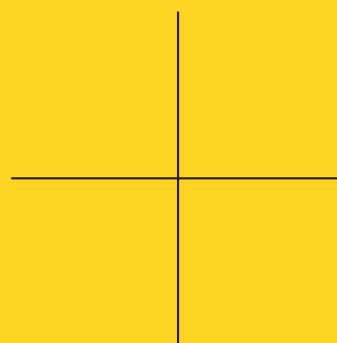


# European Federation of Pharmacy Chains



Annual report 2022



EUROPEAN  
FEDERATION  
OF PHARMACY  
CHAINS

# Annual report 2022

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# Foreword

## Letter from the EFPC Head of Executive Board

My esteemed colleagues,

You hold in your hands what is already the fourth annual report of the European Federation of Pharmacy Chains (EFPC), mapping the activities of the federation during 2022. That there is now a fourth annual report must also mean that the EFPC is already going into its fifth year; I believe this fact is by itself strong testimony of the federation's ability to justify its existence.

The time which has passed since the establishment of the EFPC has had an extremely positive influence on the atmosphere which permeates our encounters whenever representatives of our members meet. The collaborative spirit of good professional fellowship and personal friendship has left its mark in everything the federation does. Sadly, the passage of time always also inevitably means that there will be personnel changes. One of the co-founders of the EFPC and a member of its board, Sebastian Ring, has stepped down from his active role in the federation. If anyone deserves kudos for advancing the EFPC to a point where it may look back on its history so far with a sense of accomplishment, it's him, and I would like to say a big thank you to Sebastian!

The EFPC has already established a name for itself as an entity which fosters healthy debate on industry issues on the international stage – a debate in which it is clearly and unambiguously taking sides with the patients. Most recently, it proved its mettle in the role of the host of our October 2022 conference in Warsaw, where we pointed to the barriers on the road to further development and growth of the pharmacy sector, and thus of the healthcare sector at large. The importance of the EFPC's role was brought home by the Czech deputy minister of health, who participated himself at the conference and appeared as a presenter, when he pointed out that this conference was in fact the only event of its kind organized by pharmacy representatives at the time, i.e., during the Czech EU presidency.



Daniel Horák, Head of Executive Board, EFPC

However, the scope of the EFPC's work also comprises other activities, such as the organization of exchange workshops for individual pharmacists. The first of these workshops took place in 2022 in Prague; in the year after that, Bucharest will pick up the baton. We take pride in the fact that we have in this manner been able to create a platform where those on whose work we build may share their views and experiences. Not only does the engagement of the EFPC thus attain an additional dimension which is of extreme relevance for the day-to-day practice of pharmacists, but the organization also returns to its roots.

Of course, as we've entered 2023, our gaze is directed toward the future. Going forward, we want to continue to highlight pressing issues related to public pharmacy services and play our part to strengthen their role as a respected part of the healthcare system across EFPC member states. The most prominent opportunity for doing so will be the next international conference, which this time will be hosted by Budapest.

Having said all that, the primary purpose of this annual report is to take stock of the year 2022. I would like to take the opportunity and thank all our members for their efforts, which have helped put us in a place from where we may look back on the past year and say: it has been a successful year.

Daniel Horák

Head of the Executive Board, EFPC

# Membership

## EFPC Members and Observers in 2022

In 2022, the situation regarding the COVID-19 infection was stabilized and all projects and plans began to slowly be implemented.

We arranged several meetings with potential partners who were interested in EFPC before the COVID-19 pandemic. Contact links that were interrupted due to changes in the management of pharmaceutical chains were also restored.

In 2022, our main focus was on Croatian pharmacy chains that the discussion was interrupted at the end of the previous year. But due to the complexity of the ownership system in Croatia, we are going to continue discussions about Croatian membership in forthcoming years.

Our goal for 2023 is to also focus on the Balkan states, Italia and Bulgaria, which has expressed interest in cooperating with EFPC on some specific projects.

### Federation members

Membership within the EFPC is open to countries in Europe



- 6 500 pharmacies
- 35 700 pharmacy experts
- 6 members

**Czech Republic:**

- Number of public pharmacies: 2 450 (+250 pharmacy outlets)
- APLS: 650 pharmacies (approx. 26 % market share)
- Pharmacy professionals: 4 000

**Slovakia:**

- Number of public pharmacies: approx. 2 150
- APSL: 418 pharmacies (approx. 20 % market share)
- Pharmacy professionals: 2 200

**Hungary:**

- Number of public pharmacies: approx. 2 400
- HGYSZ: 248 pharmacies (approx. 10 % market share)
- Pharmacy professionals: 1 300

**Romania:**

- Number of public pharmacies: approx. 9 360
- ADRFR: 1 251 pharmacies (approx. 13 % market share)
- Pharmacy professionals: 6 204

