

## Resilience, Collaboration and Future-Proof Guidelines: Highlights of PharmaSupply 2025

Organised by GIRP, the European Healthcare Distribution Association



**Warsaw, 1-2 October 2025** - Against the backdrop of growing global uncertainty and supply chain pressure, PharmaSupply 2025 brought together policymakers, Good Distribution Practices (GDP) inspectors and industry leaders to discuss the security and the resilience of the medicine supply chain. Over two days, the discussions went through key topics, including cybersecurity, crisis preparedness, and revision of the GDP guidelines. Overall, one clear message stood out from this conference: collaboration is the key to all the challenges we are facing, and more importantly, “failure is not an option”<sup>1</sup>.

During the opening of the conference, the audience was reminded how recent crises have tested the limits of Europe’s medicines distribution systems. Yet those same challenges revealed a vital truth: “Resilience cannot be built in isolation”<sup>2</sup>

The first panel built on that theme. Speakers shared how strategic foresight, flexible logistics, and stronger public-private coordination can make the sector better prepared for the unexpected. From the COVID-19 pandemic to the recent floods and power blackouts in Spain, they took the audience through real-world crises and the lessons learned about acting together rather than

<sup>1</sup> Rubén Orquín, Director General, Cofares

<sup>2</sup> Tomasz Kaczyński, President, Polish Pharmaceutical Wholesale Association

alone. Their message was clear: preparedness must be embedded into every operational layer, not rediscovered at each emergency.

The conversation then turned digital. The next session, about cybersecurity, painted a vivid picture of the escalating cyber risks that pharmaceutical logistics are exposed to. Experts warned that data breaches or system failures are not just IT problems: they are direct threats to patient safety. Their message was clear: “We live in a connected world, and we have to make sure we don’t leave anyone out”<sup>3</sup>. The panel agreed that Europe’s medicines supply chain is vital and fragile, and that cooperation, not competition, will define how the sector faces the next wave of cyber threats.

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The limitations of the current GDP inspection system were discussed, highlighting that while inspections provide valuable oversight, they capture only a moment in time. The discussion encouraged exploring a more continuous, data-driven approach, built on transparency and mutual trust between regulators and industry. Drawing inspiration from sectors such as aviation, the concept of a shift toward co-operative regulation was introduced, in which companies demonstrating strong governance could share operational data in exchange for proportionate, risk-based oversight. A pilot initiative, the Responsible Person Code of Conduct and Ethics, is being developed to test this principle.

The panel of national GDP inspectors and experts from Poland, Denmark, the UK, and the European Medicines Agency took the conversation further. They explored how harmonisation and mutual recognition could help regulators pool their limited resources. Several panelists noted that inspection capacity across Europe has fallen since the pandemic, making smarter collaboration essential. “The goal is not more rules,” one inspector guaranteed, “but smarter oversight, and more consistency for the people we regulate”.

That conversation moved to the revision of the GDP guidelines, where manufacturers, wholesalers, and pharmacy groups explored how to modernise compliance without adding unnecessary administrative weight. Innovation, from digital traceability to AI-based quality controls and sustainable transport, was seen as a key opportunity. The consensus: Europe’s distribution network remains a global benchmark, but future guidelines must reward responsibility and enable innovation rather than add complexity.

Finally, IQVIA examined the future trends of the global pharmaceutical market. But the real focus was medicine shortages and stockpiling. Presenting data from across Europe, IQVIA experts

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<sup>3</sup> Michał Zdunowski, CEO & Founder, IS Consulting

revealed that almost half of the reported shortages are resolved within two months. They have developed a modelling tool capable of estimating the cost of a one-week stockpile of EU critical medicine in the EU4. They also concluded that an 8-week reserve could cover half of all recurring shortages.

Following that insight, a stunning panel discussed how all actors should work together to establish more efficient stockpiling reserves. First, we heard some interesting insights our wholesalers' experts on two successful stockpiling models, in Sweden and in Estonia, before hearing from manufacturers, but also learning about a new programme of rapid deployment of API. Speakers agreed that stockpiling could play a key role in the upcoming Critical Medicines Act, but warned that it must be coordinated, targeted, and realistic. This session was closed by underlining the role of systemic wholesalers in implementing such a model. Their reach makes them indispensable partners in managing rotation, logistics, and equitable access.

Across every session, one theme stood out: resilience cannot be achieved by one actor alone. Whether through joint preparedness planning, coordinated digital defenses, and harmonised regulation, Europe's medicine supply chain depends on cooperation at every level.

PharmaSupply 2025 reaffirmed GIRP's central message: systemic wholesalers are not only a logistic partner but a strategic pillar of healthcare security in Europe. Building resilience will require one thing above all: working together, before the next crisis hits.

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## **ABOUT GIRP**

GIRP, the European Healthcare Distribution Association, represents pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers across Europe. We play a vital role in ensuring a reliable and efficient healthcare supply chain, connecting manufacturers with community pharmacies, hospitals, and healthcare professionals. Our mission is to advance the healthcare distribution sector through knowledge exchange, advocacy, and high-impact events and initiatives.

## **CONTACT**

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