

## THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF PHARMACY CHAINS GROWS AFTER THE SERBIAN PHARMACY ASSOCIATION JOINS THE RANKS OF ITS MEMBERS

**Serbia's Association of Private Pharmacy Chains Belgrade became the sixth member country of the European Federation of Pharmacy Chains (EFPC) in June 2021. Serbia has joined the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Poland, which became a regular member last year. The EFPC now represents more than 6,196 pharmacies and 34,500 pharmacy specialists in Central and Eastern Europe.**

**Prague, 23 June 2021** – Serbia's Association of Private Pharmacy Chains Belgrade represents over 2,800 professional pharmacists and 646 pharmacies. That accounts for 20% of the entire Serbian pharmaceutical market. Even though Serbia's adhesion to the EFPC has for a long time been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that Serbian government offices were functioning on a limited basis, the registration process and grant of membership was in the end successfully completed. *"The Serbian association held an observer status in the EFPC for quite some time. Thanks to that, its delegates are very well familiar with our activities and visions. In fact, they have taken part in formulating many of them together with regular members. An example is the ApaVision project carried out in 2020, where the Serbian association was represented by Maria Marković Golubović in a debate about the European pharmacy sector,"* commented EFPC's Executive Director Zdeněk Blahuta.

For Serbia's Association of Private Pharmacy Chains Belgrade, the greatest benefit of its EFPC membership is being able to share experience from the pharmacy sector with other national associations. The main topic contributed by the Serbian association to the EFPC is defining the need for new services in Serbian pharmacies based on patient demand.

*„Because the legislative definition of pharmacy services in Serbia covers only some of the basic services and the dispensation of pharmaceuticals it is essentially the only important service recognized under the law, we want to use our membership in the EFPC as a springboard for a discussion about other and additional pharmacy services and their reimbursement. Together with the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Pharmacists, we have been trying to change the situation for a long time, and the EFPC's support and the experience of our colleagues from other member countries will be very valuable for us,"* explained Marija Marković Golubović, Director of Serbia's Association of Private Pharmacy Chains Belgrade. *"We are currently trying to get an approval for a pilot project of flu vaccination in pharmacies. We have the support of various organizations, including universities, and we're now only waiting for a response from the authorities,"* added Marković Golubović.

Serbia's admission to the EFPC is welcomed by all EFPC's members, as the country's membership application received widespread support. *"We are happy to be able to help our Serbian colleagues in their efforts to have new reimbursed services introduced in pharmacies and to share with them our experience with their delivery. At the same time, if our Serbian counterparts succeed in pushing through the new pharmacy services, they can serve as a model*

*for other countries, where supplementary services are presently not provided, even though doing so has the potential to lessen the burden placed on the public healthcare sector. An example of that is Poland, where there is a lasting shortage of general practitioners, especially in rural areas, and where allowing pharmacies to deliver certain services would be a logical step,”* explained Chairman of the EFPC Executive Committee Daniel Horák.

If Serbia succeeds in carrying out the in-pharmacy vaccination pilot project, it will be the second EFPC member country where the law permits providing this service in pharmacies.

Zdeněk Blahuta  
Executive Director

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***The European Federation of Pharmacy Chains (EFPC)** is the only organization representing pharmacy chains in Europe. The EFPC is an independent, voluntary, and non-governmental organization that cooperates with and promotes partnerships among national European associations in dealing with key issues relating to the pharmacy sector.*