



Community pharmacists: standing by European patients

Annual Report 2022



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About the PGEU

mission and vision

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) is the association representing European community pharmacists. PGEU members are the national associations and professional bodies of community pharmacists in 32 European countries, including EU Member States, EFTA countries, the UK and EU candidate countries.

PGEU's vision is to see community pharmacists recognised as key health professionals delivering a dynamic, sustainable, and evolving 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 Roberto Tobia

PGEU President 2022

The year 2022 has been yet another challenging one. As we were starting to feel hopeful, coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, a war started in Europe with the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

In these unsettling times, community pharmacists stood at the side of European patients providing them with professional advice on the safe use of medicines and new advanced services, improving the quality of care and reducing pressure on other healthcare settings.

We also stood all together at the side of Ukrainian pharmacists and all Ukrainian people and I was particularly proud of the great solidarity shown by all PGEU members and the unprecedented mobilization of resources and donations .

The war in Ukraine has costed many lives, and since the beginning of the conflict a great number of healthcare facilities have been destroyed. Certain services such as cancer treatment have been seriously disrupted. According to the national statistics, more than 500 pharmacies were damaged in Eastern Ukraine and 47 completely destroyed. Fortunately, the acute shortage of medicines observed at the beginning of the war has improved, at least in the areas controlled by the Ukrainian Government. However, access to treatment remains difficult also in the areas where there is currently no military conflict.



The war in Ukraine and the consequent increase in energy costs and worsening of the raw material crisis - which also affects packaging materials such as aluminium for blisters or cardboard which are essential for medicine distribution - has also exacerbated shortages across Europe. The results of the PGEU annual shortages survey indicate that the situation in 2022 has generally worsened and that all countries and all classes of medicines continue to be affected. 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 close to 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 for patients. That is why, the PGEU called on policymakers to adopt bold and ambitious measures to effectively address the problem in the upcoming revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation.

During 2022, PGEU also addressed key strategic issues with the adoption of a position on health emergency preparedness and response, building on the lessons learned from COVID-19, and a position on demographic change and territorial cohesion, another big challenge all European healthcare systems are facing. At the November General Assembly, European community pharmacists also adopted the PGEU position on the draft Regulation on the European Health Data Space, a complex piece of legislation that is going to have a significant impact on pharmacy and on the European healthcare systems.



“In these unsettling times, community pharmacists stood at the side of European patients providing them with professional advice on the safe use of medicines and new advanced services, improving the quality of care and reducing pressure on other healthcare settings.”



It was my privilege to welcome in Rome all PGEU members, policymakers and stakeholders to exchange views and ideas on key issues including access to medicines, information to patients and on the use of real-world evidence for medicine regulatory decisions.

It was an honour for me to serve as PGEU President. It was a unique and enriching experience and I would like to extend my gratitude to the PGEU staff for their advice and professionalism and to all PGEU members for their support throughout my mandate. I look forward to continuing working together in the interest of the pharmacist profession.

-  [PGEU Medicine Shortages Survey 2022](#)
-  [Revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation](#)
-  [Health emergency preparedness and response](#)
-  [Demographic change and territorial cohesion](#)
-  [Position Paper on the European Health Data Space](#)

2022 at a glance

January

EU General Pharmaceutical Legislation

PGEU published their [position on the upcoming revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation](#). The position paper served as a basis for PGEU contribution to several meetings and surveys organised by the EU institutions and EU stakeholders, including a workshop and interview organised by the consultancy Technopolis, tasked by the European Commission to conduct an evaluation of the current EU general pharmaceutical legislation, in light of its planned revision.

Oslo Medicines Initiative: Reflections on the market for innovative medicines in the WHO European Region

PGEU participated to the first webinar of a series of five launched by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Government of Norway under the [Oslo Medicines Initiative \(OMI\)](#). The webinar focused on transparency, accountability, and sustainability in the pharmaceutical sector, on the dynamics of the pharmaceutical market today, outlining potential policy options and directions for increasing equitable access to effective, high-priced novel medicines in the European Region. Several panellists highlighted that pricing and reimbursement policies in the European region need to be adjusted to take into account learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic, including use of joint procurement of medicines and Health Technology Assessment (HTA) as mechanism to decide on market entry of new innovative medicines and leverage public payer positions in negotiations with the industry.

AMR One Health Network meeting

PGEU participated in the antimicrobial resistance (AMR) One Health Network meeting, organised by the European Commission. It was the first time that a meeting from the AMR One Health Network, usually reserved only for the European Commission, EU agencies and Member States, was accessible to invited stakeholders. On the agenda were discussions around the latest EU policy and funding developments for AMR, AMR activities of the Tripartite Plus organisations (FAO, WHO, OIE, UNEP) and a revamp of the AMR One Health Network. PGEU also provided a statement on the contribution of European community pharmacists to tackle AMR and highlighted the main PGEU policy recommendations on AMR.



