

NEWS FROM BRUSSELS



Word from Senior Policy Advisor Dr. Theodoros Koutroubas

Dear Friends,

In this News From Brussels, we are sharing with you some very interesting news from the other side of the Atlantic via our American Observer Member TruMerit. Our colleagues from TruMerit will be with us at the end of the year in Dublin but already before that we are aiming to organise a Webinar in order to promote an exchange of good practice.

From the EU side, please read carefully how to use the new European Project app for your applications for your EU-funded projects.

Cyprus has health-related ambitions for its EU Council Presidency. A new era for patient access to innovation is announced.

Do come back with feedback

Warm regards,
Theo

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Presentation of Priorities of the Cyprus rotating EU Council Presidency by the Minister of Health of Cyprus

New EU Rules on Health Technology Assessment Open Up a New Era for Patient Access to Innovation

New European Projects App Launched

New Chair of TruMerit's Board of Trustees Elected

TruMerit and NAPNAP Team Up to Develop a Global Micro-credential for Paediatric Nursing Care

Presentation of Priorities of the Cyprus rotating EU Council Presidency by the Minister of Health of Cyprus



On the 2nd of February, Neophytos Charalambides, Minister of Health of the Republic of Cyprus presented the priorities of the Cyprus rotating Presidency of the EU Council in the field of public health to the European Parliament. It was followed by the discussion between the Members of the EP SANT committee and the Minister.

Speaking before the EP Committee on Public Health (SANT), Minister Charalambides on 2 February thanked its members for their contribution to shaping a people-centered European health policy. He stressed that the Presidency aims to foster close cooperation between the European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission.

He added that this cooperation is also essential for addressing critical humanitarian issues and health policies affecting everyone, particularly during periods of complex geopolitical and socio-economic challenges.

An autonomous Union open to the world

Minister Charalambides underlined that, Europe's response to this unstable environment focuses on enhancing resilience, cohesion, and strategic autonomy. Referring to the central message of the Cyprus Presidency, '**An autonomous Union open to the world**,' he noted that it reflects an approach combining internal strength and independence with outward engagement, cooperation, and international action.

Regarding health, the Minister stressed that autonomy is the keyword for the Presidency. “The Union’s ability to ensure citizens’ access to medicines, technologies, and quality care, regardless of urgent threats or external crises,” he explained, is paramount.

Minister Charalambides underlined that the Cyprus Presidency promotes a vision for health in the Union based on solidarity, equality, innovation, and social cohesion—the Union’s fundamental values. He emphasized that the goal is for no European citizen to be denied fair and quality healthcare.

The Minister noted that, in this context, a key priority of the Presidency is improving the availability, affordability, and accessibility of medicines and medical devices, as well as strengthening the resilience of healthcare systems.

Pharmaceutical Package

On the legislative front, Minister Charalambides stated that the Cyprus Presidency will continue the work initiated by the Danish Presidency.

He announced that pending matters regarding the **Pharmaceutical Package** will be completed following the preliminary agreement of 11 December, aiming to enhance access to medicines across all Member States while maintaining the competitiveness of the industry.

Regarding the **Regulation on Critical Medicines**, the Minister noted that completing negotiations is a key priority of the Presidency. “The inaugural trilogue takes place today with the aim of reaching a political agreement before the end of the Cyprus Presidency,” he added.

He also emphasized that the Presidency will work intensively on targeted amendments to the **Medical Devices Regulation** and the **In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices Regulation** (MDR and IVDR) to ensure their availability and the attractiveness of the Union for development. The aim is to achieve substantial progress for submission of a report at the EPSCO Council in June.

Another key legislative file the Presidency will address is the **European Biotechnology Act** (Biotech Act), which Minister Charalambides described as a strategic tool to strengthen innovation, research, competitiveness, and resilience in the Union's life sciences sector. He added that the Presidency will aim to reach a general approach agreement on the Directive and present a progress report on the Regulation at the EPSCO Council.

Preparedness Strategy

On the Union's Preparedness Strategy, including the proposal for the **Civil Protection Mechanism and support for health crises**, Minister Charalambides emphasized that the Presidency will continue discussions on the relevant regulation, building on the work of the Danish Presidency, aiming for a general approach agreement.

He also highlighted that the Presidency places particular emphasis on mental health and inclusiveness, with a focus on young people, and will continue efforts for a "Comprehensive EU Approach."

Regarding transparency, decision quality, and coherence in European health systems, the Minister stated that at the upcoming Informal Meeting of EU Health Ministers and Heads of Medicines Regulatory Authorities in Cyprus (26/02/26), the Presidency will present a proposal for the establishment of a **European Centre of Clinical Excellence for Pharmaceutical Products**. The Centre will provide scientific evaluations of clinical evidence and support joint clinical assessment reports under the EU Health Technology Assessment Regulation. The initiative is already under consultation with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

Minister Charalambides also stressed the Presidency's focus on effectively implementing the **European Health Data Space (EHDS)**, which is a key tool for connecting health systems, advancing artificial intelligence, and transitioning toward a fully integrated European Health Union. This topic will be promoted through a dedicated event in Cyprus and included as a discussion item at the Informal EU Health Ministers' meeting.

