










PGEU ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Community Pharmacists: serving patients through pharmacy services



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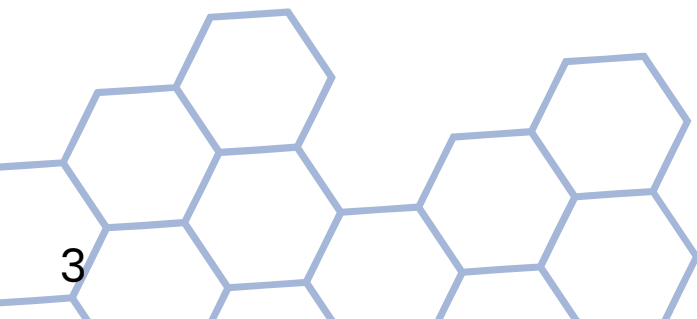
About PGEU

Mission and Vision

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) is the organization representing European community pharmacists. PGEU members are the national associations and professional bodies of community pharmacists in 33 European countries, including EU Member States, EFTA countries, the UK and EU candidate countries.

PGEU represents about 500.000 pharmacists and 200.000 pharmacies in the European Region.

PGEU's vision is to see community pharmacists recognised as key health professionals delivering a dynamic contribution to the health of people while strengthening European health systems. Community pharmacists work at the heart of communities, providing high-quality, professional advice on the safe, effective, and rational use of medicines. Often, community pharmacists are the first and the last point of contact between patients and the health system and they make an invaluable contribution to public health.



FOREWORD BY PGEU PRESIDENT 2024

As we look back and reflect on the past year, 2024 has been a pivotal year for community pharmacists in Europe. Our profession has been at the forefront of addressing critical healthcare challenges, reinforcing its essential role in ensuring patient access to medicines and safeguarding public health.

One of the defining issues of the year has been medicine shortages. Across Europe, pharmacists have worked tirelessly to mitigate the impact of supply disruptions, ensuring that patients continue to receive the treatments they need. Last year we saw the launch of the Critical Medicines Alliance, and PGEU has actively contributed to the work of the Alliance, as member of the Steering Board and provides the perspective of pharmacy practice in the technical working groups discussions. Furthermore, we have actively engaged with policymakers calling for effective and sustainable solutions for a stronger and more resilient supply chain.

Pharmacy services have continued to evolve, demonstrating their added value to healthcare systems under strain. From vaccination campaigns to medication management and patient counselling, pharmacists have stepped up as accessible healthcare providers, easing the burden on other parts of the healthcare system. Our work in tackling antimicrobial resistance has been particularly noteworthy, with pharmacists playing a key role in promoting responsible use of antibiotics and supporting EU-wide strategies to preserve the efficacy of these vital medicines.

- ARIS
PRINS



Workforce shortages remain a pressing challenge, not only in pharmacy but across all healthcare professions. This has further highlighted the need for interprofessional collaboration, ensuring that healthcare professionals can work together effectively to meet patient needs. Strengthening partnerships across the sector has been a priority, reinforcing the shared responsibility we have in maintaining high-quality patient care. This was visible during our Annual Conference in Amsterdam, organised jointly with European doctors (CPME), showcasing the doctors and pharmacists' contribution to tackling shortages of medicines, medical devices and health workforce.

2024 was also marked by the start of a new political cycle, as the results of the European elections confirmed a new configuration of the EU institutions. At the European level, we have engaged actively in policy discussions, advocating for the expansion of the pharmacists' role in shaping a healthier, more resilient Europe. In line with the EU's principle of being united in diversity, we have emphasized the importance of a harmonized yet flexible approach that respects national healthcare systems while fostering innovation and cooperation.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to ensuring that pharmacists continue to be recognized as indispensable healthcare professionals. Our contribution goes beyond dispensing medicines—pharmacists are trusted advisors, public health advocates, and key stakeholders in ensuring the safe and effective use of medicines. Together, we will continue to strengthen our profession and enhance the care we provide to millions of people across Europe.

It has been a great honour to serve as President during this time of both challenges and progress. The dedication of our members, the strength of our collective voice, and the impact of our advocacy efforts have reinforced my belief in the crucial role that pharmacists play in society. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to represent this profession and look forward to seeing it continue to thrive in the years to come.

