

NEWS FROM BRUSSELS



Word from Senior Policy Advisor Dr. Theodoros Koutroubas

Dear Friends,

Our dear friends are inviting us to the 18th Panhellenic Conference, the European Commission is consulting on cybersecurity for hospitals and in the UK, nursing departments are facing challenges.

I hope you find our news interesting, I look forward to your feedback, and of course I wish you a Happy Easter.

Kind regards,
Theo

NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

Save the Date- Union of Nurses of Greece to Host 18th Panhellenic Conference in Rhodes

Trump's Tariffs Creates Unease in EU Pharma

Commission Seeks Contributions to Enhance Cybersecurity for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers

Plans to Scrap University's Nursing Department 'On Hold'

ENE 
ΕΝΩΣΗ ΝΟΣΗΛΕΥΤΩΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ

18th
PANHELLENIC
SCIENTIFIC &
PROFESSIONAL
NURSING
CONFERENCE

RHODES
14-17 MAY
2025

Nurses promote
interdisciplinary as a
means of evolution of
health systems

Info



Organization - Secretariate
 **PROOPSIS**
ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΟΣ

Hotel
 **Hotel**
Rhodes Rhodes Hotel

Save the Date- Union of Nurses of Greece to Host 18th Panhellenic Conference in Rhodes



Our ENC colleagues at the Union of Nurses of Greece will be hosting its 18th annual Panhellenic Scientific and Professional Nursing Conference in Rhodes between the 14th and 17th of May 2025. The event will bring together professionals and experts in nursing and medical research from Greece and beyond to discuss the latest developments, challenges and solutions in the field of nursing and patient care.

The official language of the hybrid event will be in Greek with select sessions with English translation available.

If you wish to attend the event or wish to participate in the conference's Scientific Programme, you can submit your scientific proposals in the links included in the Infopack that will be attached in the email along with this News From Brussels.

Trump's Tariffs Creates Unease in EU Pharma



The world has had a roller-coaster of a week as President Trump's tariff tsunami rocked global financial markets before being halted just as suddenly as they were implemented. Initially, it seemed as if the 20% tariffs imposed by Trump on EU goods were avoided by the pharmaceutical sector as no tariffs were announced for these products.

This sigh of relief quickly dissipated, however, as the American President mused on implementing an increased tax on pharmaceutical products coming into the United States, announcing potentially 'major' tariffs: a move that could end decades of low-cost global trade in medicines.

This sigh of relief quickly dissipated, however, as the American President mused on implementing an increased tax on pharmaceutical products coming into the United States, announcing potentially 'major' tariffs: a move that could end decades of low-cost global trade in medicines.

For years, most countries, including the US, have imposed few or no tariffs on finished drugs, thanks in part to a 1995 World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement aimed at keeping medicines affordable. This shift in opinion that occurred in less than a week came in the wake of serious escalatory trade policies between the United States and China after the US administration's new 'reciprocal' tariffs - including a duty of 104% on goods arriving from China - came into force on Wednesday, intensifying a global trade war and further shaking markets.

The US has typically imported vast quantities of finished medicines from India, Europe and China without buyers paying tariffs - although active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), used to make drugs, do face some duties. Speaking at a fundraiser dinner for his Republican Party on Tuesday, Trump said: *'We're going to be announcing very shortly a major tariff on pharmaceuticals. And when they hear that, they will leave China.'*

He also told reporters on board his Air Force One plane last week that 'pharma' tariffs would arrive 'at a level that you haven't really seen before,' saying these would be announced 'in the near future.'

In 2024, the US imported \$213bn (£168bn) worth of medicines - more than two and a half times the total a decade earlier. While short on detail, his comments have rattled buyers, especially those relying on Indian imports. India supplies nearly half of all US generics, or cheaper versions of popular drugs, saving the country billions in healthcare costs.

What concerns us is that European drugmakers are also on alert. After a high-level meeting between European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and top pharma firms on Tuesday, the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) warned that tariffs could shift production away from Europe, and to the US.

The EFPIA, whose members include major pharmaceutical companies such as Bayer, Novartis, and Novo Nordisk - the maker of the star diabetes type 2 drug Ozempic - expressed concerns that rising tariffs could disrupt Europe's role as a key player in global pharmaceutical production.

In 2024, pharmaceuticals were the EU's largest export to the US, worth a reported \$127bn (£100bn). Major companies have urged the EU to act swiftly, seeking policy changes to enhance Europe's competitiveness and prevent a 'mass exodus' to the US. They have also expressed concerns about potential EU retaliatory tariffs, which could disrupt supply chains and affect patients on both sides of the Atlantic; global pharma giants like GSK and Pfizer operate across several countries, including Ireland and Germany, meaning new tariffs could disrupt multiple parts of the supply chain.

It said a survey of its members last week had shown that capital expenditure, money pumped into manufacturing centres, and R&D were the frontline risks. EFPIA's estimated that, €164.8bn is planned by pharma companies in the EU between 2025 and 2029.

