

Press Release

Irish Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence acknowledges community pharmacists' key role in public health policy at Annual Conference of PGEU hosted in Dublin.

Community Pharmacists proactive management of medicine shortages protects patients, over 11 hours per week of an EU pharmacist time is devoted to managing medicine shortages.

Today, Thomas Byrne, Ireland's Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence, addressed attendees at the 2025 PGEU Annual Conference *"Building a Resilient Pharmacy Workforce for the Future"*, emphasizing the vital role European pharmacists play in shaping EU health policies.

In a speech dedicated to the European Health Union, Minister Byrne spotlighted one of the most pressing issues facing pharmacists: persistent and widespread medicine shortages. *"The ongoing reform of the EU General Pharmaceutical Legislation will translate into practice effective measures to mitigate medicine shortages. The negotiations are ongoing, and we expect to advance this topic swiftly"*.

Medicine shortages continue to disrupt pharmacy practice in all European countries, a recent report by PGEU, pharmacies across the EU spent on average 11 hours per week last year dealing with medicine shortages. This is a growing trend over the last decade, this time spent by pharmacists could be deployed more positively in the provision of pharmaceutical care to patients, and employing pharmacists' expertise in clinical skills, rather than on medicine sourcing and associated administrative tasks.

Minister Byrne underlined the potential impact of upcoming EU legislation: *"The Critical Medicines Act, recently proposed, will be another opportunity for EU legislation to effectively introduce measures to address medicine shortages. The Critical Medicines Act aims to improve the availability, supply and production of critical medicines within the EU, and is expected to bring additional tools for EU Member States to ensure access to medicines for all patients."*

PGEU President, Clare Fitzell said "European Community Pharmacists welcome the European Commission's proposal as a significant step forward to strengthen the EU's pharmaceutical supply chain. We call for sustainable incentives for pharmaceutical production, improved coordination of medicine security initiatives, strengthening oversight of supply obligations, strategic investment, optimized contingency stocks, better public procurement practices, and swift implementation".

For more information see the [PGEU Position Paper on the Critical Medicines Act](#) adopted today.

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