- ARIS PRINS



EMA ENGAGEMENT



Pharmacists' contribution to Pharmacovigilance

PGEU is involved in the EMA PRISMA initiative (Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee Risk Minimisation Alliance of the European Medicines Agency), a PRAC pilot on stakeholder engagement for the implementation of risk minimisation measures (RMM) in healthcare. PGEU often presents the practical implications on the implementation of RMM during medicines use. In 2024, the group discussed sub-categories of legal status not subject to medical prescription, the implementation of RMM, the revision of the Good pharmacovigilance practices (GVP) Module XVI on RMM, and regulatory communication on RMM.

Pharmacists' contribution to Patient information

The collaboration between PGEU and EMA on Patient Information is based on the involvement in the European Medicines Agency Quality Review of Documents (EMA QRD) working subgroup. PGEU represents Healthcare Professionals in the QRD working group, to discuss key improvements on the package leaflets. During 2024 the group discussed and proposed changes to the package leaflet, in relation to the inclusion of a key information section and information on benefits of medicines. PGEU actively advocated for the changes in the package leaflet to be patient-friendly, mirroring the use of the package leaflet as an information tool for patients with the support from community pharmacists, detailing examples of practice and impact on the use of these tools.

Pharmacists' contribution to shortages mitigation at European level

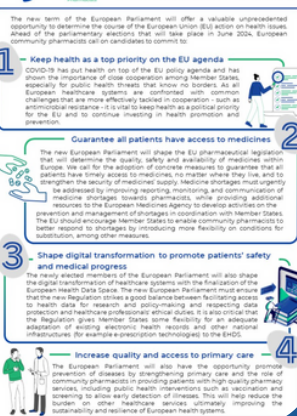
PGEU works together with EMA in the mitigation of medicine shortages in Europe. During 2024, community pharmacists actively contributed to the revision of the EU List of Critical Medicines, providing input and national expertise. Furthermore, PGEU is involved in the co-creation of a medicine shortages campaign, sharing its main messages on the topic and highlighting its Position Paper and the annual PGEU Medicine Shortages Report. PGEU is also part of a technical subgroup on the implementation of the [Good practice guidance for patients and healthcare professional organisations on the prevention of shortages](#). This document, which was co-led by PGEU, focuses on proactive mechanisms to prevent shortages of medicines for human use.

PUBLICATIONS



PGEU Medicine Shortages Report 2024

In 2024, medicine shortages continued to affect all European countries. Shortages of medical devices available in pharmacy continue to exist across all categories in various European countries, with significant differences across countries. Pharmacists across the EU spend nearly three times as much time addressing shortages as they did a decade ago, amounting to almost 11 hours per week on average.



EU Elections 2024 – European Pharmacists' Recommendations

PGEU urged candidates in the 2024 EU elections to prioritize health by ensuring continued investment in health promotion and cooperation on public health threats. Community pharmacists called for stronger measures to guarantee timely access to medicines, including better monitoring of shortages and more flexibility for pharmacists in managing supply issues. Digital transformation should enhance patient safety while balancing data access and protection. Strengthening primary care and expanding pharmacists' roles in disease prevention, such as vaccination and screening can improve healthcare system sustainability.

PGEU position paper on medicine shortages 2024

The PGEU position paper on medicine shortages highlights the growing impact of supply disruptions on patient health and trust in healthcare systems, with community pharmacists now spending nearly 10 hours per week managing shortages. To address this crisis, PGEU calls for policies that prioritize medicine availability, ensuring timely access for patients while expanding pharmacists' roles to maintain continuity of care. PGEU also recommends implementing a standardized EU-wide definition of medicine shortages and ensuring timely reporting by marketing authorization holders. Additionally, PGEU advocates for enhanced transparency and oversight of the supply chain, robust prevention and mitigation plans by manufacturers, and improved EU coordination to redistribute medicines effectively among Member States. Optimizing stockpile management through the development of rolling stocks is also emphasized to mitigate the impact of shortages.

PGEU Position Paper on Pharmacists Workforce Shortages

PGEU position paper highlights the urgent need to address pharmacist workforce shortages in Europe, driven by rising demand due to an ageing population, chronic diseases, and expanded clinical roles. Challenges such as burnout, retirement, and limited educational capacity have strained supply. PGEU calls for increased investment in education, better working conditions, and stronger support to ensure sustainable pharmacy services. Recommendations include increasing educational capacity, promoting continuous professional development, and integrating pharmacists more deeply into healthcare systems. Immediate action from policymakers and stakeholders is essential to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality pharmacy services to European patients

Joint Statement on Electronic Product Information (ePI)