'Over the next three months, companies that responded estimate that a total of €16.5bn, i.e. 10% of the total investment plans, is at risk,' it said.

It added that the US was becoming a clear favourite for investment, with tariffs expediting that potentially, putting at risk hundreds of thousands of jobs among the 1 million directly employed in UK and EU and many more in academic and clinical settings.

'The US now leads Europe on every investor metric from availability of capital, intellectual property, speed of approval to rewards for innovation,' the EFPIA said. 'Now, with the addition of tariffs, there is little incentive to invest in the EU and significant drivers to relocate to the US.'

The association presented von der Leyen with a five-point plan, including strengthening incentives to locate intellectual property in Europe and the adoption of a worldwide set of rules to make it more attractive to place innovation and research and development in Europe.

'Sometimes they are talking to a human and sometimes they're not'

At the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences in Little Rock, staffers need to make hundreds of calls every week to prepare patients for surgery. Nurses confirm information about prescriptions, heart conditions and other issues, like sleep apnoea, that must be carefully reviewed before anaesthesia.

The problem: many patients only answer their phones in the evening, usually between dinner and their children's bedtime.

Since January, the hospital has used an AI assistant from Qventus to contact patients and health providers, send and receive medical records and summarise their contents for human staffers.

Qventus says 115 hospitals are using its technology, which aims to boost hospital earnings through quicker surgical turnarounds, fewer cancellations, and reduced burnout.

While companies like Qventus are providing an administrative service, other AI developers see a bigger role for their technology.

Israeli start-up, Xoltar, specialises in humanlike avatars that conduct video calls with patients. The company is working with the Mayo Clinic on an AI assistant that teaches patients cognitive techniques for managing chronic pain. The company is also developing an avatar to help smokers quit.

Nursing experts who study AI say such programmes may work for people who are relatively healthy and proactive about their care. But that's not most people in the health system.

"It's the very sick who are taking up the bulk of health care in the US and whether or not chatbots are positioned for those folks is something we really have to consider," said Roschelle Fritz of the University of California Davis School of Nursing.

Commission Seeks Contributions to Enhance Cybersecurity for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers



The Commission has launched a consultation on the Action Plan for the cybersecurity of hospitals and healthcare providers; published on 15 January 2025, the Action Plan is crucial to protect the healthcare sector from cyber threats and contributes to the successful implementation of the European Health Data Space (EHDS). By improving threat detection, preparedness, and response capabilities of hospitals and health providers, it will create a safer and more secure environment for patients and healthcare professionals.

In recent years, Member States have reported significant cybersecurity incidents affecting the healthcare sector—more than in any other critical sector. This Action Plan addresses the specific and urgent threats facing the sector.

To ensure the effective implementation and impact of the measures outlined in the Action Plan, the Commission invites stakeholders to contribute to the consultation. This includes citizens, healthcare professionals, healthcare authorities, patients, compliance and data privacy professionals, cybersecurity professionals, organizations, and academia, among others, to share their views. The results will further contribute to the recommendations that the Commission plans to present by the end of the year. The deadline for contributions is 30 June 2025.

Plans to Scrap University's Nursing Department 'On Hold'



Plans to close Cardiff University's nursing department have been put on hold, as an 'alternative plan' is currently being considered. Located in the capital city of Wales in the United Kingdom, Cardiff University is one of the largest and most prestigious universities in Britain. This follows an announcement in January which proposed to cut 400 staff and scrap some departments including nursing. A number of

staff members having already opted for voluntary redundancy.

The new alternatives proposed would mean that undergraduate programmes would be limited, meaning a smaller cohort of students studying nursing sciences in the future with 'degree programmes reshaped to significantly enhance the teaching and learning experience offered to our students,' it said, adding that 'we would continue to offer adult, child and mental health nursing programmes for students from Wales and beyond.'

Students and staff protested the news that the nursing school at Cardiff University would be axed with unions and politicians voicing their concerns that it would threaten the supply of nurses to the Welsh NHS which along with its counterparts in the rest of the UK faces a crisis in manpower.

Following the announcement, the initial proposal to cut 400 staff has since been brought down to a 286-person reduction instead; voluntary redundancies have been paused but there is no guarantee that further cuts in the future would not jeopardise nursing in Wales and the UK at large.

Reacting to the revised cuts, Helen Whyley, director of the Royal College of Nursing in Wales, said the RCN was pleased the university was planning to continue providing nursing courses but disappointed it was in this position in the first place. Ms Whyley said these measures could have been taken long before any consideration was made to close the school of nursing.

The situation is, thankfully, not as bad as it could have been for our partners in Wales, however, the issues facing nurses in the United Kingdom are issues that all members of the nursing profession face globally. The ENC's work in ensuring the highest quality of care for patients, and working and training conditions for nurses is now more important than ever.