



Dear colleagues

This edition follows the Board meeting held on 14 September, when preparations for November's General Assembly came into full focus following the summer break. We reviewed draft policies on the health affects of cannabis and doctors' wellbeing, and draft campaign messages for the upcoming European elections next year.

We adopted amendments to the EU pharmaceutical legislation in view of the European Parliament's tight timeline and will continue to monitor and react accordingly in consultation with CPME members. We were also particularly active prior to the European Parliament's vote on the revision of the EU's ambient air quality standards, and we welcome the call for a full alignment with the WHO guidelines (see page 8).

We invite you to read about this and much more in this month's edition.

Dr Christiaan Keijzer

CPME President



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

Finances

Draft Budget 2024 and simulation 2024–2026

- ▶ The Board agreed that the treasurer will propose a range of measures at the GA in November for the members' consideration and decision.

The Board discussed the extraordinary circumstances of the past years against the need to balance this and future budget while also taking into account members' ability to pay.

Politico Pro Agreement prolongation

- ▶ The Board approved an agreement to prolong CPME's subscription to Politico Pro.

The Board noted the value of the information, the uptake of CPME's press releases and consequent visibility of our work and the relationship built with their journalists.

Support requests to attend the CPME General Assembly and Policy Sessions

- ▶ The Board regrettably confirmed that there is no provision in the budget to cover financial support requests to attend the CPME General Assembly and Policy Sessions.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

Internal Affairs

General Assembly, 10–11 November 2023, Tallinn, Estonia

- ▶ The Board reviewed the draft agenda for the upcoming General Assembly, taking place in Tallinn from 10–11 November 2023.

The Board decided to plan a members' conference on greening the healthcare sector, noting that Tallinn is European Green Capital 2023.

Planning for General Assemblies 2025

- ▶ The Board decided on the provisional dates for the CPME General Assemblies in 2025.

The proposed dates are 22–23/03/2025 and 25–26/10/2025.

New Rapporteurs appointed on medical devices

- ▶ The Board decided to appoint Janne Aaltonen, CEO of the Finnish Medical Association and Rudolf Reibel of the German Medical Association as co-rapporteurs on Medical Devices.

Members' Communication Network Meeting

- ▶ The Board took note of a planned meeting of the Members' Communication Network.

The aim is to build a network of communication professionals at national medical associations to share best practice, communication activities and inform about upcoming CPME communications.

Policies

Pharmaceutical legislation

- ▶ The Board adopted amendments to the EU pharmaceutical legislation.

The Board was informed about the European Parliament's timeline and decided to monitor the legislative process and react accordingly in consultation with CPME members.

The Board also discussed the actions taken and planned by the European Commission and Member States regarding medicine shortages and suggested that a CPME public statement could be envisaged soon.

Access to medicines

- ▶ The Board decided to formally accept the terms of reference for WHO Novel Medicines Platform.

Doctors' right to strike

- ▶ Following a request by the BMA, the Board adopted a statement on doctors' right to strike in response to UK Minimum Service Levels Bill.

European Climate and Health Observatory

- ▶ The Board decided to accept the invitation to join the informal partnership of the European Climate and Health Observatory hosted by the EU European Environmental Agency.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

Transparency Directive consultation

- ▶ The Board approved a draft response to a public survey on the Transparency Directive (89/105/EEC) organised by the EUHealthSupport consortium, in the context of a study launched by the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE).

Policy on the health effects of cannabis

- ▶ The Board discussed the comments received on the draft CPME policy on the health effects of cannabis. After the preliminary discussion in the CPME Working Group on Healthy Living in June all CPME members were invited to send comments by 28 August.

The Board noted that all CPME members were invited to another online meeting to discuss the comments on 28 September.

Doctors' well-being

- ▶ The Board discussed the draft CPME policy on doctors' well-being: promoting work-life Balance and Supportive Environments. The policy will be circulated to the Working Group on Professional Practice for their comments, along with national examples.

Health priorities for European elections 2024

- ▶ The Board revised the draft messages for our European election campaign following comments and feedback from members. The Secretariat will finalise the messages and send to the Board once again.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

Revision of the EU air quality directives

- ▶ MK gave an update about the European Parliament's plenary vote on their position on the revision of the EU ambient air quality directives. On 13 September, the Parliament adopted a position calling for a full alignment of the EU standards with the WHO guidelines, in line with the CPME policy.

Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA)

- ▶ The Board discussed a draft discussion paper outlining the joint feedback from the WG of HERA Civil Society Forum concerning the future of HERA. The Board agreed to approve it by written procedure at a later stage.

Webinar on quality of basic medical education

- ▶ The Board took note of the revised concept note and draft agenda of a CPME Webinar on Quality of Basic Medical Education.

The webinar agenda will be finalised, and speaker invitations will be sent by the secretariat.

Invitation to online Doctor MEP Roundtable, 10 October, 15:00

We are pleased to invite you for the next roundtable with Members of the European Parliament who are medical doctors co-hosted by MEP Dr Sara Cerdas and MEP Dr Peter Liese, which will be held virtually on 10 October 2023, 15.00–16.30 Brussels time.

You are invited to join the debate to discuss current health policy items on the European Parliament's agenda. Please find the programme attached. Please note that this is not a public event, thank you very much for not sharing publicly.

Please use this [link](#) to join the meeting.

CPME called on MEPs to vote for clean air, prevent disease and save lives

CPME, together with seven other health groups, sent a letter to all Members of the European Parliament, urging them to step up the revision of the EU's clean air standards ahead of the vote in the plenary session.

These efforts were successful: on 13 September, the Parliament [adopted](#) a position calling for a full alignment of the EU standards with the WHO guidelines, in line with the CPME policy. However, the Parliament sees this happening by 2035, not by 2030 as has been CPME's call. The Parliament position also mentions healthcare professionals and vulnerable groups. The Parliament rapporteur MEP Javi López had thanked specifically doctors for their lobbying efforts. The Parliament is now ready to start negotiations with Council on the final law.

Stop Cancer at Work welcomes European Parliament's further protection for workers and healthcare professionals from exposure to hazardous medicinal products (HMPs)

The Stop Cancer at Work coalition [welcomed](#) an overwhelming vote for better protection for healthcare professionals from potentially life-threatening hazardous medicinal products (HMPs) in the Employment Committee of the European Parliament on 7 September, and urged the European Commission and the European Council to formally adopt and implement the amendments in the trilogue on the Carcinogens, Mutagens and Reprotoxic Substances Directive (CMRD) later this year.

CPME calls for review of EU alcohol labelling in Euronews

The [feature](#) reports on Ireland's law enforcing alcoholic drinks to have health warning labels by 2026. It will be mandatory for the packaging on alcoholic beverages to display information including calorie content, risks of cancer and liver disease and the dangers of drinking during pregnancy.

Vice-President Dr Ray Walley emphasised CPME's call for the European Commission publish a review of EU legislation as soon as possible.

Webinar for healthcare professionals on COVID-19 and seasonal influenza vaccination

On 25 October at 11:00 – 12:30 (CEST), the European Commission will organise a webinar to give healthcare professionals the opportunity to discuss the latest epidemiological and scientific developments as the resurgence of seasonal influenza, RSV and SARS-COVID-2 is anticipated this autumn and winter.

Moreover, the Commission together with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and WHO/Europe will give an update on authorised vaccines, adapted vaccines and antivirals in the EU, as well as the available support for awareness-raising and communication campaigns.

Please register [here](#).

The EU needs to publish ambitious Sustainable Food Systems framework before end of Commission's mandate

160 organisations, including CPME, wrote a [joint letter](#) to Ursula von der Leyen urging the European Commission to publish an ambitious Sustainable Food Systems Law, and stand by its commitment to an environmentally and animal friendly, fair and healthy food system.

Call for rapporteurs

CPME is looking for new rapporteurs and chairs of the working groups:

- Rapporteur on Refugee Health
- Chair of the Working Group on Healthy Living
- Chair for the Working Group on Climate Change
- Co-rapporteur on the independence of the medical profession

CPME members are welcome to propose experts, including those beyond their delegations to CPME if they can assist them in fulfilling their role (see Rules of Procedure) by sending an expression of interest to secretariat@cpme.eu.

Rapporteur on Refugee Health

CPME is seeking for a new rapporteur on refugee health, noting the increased interest in the topic in light of the rising numbers of refugees resulting i.a. from the war in Ukraine.

In the CPME statement on the medical treatment of refugees, CPME emphasises doctors' ethical responsibility for equitable care to all patients, irrespective of status. CPME also implements its policy on refugee doctors.

By joining CPME as a rapporteur, you will work alongside CPME secretariat to contribute to the development and implementation of effective policies in the field of refugee health.