In a joint statement dated November 15, 2024, several healthcare organizations, including CPME, PGEU, BEUC, AGE, HOPE, AIM, EFN, and EAHP, advocate for the retention of paper package leaflets for medications, suggesting that electronic product information (ePI) should serve as a complementary resource. They emphasize that relying solely on ePI could exacerbate the digital divide, disadvantaging individuals without access to digital devices or the internet. The statement highlights the critical role of paper leaflets in providing immediate, unbiased information essential for patient safety and informed decision-making. Concerns are also raised about the potential shift of responsibility and costs for printing information from pharmaceutical companies to pharmacists or patients if paper leaflets are eliminated. The organizations urge EU legislators to consider inclusivity, privacy, and data protection in their deliberations on pharmaceutical legislation.



Position paper on medicine shortages



Brussels, 15 November 2024
CPME, PGEU, BEUC, AGE, HOPE, AIM, EFN, EAHP
Joint Statement on Electronic Product Information (ePI)

Doctors, nurses, community and hospital pharmacists, hospitals and healthcare services, consumers, older people, health insurance funds and not-for-profit health mutuals, call on legislators to maintain paper package leaflets, and use electronic leaflets as a complementary tool.

Ahead of the future co-legislators' interinstitutional negotiations on the European Commission's Proposal for a revised pharmaceutical legislation in the European Union, healthcare professionals and consumers appeal for inclusive provisions that leave no one behind and are respectful of privacy and personal data protection.

We call upon the co-legislators to:

- Contribute to an inclusive society, without enacting discriminatory rules that increase the digital divide and limit individual choice.
- We call on the EU to guarantee the right to use digitalisation for those who wish to do so, and maintain the paper leaflet for those who do not, or cannot. We also alert to the risks of imposing the use of a mobile device to access basic health information. An exclusive shift implies possessing a smartphone or tablet, sufficient connectivity, an internet data plan, and to have those devices at hand at the time of need. The shift requires a level of digitalisation without considering those who do not want to use a smartphone, or cannot, due to age, geographical location, disability, health, income, religion or social situation. The shift is also disproportionate to what the paper alternative could offer in a simpler way.
- Recognize the importance of the package leaflet as a key tool for information accessibility.

We highlight that the package leaflet is a vital component of the information provided to patients on the safe and effective use of the medicines they take, which is a consideration under the beneficence principle. It is furthermore a tool to improve health literacy. Paper leaflets offer immediate access to accurate, complete and consistent information that helps the patient to make an informed decision. Changes that move access to such information and its storage away from the patient place the burden of seeking information on the patient. For example, studies conducted in other fields show that a low level of consumer scan product information made available through a QR Code.



Pharmacy Services At the service of patients

Community pharmacy practice has evolved significantly over the past decades, progressively meeting societies' health needs and accompanying the development of healthcare systems. In addition to their well-established role in dispensing medications, **community pharmacists** are increasingly recognized as **vital contributors to primary care thanks to their privileged position at the center of communities to provide care and counselling**.

The demand for innovative services in community pharmacy is intensified by an aging population, emerging health threats, shifting patient expectations, and constrained budgets. These factors create an urgent need for **more patient-centered care and emphasise the pharmacist's capacity to deliver high-quality, cost-effective services** at the heart of local communities reducing pressure on emergency rooms and hospitals. Legislative frameworks in various countries are gradually adapting to allow pharmacists to offer a wider range of patient-centered services, leveraging their expertise for improved health outcomes.

Aggravating factors



- Aging population
- Emerging health threats
- Shifting patient expectations
- Constrained budgets



Pharmacy Services At the service of patients

Pharmacy-based public health interventions – **encompassing health promotion, disease prevention, and disease/medication management** – demonstrate the sector’s commitment to achieving the “triple aim” of **better quality of care, better health outcomes, and lower costs**. Traditionally, core pharmacy services included dispensing, compounding, and emergency care (such as emergency supply of medicines), along with medication management. However, in recent years, an increasing number of advanced services, such as vaccination, smoking cessation programs, chronic disease management, and early screening/testing, have become integral components of community pharmacy practice.

By offering these advanced services, pharmacists enhance patients’ experiences and outcomes in multiple ways. First, patients benefit from more convenient, walk-in access to high-quality care—often with extended opening hours. These services reduce barriers to healthcare and provide timely interventions, facilitating early detection of illnesses and proactive disease management. They also improve medication adherence and foster stronger relationships between pharmacists and patients, leading to more personalized recommendations and improved health literacy. The result is better long-term health, reduced complications, and an overall decrease in healthcare costs for patients and systems alike.

