

# Hospital pharmacists raise concerns about free movement and availability of medicines after Brexit

1 March 2019

- EAHP's members warn about an increase of medicines shortages post-Brexit, especially in a no-deal situation.
- EAHP calls on the European Union to minimise negative implications on the cross-border mobility of hospital pharmacists.

Members of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP) have raised increasing concerns about the availability of medicines post-Brexit in European Union (EU) countries and the United Kingdom (UK), in particular in a no-deal situation. These concerns are linked to a recent publication of the Association which underlined that medicines shortages are currently a common problem in over 90% of hospitals all across Europe. Even though EAHP's 2018 Medicines Shortages Survey did not directly touch on the subject of Brexit a number of participants, especially those working in Ireland and the UK, highlighted that Brexit will worsen the situation. In addition to the increase in medicines shortages, EAHP fears that the robustness of the EU-wide capacity to manage the shortages problem will be significantly affected due to the fact that difficulties could arise when trying to access packs from the UK market.

Free movement of hospital pharmacists is another concern of EAHP. Efforts by the European Commission to remove mobility barriers were intensified since the financial and economic crisis, with a leading action being the revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive. However, hospital pharmacists are still not benefitting from the rules and measures adopted by the EU to foster labour mobility. Labour mobility for the hospital pharmacy profession largely depends on the flexibility of national authorities. Ireland and the UK have a high rate of inter country registrations of pharmacists due to the similarities of educational systems and language. Brexit poses a threat to this practice and could in the case of the UK and Ireland lead to a significant limitation of cross-border cooperation between these countries.

The annual congress of the EAHP, taking place in Barcelona from 27th to 29th March 2019 will address many of these issues. On 28th March – a day prior to the UK's exit from the EU –

hospital pharmacists will have the opportunity to attend the Synergy Satellite event “Facing Brexit and FMD - Is Europe ready for the double “storm”?”. This session will describe and discuss how Brexit and medicines shortages can affect accessibility and availability of drugs in Europe and provide information on procedures to prevent the possible negative effects of access to medicines.

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