22 health-related meetings and conferences in Cyprus

The Cyprus Presidency will host 22 health-related meetings and conferences in Cyprus, including the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers in February, and 15 additional events under the Presidency's auspices.

In line with the overarching goal of the Cyprus Presidency, "An autonomous Union open to the world," the Minister said work will continue to strengthen cooperation with third countries, international, and regional organizations, which is essential to address emerging health threats.

Praising the role of the **World Health Organization**, he said it remains crucial for global health resilience. He added that the EU and its Member States play a central role in strengthening international health security and preparedness. In this context, the Presidency will advance the **Pandemic Accord Annex on Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS)**, which the European Commission negotiates on behalf of the EU.

The Minister noted that the Presidency aims to secure a broad consensus within the EU and with WHO member states to finalize the annex in time for adoption at the World Health Assembly in May.

New EU Rules on Health Technology Assessment Open Up a New Era for Patient Access to Innovation



On Sunday, 12 January, the **Regulation on Health Technology Assessment (HTA)** has become applicable, bringing a significant improvement in ensuring that innovative and effective health technologies are available to patients across the EU.

The new rules create an EU framework for the assessment of health technologies, such as medicines and medical devices, by fostering collaboration and coordination between EU Member States. This will help national authorities to make more timely and informed decisions on the pricing and reimbursement of health technologies and streamline the procedure for health technology developers. It will contribute to **faster and wider access to new and more effective innovative products for patients**.

The rules will apply to companies seeking marketing authorisation for their products by introducing a **new and permanent EU framework** for Health Technology Assessment, including through:

- **introducing a single EU-level submission file for joint clinical assessments** in order to ensure **pooling of resources at the EU level** and **strengthening the scientific quality of HTA** across the EU while avoiding duplication of assessments at national level.
- **establishing faster procedures** requiring Joint Clinical Assessments to be completed within 30 days after the authorisation of the medicine;
- **the systematic consultation of patients and clinicians** during the preparation of the assessments as well as the involvement and consultation of the HTA stakeholders.

As a first step, starting on 12 January, these new rules will apply to marketing authorisation applications for a **new cancer medicine or an advanced therapy medicinal product (ATMP)**. The rules will be **extended to orphan medicines in January 2028** and will **as of 2030 cover all new medicinal products**. Selected **high-risk medical devices** will also be assessed as of 2026. The new EU framework replaces the long standing EU-funded project-based cooperation between Member States on health technology assessment, while fully respecting Member States' responsibility for the management of their health services as their national context requires.

Background

Health technology assessment is a scientific, evidence-based process that aims to inform the creation of safe and effective health policies by summarising information about the medical, social, economic and ethical issues related to the use of a health technology.

The European Commission adopted its proposal for a Regulation on Health Technology Assessment on 31 January 2018. Adopted in December 2021, the Regulation, a key deliverable of the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy, entered into force in January 2022. It applies from 12 January 2025. During this three-year transitional period, the Commission and the Member States prepared by setting up the necessary governance structure and drafted preparatory documents to support an effective application.

New European Projects App Launched



The European Commission unifies the EU funding system into one mobile app, which aims to simplify and improve access to European funding for projects.

Every year, EU citizens have access to more than €38 billion in funding opportunities through the EU's Funding and Tenders Portal. To make applying for these funds easier and more user-friendly, a new mobile app 'EU funding & me' has been launched.

This new app acts as a complementary tool to the portal. While people will still have to apply for funding through the portal, it will ensure that EU funding is more accessible and will make it easier for users to find funding opportunities. It will also help the more than 2 million registered users, and more than 300,000 weekly visitors access their projects directly from their mobile and tablet devices.

Available on both Android and iOS, it guarantees flexible access to EU funding services anytime, anywhere. Moreover, the app continues to evolve every day with a strong commitment to enhancing its features and delivering an even better user experience. All EU citizens can apply for EU funding. It is the Funding & Tenders Portal that is the main entry point for funding programmes and procurement options managed by the European Commission and other EU institutions and agencies. You can find funding opportunities in a wide variety of areas, through flagship EU programmes such as Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and the European Social Fund+.

News From Our Members: New Chair of TruMerit's Board of Trustees Elected



The Board of Trustees of our USA Observer Member TruMerit, as elected **Sylvain "Syl" Trepanier**, DNP, RN, CENP, FAONL, FAAN, as its new chairperson, along with five new trustees, to help guide the world's largest credential evaluation and assessment organization as it works to advance a global health workforce in a transformative era of digital health and demographic shifts.

Trepanier, who has served on the TruMerit board since 2022, is System Chief Nursing Officer at Providence, serving as the voice for nursing at the senior executive level and representing nursing practice for 40 thousand nurses, 52 hospitals, and 1,085 clinics in seven states. He succeeds Dr Pamela Maraldo, CEO of Girls Inc. of New York City, who departs after serving her eight-year term, including four years as chairperson of the Board.