CPME NEWS

Chair for the Working Group on Healthy Living

This WG is dealing mainly with alcohol, nutrition, and tobacco policies but it has also discussed other topics such as physical activity. Currently, it is drafting a policy on the health effects of cannabis. In the near future, it aims to contribute to the following EU's legislative processes: the introduction of European alcohol and front-of-pack nutrition labelling rules, the revision of the directives on tobacco products, taxation, and advertising. Moreover, CPME and a number of other organisations are developing a campaign on unhealthy food marketing.

Chair for the Working Group on Climate Change

This WG recently completed a policy on climate change and health. CPME keeps promoting this policy as it tackles various aspects of climate change, including the emissions of healthcare sector. CPME is also very active in the revision process of the EU air quality directives. The EU institutions are currently forming their position in order to start the trilogue negotiations. Finally, the annual Lancet Countdown process on climate change and health is expected to start soon. Since 2018, CPME has been co-publishing briefings and recommendations for EU policymakers.

Co-rapporteur on the independence of the medical profession

Following discussions at the CPME meetings in March, a survey will be carried out to map challenges to the independence of the medical profession in Europe. The co-rapporteur will cooperate with the responsible VP and secretariat to design and evaluate the survey for presentation at a forthcoming meeting. Members' requests for support in this matter will also be consulted with the rapporteurs.

MEMBER NEWS

In a new feature, we have screened members' website to provide links to latest news from NMAs.

Bulgaria: New method of paying for cancer drugs

The Bulgarian Medical Association [signed](#) an open letter to authorities on a new methodology for payment of cancer drugs in hospitals.

Denmark: Very good pace in the revision of further medical education

The Danish medical profession [commented](#) on the Danish Health Authority's plans for the revision of further medical education, with particular feedback on specialist medical education.

Germany: Hospital reform: The test is staffing, promoting young talent and reducing bureaucracy

The German Medical Association [commented](#) on the first, still incomplete working draft for a hospital care improvement law.

Greece: Mobilisations of laboratory doctors

The Panhellenic Medical Association [requested](#) the state to ensure the execution of examinations, adequate funding and the decent compensation of laboratories.

Hungary: The Chamber put another package of proposals on the table of the Minister of the Interior

Topics include transformation of financing; stabilisation of human resources; development of prevention, screening and care; professional rules; cooperation between public and private healthcare.

MEMBER NEWS

Ireland: ‘Radical reform is now the only viable option’ for health system

The Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) has [warned](#) that radical reform is now the only viable option for a health system that has been chronically under-funded and under-resourced for decades.

Norway: ‘Still a way to go’ for review of general practitioner service

The Norwegian Medical Association [sent](#) its input to the Ministry of Health and Care, urging authorities to create predictability and faith in the GP scheme, not new uncertainty.

Poland: The no-fault system strengthens the doctor-patient relationship

Thanks to the [actions](#) of the Polish Chamber, the original draft of the government bill on quality in health care and patient safety was rejected. However, it was adopted at a later date after introducing some requested amendments.

Romania: Burnout syndrome. Intention to migrate abroad. Malpractice.

36% of Romanian doctors [are at risk](#) of burnout. It is the result of the first national study that evaluates the risk of burnout among doctors in Romania, carried out by the College of Doctors in Romania (CMR).

Slovakia: Chambers no longer want to watch decline of the healthcare system

The presidents of the Slovak Medical Chamber, the Slovak Chamber of Dentists and the Slovak Medical Chamber [initiated](#) a discussion meeting with health experts from political parties on professional self-governance, reimbursement mechanisms and the role of pharmacists in the modern health system.

MEMBER NEWS

Sweden: Promised investments are missing in the government's budget

The Swedish Medical Association [highlighted](#) several important missing investments in the government's budget bill.

Netherlands: A bad gamble by the government

René Héman, chairman of KNMG, [wrote](#) about his concern that the number of gambling addicts has increased since the government has legalised online gambling in 2021.

UK: Joint industrial action in England

Joint industrial action takes place between 2 – 5 October with consultants and junior doctors providing Christmas Day levels of care only. Consultants and doctors [held](#) a national pay rally in Manchester on the doorstep of the Conservative Party Conference.

MONITORING

The Secretariat monitors the news and uploads [weekly monitoring reports](#) the members' section of the website. In the following pages we include a selection of the most relevant news items.

EU Political Outlook

Ursula von der Leyen's annual address to Parliament included no announcements on health

The 2023 State of the Union [Address](#) by President von der Leyen contained no new health initiatives. This is in contrast to the previous three years, where topics such as the pandemic response (2020), the unveiling of the European Health Union (2021), and the new mental health strategy (2022) were included.

