



## PRESS RELEASE

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# European community pharmacists call for action to address Medicine Shortages

*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 31 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 [pharmacy@pgeu.eu](mailto:pharmacy@pgeu.eu)*



The unavailability of medicines is on the rise in Europe and it has a serious impact on patients. Medicine shortages occur across all healthcare settings and involve both essential life-saving medicines and very commonly used drugs. The root causes of the problem are diverse and complex, but medicine shortages generally are the result of different economic, manufacturing or regulatory causes. Both the recent work of the [HMA/EMA Taskforce on Availability of Authorised Medicines](#) and the Juncker Commission [recommendations](#) for the EU strategic agenda 2019-2024 clearly highlight the need to address the problem at European level.

Community pharmacists are very concerned about medicine shortages, which can compromise patients' health. [PGEU calls](#) for a number of coordinated actions to reduce the burden of shortages on patients, healthcare professionals and supply chain actors.

PGEU President Michał Byliniak stated *"European community pharmacists do their best to ensure that their patients can have continued access to treatments. In recent years mitigating shortages has unfortunately become a daily activity of community pharmacists in Europe which leads to high inconvenience and distress to the patient, but worse, may negatively affect health outcomes. Moreover, pharmacies and pharmacists invest a lot of resources dealing with shortages which constitutes not only a financial burden but also a loss of opportunity to spend time with the patient to improve the quality of care. Coordinated and tangible policy actions are urgently needed both at national and EU level to ensure the availability of medicines, improve the communication and cooperation between supply chain actors and national competent authorities, and to empower community pharmacists in their ability to provide solutions to patients."*

To address the problem of shortages and ensure patients continued access to medicines PGEU asks to:

1. **Put patients' needs first** when developing business policies, national laws and strategies that can affect the timely and adequate supply of medicines and assure effective compliance with EU & national laws related to the public service obligations of supply chain actors.
2. **Expand the scope of pharmacy practice** when medicines are in short supply, so that pharmacists can better use their skills and knowledge to better manage patient care.
3. **Establish effective communication frameworks** between all medicines supply chain actors and national competent authorities so that timely information on a (foreseen) medicine shortage is provided to all actors.
4. **Compensate the negative financial impact** medicine shortages cause on patients and healthcare professionals through appropriate reimbursement and remuneration provisions.
5. **Develop effective governance systems** to improve reporting, monitoring and communication on medicine shortages. A close collaboration between EU Member States and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) as well as more structural, timely and transparent collaboration models between supply chain stakeholders and national competent authorities are needed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of joint notification and assessment practices, and to empower pharmacists in reducing the impact on patients.