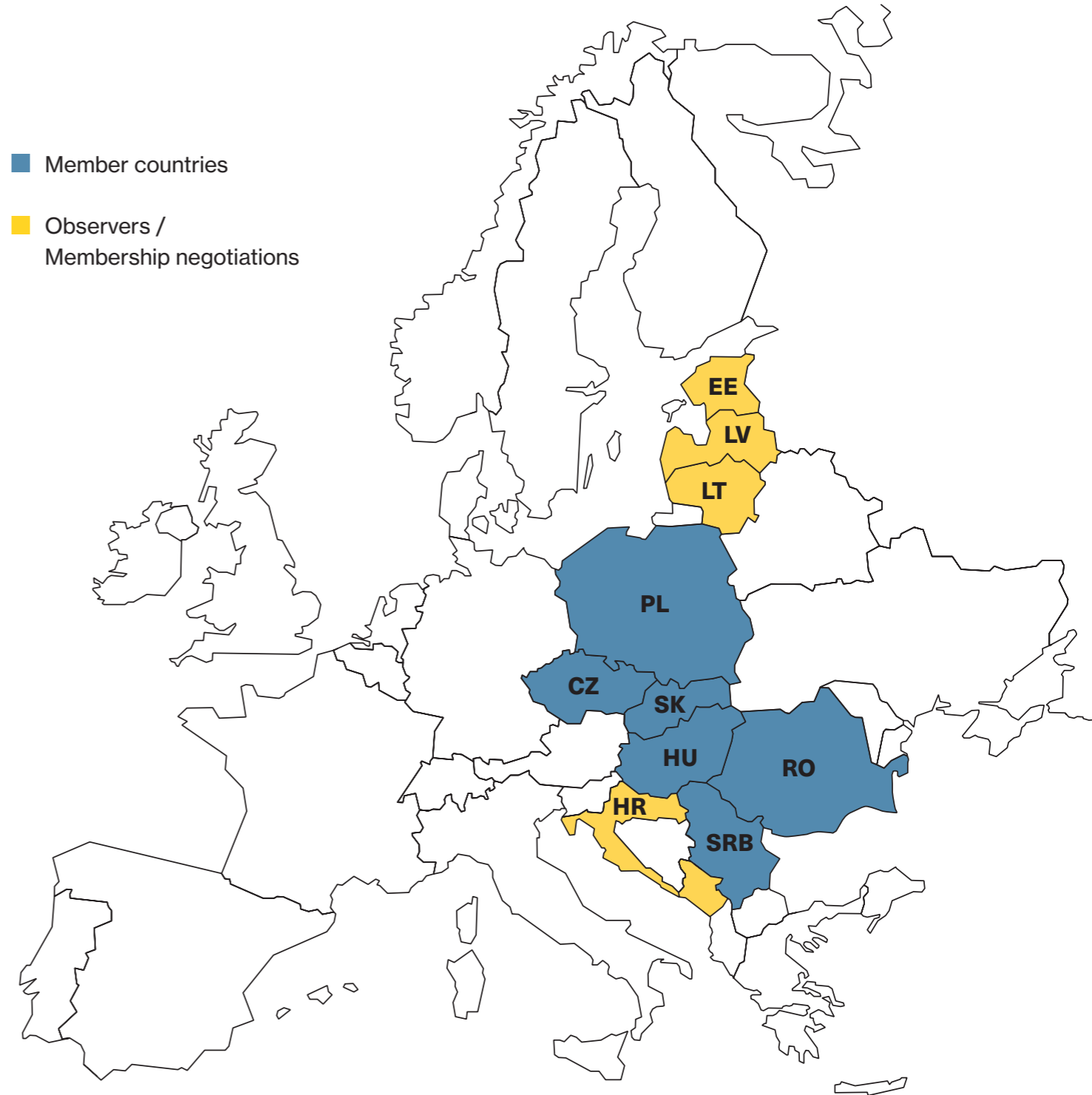
**Poland:**

- Number of public pharmacies: approx. 12 300
- PharmaNET: 3 000 pharmacies (approx. 25 % market share)
- Pharmacy professionals: 18 000

**Serbia: (since July 2021)**

- Number of public pharmacies: approx. 4 000
- APAL: 1 000 pharmacies (approx. 26 % market share)
- Pharmacy professionals: 4 000

- Member countries
- Observers / Membership negotiations



# Highlights of the Year

- 29 March 2022  
The EFPC's request for permission to employ Ukrainian health professionals
- 8 June 2022  
European Academy of Chain Pharmacists
- 15 June 2022  
Bulgaria — statement on restricting vertical integration in the pharmaceutical field
- 19 October 2022  
3rd EFPC Conference “Pharmacy Care — What are the Barriers to Pharmacy Development?”
- 19 October 2022  
Joint statement on the need of inclusion of pharmacy sector into EU4Health Initiative



# The EFPC's request for permission to employ Ukrainian health professionals in adequate professional positions in the fastest possible way


Representatives of the European pharmaceutical chains associated under the EFPC call upon professional organizations and other affiliated institutions in the pharmaceutical sector to mount a more flexible response to the emergency caused by the war in Ukraine.