Health leaders of the EU pledge to make progress in building the European Health Union

During an informal ministerial [meeting](#) in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, EU health ministers pledged to strengthen the European Health Union for unified crisis management and healthcare across the continent. The Spanish presidency hosted the event, where representatives of EU-27 discussed healthcare challenges. Digitalising healthcare, prioritising mental health, and ensuring resilient supply chains were emphasised for a stronger European healthcare system.

MONITORING

Iljana Ivanova officially appointed commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

Ivanova (Bulgaria) was nominated in June and was officially [appointed](#) for the remainder of the Commission's term until 31 October 2024. She is a former MEP and member of the European Court of Auditors. The appointment follows the resignation of Mariya Gabriel, who left to help form a coalition government in Bulgaria. At her hearing in the Parliament, she named ensuring a stable and growing EU budget for research and innovation as a key priority. Her work will include developing the next framework programme for research and innovation (the successor to the current Horizon Europe).

EU and UK reach political agreement on UK participation in Horizon Europe and Copernicus

On 7 September, the European Commission and the United Kingdom [reached](#) a political agreement on the UK's participation in Horizon Europe, the EU's research and innovation programme, and Copernicus, the EU's Earth observation programme.

MEP Dr Véronique Trillet-Lenoir dies

We are deeply saddened to share that Dr Véronique Trillet-Lenoir, a dedicated oncologist and esteemed French MEP, has passed away at the age of 66. Her integrity and commitment to European health were well known as she was a member of the European Parliament's the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), and the new sub-committee on public health (SANT), as well as a co-chair of the MEPs Against Cancer group.

CPME had the privilege of collaborating with MEP Dr Trillet-Lenoir on several important dossiers such as the European Health Union and she had agreed to co-host the future Doctor MEP roundtables which CPME will organise on 10 October. We sent a letter of condolence to her family and colleagues.

Professional Practice and Health Systems

Belgium considers health workforce as presidency priority

Europe's health workforce crisis is a likely key priority for the Belgian presidency of the European Council during the first half of 2024. Presidency priorities may also include tackling drug shortages.

Physicians in the EU – How Many?

Eurostat has [published](#) its latest data on numbers of doctors across the EU, EEA and neighbouring countries in 2021. There are three defined categories for physicians that Eurostat collects data on:

1. 'practising' – physicians providing services directly to patients;
2. 'professionally active' – 'practising' physicians plus physicians for whom their medical education is a prerequisite for the execution of their job;
3. 'licensed' – physicians who are registered and entitled to practise as physicians.

According to the Eurostat [data](#), in 2021, there were approx. 1.82 million practising physicians in the EU, with Germany (377,000), Italy (243,000), France (216,000), and Spain (213,000) having the highest numbers. Greece and Portugal held the highest physician-to-inhabitant ratios, while France, Belgium, and Hungary displayed the lowest ratios.

Overall, the EU saw a rise in physicians per 100,000 inhabitants from 2016 to 2021. The articles also discuss overall trends, such as the feminisation of the workforce, the age structure, and the increases in numbers of medical students.

The data is stratified across medical specialties and accounts for general medical practitioners in a separate category which is comprised of general practitioners (GPs) and "other generalist medical practitioners". CPME has in the past requested Eurostat to treat GPs on equal footing with other specialties and indicated that the category of 'other generalist medical practitioners' is frequently misused in policy to inflate the workforce in general practice.

MONITORING

Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare

European Parliament draft reports on the pharma package published

Draft reports from rapporteurs [Pernille Weiss](#) and [Timo Wölken](#) have been published.

ENVI Committee and debated the pharmaceutical legislation for the first time with official proposals out

MEPs [discussed](#) the pharmaceutical legislation and clear division lines between political groups were drawn. On the two most contentious issues – regulatory protection and the voucher for new antibiotics – MEP Sokol and MEP Liese shared that proposed period of exclusivities are too short and should be extended, as well as the voucher should be supported as there is no better proposal. S&D and the Greens commented that they do not have a clear position on the voucher yet, but are likely to oppose it and would like to propose an EU wide R&D fund for AMR instead. On the regulatory protection both group said they want to see more strings attached – S&D proposed certain % of R&D investments in Europe in order to obtain incentives. On medicine shortages – MEPs generally welcomed the proposals and suggested further additions e.g. label “medicines made in Europe” and more transparency on supply chains to keep companies accountable. Draft reports will be presented in ENVI on 6/7 November, and deadline for amendments is 13/14 November.