“**Better quality of care, better health outcomes and lower costs!**”

Pharmacy Services At the service of patients

Recognizing the growing importance of pharmacists in healthcare systems worldwide, the WHO – Europe's 2019 report acknowledged community pharmacists as the most accessible health professionals and a cornerstone of primary health care. This report emphasized the opportunity for communities to benefit from the full range of services pharmacists can provide, highlighting the need for adequate remuneration to ensure sustainability. Similarly, the OECD and the European Commission have observed that pharmacists' roles have broadened to include more direct patient care, both within community pharmacy settings and as part of interdisciplinary healthcare teams.

More recently, the 2020 OECD report on primary health care reiterated the challenges OECD countries faced, even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and reinforced the importance of robust primary healthcare to deliver accessible and effective services. In this context of limited resources, community pharmacy stands out as a key setting for public health interventions, owing to its convenient walk-in access, widespread geographical distribution, high frequency of patient interactions, strong patient trust, extended operating hours, and highly skilled pharmacist workforce.

By embracing advanced clinical services and placing a strong emphasis on patient care, community pharmacists continue to demonstrate their pivotal role in strengthening health systems and improving population health. Through proactive engagement, they empower individuals to manage their well-being, bridge gaps in care, and ultimately promote healthier communities.



A look forward

As we enter 2025, PGEU is focused on advocating for the future and resilience of the European healthcare ecosystem and the community pharmacist's profession, with a strong emphasis on addressing critical issues such as medicine shortages, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), workforce shortages, ensuring patient safety and quality of care.

A key area of focus for PGEU will be the ongoing reform of EU pharmaceutical legislation, which aims to address long-standing challenges like medicine shortages while improving access to essential medicines and ensuring patient safety. At the same time, PGEU will follow the legislative process on the Critical Medicines Act, which we hope will play a key role in securing the supply of life-saving medications, particularly in times of crisis.

Assisting in tackling and raising awareness on antimicrobial resistance will continue to be a priority in 2025, with community pharmacists all across Europe intensifying their efforts to promote responsible antibiotic use and reduce resistance. Community pharmacists play a central role in informing patients and supporting national and EU strategies to curb the misuse of antibiotics.



The European Health Data Space (EHDS) will also come into full effect in 2025, and PGEU is committed to ensuring that community pharmacies are well-positioned to leverage this new regulation for better data sharing and more personalized patient care, all while maintaining strong protections for patient privacy and data security. Artificial Intelligence (AI) also presents both great promise and significant challenges for healthcare in the coming years. As AI technologies continue to evolve, PGEU will advocate for a regulatory framework that ensures transparency, accountability, and patient safety. AI has the potential to enhance healthcare delivery and improve patient outcomes, but its implementation must be guided by strong ethical principles to maintain the integrity and trust of healthcare systems.

Finally, addressing workforce shortages remains a critical issue. PGEU will advocate for policies that support the recruitment, retention, and development of skilled pharmacy professionals, ensuring that the pharmacy workforce is equipped to meet the growing demands of patient care.

As always, PGEU will work closely with EU institutions, healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders to build resilient, sustainable healthcare systems capable of delivering high-quality care for all EU citizens in the face of evolving challenges.



- ILARIA PASSARANI

PGEU SECRETARIAT



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Secretary General

● **Jorge Batista**
Senior Professional Affairs Advisor

● **Audrey van Coillie**
Senior Office Manager

● **Silvia González Vidal**
Legal Advisor

● **Riccardo Rubini**
Past - Diogo Dominguez-Piedade
Economic Affairs Manager

● **Leonor Araújo**
EPSA Officer

PGEU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2024



Belgium

A.P.B - Association Pharmaceutique Belge/Algemene Pharmaceutische Bond (Association of Pharmacists Belgium)
Orde der Apothekers – Ordre des Pharmaciens (Belgian Order of Pharmacists)

Bulgaria

Български фармацевтичен съюз (Bulgarian Pharmaceutical Union)

Finland

Suomen Apteekkariliitto / Finlands Apotekareförbund (Association of Finnish Pharmacies)

Hungary

Magyar Gyógyszerész Kamara (Hungarian Chamber of Pharmacists)

Italy

Federazione Ordini Farmacisti Italiani (FOFI) (Federation of the Order of Italian Pharmacists)
Federfarma (Italian Pharmacy Owners Federation)