February

European Commission Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative Meeting

PGEU participated in a European Commission meeting on its new [EU Non-Communicable Diseases Initiative](#), aiming to support EU countries in reducing the burden of NCDs, focusing on 5 key areas: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes chronic respiratory diseases, mental health and neurological disorders, and health determinants. While focusing on promotion and prevention, this initiative may also support better knowledge and data, screening and early detection, diagnosis and treatment management, and quality of life of patients. Support focuses on implementation, helping EU countries to transfer best practices, develop guidelines, roll out innovative approaches, among others. PGEU outlined European community pharmacists' contributions in the area of prevention, health promotion, early detection, access to treatment and providing adequate pharmaceutical care.

State of Health in the EU policy dialogue

PGEU participated to a policy dialogue on the State of Health in the EU, organized by the European Policy Centre. The dialogue served to reflect on the main themes contained in the Companion report and the country health profiles, presented by the European Observatory on Health, OECD and the European Commission. The debate among stakeholders focused on the key lessons on digital health from COVID-19, including the need for political commitment and technical infrastructure supporting digitalization of healthcare as well as reducing inequalities in digital health literacy and involving patients and health professionals when developing digital solutions in healthcare. Additionally, the debate addressed the variability of health workforce capacity across Europe and even within countries in terms of differences between urban and rural areas. Policy responses suggested included the need to distribute capacity of health workforce more equally and to invest in the health workforce wellbeing and mental health.

PGEU event on Green and Sustainable Pharmacy

PGEU hosted its online event on Green and Sustainable Pharmacy. MEP Jutta Paulus, a pharmacist by training, opened the meeting highlighting the key role of community pharmacists in reducing the negative impact of pharmaceuticals in the environment, by guiding patients about their prudent use and correct adherence to treatment.

The OECD and the European Commission (Directorate General for Environment) presented their findings on the management of pharmaceutical household waste and policy implications, which was then highlighted during a presentation of good practices by experts from Germany, Portugal, Sweden, The Netherlands, showcasing the efforts of community pharmacists towards reducing the impact of pharmaceuticals in the environment.

Bengt Mattson then assured the commitment of the industry to address their impact on the environment. Finally, Stefan Berggren discussed the need for close collaboration between Member States and all units and agencies within the EU to ensure the different legislative initiatives are well coordinated and aligned.

March

PGEU support to Ukraine

PGEU participated in a meeting organised by the European Commission on supporting Ukraine and neighbouring countries. A total of 240 EU health organizations joined to share information on how to provide help to Ukrainian people and refugees. PGEU shared the initiatives and efforts from member organizations at a national level and confirmed our commitment to coordinate with the European Commission's humanitarian aid initiatives and with the other EU stakeholders.

During the March Advisory Working Group meeting, PGEU hosted the Chair of the All-Ukrainian Pharmaceutical Chamber, Oleg Klimov, who provided an update on the impact of the conflict on pharmacies and highlighted some possibilities for PGEU members' support. He stressed that many pharmacies in Ukraine had to close due to staff shortages and that there were significant challenges for wholesalers to continue delivering products to pharmacies. He also thanked PGEU members for their support and for the large number of donations they received from all pharmacies' associations across Europe and from PGEU.

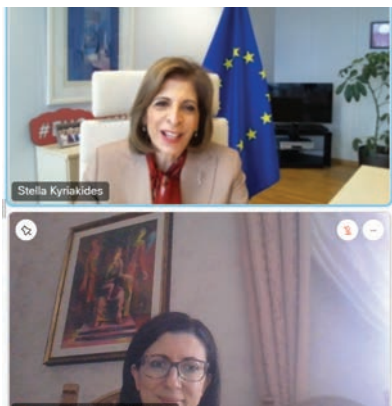
Meeting with EMA on pharmacovigilance and risk minimization

PGEU met with the European Medicines Agency to discuss the recommendations of the PGEU survey on pharmacovigilance and risk minimization. Several concrete actions were identified in relation to the establishment of a pool of pharmacovigilance experts from PGEU member organisations as well as on activities aiming to raise awareness on key risk minimisation measures and the value of reporting adverse drug reactions by healthcare professionals.



April

Meeting with EU Health Commissioner on COVID-19 vaccination of adolescents and children



PGEU met with the EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides to discuss uptake of COVID-19 vaccination among children. We exchanged views on the challenges around communication about COVID-19 vaccination for adolescents and children together with the European Academy of Paediatrics (EAP), the Excellence in Pediatrics Institute (EIP), the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) and the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). PGEU referred to the national experiences of COVID-19 vaccination in community pharmacy and to the role of pharmacists as trusted source of health information, including on the safety and efficacy of vaccines.

