

## WHY DO WE NEED E-PRESCRIPTIONS IN EUROPE?

### STATE OF PLAY IN EUROPE

E-prescriptions are a simple tool to generate doctors' prescriptions for everyone's medication electronically. It is an important element in improving the quality of patient care, offering enormous benefits to European patients, healthcare professionals, and EU health systems.

As highlighted in the 2021 [report](#) on the 'State of Health in the EU's Country Health Profiles', the share of Europeans that reported having received a remote prescription since the start of the pandemic increased from 43% in June/July 2020 to almost 53% in February/March 2021. This trend is expected to grow further in the next years.

E-prescription contributes to decreasing the number of adverse drug events caused due to errors in hand-written prescriptions

Figure 1: Study on „e-prescription in Europe“ by P. Kierkegaard

The nationwide e-prescription system is progressively established, with some EU countries still in the process of rolling it out.

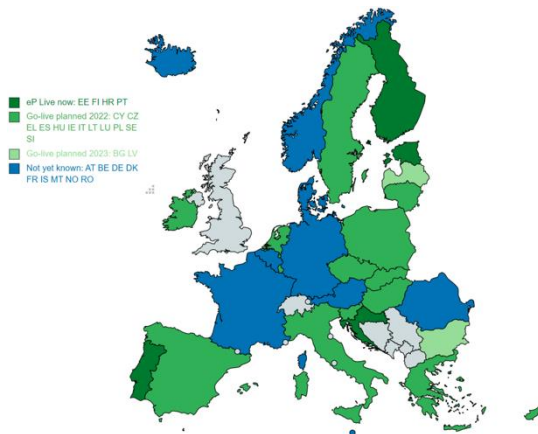


Figure 2: Presentation of the European Commission

In parallel, the European Union has recently developed ICT infrastructures that would allow citizens in Europe to retrieve their medication when travelling in another European country. That was made possible by online transfers of their e-prescriptions from their country of residence to their country of travel. Pharmacists participating in this initiative will be able to access the prescription through the Commission's eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure (eHDSI). Since 2019, Croatia, Estonia, Finland and Portugal have started exchanging e-prescriptions, allowing citizens to benefit from cross-border healthcare. By 2025, cross-border e-prescription will be gradually implemented in 25 EU countries<sup>1</sup> (image 2). However, this 'European e-prescription' is a bilateral exchange between member states rather than a fully-fledged system across all borders.

### WHO'S NEXT? THE GERMAN CASE

While some countries have adopted their legal framework quickly, others have been slower to implement e-prescriptions. One of the countries which is expected to finalise the implementation phase is Germany. A pilot project has been running there since July 2021. The new German government plans to accelerate the mandatory nationwide introduction of e-prescriptions as mentioned in the new coalition agreement signed in December 2021. The e-prescription is thus still in its test phase as the government cancelled the initially foreseen start date of 1 January 2022. Certain quality criteria need to be fulfilled before the nationwide roll-out can begin.



Figure 3 Created with MapChart.net

*“We accelerate the introduction of the e-patient summary and of the e-prescription as well as their beneficial application and connect all actors to the telematics infrastructure at an increased rate”*

<sup>1</sup> Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Slovakia, Latvia, and Bulgaria [https://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/electronic-cross-border-health-services\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth-digital-health-and-care/electronic-cross-border-health-services_en)



## WHY DO WE NEED E-PRESCRIPTIONS?

In practical terms, e-prescription means:

- Better and more secure communication between all parties involved (patient, medical practice, pharmacy, health insurance company).
- Better medical care and improved visits to the doctor for people who work, especially in rural areas.
- Quicker delivery of follow-up prescriptions.
- Lower error rates (e.g. illegible handwriting or misinterpreted prescriptions).
- Avoidance of time-consuming queries.
- Dispatch, ordering and billing is quicker and easier.



## TWO CLEAR RECOMMENDATIONS

If Europe wants to reap the benefits of digitalisation in healthcare, concrete commitment is needed by the EU, Member States and all healthcare stakeholders.

**We call on the European Commission, European Parliament and Member States to**

- 1. foster a well-functioning e-prescription in all EU Member States with a clear framework and communication mechanisms to allow patients and healthcare providers to easily use e-prescriptions,**
- 2. support a legal framework enabling the sale of prescription medicine across the EU, also allowing online pharmacies to participate in the scheme. Reimbursement of such cost should be permitted.**

A real European Health Union cannot be achieved without a strong contribution from cross-border sale of prescription medicine, alongside other E-Health services.

### **About the EAEP**

The European Association of E-Pharmacies (EAEP) represents the interests of e-pharmacies on the European continent. More than 20 million customers and patients across Europe are currently being supplied by our members and on top of that, our online pharmacies and their more than 4,000 employees are currently active in eleven European markets.

Founded in February 2021, the EAEP voices its interests mainly with political stakeholders, regional and business actors, with the ultimate aim to improve the health of Europe's citizens and strengthen the European healthcare system. E-Pharmacies have digitalised the classical pharmacy, and therefore act at the crossroads of digitalisation, healthcare, e-commerce and sustainability.

As pioneers in providing digital solutions and our innovative and secure processes in dealing with health data, offering medicinal products and digital healthcare service while complying with national and EU law, the EAEP members continuously seek for ways to enhance the quality, safety and efficiency of healthcare for Europeans.

Do you want to learn more about what we do?

Find out more on our [website](#) and get in touch with us by email:

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