

Rome, 10th February 2023

Official kick-off of CHESSMEN, the Joint Action to mitigate medicine's shortages, took place in Rome

The kick-off meeting of Joint Action CHESSMEN – Coordination and Harmonisation of the Existing Systems against Shortages of Medicines, European Network – took place today, in Rome.

This project, that has officially started on January 16th and will be running for three years, is led by the Italian Medicines Agencies (AIFA - Agenzia Italiana del Farmaco) with the support of the Italian National Health Institute (CNS and CNT) and benefits from the active participation of a wide consortium involving 27 organizations (associated and affiliated organizations) in representation of 22 EU Member States. CHESSMEN is co-funded by the European Commission. Short supply of medicines is of utmost importance and a current issue in public health and medical care delivery at both national and international levels. CHESSMEN Joint Action aims at supporting the EU Member States in implementing proper structures, measures and tools to tackle the issue of medicine shortages. The monitoring and prevention of medicine's shortages are key factors in sustaining the long-term and timely access of citizens to the respective therapeutics.

CHESSMEN envisages strengthening the coordination and harmonisation between different Member States, supporting the existing networks and initiatives such as the EMA SPOC Working Party and the HMA Task Force on Availability of authorised medicines of human and veterinary use, and therefore, enhancing Member States cooperation in identifying the root causes of observed shortages of medicines; monitoring and reporting medicine's shortages, including a common dataset proposal. Moreover, aims on defining preventive strategies of shortages and by capitalizing and expanding on prior knowledge, such as through the creation of model initiatives and practices based on studies conducted by the European Commission and the best practices already in use in EU Member States.

The partnership will develop a mechanism to gather practical models for Member States while considering the findings of the future-proofing Pharmaceutical Legislation Study on Medicine Shortages: Final Report and the Structured Dialogue on Security of Medicine Supply.

At the end of the work, Domenico Di Giorgio, Coordinator of the project, underlined the key points of the CHESSMEN approach:

“Shortages is a phenomenon that occur with many common characteristics and issues in most EU/EEA Member States; from this awareness this European-level project has started aiming at promoting and supporting the continuous dialogue between Regulatory Authorities in the identification and implementation of effective measures and initiatives in order to prevent shortages and reduce their impact for patients, and therefore to develop good practices and models that can be replicated, albeit with the necessary modifications that certain contexts may require beyond the common factors.

Sharing effective models and initiatives and avoiding the dispersion of resources that the autonomous management of problems at national level inevitably ends up generating: I believe this is the primary objective of a project to which many of the European Regulatory Authorities have joined.”