May

OECD Event on Management of Pharmaceutical Household Waste

PGEU attended an OECD event about the Management of Pharmaceutical Household Waste. The event focused on understanding where OECD countries stand on the consumption and disposal of pharmaceuticals, whilst shedding some light on the role of policymakers in this matter, detailing how can collection schemes help to prevent, collect and treat unused and expired medicines to protect human health and the environment.

Disposal of unused and expired medicines via solid household waste can also result in pharmaceutical residues entering the environment if this waste is illegally dumped or destined for landfills. In addition to environmental risks, unused or expired medicine not only present a possible public health risk of accidental or intentional misuse and poisoning but also constitute wasted healthcare resources.

*European Medicines Agency veterinary medicines info day 2022*

PGEU attended the information days on veterinary medicines organized by the European Medicines Agency. During the webinars, implementation of the regulation on veterinary medicines and a big data strategy for veterinary medicines were discussed, while also providing updates on other topics such as pharmacovigilance mechanisms and good manufacturing practices.

PGEU co-chaired the Annual Meeting of the Coalition for Vaccination 2022

PGEU co-chaired (together with CPME and EFN) the Annual Meeting of the Coalition for Vaccination, an event that took place online and at the Albert Borschette Congress Center, in Brussels. The Coalition for Vaccination brings together European associations of healthcare professionals and relevant student associations in the field. It was convened by the European Commission in 2019 based on the 2018 Council recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases. During the Annual Meeting, PGEU shared the work that is developed by community pharmacists on vaccination in the different member countries, showcasing best practices and opportunities to collaborate with other healthcare professionals and healthcare students, with the aim to enhance vaccine uptake and fight vaccine hesitancy.

*Finnish Association of Pharmacies 125th anniversary*

PGEU Secretary General participated in a conference organised on the occasion of the Finnish Association of Pharmacies' 125th anniversary. She spoke about the role of pharmacists during COVID-19 and presented the findings of the ISBE study on pharmacy services.

May

BEUC event on access to medicines

PGEU spoke at the roundtable on access to medicines organised by the European Consumer Organization (BEUC). During the event, PGEU presented its position on shortages and on the upcoming revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation. Other participants were the European Commission, the pharmaceutical industry, payers, patients and hospital organizations and representatives of the EU permanent representations in Brussels of a few countries.



French Asso Sante conference on the EU pharmaceutical legislation

PGEU was present at a conference organised by the French patients and consumers organization French Asso Sante. PGEU presented its position on medicine shortages and on the upcoming revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation. Other participants included the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists, French patients' organizations, representatives from the French Medicines Agency and French Government, the pharmaceutical industry, and payers.

June

PGEU Annual Conference 2022 in Rome, Italy

PGEU members met in Rome to discuss strategic issues such as demographic change and territorial cohesion in Europe, health emergency preparedness and response, the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy, and the European Health Data Space. They also exchanged views with the European Medicines Agency and with key EU stakeholders – including the European Patient's Forum (EPF), the European Consumer Organization (BEUC), the European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP) and the European Trade Associations of Generic Medicines Industries (Medicines for Europe) and self-care medicines industries (AESGP).



Roberto Tobia opening speech in Rome



Gala Dinner in Rome

European Commission meeting on supporting Ukraine

PGEU participated in the webinar organised by the “Supporting Ukraine, neighbouring EU Member States and Moldova” Network. During its intervention, PGEU presented the work conducted by Community Pharmacists across Europe, highlighting the developments in the field of diploma recognition and support for healthcare professionals arriving in EU Member States and Moldova. In particular, the intervention referred to different experiences of Member States where programmes for recognition of professional qualifications have been put forward (e.g. France, Italy and Latvia) and those that have put forward special conditions (e.g. Germany, Ireland, The Netherlands and Portugal). There was also a request for further guidance from the Commission to Member States in order to set out their own schemes and overcome the barriers detected.

July

BeWell Project Kick-off Meeting

PGEU participated in the Kick-Off Meeting of the EU funded BeWell (Blueprint alliance for a future hHealth Workforce strategy on digital and green skills) Project, in which PGEU is a partner. The BeWell project aims to form an alliance, to build a movement of all healthcare stakeholders supporting and committed to the development, implementation, and upscaling of the strategy on upskilling and reskilling of the European health workforce. The ultimate project aim is to develop a green and digital skills strategy for the health ecosystem that can be implemented at a local, regional, national, and ultimately at the European level through the Pact for Skills. By addressing the existing skill mismatches and strengthening these competencies, the project will enable the health workforce to be better prepared to face future challenges and adapt to ever-evolving societal contexts. To do this, the project will build comprehensive curricula and training programmes that will target all professionals of the health workforce, including for health students, and professionals of emerging occupations. The training programmes co-created by universities, VET providers and companies will reach the target populations through initial education and continuing professional development. This Kick-Off meeting was an opportunity to engage with all project partners, sharing knowledge and preparing the next steps of this 4-year project.

