

GIRP PRESS RELEASE

GIRP calls on the European Council to ensure continuous medicines availability through pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers

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GIRP, the European Healthcare Distribution Association, calls for the revision of the EU General Pharmaceutical Legislation (EU GPL) to ensure continuous medicines availability through a right-to-be-supplied to pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers.

GIRP calls for an amendment to article 56.3 to strengthen the Marketing Authorisation Holders' (MAHs) supply obligation to wholesale distributors, pharmacies **and** persons authorised to supply medicinal products so that the needs of patients in the Member State in question are covered. Article 56.3 in its current format explicitly allows for the bypassing of pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers. A right-to-be-supplied would allow for the various distribution channels to co-exist while ensuring fair market access and competition. It would also support the diversification of distribution actors.

Considering that in article 166 of the draft directive, pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers are required to continuously guarantee the appropriate and continued supply of medicines, GIRP reinforces our call to guarantee at European level the right to be supplied by MAHs so full-line wholesalers can effectively comply with the requirements foreseen in the proposed directive, notably in articles 166.1(l) and article 167. It should be noted that not all wholesale distributors are in a position to comply with the requirements outlined in 166.1(l) and thus only pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers should be granted the right-to-be-supplied.

Without such a measure, pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers are categorically unable to continuously guarantee the appropriate and continued supply of medicines.

At a time when European patients are suffering from disruption in their treatments, and as the European Council is considering the best response through the EU GPL, it is crucial that pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers be granted continuous access to medicines supply to ensure the appropriate and continued availability of medicines to patients. Through their experience and extensive network of distribution centres, full-line wholesalers cover the needs of all patients through rationalising distribution and allocating the products equitably across a territory.

Pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers ought to have access to a continuous supply to fulfil their mission as Public Service operators. GIRP president, Mr Bernd Grabner says: 'The revision of the EU General Pharmaceutical Legislation offers a unique opportunity for the European Union to implement the structural measures needed to respond to the issue of medicines shortages. A right-to-be supplied from MAHs would ensure that pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers are able to fulfil their public service obligation as foreseen in the current and new legislation. Yet, on a daily basis, distributors operations are disrupted by lack of access to medicinal products, leaving healthcare professional having to 'shop around' for products instead of spending time with their patients.'

Mr Grabner continues: "Wholesale distributors invest heavily in time and resources to ensure they meet the supply and demand of patients and pharmacies as well as other healthcare professionals. Particularly, in the current climate of shortages of critical medicinal products, the fair and equal distribution of the available products can only be secured by full-line wholesalers across the Union."

GIRP therefore urges European Council representatives to make a clear commitment to the resilience of supply chains and to their patients through granting full-line wholesalers a right-to-be-supplied.

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About GIRP

GIRP, the European Healthcare Distribution Association, is the umbrella organisation of full-service healthcare distributors in Europe. GIRP represents the national associations of over 500 pharmaceutical wholesalers serving 33 European countries, as well as major international and pan-European healthcare distribution companies. GIRP members employ over 140,000 people and distribute around 15 billion packs of medicines as well as a wide range of healthcare products per year.