

Brexit: the European Parliament's role in prioritising patients, public health and health security across Europe.

With the Brexit clock ticking and with only six months left until the United Kingdom leaves the European Union, both sides are now preparing for a possible 'no deal' Brexit, which could impact on patient and public health across the EU27. Whether the Brexit talks end in a comprehensive agreement or 'no deal', the health of patients across Europe must not suffer, MEPs and negotiators will hear at an event on 27 September 2018 at the European Parliament.

The European health community will express their concern that with time running out, no substantial progress has been made on those areas affecting patient and public health.

They will call upon MEPs to follow up on the concerns highlighted at last year's European Parliament ENVI committee hearing in November 2017, urging them to organise a second hearing in order to ensure the preparedness of the EU27 with a view to securing continuity in the supply of medicines post Brexit.

The event will consider what can be done to ensure public health and health security are prioritised.

The questions to be explored include:

- In the event of 'no deal' and realising we are running out of time, how would EU27 national governments mitigate any negative effects of Brexit on healthcare?
- How will a future deal ensure sufficient and timely supply of drugs and medical devices for both EU and UK patients?
- What kind of agreement will the UK and EU need to ensure the future medicine and med tech licensing system does not exacerbate delays in access to the most innovative treatments for patients, both in the UK and across the EU?
- How can we ensure a common framework for collaboration in pan-European research, innovation networks and clinical trials, post Brexit?

The event has been organised by 20 EU-level health organisations who have come together to highlight the implications of Brexit for healthcare across the Continent.

"Cancer has no frontiers and at a time of major potential therapeutic breakthroughs, it is essential to work together, more than ever, for the benefit of all European citizens"

Professor Françoise Meunier, FEAM Vice-President and Director of Special Projects at the EORTC

"For most sectors, the key considerations around Brexit are economic. For those of us working to research, develop and deliver new medicines and treatments, the primary concern is patient safety and public health of citizens across Europe and the UK. Our members are working hard to ensure contingencies in place for a no deal scenario but there is no doubt that patients in Europe and the UK are best served by securing ongoing alignment, cooperation and mutual recognition between the UK and the EU regarding the authorisation, testing and surveillance of medicines."

European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations

"Paediatric cancer is a collection of rare diseases that together make up a leading cause of children's mortality in Europe. Continued cross-border cooperation on research and health-care is instrumental to ensuring continued progress towards more and better cures in paediatric haemato-oncology. Critical areas for continued cooperation include researcher mobility, cross-border networks of clinical expertise, access to medicines, and the conduct of multi-country clinical trials".

SIOP Europe – European Society for Paediatric Oncology

“The European Federation of Regulators of Dentists/FEDCAR would like to maintain the mutual system of recognising professional qualifications after Brexit and the current Alert Mechanism on professional sanctions. We also believe that the Brexit agreement should respect the all-Ireland nature of many aspects of health care on the island of Ireland.”

Cédric Grolleau, Acting Executive Director

“EULAR represents the interest of 120 million people with Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases in the EU (including more than 15 million in the UK), as well as health professionals and scientists who will all be impacted if health does not receive a strong prioritisation in the future relationship between the EU and the UK. It is crucial to recognise the strong links and the success of collaboration on issues ranging from research and innovation to European Reference Networks and working towards patients' access to timely high-quality treatment.”

Professor. Gerd R. Burmester, Professor of Medicine in the Department of Rheumatology and Clinical Immunology at the Charité University Hospital, Past President of the European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR).

“The strengths of the EU lie in its ability to develop successful medical research and foster collaboration between experts and researchers. As a partner in the European research landscape, the UK contributes almost 20% of the total research work carried out within EU health programmes between 2007 and 2016. The UK National Health Service (NHS) is involved in 23 of the 24 European Reference Networks (36 NHS hospitals), with NHS Trusts leading a quarter (6) of these networks. Therefore, it is vital that all partners strive for the establishment of a common framework for collaboration in research and information between the EU27 and the UK”.

Professor. Wilfried Ellmeier, PhD, Professor of Immunobiology, Medical University of Vienna, President Elect of the BioMed Alliance

Editor's notes

1. In 2017, the European Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee (ENVI) held a hearing which assessed and discussed the possible impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU on the environment, public health and food safety. Details can be found [here](#)
2. In December 2017, the group of 18 pan-EU health community stakeholders issued a joint policy statement which outlined five priorities:
 - Bring close cooperation between the EU and UK on the regulation of medicines and medical technologies, to ensure that UK and EU patients will continue to have access to life-saving medicines and medical technologies.
 - Establish a common framework for collaboration in research and information sharing between the EU27 and the UK.
 - Ensure that there are continued reciprocal healthcare arrangements between the EU and UK.
 - Develop strong coordination between the EU and UK on public health, including in pandemic preparation and disease prevention programmes.
 - Ensure EU and UK health professionals continue to benefit from mutually beneficial training and education opportunities, with automatic recognition of qualifications.

Further information about the group can be found [here](#)

3. The event will take place on **27 September 9.00 – 11.00am, Room 4Q2, European Parliament**. A programme for the event will be circulated nearer to the date. **If you would like to attend, please [register your details](#) by 20 September**. In compliance with the European Parliament's internal security, registrations cannot be considered after this date.