September

PGEU President at the 80th FIP Congress in Seville

PGEU’s President Roberto Tobia participated to the 80th Congress of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) that took place in Seville. During the Congress, PGEU’s President met with FIP President Dominique Jordan to discuss about strengthening cooperation between the two organisations and creating synergies to support our respective members and promote the pharmacy profession. The Congress was an opportunity to reflect on how pharmacy practice has changed during COVID-19 and on the new challenges and opportunities pharmacists across the world are facing.

Meeting with ECDC

PGEU met with the European Centre for Disease prevention and control (ECDC) to discuss about antimicrobial resistance and in particular PGEU involvement in the European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD 2022).



GIRP meeting on pharmaceuticals in the environment



PGEU participated to a meeting to discuss pharmaceuticals in the environment organised by the Healthcare distributors association (GIRP). PGEU presented its position on green and sustainable pharmacy and discussed the collaboration between community pharmacists and wholesalers on pharmaceuticals disposal, including the EU Medsdisposal campaign that both organizations are involved in.

European Health Forum Gastein

PGEU attended the European Health Forum Gastein, a yearly conference on the European Health Union. In particular, the sessions covered referred to topics linked with PGEU priorities including digital health, medicines affordability, and the EU pharmaceutical strategy. The theme of this year forum was “a moon shot for a true European Health Union” and it focused on the opportunity to build a European Health Union to better equip Europe to deal with the multiple crises it is facing, including pandemic preparedness, health workforce planning and efforts to move global health forward on European political agendas.

October

PGEU strengthens collaboration with EMA on Pharmacovigilance

PGEU formally integrated the European Medicines Agency (EMA) Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) Multistakeholder Working Group on Digital Support Tools for Risk Minimisation Measures (RMM) and their Effectiveness Evaluation. This multistakeholder working group discussed options, opportunities and challenges of digital support tools for RMM and their use for evaluation of RMM effectiveness.

PGEU meets with the European Public Health Alliance

PGEU met with the new Director General of the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), Dr. Milka Sokolović, and the Special Adviser Paul Belcher. We discussed health equity and healthcare delivery and committed to a strengthen collaboration among the two organization on shared priorities such as access to medicines and antimicrobial resistance.



PGEU meets the European Medicines Agency Executive Director

PGEU met with Emer Cooke, the Executive Director of the European Medicines Agency, together with the Heads of Regulatory Science and Innovation, Public and Stakeholders Engagement Department, and Supply and Availability of Medicines and Devices. PGEU presented its priorities for 2023, highlighting the Revision of the Pharmaceutical Legislation, the European Health Data Space, Pharmacy Services, and the collaboration with EMA, amongst others. EMA and PGEU discussed the monitoring of medicine shortages, and the Electronic Product Information leaflet (ePIL).



30th Anniversary of the Slovene Chamber of pharmacists

PGEU President and PGEU Secretary General participated to a conference organised by the Slovene Chamber of pharmacists on the occasion of the organization of its 30th anniversary. The President of the Slovenia Republic participated to the celebration and stressed the vital role of community pharmacists for the national healthcare system. The conference focused on pharmacy services and several PGEU members participated to share national experiences.



November

PGEU presents pharmacy-based vaccination in Expert Conference

PGEU participated to the Czech Presidency of the European Union expert Conference on Vaccination - Building public trust as a pathway to vaccine acceptance. PGEU contributed to the session on the role of primary care in communication, presenting the community pharmacy perspective with regards to vaccination, and showcasing the successful examples of pharmacy-based vaccination in the different countries.



EFPIA Roundtable on the Revision of Pharmaceutical Legislation - ePI

PGEU participated in a Roundtable event organized by EFPIA on the Revision of the Pharmaceutical Legislation “Future-Proofing the EU regulatory system – a regulatory affair”. The meeting main topic was the Electronic Product Information leaflet (ePIL) and included a discussion between the stakeholders on the various opinions regarding the update of the EU regulatory framework. Stakeholders involved in the meeting included representatives from the pharmaceutical industry, representatives from the National Competent Authorities, healthcare professional organisations, patients and consumers representatives, and trade associations.

