

# Community pharmacists' recommendations on medicines shortages

Over the years we saw the **number of shortages growing progressively worse in all European countries**. Despite continued pharmacists' efforts to find solutions, we witness a **significant negative impact on patients' health** and a concerning erosion of patients' trust in the healthcare system. This situation generates **frustration and stress for pharmacists** and **imposes an additional administrative burden** on pharmacies' daily work. In 2023 we estimated that every pharmacy across the EU spent on average close to **10 hours per week dealing with medicine shortages**.

To tackle this crucial challenge, PGEU calls for **effective policy measures to strengthen supply resilience and allow for shortages mitigation**, including:

The implementation of a **common definition of medicine shortages across the EU** and across the full supply chain to better identify and evaluate medicine shortages and to accelerate a coordinated response.

**Timely reporting by marketing authorization holders** to allow community pharmacists to be informed about future and ongoing shortages and their expected duration and find solutions.

**Allowing community pharmacists to make full use of their skills, knowledge and experience to find alternative treatments for their patients**, being it by dispensing the same medicine in a different formulation or pack size, performing generic substitution or therapeutic substitution, through an adequate shared decision-making process or compounding.

**Enhancing transparency and authorities' oversight of the upstream supply chain** and ensures that manufacturers have robust shortages prevention and mitigation plans in place.

**Fostering EU solidarity and coordination among Member States** to facilitate the redistribution of medicines to those in need.

**Optimizing European and national stockpile management by progressively building buffer stocks** without generating unnecessary waste.

**Better using procurement to secure long-term availability**, encouraging the use of MEAT criteria and splitting tender awards in procurement processes to achieve **supply chain diversity** and **reduce downward price pressure** while **improving demand forecasting** from public sources and buyers.

**Clarifying and better enforcing manufacturers' and wholesale distributors' supply obligations**.

**Evaluating and addressing the impact of parallel trade and manufacturer-initiated supply quotas and allocations**.