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# WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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# EU COMMISSION PRESENTED FIRST COUNTRY CANCER PROFILES UNDER THE EUROPEAN CANCER INEQUALITIES REGISTRY

**On Wednesday, ahead of World Cancer Day on 4 February, the European Commission, along with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), presented the first Country Cancer Profiles under the European Cancer Inequalities Registry for all the EU Member States, as well as Norway and Iceland.**

The Profiles show that EU countries spent a substantial amount, nearly €170 billion, on cancer care (in 2018). Another important finding is that lung cancer remains, by far, the most common cause of death from cancer. There are also significant inequalities in cancer mortality rates between and within EU countries. This phenomenon can be partly explained by varying exposure to risk factors for cancer, but also by the different capacities of health systems to provide timely and free access to early diagnosis, and high-quality cancer care and treatment. The Profiles show that identifying challenges and sharing best practices between Member States can help countries address cancer inequalities.

For the first release, in total, 29 Cancer country profiles (EU27, Iceland, and Norway) have been produced with the help of the OECD. They serve as a tool to identify inequalities in cancer prevention and care. At the same time, the profiles shed light on key achievements, challenges, and disparities within each country and compare the findings for individual countries to the situation in the EU as a whole. This can support decision-makers and help guide investment and interventions at the regional, national, and EU levels under Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

Source: <https://www.oecd.org/health/eu-cancer-profiles.htm>

# PGEU SURVEY: EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FACE CONTINUED MEDICINE SHORTAGES

European countries are still experiencing a high incidence of medicine shortages, with a deteriorating burdensome impact on patients, according to a recent survey conducted by the Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU). The survey covered 29 countries, including EU members, Turkey, Norway, and North Macedonia.

The results showed that the medicine shortages in most European countries worsened significantly compared to last year. More than 600 drugs are scarce in a quarter of these countries, while 20% reported 200-300 drug shortages, it noted. About 75% of the countries reported that shortages were worse this winter than a year ago. Moreover, the survey also showed that the most difficult drugs to be obtained in pharmacies across Europe are especially amoxicillin group antibiotics used in the treatment of respiratory tract infections, cough syrups used for pediatric diseases, paracetamol in syrup form, and some blood pressure pharmaceuticals.

The reason of the problem is a decline in supply despite a surging demand. Seasonal infections, especially influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), started early and progressed stronger than average in European countries this year. Experts say weaker immune systems are related to COVID-19 lockdowns as people were not exposed to some viruses during this period. Pharmaceutical manufacturers are also unprepared for the high demand in the face of increasing infections, with the energy crisis in Europe and the rising raw material prices affecting production.

Source: <https://www.pgeu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Medicine-Shortages-PGEU-Survey-2022-Results-1.pdf>

# DRAFT PANDEMIC TREATY IS OUT. IT STIPULATES THAT WHO GETS 20% OF ALL PANDEMIC PRODUCTS TO SECURE EQUITY

**The World Health Organization's "zero-draft" of a pandemic treaty stipulates that as much as 20% of pandemic-related products – vaccines, diagnostics, personal protective equipment, and therapeutics – should be allocated to the global body, which will then ensure their equitable distribution.**

The draft, reviewed by Reuters, was sent to the 194 member states of WHO and the NGOs on Wednesday (February 1), officially opening the door for negotiations on how the world should behave in future pandemics. Among other things, the document seems to deepen a long-running argument by calling for intellectual property rights to be waived during future pandemics, which advocates say would allow for broader access to life-saving drugs and vaccines more quickly.

The draft begins by saying it is being drawn up "in recognition of the catastrophic failure of the international community in showing solidarity and equity in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic". Furthermore, it states it has been developed "without prejudice to the position of any delegation and following the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed." Subsequently, the negotiations on the draft treaty will begin on February 27 and are set to continue until 2024. WHO member states have already agreed that the treaty will be legally binding for those who sign up, but no one knows for sure, how that will be enforced.

Source: <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/pandemic-treaty-zero-draft-proposes-who-gets-20-of-products/>

# Thank you for your attention!

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