"Dr. Trepanier is an inspirational leader whose organizational transformation and system standardization expertise will assist TruMerit's own evolution in supporting an ever-evolving global health workforce addressing the complexities of health systems and population health needs," said Peter Preziosi, TruMerit's President and CEO. "We look forward to his contributions as Board Chair while expressing our deepest gratitude to Dr. Maraldo, who courageously led the board through a period of critical transformation that opened the door to a new future for TruMerit and the healthcare professionals we serve globally."

Biography

Sylvain "Syl" Trepanier, DNP, RN, CENP, FAAN, FAONL, is Providence's System Chief Nursing Officer. In this position, he serves as the voice for nursing at the senior executive level. He also serves as the co-chair of the system's Workforce Council.

Dr Trepanier is a seasoned nurse executive with healthcare system experience in executive leadership, organizational transformation, and system standardization. Dr Trepanier is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and a Fellow of the American Organization of Nursing Leadership (AONL). He obtained his Bachelor's and Master's degree in Nursing from

the University of Montreal, Canada, and a Doctorate of Nursing Practice (DNP) from Texas Tech University Health Science Center (TTUHSC).

In addition to his duties as a System Chief Nursing Executive, he is an assistant professor for TTUHSC in the Masters in Nursing Administration program. He currently serves as a member of the Advisory Board for the Institute of Human Caring, is one of three appointed nurse leaders serving on the American Hospital Association's Clinical Leadership Committee, is a member of the Board of Trustees for TruMerit, the world's largest credentials evaluation agency for nursing and allied health, the Board of Dignity Health Education Global Education, AONL's Board of Directors, and serves on the Audit & Risk Committee for the American Academy of Nursing.

News From Our Members:

TruMerit and NAPNAP Team Up to Develop a Global Micro-credential for Paediatric Nursing Care



TruMerit, a worldwide leader in international credentials evaluation to support health worker careers, and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP), The Leader in Pediatric Education for Nurse Practitioners®, have announced they will jointly develop a global micro-credential to help advance the knowledge and skills of the world's pediatric nursing workforce.

The collaboration aims to improve health outcomes for infants, children, adolescents, and young adults worldwide amid a global shortage of pediatric nurses that is limiting access to evidence-based pediatric care in countries of all income levels. The partners envision that their micro-credential program will be the centerpiece of a larger initiative to engage global stakeholders in educating, assessing, and credentialing the nursing workforce in this specialization.

A micro-credential is a short, competency-based recognition for specific skills, knowledge, or accomplishments that is offered as a more flexible and time-efficient alternative to the coursework tied to a traditional degree. When it becomes available in mid-2026, the NAPNAP micro-credential will be available to first-level, general nurses (RN) in any country who complete a set of online learning modules and pass an examination grounded in evidence-based pediatric nursing fundamentals of care within a global context.

The partnership leverages NAPNAP's expertise in developing and delivering online educational courses in pediatric nursing, along with TruMerit's experience in creating assessment tools for healthcare professionals and global standards that support testing and evaluation for specialty credentials.

Under this partnership, both organizations are working with a global team of subject matter experts to develop a competency framework for the coursework, identify instructional content, and create the assessment to validate learning and content mastery. NAPNAP is leading content development while TruMerit is creating the assessment leading to the granting of the micro-credential.

“This is a bold strategy that is driven by NAPNAP’s 50+ years of experience in providing high-quality education to pediatric nurse practitioners,” said James H. Wendorf, NAPNAP’s chief executive officer. “With TruMerit’s expertise in credentialing and extensive global relationships, we look forward to enhancing pediatric clinical knowledge and supporting health care workers around the world to increase child health outcomes.”

“We are thrilled to have this opportunity to bring our expertise to bear on NAPNAP’s efforts to expand pediatric knowledge and skills throughout the world’s nursing workforce. Our success in this endeavor will be a testament to how micro-credentialing can be a powerful force in achieving our shared goals of making the world a better, healthier place for women to have a child and for children to develop in a healthy manner,” said Dr. Peter Preziosi, TruMerit’s President and CEO.

About NAPNAP

The National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) is the professional association for pediatric nurse practitioners and all pediatric-focused advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) in the U.S. and abroad. NAPNAP is recognized as the global leader, trusted authority and indispensable resource on comprehensive pediatric advanced practice nursing. Established in 1973, NAPNAP was the first professional society for nurse practitioners and remains the only U.S. organization dedicated to both advancing the APRN role and improving the quality of health care for infants, children and adolescents. For more information, please visit napnap.org.

About TruMerit

TruMerit is a worldwide leader in healthcare workforce development. Formerly known as CGFNS International, the organization has a nearly 50-year history supporting the career mobility of nurses and other healthcare workers—and those who license and hire them—by validating their education, skills, and experience as they seek authorization to practice in the United States and other countries. As TruMerit, this mission has been expanded to building workforce capacity that meets the needs of people in a rapidly evolving global health landscape. Through its Global Health Workforce Development Institute, the organization is advancing evidence-based research, thought leadership, and advocacy in support of healthcare workforce development solutions, including globally recognized practice standards and certifications that will enhance career pathways for healthcare workers.