The enormous influx of refugees generated by the Russian aggression is placing unprecedented demand on the healthcare systems in the destination countries, or will do so in the near future, which mainly concerns the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia. The current circumstances aside, the process for incorporating foreign medical professionals into the healthcare systems of the concerned countries, including healthcare specialists from Ukraine, has remained unchanged. It is as complicated and protracted as in the time of peace. Thus far, there has been no appropriate willingness from any entity to make particular changes despite various declarations to that effect.

Allowing Ukrainian medical professionals to assume, in the fastest possible way, positions for which they hold relevant professional credentials, received in their home country, could not only lessen the burden on the healthcare system in the affected countries, but it would also allow earning appropriate remuneration for Ukrainian people to cover expenses for their families, many of whom have lost everything. Ukrainian healthcare professionals need to work as fast as possible in their field of expertise, not only to allow them to remain in touch with their profession, but also to prevent them from having to rely on the social system or working for wages corresponding to low-skilled work. The system for incorporating Ukrainian professionals into the workforce should be adapted to these factors.

To ensure the maximum effectiveness of the process of incorporating Ukrainian healthcare professionals into the local workforce, EFPC members are ready to adapt and update their training programs to allow for Ukrainian healthcare professionals to participate.

It is general knowledge that the labor markets in the individual countries where EFPC members operate are currently facing a significant shortage of qualified workers. Because the surge in immigration will accelerate this problem, it would be most desirable to turn the situation to the advantage to the maximum extent possible. Extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures. Insisting on standard procedures will not produce the desired result.



**THE EFPC'S REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO EMPLOY UKRAINIAN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN ADEQUATE PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS IN THE FASTEST POSSIBLE WAY**

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Rybná 716/24, 110 00 Prague, Czech Republic  
www.eufpc.eu



## EFPC organized unique gathering of pharmacists from European pharmacy chains in Prague

The beginning of June saw the official kick-off of the latest project by the European Federation of Pharmacy Chains (EFPC) for pharmacists from the various member states and various pharmacy chains, who are organized within their respective national associations. This project, which has been named the "European Academy of Chain Pharmacists", has become a unique platform for meetings among pharmacists who take an interest in topics related to the European market and wish to familiarize themselves with the different conditions under which the pharmacy sector operates in various jurisdictions across Europe. In its first year, the Academy convened in Prague in the Czech Republic; it was attended by 35 pharmacists representing 10 chains and 6 European countries. Barbora Příkladová, a Czech pharmacist, acted as the host of the event.



The European Academy of Chain Pharmacists offered the special opportunity of having an open discussion about the way in which the pharmacy business operates in various European countries – aimed this time not at chain managers but at the pharmacists themselves. They, as representatives of their country, familiarized their foreign counterparts with the legislation and rules affecting pharmacists in their home country, the services they offer and the mechanisms for the dispensation and distribution of pharmaceuticals. In this way, participants of the Academy found out about the inner workings of the pharmacy sector in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Serbia and, of course, the Czech Republic.



The gathering of pharmacists was attended by Daniel Horák, chairman of the EFPC executive committee, who formally opened the Academy, welcomed all pharmacists in attendance, and thanked them for their participation. "It gives me great pleasure that the European Federation of Pharmacy Chains has been able this year to add this project, long in the making, to the portfolio of its activities. It is not too early to say that the Academy has fulfilled its chief purpose – forging a bond among active pharmacists from all countries. The rich discussions of everyone on the various topics are proof that we've sorely lacked this kind of project; we shall carry on and develop it further," said Daniel Horák, presenting the new EFPC project.









The Czech Republic was represented by pharmacists from the Dr. Max and Benu chains who demonstrated the state of play in the Czech pharmacy sector and the way in which it operates. Their summary of the modus operandi of Czech pharmacies, and the wealth of services offered by them, triggered a lively discussion among those present in the auditorium.

"It was a very pleasant surprise for our foreign colleagues to learn about the breadth of services offered at Czech pharmacies; most questions that were asked did in fact concern these services. People were interested in the training received by pharmacists, in the premises on which such services are provided, and in whether there exist any restrictions due to government regulations. The biggest surprise for people was to learn that these services are not covered by insurance (as they would be, if administered by a medical doctor), but that we offer them for free or on a self-payer basis," explains Matěj Nižnik, an Academy participant.

"Through the comparison with other countries, I realized for myself the liberty which we as pharmacists enjoy here, and the variegated character of the services we provide – which is by no means a given fact in other countries in the same way it is here. Personally, I believe that Czech patients could no longer imagine their pharmacy without the current range of services," adds Nižnik, and mentions a number of examples: Rx reservations, the option to operate an online store, and the mail-order distribution of OTC products (which is outlawed in a number of countries).