December

EMA Big Data Stakeholder Forum 2022

PGEU participated in the European Medicines Agency Big Data Stakeholder Forum 2022 organized by the European medicines regulatory network. The meeting aimed at informing stakeholders on the delivery of data activities of the Network Strategy 2025, promote stakeholder engagement and collaboration and address the European Health Data Space proposal through a medicines’ regulatory lens. On the latter topic, PGEU Secretary General contributed to the session on data governance in the European Union. During her intervention, the Secretary General presented the opportunities and challenges for community pharmacists in relation to European Health Data Space Regulation.



EPHA 2022 Universal Access and Affordable Medicines Forum

PGEU attended the EPHA 2022 Universal Access and Affordable Medicines Forum. This is a yearly event organised by the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) to foster a meaningful and inclusive dialogue on access to medicines and pharmaceutical policies in Brussels and beyond. This edition – the first one after the pandemic – followed a period of increased political attention for access to medicines, which has brought high expectations but limited results in terms of equitable access to affordable medicines at global, EU and national levels. The conference focused on topics such as the EU Joint Procurement, cross-border healthcare, access and affordability of medicines, transparency of R&D costs, and antimicrobials.

European Health Forum Gastein

PGEU attended the European Health Summit. The European Health Summit is an annual event aimed at bringing together different stakeholders, policymakers, and academia to debate the key healthcare issues in Europe. The event included panels linked to dossiers PGEU is active on, such as the European Health Data Space, how to improve the antibiotic pipeline or the delivery of improved healthcare services.





PGEU Medicine Shortages Survey 2022

The results indicate that the situation in 2022 has generally worsened and that all countries and all classes of medicines continue to be affected. Medicine shortages have a negative impact on patients' health, and they also constitute a burden for the daily work of pharmacists.



Position Paper on the revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation

European community pharmacists welcome a revision of the EU general pharmaceutical legislation as a tool to help ensuring Europe's supply of safe and affordable medicines to meet patients' needs and to support the financial sustainability and the resilience of health systems.



Position Paper on Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA)

PGEU acknowledges that lessons learnt through COVID-19 pandemic shall be included in permanent decision-making streams to diligently act against future health emergencies. In that regard, both the HERA Proposal and the proposal for a Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health, have a clear goal: learning from the past to shape the future and ensure a timely and efficient supply of critical countermeasures.



Position Paper on Demographic Change and Territorial Cohesion in Europe

Ageing and longevity will inevitably lead to a structural increase in the overall demand for healthcare and long-term care. This is expected to add further pressure on already overburdened European public health systems, faced with increasing challenges in the midst of the unprecedented crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Position Paper on the European Health Data Space

PGEU welcomes the proposal for a European Health Data Space and supports the general objective of the EHDS of facilitating the access of health data across the Union for primary and secondary uses, whilst ensuring citizens have control over their own health data.