Pharma legislation debated by Competitiveness Council

Austria, Germany and Denmark are reported to have expressed concerns about the proposed pharmaceutical legislation’s impact on the EU’s competitiveness, while other countries including Malta, Cyprus, Estonia and Sweden, defended the package. European Commissioner for Health Stella Kyriakides told ministers that the reform sought to solve problems including large inequalities in access to new medicines and shortages of critical drugs.

MONITORING

European Commission asked to start working on Critical Medicines Act

A large group of MEPs [asked](#) the Commission about its plans around medicine shortages. MEPs asked whether the Commission will start work on the Member States' proposal for a law on critical drugs and whether it will happen during this term. Critical Medicines Act is a proposal backed by 23 Member States, led by Belgium. The Commission did not take any official position on the proposal. The issue is likely to be discussed at the next Plenary of the European Parliament in September.

European Medicines Agency expected to change rules on clinical trial transparency

European Medicines Agency is expected to make a U-turn on when drug companies should publicly release the details of their clinical trials. Currently, pharmaceutical companies only need to publish a summary of a clinical trial and its results within 12 months of its completion. But publication of numerous other documents relating to the study, including the study protocol, can be deferred – some of them for up to seven years. The rule change is expected to be voted on by the EMA's board on October 5. In October 2022, CPME, alongside 10 other organisations, [sent](#) an open letter to EMA calling for increased clinical trials transparency.

Council and Parliament strike deal on EMA Fee system

The presidency of the Council and European Parliament negotiators [reached](#) a provisional agreement on a regulation to modernise and simplify the structure of fees payable to the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The Commission [welcomed](#) the political agreement.

EMA charges a fee for processing applications from companies to launch a medicine on the market, as well as tasks such as pharmacovigilance. For 2023, fees and charges accounted for around 89% of the agency's budget.

MONITORING

MEPs adopt position on substances of human origin (SoHO)

The new measures will apply to blood, tissues and cells used for transfusions, therapies, transplantations or medically assisted reproduction. MEPs [insist](#) that donations of those substances must always be voluntary and unpaid, with donors able to receive compensation or reimbursement for losses or expenses incurred during the donation process. They stress that compensation should not be used as an incentive to recruit donors, nor lead to the exploitation of vulnerable people. MEPs also called for an EU strategy to ensure their availability, an EU list of critical SoHOs, and the establishment of “national emergency and continuity of supply plans”.

Survey on communication about medical devices

The European Commission launched a [survey](#) to better understand stakeholders needs around the EU Regulations on medical devices (MDR) and in vitro diagnostic medical devices (IVDR).

MONITORING

Public Health and Disease Prevention

Germany adopts cannabis legalisation bill

On 16 August, the German government moved closer to legalising cannabis with new [regulations](#) allowing individuals to own up to three plants or 25g of cannabis, and the creation of 'social clubs' for its legal distribution. There was criticism from legal, medical, and law enforcement circles. Dr. Klaus Reinhardt, President of the German Medical Association, raised concerns over the health effects, the feasibility of effectively controlling the proposed regulations and emphasised the need for an evidence-based drug policy focusing on prevention and support services. He pointed out that while the government plans to legalise cannabis, it also intends to run an information campaign for young people warning about its dangers, which he finds contradictory.

Record number of excess deaths in Europe due to heat in 2022

In the 2022 summer, heat [caused](#) between 37,600 and 86,800 deaths in Europe, according to a recent study published in Nature Medicine. Southern countries, including Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal, suffered most. The excess mortality is therefore close to or may exceed the previous record of more than 70,000 heat-related deaths in Europe during the summer of 2003, emphasising the need for enhanced heat surveillance, prevention, adaptation strategies, and safeguarding of vulnerable populations. The study shows a 56% higher incidence among women compared to men, as well as high rates in men aged 0–64 (+41%) and 65–79 (+14%) years, and in women aged 80+ years (+27%).

Parliament adopts new rules to protect EU workers from asbestos

The plenary [adopted](#) a directive, already agreed with member states, that will decrease the occupational exposure limit of asbestos and calls for the use of more modern and accurate technology to detect the presence of thin asbestos fibres.