He said he was impressed in turn by the presentation given by Polish pharmacists, who told the story of how they began to vaccinate clients against Covid-19 during the pandemic at pharmacies, and followed up by administering also flu shots.

"It was my immense pleasure to present to our colleagues the vaccination procedure at Polish pharmacies – since last year, this is a new, and at the same time the only, complementary service which we may offer to patients at pharmacies. I and my colleagues demonstrated the entire process by which we got into vaccinations – from legislative theory to preparation and roll-out. I also gave colleagues a few tips and tricks from my personal perspective, in the event that their national laws principally allow for vaccination by pharmacists," shared her impressions Anita Jeglińska, a Dr. Max pharmacist who became the first-ever pharmacist in Poland to administer a vaccine.

Conversely, the Hungarian colleagues from Benu pharmacies reported how they reel under the ban of online store operations and of commercial activities by pharmacies of any kind. "For many of our colleagues, the Hungarian regulatory framework for pharmacies was a bit of a shock; aside from the demographic and geographic restrictions, they enquired about the regulation of pharmacy ownership, and in particular about the chief pharmacist's 51% ownership quota and veto right. This topic fielded the majority of questions," summarizes András Nagy. "We also presented how the work of pharmacists is being made more complicated by the restrictions on expanding the available range of goods at any given pharmacy, and the ban on loyalty programs, ostensibly designed to ensure that all patients are being served on equal terms," adds Zina Branyiczki, another Hungarian pharmacist.

The work of her Hungarian peers was admired by Zdenka Bobor Bartošová, a pharmacist from Slovakia whose presentation of the Slovak market caught the audience's interest when she described the voluntary membership of Slovak pharmacists in the professional chamber.

"Hungarian pharmacists have earned our unconditional respect for their poise in fighting government regulations and decrees such that they are still able to offer quality care to their patients. I feel similar admiration for our Serbian colleagues, who have been able to keep up functioning pharmacies in spite of extremely low regulated margins on medicinal products."

Low margins were also the topic of the representatives from Romania, who at the same time face the issue of an acute lack of graduates and active pharmacists. "We do have ten pharmaceutical faculties in Romania, but the number of students who graduate from them is smaller from year to year and

interest in the study program is continuously declining. This finds its expression in a shortage of staff in practice, and is leading to a stagnation of the pharmacy market in Romania, preventing us from offering supplementary services at pharmacies – we are simply unable to procure the workforce necessary to cover such services," described the problem Catalina Ilinca, a pharmacist from the HelpNet chain.

The shortage of medical personnel was also the topic of a presentation by Tomáš Šebek, a Czech physician and proponent of telemedicine who showed how the problem may be resolved using modern technology. He also presented cutting-edge approaches to examining patients remotely with the aid of technology, the regulatory hurdles which stand in the way of further development of such modern approaches, but also the potential risks inherent in them. A discussion ensued during which a unanimous consensus emerged among the participants that the further growth of telemedicine is needed and important also from the point of view of pharmacies, provided that efforts are being made at the same time to educate patients.

In the light of the positive response by the participants and their express wishes, the representatives of the European Federation of Pharmacy Chains have already resolved to put the next few months to good use by planning the next meeting in the series for 2023, to be held in another member state.

## Bulgaria – statement on restricting vertical integration in the pharmaceutical field

The European Federation of Pharmacy Chains (EFPC) hereby wishes to express its concern at the possible adoption of public policy measures aimed at restricting vertical integration in the pharmaceutical field in Bulgaria.

At the level of the European Community, there is a wide variety of regulations in this area. The existence of this diversity, in the daily practice of each state, allowed us to draw conclusions regarding the optimal models for ensuring the sustainable development of the pharmaceutical sector, for the ultimate benefit of the citizens.

EFPC is thus in a position to appreciate that a possible limitation of the vertical integration on the Bulgarian pharmaceutical market risks generating multiple negative effects, including long-term, for the future of the pharmaceutical sector in this market, as well as for the final consumers.

Such a regulation would call into question the sustainable development of community pharmacies as vertical integration helps to support the non-profit operation of medicines retail. The closure and/or absence of investments in the opening of new community pharmacies in rural regions will have a direct effect in reducing the population's access to medicines. There is also a significant risk for increases in medicine prices, given that vertical integration allows business efficiency, which ultimately is seen in strengthening competitiveness and discounts for consumers. Community pharmacies might concentrate only on medicines and less on ensuring extended services.

Vertical integration is also an engine of increasing competition in the field, stimulating not only the most competitive pricing policies, but also the provision of related services, which contribute to increasing the quality of general services offered by community pharmacies to the population. Thus, follow-up quality management systems are implemented (a permanent process of maintaining the quality of end-consumer-oriented services) and the highest levels of training of professionals in both downstream disciplines are ensured in an integrated manner.

In view of all these elements, the EFPC would like to warmly recommend to the decision-makers in Bulgaria the preservation of the current normative provisions regulating the activity of community pharmacies and which currently position this country as a model of good practices at European level.