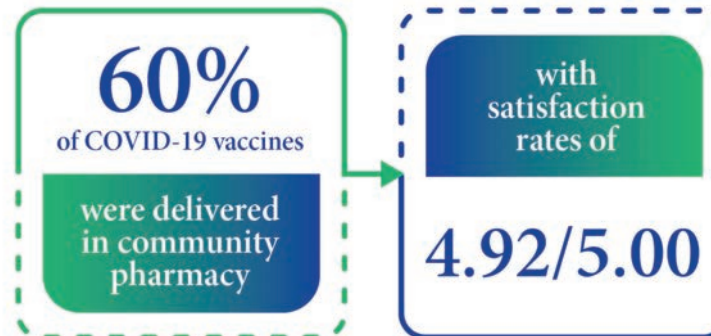


Pharmacists contribution to vaccination at European Level

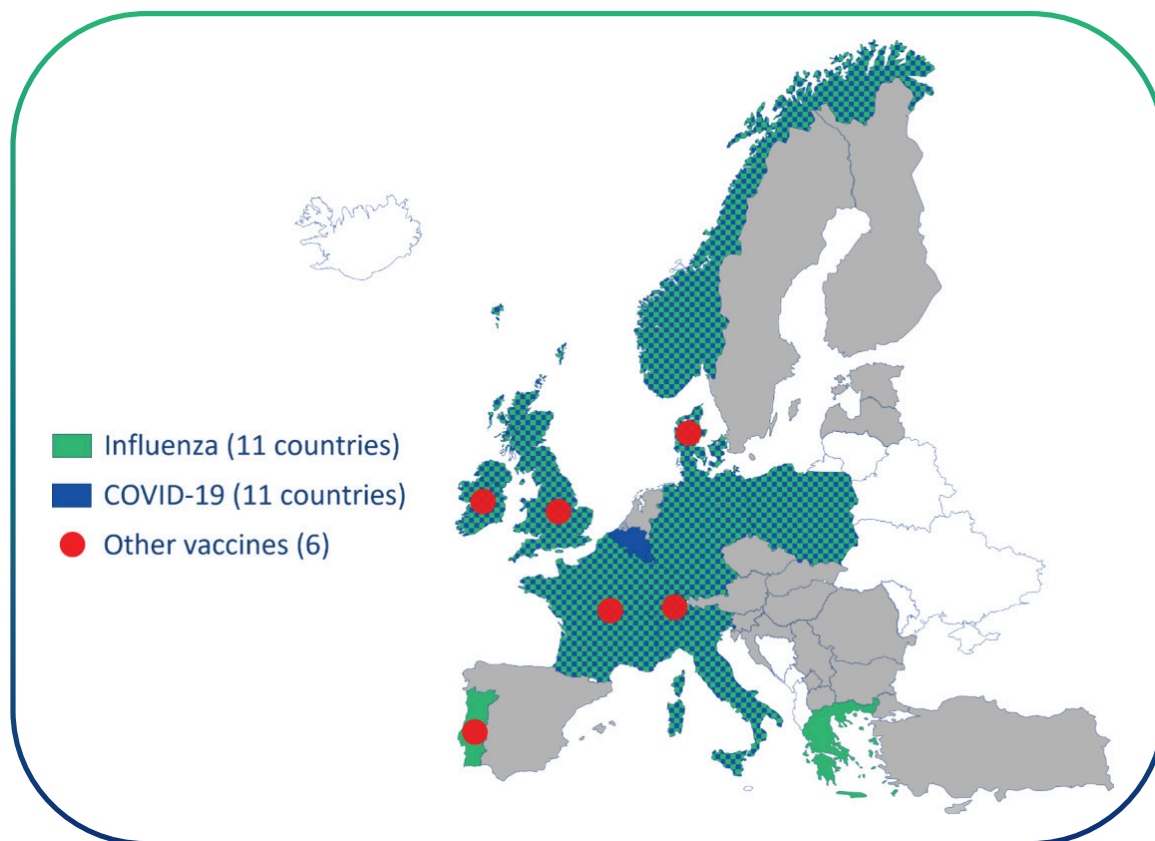
The year 2022 showed a significant progress in increasing vaccination services in community pharmacies throughout Europe. New countries changed their legislation, standards were developed, and pharmacy-based vaccination services were implemented.

Currently, in 13 European countries citizens can be vaccinated in community pharmacies against several diseases, namely seasonal influenza, COVID-19, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), Pneumococcal, Herpes zoster (shingles), Cholera, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis, Meningococcal, Tick-borne Encephalitis, Japanese-Encephalitis, Typhoid Fever and Hepatitis A, Rabies, Human rotavirus, Varicella, and other travel vaccination.

COVID-19 vaccination in community pharmacy was the latest example of how much this service is valued by citizens in Europe.



According to a study carried out in France, 60% of COVID-19 vaccines were delivered in community pharmacy, with satisfaction rates of 4.92/5.00.



The spread network of community pharmacies in the European territory, the highly skilled workforce and the convenience of extended opening hours, make these healthcare structures as key essential to deliver vaccination services, bringing benefits to patients. Mirroring conditions of vaccination in community pharmacies than the ones in other primary cares structure have been shown to increase vaccination coverage.

Furthermore, countries that had introduced pharmacy-based vaccination were able to increase vaccination rates, especially in a time where vaccine-preventable diseases are rising in Europe.

Community pharmacists are trusted healthcare professionals who are often the first point of contact between citizens and the healthcare system, thus supporting communities in increasing vaccine confidence, fighting misinformation and debunking myths around vaccines.



In 13 European countries citizens can be vaccinated against:

seasonal influenza
 COVID-19,
 Hepatitis A,
 Hepatitis B,
 Human Papillomavirus (HPV),
 Pneumococcal,
 Herpes zoster (shingles),
 Cholera,
 Diphtheria,
 Tetanus and Pertussis,
 Meningococcal,
 Tick-borne Encephalitis,
 Japanese-Encephalitis,
 Typhoid Fever and Hepatitis A,
 Rabies,
 Human rotavirus,
 Varicella,
 and other travel vaccination



Coalition for Vaccination

The Coalition for Vaccination brings together European associations of healthcare professionals and relevant student associations in the field. It was convened by the European Commission in 2019 based on the 2018 Council recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases.



The Coalition aims to support delivering accurate information to the public, combating myths around vaccines and vaccination, and exchanging best practices on vaccination. Healthcare professionals' role is to reassure people that vaccines are safe and effective.

PGEU co-chairs the Coalition for Vaccination together with the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) and the European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN).



