

## PRESS RELEASE

### Pharmacists ask for actions and support in mitigating shortages

The latest [PGEU Medicine Shortages Report](#) underscores the persistent and significant impact of medicines shortages across Europe. Over the past twelve months, pharmacies have consistently faced high levels of shortages, with 61% of countries reporting that the situation has not improved compared to the previous year's survey, which was an exceptionally high benchmark for shortages.

This year's survey highlights a concerning trend: the time pharmacists dedicate to managing medicines shortages continues to rise, with European community pharmacists now spending around **11 hours per week** addressing this issue. This substantial demand on their time diverts resources from other critical healthcare services but remains essential to ensure patients receive the care they need.

Pharmacists' efforts to mitigate the impact of shortages include counselling patients on available alternatives, sourcing and procuring alternative medicines, collaborating with prescribers to identify suitable options and negotiating reimbursement with payment agencies for alternative treatments.

#### Leveraging Pharmacists' Expertise

Clare Fitzell, PGEU President, announces *"We reached a steady state that is unacceptable for patients, pharmacists and prescribers – shortages are not getting worse, but also are not resolving. Behind every medicine shortage is an anxious patient and their diligent pharmacist trying to seek alternatives and solutions. Some countries have facilitated pharmacists through their legal framework to find a greater range of solutions for patients, such as generic substitution and therapeutic substitution, which provides for a timelier solution for patients and harnesses the expertise of pharmacist. This is one of the important measures we have put forward for consideration in our [latest position on proactive measures to address medicine shortages](#)."*

#### Policy Progression to Expand Roles for Pharmacists

In 2024, one-third of European countries enacted legislation granting pharmacists greater flexibility to combat medicines shortages. These new powers include adjusting dosages and formulations, compounding medicines, and performing therapeutic substitutions. Additionally, 20% of countries are actively developing legislative initiatives to further extend pharmacists' responsibilities, enabling them to manage shortages more effectively and expand their scope of practice.

Clare Fitzell highlighted the importance of ongoing policy initiatives and urged countries to expedite their implementation: *"Pharmacists can do so much more if they are provided with the necessary tools, opportunities, and resources. This requires greater transparency and information sharing across the supply chain; robust reporting mechanisms; enhanced professional competencies; and financial measures to offset the economic impact on pharmacies. The ongoing EU-level initiatives present a pivotal opportunity to strengthen the resilience of the medicines supply chain. We urge the European Institutions and Agencies to swiftly advance policies that ensure the safe and reliable supply of medicines for all European citizens. We look forward to progress on the Reform of the EU General Pharmaceutical Legislation, the work of the European Medicines Agency, and the adoption of the Critical Medicines Act."*

**ENDS**