



**PGEU GPUE**

Pharmaceutical Group of European Union  
Groupement Pharmaceutique de l'Union Européenne

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## PGEU calls for action on Medicine Shortages

For Immediate Release

**The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU)** is the European association representing more than 400,000 community pharmacists.

PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of pharmacists in 32 European countries, including EU Member States, EEA/EFTA members and EU applicant countries.

For more information, please visit the PGEU website [www.pgeu.eu](http://www.pgeu.eu) or contact

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Reports of medicine shortages in the EU are increasing.

According to a survey recently conducted among PGEU members, the problem is EU wide. In the UK alone over 1 million branded medicine supply failures occur each year. According to the survey, in the EU all classes of medicines are affected, from complex chemotherapy agents to even basic medication such as aspirin.

Shortages are of great concern to community pharmacists, and in some countries already affect our daily practice. It is reported that in some countries pharmacy staff spend hours each week sourcing medicines which they are not able to order from their usual wholesaler. Patients, who have been traditionally accustomed to a highly reliable medicines supply in Europe, often have difficulty in understanding why a medicine is unavailable. Addressing shortage problems is a frustrating and time consuming diversion from patient care. Worse, shortages can hinder therapy and may ultimately be fatal.

During its final General Assembly of 2012 held this week in Brussels, the PGEU unanimously adopted a [statement](#) highlighting the increasing problem and called for a concrete action from governments, EU Institutions and supply chain partners.

**Mr John Chave, PGEU Secretary General** commented: *"This is a growing problem not only in the EU, but globally too, and it affects both richer and poorer EU Members. The causes are diverse, but the dangers are clear: patients have to wait for medicines or even have to go without them altogether.*

*We need to tackle the multiple causes of shortages, but there are a number of measures than can be implemented to make things easier for patients in the short term, such as improving communication about shortages between supply chain partners, strengthening obligations in the supply chain, and making sure that pharmacists have flexibility to supply alternative medicines when absolutely necessary. It's time for governments to recognise that the problem is real, and to develop policy accordingly'.*