

PGEU Annual Conference highlights the role of community pharmacies in strengthening Europe's health preparedness

Community pharmacists are among the most accessible healthcare professionals in Europe, supporting patients every day through a network of more than 200,000 pharmacies across 33 European countries. At its Annual Conference in Wrocław, held under the theme “**Ensuring Europe's health preparedness**”, PGEU launched its new **Position Paper on Health Preparedness**, outlining how community pharmacies and pharmacists can further strengthen Europe's capacity to prevent, prepare for and respond to health crises.

Recent crises have exposed structural vulnerabilities in Europe's health systems. Throughout these challenges, community pharmacies remained open and continued to provide support to patients and communities. Pharmacists ensured continuity of treatment, supported vaccination and testing campaigns, helped manage shortages, provided health advice, and contributed to access to medicines, medical countermeasures, diagnostics and personal protective equipment.

PGEU President, Mikołaj Konstanty said: “Europe's community pharmacists are a critical part of health preparedness. They are accessible, trusted and present in every community, also when health systems are under pressure. Recent crises have shown that pharmacists can help maintain continuity of care, support public health interventions, communicate reliable information and relieve pressure on other parts of the healthcare system. However, this potential can only be fully used if pharmacies are formally integrated into emergency planning, properly resourced, and empowered.”

The PGEU Annual Conference brought together European and national policymakers, healthcare professionals, public health authorities and PGEU members to discuss the role of community pharmacists in emergencies, and how to ensure the preparedness of European healthcare systems. Speakers and panellists included representatives from the European Commission, DG HERA, DG ECHO, the European Parliament, Vaccines Europe, the Standing Committee of European Doctors, the Polish Government, the Military Institute of Medicine, and national pharmacy organisations.

To strengthen Europe's health preparedness, PGEU calls for:

- Formal inclusion of community pharmacists in emergency and crisis response strategies.
- A proportionate and coordinated European framework for contingency stocks of essential medicines and medical devices.
- Expansion of pharmacists' scope of practice to support emergency response, vaccination, testing, shortage management and continuity of treatment.
- Better use of aggregated pharmacy data to inform preparedness, collaborative procurement and shortages management.
- Targeted action to improve the availability of medical countermeasures, diagnostics, therapeutics and personal protective equipment.
- Integration of pharmacies into public risk communication strategies to support trusted, science-based information.
- Stronger interprofessional preparedness collaboration between community pharmacists, doctors, hospital pharmacists, nurses, public health authorities and emergency services.

For more information, read: [PGEU Position Paper on Health Preparedness](#).