# 3rd EFPC Conference “Pharmacy Care – What are the Barriers to Pharmacy Development?”

REPRESENTATIVES OF PHARMACY CHAINS CALLED ON THE EU CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE TO INVOLVE EUROPEAN PHARMACIES IN THE EU4HEALTH INITIATIVE

**The European Federation of Pharmacy Chains organized its third international conference, this time in Warsaw. The conference was held under the title "Pharmacy Care - What are the Barriers to Pharmacy Development?" and was attended by pharmacists, politicians, health experts, representatives of pharmacy chains, deans of pharmaceutical faculties, as well as pharmacy students and representatives of patient associations. In three thematic panels, it was discussed, for example, how the COVID-19 pandemic manifested itself in the development of new pharmacy services or where outdated regulation stands in the way of this development. This also played a role in another of the topics: the promotion of the pharmacy assortment and services in connection with the self-medication of patients and their awareness. The highlight of the conference was a joint declaration by representatives of pharmacy chains to the main representatives of the European Union with an appeal for pharmacists to be fully counted among health professionals within the framework of the accepted European initiative EU4Health.**

Warsaw, 19 October 2022 – The conference was a good opportunity not only to exchange views and experiences across the European region, but also to sign a joint call and request for the involvement of European pharmacies in the EU4Health initiative. It currently brings together all important stakeholders of the European healthcare sector. The call was addressed to the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and Stella Kyriakides, the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety with an appeal to support the participation of representatives of European pharmacies in this important initiative.

„With the document we signed, we request the inclusion of pharmacists in the EU4Health initiative, which has a number of projects related to European health care, and we believe that pharmacists can also play an important role in some of them. The declaration was signed by representatives of all EFPC member states – Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia. In these, but also in many other countries, the pandemic has shown that pharmacists are an important primary contact for patients, and for this reason we want the pharmacy segment to be included in this initiative. We are ready to actively participate in the projects and help create an effective health care system for Europe, where we hope the pharmacy will play an important role,“ says Daniel Horák, Head of the EFPC Board.

The conference was attended by a number of speakers, including deputy health ministers from host Poland, as well as from the Czech Republic (currently EU presidency state). Czech Deputy Minister Jakub Dvořáček appreciated that this was an event organized by the pharmacists themselves. "This cannot be said about any of the other medical conferences that I have had the opportunity to visit, this event is the first of its kind," added Jakub Dvořáček.

The activity of pharmacists is bearing fruit, which can be seen, for example, in Poland, where the law allows vaccination in pharmacies as well as in surgeries. "The effectiveness of the vaccination program against COVID-19 and seasonal flu in Poland shows the great potential of pharmacies, especially chain pharmacies. But vaccination is only the first step. In Western Europe, the range of services that can be provided in pharmacies is much wider and can respond to other health challenges of the population, not only those related to infectious diseases, but also, for example, the no less serious civilizational disease epidemic," explained Marcin Piskorski, president of PharmaNET Pharmaceutical Employers' Association.

The fact that the introduction of such new services in pharmacies is a purely political decision was alleged during the conference by the lectures of not only Polish, but also British representatives, where vaccination in pharmacies, whether against flu or covid, was part of government policy, the strategy of the Ministry of Health and had considerable support insurance companies. "At the same time, for our network, we have not recorded any serious side effects of vaccination that would threaten the health or even the life of patients vaccinated in pharmacies," said Niral Dawda, head of retail strategy and transformation at Rowlands Pharmacy (UK), in his speech.

"The future of pharmacies is in the specializations that differentiate them from each other. Some will focus more on vaccinations, others on providing consultations, the most important part of which will certainly be prevention. I believe that preventive programs are effective tools to save significant amount of money for the health system and should be more perceived by politicians, insurance companies, but also by patients themselves. I also think that pharmacists should be more visible and should tell themselves how they want their profession to be in the future and how they want to specialize. Warsaw declaration is just one of the steps to include pharmacists in the system and remind them that pharmacies must be counted with in the future," added Daniel Horák.

During the conference, it was emphasized many times that, from the point of view of interest, pharmacies have enormous organizational, logistical and material potential and are an integral part of European health systems, which is proven by the existing services provided, but also only by the opening hours of pharmacies. Many offer 24/7 patient support across the European region.

"The importance of pharmacies for ensuring continuity of treatment and general health safety during the pandemic was considerable. It is worth reminding that the average time of a patient's visit to a pharmacy tripled in that time in Poland. When addressing the petition to the EU authorities, we tried to contribute to everything, how important pharmacies can be for the health of Europeans," concluded Marcin Piskorski.

The EFPC plans to hold its next conference in 2023 in Budapest.