Latvia

Latvijas farmaceutiskās aprūpes asociācija (Pharmaceutical Care Association of Latvia)

Luxembourg

Syndicat des Pharmaciens Luxembourgeois a.s.b.l. (Union of Luxembourg Pharmacists)

Netherlands

KNMP - Koninklijke Nederlandse Maatschappij ter bevordering der Pharmacie (Royal Dutch Pharmaceutical Association)

Romania

Colegiul Farmacistilor din Romania (The Romanian College of Pharmacists)

PGEU Members 2024

Ordinary Members

Austria

Österreichische Apothekerkammer (Austrian Chamber of Pharmacists)
Österreichische Apothekerkammer (Austrian Chamber of Pharmacists)

Belgium

A.P.B - Association Pharmaceutique Belge/Algemene Pharmaceutische Bond (Association of Pharmacists Belgium)
Orde der Apothekers – Ordre des Pharmaciens (Belgian Order of Pharmacists)

Bulgaria

Български фармацевтичен съюз (Bulgarian Pharmaceutical Union)

Croatia

Hrvatska Ljekarnička Komora (Croatian Chamber of Pharmacists)

Cyprus

Παγκύπριος Φαρμακευτικός Σύλλογος (ΠΦΣ) (Pancyprian Pharmaceutical Association)

Czech Republic

Česká lékárnická komora (Czech Chamber of Pharmacists)

Denmark

Danmarks Apotekerforening (The Association of Danish Pharmacies)

Estonia

Eesti Proviisorapteekide Liit (Estonian Pharmacies Association)

Finland

Suomen Apteekkariliitto / Finlands Apotekareförbund (Association of Finnish Pharmacies)

France

Fédération des Syndicats Pharmaceutiques de France (Federation of Pharmaceutical Unions of France)
Ordre National des Pharmaciens - Conseil Central A (The National Chamber of Pharmacists - Pharmacy Owners Section)
USPO - Union des Syndicats de pharmaciens d'officine (Trade Union of Community Pharmacists)

Germany

ABDA - Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Apothekerverbände (Federal Union of German Pharmacists Associations)

Greece

Πανελλήνιος Φαρμακευτικός Σύλλογος (Panhellenic Pharmaceutical Association)

PGEU Members 2024

Ordinary Members

Hungary

Magyar Gyógyszerész Kamara (Hungarian Chamber of Pharmacists)

Ireland

Irish Pharmacy Union

Italy

Federazione Ordini Farmacisti Italiani (FOFI)
(Federation of the Order of Italian Pharmacists)
Federfarma (Italian Pharmacy Owners Federation)

Latvia

Latvijas farmaceutiskās aprūpes asociācija
(Pharmaceutical Care Association of Latvia)

Luxembourg

Syndicat des Pharmaciens Luxembourgeois
a.s.b.l. (Union of Luxembourg Pharmacists)

Malta

Kamra ta' l-Ispizjara ta' Malta (Malta Chamber of Pharmacists)

Netherlands

KNMP - Koninklijke Nederlandse Maatschappij
ter bevordering der Pharmacie (Royal Dutch
Pharmaceutical Association)

Poland

Naczelna Izba Aptekarska (Polish
Pharmaceutical Chamber)

Portugal

Associação Nacional das Farmácias (National
Association of Pharmacies)
Ordem dos Farmacêuticos (Pharmaceutical
Society)

Romania

Colegiul Farmacistilor din Romania (The
Romanian College of Pharmacists)

Slovak Republic

Slovenská Lekárnická Komora (Slovak
Chamber of Pharmacists)

Slovenia

Lekarniška Zbornica Slovenije (Slovenian
Chamber of Pharmacy)

Spain

Consejo General de Colegios Farmacéuticos
de España (General Pharmaceutical Council of
Spain)

Sweden

Sveriges Apoteksförening (Swedish Pharmacy
Association)

PGEU Members 2024

Observer Members

Kosovo

Oda e Farmacistëve të Kosovës
(Chamber of Pharmacists of Kosovo)

North Macedonia

Фармацевтска комора на Македонија
(Pharmaceutical Chamber of Macedonia)

Norway

NAF – Apotekforeningen (Norwegian Pharmacy Association)

Serbia

Farmaceutska komora Srbije
(Pharmaceutical Chamber of Serbia)
-Savez farmaceutskih udruženja Srbije
(Pharmaceutical Association of Serbia)

Turkey

Türk Eczacıları Birliği (Turkish Pharmacists' Association)

United Kingdom

National Pharmacy Association
Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland





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