MONITORING

Netherlands and Türkiye set standards in WHO tobacco control report

On 31 July, the WHO published the ninth [report](#) tracking the progress made by countries in tobacco control. It shows that many countries continue to make progress, but efforts must be accelerated. Regarding Europe, the report highlights Netherlands and Türkiye as global standard setters, having adopted all six “MPOWER” strategies: monitor tobacco use and prevention policies, protect people from tobacco smoke, offer help to quit smoking, warn about the dangers of tobacco, enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and raise taxes on tobacco.

Work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic: the impact of selected non-pharmaceutical interventions

A [study](#) conducted by ECDC and Eurofound examined how specific non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) between March 2020 and May 2022 affected the work-life balance of adults in the 27 EU Member States. Those with young children suffered from stay-at-home and school closure policies, while benefiting less from teleworking. People under 35 without children, those in rural areas, and northern EU countries saw positive effects from teleworking, with minimal negatives.

Diphtheria cases in Europe

From January 2022 up until August 11, 2023, a total of 281 confirmed cases of diphtheria, as defined by the EU, were [reported](#) within the EU/EEA region through the European Surveillance System (TESSy). This count comprises 224 cases in 2022 and 57 cases in 2023. Additionally, four deaths have been recorded. This stands in contrast to an annual average of 55 cases reported between 2017 and 2021. In the later part of the summer of 2022, intelligence data shared with the ECDC indicated that most cases during that year were diagnosed in facilities related to migrants. ECDC doesn't have evidence of wider outbreaks in the EU/EEA population due to these cases.

MONITORING

WHO and the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF) sign Memorandum of Understanding

The World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Special Research Programme on Human Reproduction (HRP), and the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the aim of advancing the cause of sexual and reproductive health and rights on a global scale. The agreement emphasises technical support, advocacy for awareness, and collaboration between WHO and parliamentarians to prioritise these issues on political agendas.

Commission proposes European Disability and Parking Card valid in all Member States

On 6 September, the European Commission [delivered](#) a legislative proposal that intends to facilitate persons with disabilities to access right to free movement, by making sur they can, on an equal basis, access special conditions, preferential treatment, and parking rights when visiting another Member State. The Commission's proposal introduces a standardised European Disability Card and enhances the current European Parking Card for persons with disabilities. Both cards will be recognised throughout the EU.

New ENVI position on urban wastewater

On 20 September, the European Parliament's ENVI Committee [adopted](#) their position on new rules for the collection, treatment and discharge of urban wastewater to better protect the environment and human health. It highlights wider reuse of treated urban wastewater to prevent water scarcity and increased monitoring of chemical pollutants, pathogens and antimicrobial resistance. MEPs also agreed to set up a system of extended producer responsibility targeting for example medicinal products for human use. In October, the Parliament is scheduled to adopt its negotiating mandate, and talks with national governments can start once the Council has adopted its position.

MONITORING

Digital Health

Digital Health in the WHO European Region

Drawing on the data gathered through the 2022 Survey on Digital Health in the WHO European Region, the WHO report [presents](#) an overview of the situation in the Region. It provides evidence of the substantial progress made and where improvement is still necessary. It highlights a number of policy options, facilitators and barriers to guide the successful implementation of digital health in Member States. The report includes case examples, illustrating digital health applications and practices in various national contexts. Through this report WHO reaffirms its commitment to support Member States in fulfilling the strategic objectives of the Regional digital health action plan for the WHO European Region 2023–2030.

Communication on digitalisation in social security coordination: facilitating free movement in the Single Market

On 6 September, the Commission [proposed](#) concrete steps to further digitalise the coordination of social security systems in Europe, in a dedicated Communication. It lays out actions to make access to social security services quicker and simpler across borders by making full use of digital tools, reducing administrative burden for citizens and business. As part of the measures, the Commission calls on Member States to i) accelerate the national implementation of the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) by the end of 2024 across Europe; ii) engage in the European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS) pilot activities; iii) work towards introducing EU Digital Identity (EUDI) wallets, which will allow EU citizens to carry digital versions of entitlement documents, such as the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), making it easier for social security institutions, labour inspectorates and healthcare providers to instantly verify these documents. Further information [here](#).

EDITORIAL BOARD

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EU Policy Adviser

Anniina Hentinen
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EDITORS

Calum MacKichan, Ph.D.
Communication Officer

CONTACT

For feedback, further information, questions or to express an interest to contribute to future editions, please contact:

Calum MacKichan
calum.mackichan@cpme.eu

Rue Guimard 15 1040
Brussels, Belgium

T: +32 2732 72 02
E: secretariat@cpme.eu
www.cpme.eu

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