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## Joint statement on the need of inclusion of pharmacy sector into EU4Health Initiative

**We, representatives of the European pharmaceutical chains associated under the EFPC call on the European institutions to include the European pharmacy sector in the EU4Health initiative. The sector has proven to be one of the key sectors in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, offering patients testing, vaccination and first-contact advice – on time, close to patients’ homes and without access problems.**

In order to promote public health values across all Member States, the EU4Health should not forget about the great potential of pharmacies as an indispensable component of healthcare systems in Europe. We offer assistance and support to patients twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. We are changing and growing rapidly, offering patients not only dispensing medicines, but also advanced new pharmacy services, such as education and health promotion, assistance in disease prevention and early diagnosis, support in addiction treatment, drug reviews, prevention of poly-pragmasy, learning to use medical equipment, and drug delivery. Additionally, during last years European pharmacies has offered millions of doses of vaccines, not only against coronavirus, but also influenza and other deseases. This trend has been strong for years in Western European countries, and is now gaining strength also in Central European pharmacies, represented by members of our organization. The sector should be able to develop in all Member States, offering services that will ease the burden on national health systems.

We urge the EU4Health Initiative to consider all this, and in consequence to give European pharmacies their rightful place in this important initiative.







Daniel Horák (Czech Republic)



Sina Niku (Slovakia)



Tamás Marjai (Hungary)




Catalina Pinteá (Romania)



Marcin Piskorski (Poland)



Daniel Shull (Serbia)


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**STELLA KYRIAKIDES**  
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Rue de la Loi, 200  
B-1049 Brussels – Berl 10/380  
[stella.kyriakides@ec.europa.eu](mailto:stella.kyriakides@ec.europa.eu)

Brussels,

Dear Members of the European Federation of Pharmacy Chains,

Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2022 addressed to President von der Leyen and myself, in which you request that European pharmacies are given a place under the EU4Health Programme. President von der Leyen asked me to reply on her behalf.

I am grateful for all the work that the European pharmacies have conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the assistance provided to patients in disease prevention, treatment and diagnosis. I commend you on the important role you have played and the contribution you have made to strengthening resilience of the EU health systems during the COVID-19 crisis.

The EU4Health Programme is implemented by means of annual work programmes which are developed in consultation with the Member States and stakeholders, via on-line consultations and conferences including the health policy platform. The annual work programmes are drawn up on the basis of the identified priorities and strategic orientations with a high level of public health protection and with an EU added impact. Your organisation is welcome to join the Health Policy Platform<sup>1</sup> and participate in the stakeholder meetings.

To that end, I am delighted to inform you that we have adopted the EU4Health work programme for 2023<sup>2</sup> and invite you to explore relevant funding opportunities. The upcoming info-days to be organised by the Executive Agency, HaDEA<sup>3</sup>, will provide further relevant details.

I am very attentive to stakeholders' views and we therefore organise consultations and dedicated events to gather their input on future needs and possible health priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> [EU Health Policy Platform - EU Health Policy Platform \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/eu-healthy/eu-health-policy-platform)  
<sup>2</sup> [2023 EU4Health Work Programme \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/eu-healthy/eu4health-work-programme-2023)  
<sup>3</sup> [European Health and Digital Executive Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/eu-healthy/eu4health-work-programme-2023)

# EFPC Regular Sessions

- 18 January 2022  
Executive Committee Meeting - online
- 15 March 2022  
Executive Committee Meeting - online
- 29 March 2022  
Members' Meeting in Warsaw
- 7 June 2022  
Members' Meeting in Prague
- 18 October 2022  
Executive Committee Meeting in Warsaw

## 18 January 2022

### Executive Committee Meeting – online

The main focus was on the 3rd Annual Conference, which was going to be held in Warsaw, Poland. The Board members approved the proposal of the speakers and panels.

Priorities for 2022 were discussed, and a new project for pharmacists of pharmacy chains was introduced.

## 15 March 2022

### Executive Committee Meeting – Online

EFPC Board members had an emergency meeting due to the current war situation in Ukraine, which had a huge impact on neighbouring countries, especially on Poland. Because Poland was handling a huge and unpredictable incoming wave of migrants, our Polish colleagues expressed their doubt about continuing with the organization of the conference. Their concerns included the safety of all attendees and considerations of moral principles. They highly recommended to postpone the conference until the following months.

Because the situation was not clear in East and Central European countries either, the Board members decided not to hold the conference and to postpone the date of the conference to June or to autumn. The conference was duly postponed from 29/30 March to 18/19 October 2022.

## 29 March 2022

### Members' Meeting in Warsaw

Sebastian Ring resigned from the EFPC Executive Board in March, so the program of the membership meeting focused primarily on the election of a new member of the Executive Board. Nikolay Binev Kolev was nominated to the EFPC Executive Boards by the ADRFR. After the nomination speech, he was elected. Nikolay Binev Kolev became a member of the Executive Board of the EFPC on 29 March 2022.

During the meeting in Poland, the names of participants of the European Academy of Chain Pharmacists were announced, and a full agenda and program were introduced.

A discussion was held on the new legal changes in the pharmacy sector in Hungary, and it was presented by the Hungarian representatives.

