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European doctors call on EU to take urgent action to tackle medicine shortages

European Doctors are deeply concerned about the rise of short- and long-term medicine shortages. We call on the European Union to take urgent action.

Almost all EU countries are reporting shortages of commonly used medicines, such as paracetamol and the antibiotic amoxicillin. CPME calls for the full potential of the regulation for the European Medicine Agency's role in crisis preparedness and management for medicinal products to be promptly explored, together with Member States, European Commission and industry.

Resilient supply chains of medicines are essential. They must be accompanied by appropriate notification systems, as well as communication and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders.

"The unavailability of medicines can significantly limit doctors' ability to provide appropriate treatment to patients. A doctor's decision of which treatment to prescribe should be based solely on each individual patient's situation, and not on the availability of medicine or alternatives" said Dr Christiaan Keijzer, CPME President.

"Doctors must be proactively notified of potential shortages and have access to up-to-date information to be able to respond. Medicine shortages result in additional workload for doctors as they must spend time away from patient care to manage the unavailability" said Dr Jacqueline Rossant-Lumbroso, CPME Vice-President.

Looking ahead, we call for the European Commission to include measures to prevent and manage medicine shortages in the upcoming revision of the EU's general pharmaceutical legislation.

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession's point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.