



PGEU GPUE

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

23 January 2022

PRESS RELEASE

Community pharmacists call for urgent measures to address medicine shortages

Medicine shortages are on the rise in Europe. The [results of our annual shortages survey](#) indicate that the situation in 2022 has worsened and that all countries and all classes of medicines continue to be affected. Moreover, over the last weeks, the surge in respiratory infections has led to an increasing demand for antibiotics such as amoxicillin – especially for paediatric use – and the supply disruptions currently reported in some countries require immediate and concrete actions.

Medicine shortages have a negative impact on patients' health, and they also constitute a burden for the daily work of pharmacists. According to the survey each community pharmacy in Europe spends on average almost 7 hours per week managing shortages and finding alternative solutions for patients, time that could be devoted to other tasks to improve the quality of care.

PGEU President Koen Straetmans commented *“Community pharmacists are putting extra effort to ensure continuity of care and minimize the negative impact of shortages on patients' health, but the situation is becoming more and more complicated.*

The root causes of the problem are diverse and complex. These includes the increasingly globalized nature of pharmaceutical manufacturing, pricing strategies and other market dynamics, as well as the current raw materials crisis – which also affects packaging materials such as aluminium for blisters or cardboard which are essential for distribution.

We call on EU and national policy makers to adopt bold and ambitious measures to effectively address the problem. It is necessary to grant pharmacists more flexibility to find alternative solutions when a medicine is in short supply so that they can better manage patient care, making full use of their skills, knowledge, and experience.

It is also vital to improve reporting, monitoring, and communication on medicine shortages. It is crucial to provide more resources to the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to develop activities on the prevention and management of shortages in coordination with Member States.

PGEU calls for developing fair redistribution mechanisms for medicines available on the European market to those patients who need them the most, regardless the EU country where they live in, especially in times of health crises. Lastly it is necessary to assure effective compliance with EU and national laws related to the public service obligations of supply chain actors”.