## 7 June 2022

### Members' Meeting in Prague

The June meeting had two parts: the Executive Committee meeting and the Membership meeting, when the financial statements for 2021 were approved.

During the Executive Committee meeting, the Annual Conference was discussed, and the speakers list was updated. Due to the high inflation that hit Europe, the budget of the conference had to be increased as well.

The issue of price increases in pharmacies was discussed in relation to inflation. Each member country shared its experience with political negotiations on increasing or changing pharmacy remuneration to be more in line with current energy prices and the situation on the pharmaceutical market.

# 18 October 2022

## Members' Meeting in Prague in Warsaw

The last meeting of the year dealt with the Board members' election. During it, an election was planned to elect the current members of the Executive Committee in order to unify their election period. Karolina Korodi, Sína Niku, Marcin Piskorski, and Nikolay Binev Kolev were elected as Board members. Daniel Horák was elected as Chairman of the Board for the next 2 years.

Board members also voted for changes in the Articles. Approval was needed to change the current wording in the deletion of Article 5, paragraph 10 of the founding charter, so that it better corresponded to the current situation and practical experience. All re-elected members approved the amendment to the EFPC statutes.

The issue of the EU4Health Initiative was introduced, a communication strategy was discussed, and an engagement plan was proposed to all Board members. Zdeněk Blahuta, Executive Director, presented that letter to Stella Kyriakides, Member of the European Commission on Health and Food Safety. Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, was briefed, and an official ceremony for signing the letter was prepared during the day of the conference.

# Executive Director Letter

## Executive Director Letter

Dear readers, dear friends.

This time a year ago, we were all looking forward to the end of the pandemic and expecting a normal year again. With great eagerness, EFPC still embarked in the autumn of 2021 on the preparation of its traditional professional conference. This time, it was to be held in Warsaw to be even more representative. At the same time, we decided to try to establish an interactive platform for our pharmacists in the form of the 1st EFPC Academy, held in June 2022 in Prague.

But, unfortunately, everything changed on 24 February 2022, when the war in Ukraine started. A humanitarian crisis quickly emerged in the Central European countries facing a massive inflow of Ukrainian refugees (mainly women and children) and started to gain momentum. With less than a month to go before the Warsaw conference, we had to unexpectedly postpone it. We did this not only at the request of our Polish colleagues, but also at the request of the Polish authorities who were burdened with coping with the enormous influx of refugees and their subsequent socialization under new conditions. Fortunately, our conference did successfully take place in October 2022, as a breath of fresh air and normalcy in the first year of the war. We were all very pleased with the previously mentioned Academy of Pharmacists of our members in Prague last June. In my opinion and from the feedback of the participants, it was a very beneficial event with a huge impact on strengthening the sense of togetherness and the rightness of the path taken to the highest quality of care. In their feedback, the participants themselves praised us very much, but, most importantly, they asked us to continue the Academy in future years and to further develop it.

In last year's annual report, I referred to the team spirit and constructive atmosphere in the day-to-day activities of the EFPC. I believe that without such an approach we would not have managed the war's humanitarian crisis so well, and not only in Warsaw.





Zdeněk Blahuta, Executive Director, EFPC

Among other EFPC actions, I would like to highlight our offer to the Croatian pharmacy network Ljekarna Pablo to become a member as a European economic entity. By the end of 2022, the offer had not yet been taken up.

As part of the exchange of the Romanian National Association ADRFR representative on the Executive Committee in spring 2022, contacts were also established with the upcoming Bulgarian Association of Pharmacy Chains. Next year, we will try to open negotiations for the Bulgarian association to join the EFPC.

Strengthening our presence in Brussels seems to be an important task ahead of the EFPC. In the meantime, we are starting to take advantage of the synergies and contacts of our Polish member ZPA PharmaNET, which is part of the Lewiatan association. Next year, we should present our projects to both the European Parliament and the European Commission.

Let me conclude by thanking all members and colleagues for their cooperation and commitment in 2022. Without them, our 2022 Annual Report would not be as diverse and colourful.

Zdeněk Blahuta

Executive Director, EFPC

# About

The European Federation of Pharmacy Chains (EFPC) was established on October 10, 2018, with operation to launch in January 2019 in Prague. The EFPC brought together Pharmacy chain associations from the Czech Republic (APLS CZ), Slovakia (APLS SK) and Hungary (HGYSZ).

The EFPC is the only organization representing pharmacy chains in Europe. The EFPC is an independent, voluntary, non-political and non-governmental organization, which cooperates and encourages strong links between the European organizations in order to solve issues of pharmacy sector.

It represents over 35.700 pharmacy experts, 6.500 pharmacies and 6 European countries.

An important part of the EFPC activities is support and protection of the interest of its members, conduct and report of surveys work related issues. Furthermore, the Federation provides educational activities in the pharmaceutical field and advocacy service for the members. The EFPC was developed from a response to negative trends in some Central and Eastern European countries which are in conflict of patient interests.