The Coalition organises public campaigns with communication materials to raise awareness, fight misinformation, and contribute to increasing vaccine uptake. During 2022, the Coalition for Vaccination issued two statements: one related with childhood vaccination (European healthcare professionals underline the importance of routine vaccination), and one on the occasion of the European Immunization Week (European healthcare professionals call for easy vaccine access for refugees).



The Coalition for Vaccination issued two statements:

one related with childhood vaccination

European healthcare professionals underline the importance of routine vaccination

one on the occasion of the European Immunization Week

European healthcare professionals call for easy vaccine access for refugees

The Coalition for Vaccination also organised an annual meeting with key policy makers and stakeholders and developed and disseminated [a promotional video on the role of healthcare professionals on vaccination](#).





IMMUNION Project

IMMUNION

IMMUNION stands for “Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION”

IMMUNION stands for “Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION”, and is a 2-year project (2021-2023) co-funded by the European Union Health Programme. Its ultimate goal is to increase vaccine confidence and uptake. IMMUNION’s mission is to strengthen collaboration between healthcare professionals and other stakeholders, addressing issues of access to accurate, evidence-based information about vaccination. This mission is achieved through strategies focused on communication and training, developing tools and resources to increase vaccine coverage, in particular amongst underserved populations.

Led by EuroHealthNet, the project brings together members of the Coalition for Vaccination, in which PGEU co-chairs together with CPME and EFN, as well as partners across the EU – building on learnings from and add value to vaccination efforts at national, regional and global level.

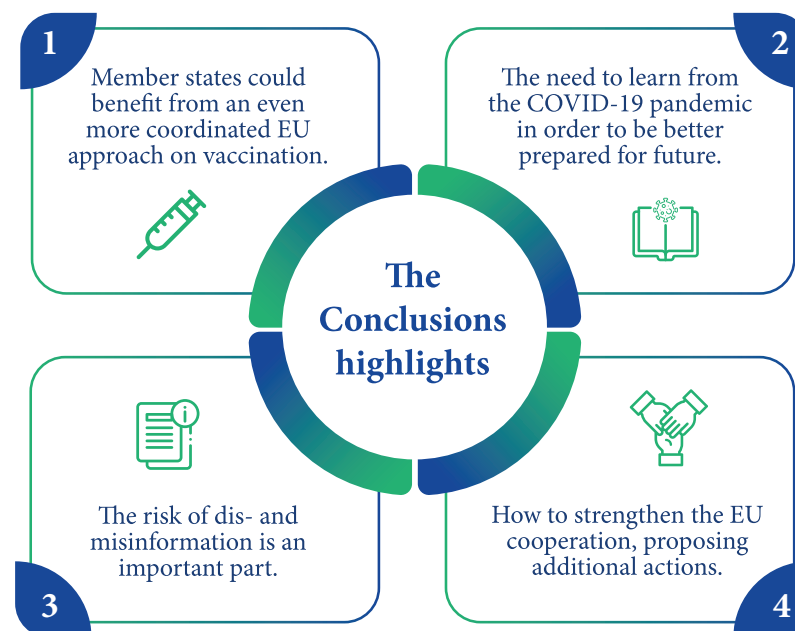


During 2022, IMMUNION organised a set of activities, aiming at fostering the knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals on vaccination, boosting confidence on how to communicate about vaccines and to deal with questions about vaccination. One of the main activities was the development of a tailored training for trainers of (future) healthcare professionals to improve vaccine confidence and communication about vaccines. This training aimed at supporting and enforcing trainers of healthcare providers and health students by offering training on vaccine confidence and communication. The training was well received, and provided knowledge and tools to trainers, who will now carry this content forward.



Council Conclusions on vaccination as one of the most effective tools for preventing disease and improving public health

During the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union, that ran on the 2nd semester of 2022, great focus was put on vaccination. A high-level conference on vaccination was organised, in which PGEU presented the benefits and good practices of pharmacy-based vaccination. By the end of the Presidency, the EU ministers of health approved the [Council conclusions on vaccination as one of the most effective tools for preventing disease and improving public health](#), put forward by the Czech Presidency.





The Conclusions highlight that member states could benefit from an even more coordinated EU approach on vaccination to prevent and limit the spread of epidemics and vaccine-preventable diseases. This high-level document focus on two areas of action: combatting vaccine hesitancy and preparing for upcoming challenges through EU cooperation.

The conclusions also highlight the need to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic in order to be better prepared for future public health crises. During the pandemic the EU has seen the development of a number of solutions and tools which can be beneficial to fight vaccination-preventable diseases. Digitalisation, with the collection and exchange of data at EU level as well as the establishment of the EU digital COVID certificate, and cooperation in procurement, purchase and distribution of vaccines at EU level have been

important public health milestones.