The EFPC is reliable partner for national and European regulatory authorities, stakeholder and beyond and support an open and constructive discussion in the pharmaceutical sector.

## Vision

The EFPC members believe that liberalization of the pharmacy market is the best way to improve patient comfort and it leads to high consumer satisfaction with the functioning of the pharmacy market. The EFPC sees of patients' changing shopping behavior in other fields and aware that there is a high probability that these changes will arise within a short time in pharmaceutical sector as well. By that time, an implementation of some processes should be led by legislators to meet patients' needs and ensure the safe servicing and keep right practice expedition.

## Mission

The mission of the EFPC is defend liberal market and the interest of patients, pharmacy workers and owners in Europe. The EFPC creates optimum conditions for the development of the pharmacy business and the activities of pharmacy operators in EU members states, and the provision of services related to the performance of their activities and established against any violation of the fundamental right to their properties / shareholding rights. The EFPC wants to bring attention to actions that go against activities include promoting the concept of "Pharmacy for the Pharmacists", which is unheard of in any other field.

The EFPC represents and protects economic, business and social interests of its members in pharmacy business.

## Aims and Objectives of the EFPC

- Defend the interests of patients and pharmacy workers and owners
- Monitoring activities which could have tendency to limit patient rights, worsening accessibility, reducing the effectiveness of pharmacy care in our members countries
- Protecting economic, business and social interests of the EFPC members
- Creation of optimum conditions for the development of the pharmacy business
- Closest cooperation with members of national associations
- Coordinated PA and PR activities

# Upcoming Events 2023

For the year 2023, the European Federation of Pharmacy Chains (EFPC) members have set several goals, namely to continue all the activities that they started in previous years and which are of increasing interest not only to members, but also to the professional public. One such activity is the already traditional annual EFPC conference, which will be held in Budapest in October 2023 and will be our 4th annual conference event.

In 2022, the European Academy of Chain Pharmacists pilot program was launched, which was aimed at employees and pharmacists working for pharmacy chains. The aim of the exchange program was to strengthen contacts and communication between pharmacists and to improve the knowledge of laws and regulations and their impact in individual countries. This project has proven to be a highly sought-after communication platform, especially in the post-COVID pandemic, when the pharmacy profession has faced major changes and has been under significant social and political pressures. EFPC members plan to develop and expand this project in the future, so that it is a useful platform for the discussion of pharmacy topics in Europe. The host country for 2023 will be Romania.

Another focus for EFPC members is membership. Our long-term priority is to increase the number of EFPC members, so that the federation is understood to be a true and equal partner in negotiations at the European level. Membership negotiations will take place with Croatian chains and the Association of Baltic States. Likewise, our goal is to start communication with Italian pharmacy chains and the representatives of Bulgarian chains as well.

EFPC members plan to join the EU4Health initiative and to be active in commenting on European legislation related to pharmacy issues, primary care, and prevention programs. To this end, a peer-reviewed seminar will take place in Brussels next May, which will be part of a series of Brussels activities culminating in a pan-European conference in 2024.

Last but not least, EFPC 2023 will continue to provide all support and cooperation to the Polish Association in dealing with EU infringement cases in Poland and will help the Hungarian Association to deal with the amendment banning online pharmacies and to reduce the risk of pressure to cancel the franchise in Hungary. It will also focus on supporting Bulgarian themes.

# The EFPC Executive Team

## The EFPC Executive Director



Zdeněk Blahuta, Czech Republic

He has more than 30 years of experience with management of public pharmacies, hospital pharmacies and pharmaceutical wholesalers. He is former Head of the State Institute for Drug Control in the Czech Republic (SUKL) and he was Member of Board of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and coordinator of the vaccination strategy against Covid-19 during the pandemic in the Czech Republic.

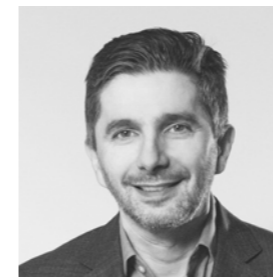
## The EFPC Executive board



Daniel Horák  
Czech Republic



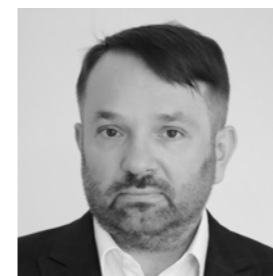
Karolina Korodi  
Hungary



Sina Niku  
Slovakia



Nicolaj Kolev  
Romania



Marcin Piskorski  
Member of Executive Board

# Contact

## European Federation of Pharmacy Chains

Rybná 716/24  
110 00 Prague  
Czech Republic

[eufpc@eufpc.eu](mailto:eufpc@eufpc.eu)  
[www.eufpc.eu](http://www.eufpc.eu)

ID No.: 07666632

The Federation registered in the Register of  
Associations maintained by the Municipal Court  
in Prague, Section L file 71221