The risk of dis- and misinformation is an important part of this strategic document, showcasing that the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the threats and challenges of mis- and disinformation for society. To counter the ensuing risks to human health, health systems and effective crisis management, the conclusions invite the Commission to establish an expert forum on vaccine hesitancy and to strengthen the coordination between EU policies on vaccination and on fighting disinformation. They also encourage member states and the Commission to develop training opportunities for health professionals to become more versed in techniques and tools for countering vaccine mis- and disinformation, involving the Coalition for Vaccination and health professionals' and students' associations at national level.

Finally, the Conclusion address on how to strengthen the EU cooperation, proposing additional actions such as exploring the added value and possibilities of overcoming the legal and technical barriers to the interoperability of (sub-)national immunisation information systems, developing exchange of information on possible surpluses and shortages of essential vaccines. This would enable a possible resell or donation among member states, and making use of the possibility for the joint procurement of vaccines.



A look forward

Permacrisis has been the word of 2022 and 2023 set off to be another year of insecurity but we are confident that the sense of common identity and togetherness that has given us energy so far will continue to inspire our work and to advance the pharmacy profession across Europe to provide better health to patients.

Crisis also means “decision” and this year EU policy makers will be asked to take many vital decisions for the future of European healthcare systems starting with the finalisation of the European Health Data Space. PGEU will work to ensure that the new Regulation strikes a good balance between facilitating the access of health data for research and respecting data protection and healthcare professionals’ ethical duties. We believe that the EHDS will also promote increased collaboration between healthcare professionals providing care to the same patient and strengthen health systems by embracing the digital transformation, increasing integrated and coordinated work among the Member States, and allowing sustained implementation of best practices and data sharing, while taking the necessary measures to avoid any misuse.

In 2023 the European Commission will also unveil its proposal to overhaul the EU pharmaceutical legislation. From the pharmacists’ perspective, we hope that the new law will include concrete measures to reduce medicine shortages, including improving reporting, monitoring, and communication of medicine shortages while providing more resources to the European Medicines Agency to develop activities on the prevention and management of shortages in coordination with Member States. We also hope that the revision will lead to fairer 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 and to a better enforcement of the so-called “public service obligations” of supply chain actors.

Not only there are shortages of medicines but there are also serious shortage of doctors and nurses which negatively impact the quality of care in most Member States. COVID-19 has exacerbated the problem with many healthcare workers leaving the profession and hospitals continue to be overwhelmed. As qualified healthcare professionals, community pharmacists stand ready to take up new tasks and to relieve pressure on the rest of the healthcare system, providing services like vaccination which have proven to be very effective in those countries which have implemented them. With regard to vaccination, PGEU will continue working closely with the European association of doctors (CPME) and with European Nurses as co-chair of the [EU coalition for vaccination](#) and disseminate the valuable educational material we developed together with our partners in the IMMUNION project. In 2023 we will also contribute to the EU funded BEWELL project to promote green and digital skills for a better health workforce and for more resilient healthcare systems. In this framework we are also committed to reinforce the long-standing relationship with the European Pharmacy Students Association (EPSA) and to support the future generation of pharmacists.

Under the Swedish Presidency the Council of the EU is expected to adopt Conclusions on antimicrobial resistance and we hope they will include recommendations to the Member States to implement testing in community pharmacists building on the successful experiences of France and Sweden where pharmacists can perform strep throat tests to verify whether the illness is viral or bacterial, in an effort to avoid the over-prescription of antibiotics.

PGEU is committed to keep on advancing the pharmacy practice and the pharmaceutical profession in Europe, contributing to the resilience of the healthcare system, focusing on better patient outcomes and better results in health.



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PGEU Executive Committee 2022



Austria

Österreichischer Apothekerverband
(Austrian Pharmacy Owners Association)



Österreichischer Apothekerverband
(Austrian Pharmacy Owners Association)



Belgium

A.P.B - Association Pharmaceutique
Belge/Algemene Pharmaceutische Bond
(Belgian Pharmaceutical Association)



Orde der Apothekers – Ordre des Pharmaciens
(Belgian Order of Pharmacists)



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)



Italy

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



Federfarma
(Italian Pharmacy Owners Federation)



Hungary

Magyar Gyógyszerész Kamara
(Hungarian Chamber of Pharmacists)



Latvia

Latvijas farmaceutiskās aprūpes asociācija
(Pharmaceutical Care Association of Latvia)



Netherlands

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



Slovak Republic

Slovenská Lekárnická Komora
(Slovak Chamber of Pharmacists)

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

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- 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

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- Irish Pharmacy Union

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

Latvia

- Latvijas farmaceitiskās 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 2022



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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