

## European Industrial Pharmacists meeting in Rome



The 2024 General Assembly of EIPG (European Industrial Pharmacists Group) was held in Rome on 20 and 21 April. Delegates from 14 European professional organisations joined EIPG, representatives of two other organisations were observers, and a few guests were present.

The General assembly was preceded by a conference on Friday, 19 April, arranged with the support of AFI (*Associazione Farmaceutici Industria*) on “Medicines Shortages and Lists of Critical Medicines” held in the *Nobile Collegio Chimico Farmaceutico*. Domenico Di Giorgio (AIFA and CHESSMEN Coordinator) was the chairman of this special event with the presence of representatives of agencies from Portugal, Finland and Spain who were speakers and panel members, together with representatives from the research pharmaceutical (*Farmindustria*) and the generic pharmaceutical (*Egualia*) industries in Italy.

As several EIPG guests from Medicines for Europe, EFPIA, the community and hospital pharmacists representing PGEU and EAHP, and the parallel trade association (AME) were interested in attending the Friday Conference, our Bureau took the opportunity to hold a meeting with them to discuss possible joint activities over the next year.

President Piero Iamartino opened the General Assembly, highlighting the significant strides made by EIPG since the last annual meeting. These achievements included EIPG's enhanced relationships with other professional organisations in the pharmaceutical arena and EMA's recognition of EIPG as an interested party regularly invited to attend meetings and initiatives open to stakeholders. Notably, he mentioned EIPG's contribution to the meeting with EMA/IWG on 7 March, where a discussion on a few GMP/quality topics and their compliance implementation occurred. He also announced that EIPG was now among the 250 members of the

CMA (Critical Medicines Alliance), a testament to our commitment to fight shortages according to the recent European Commission plan. At the end of his speech, the President highlighted the successful result of the first initiative of a professional training course promoted by EIPG at the European level focused on implementing Annex 1 requirements.

The activity report was integrated with the Vice Presidents' presentations. Astrid Thorissen (VP of Education and Career) reported on the positive feedback received on the EIPG concept paper on new competencies requested from the industrial pharmacist and gave an update on the interactions with the European pharmacy students (EPSA) and the European pharmacy academics (EAFP), confirming the development of initiatives to promote awareness of industrial pharmacist profile requirements.

The impact of artificial intelligence on the industrial pharmacist's role was one topic presented by Anni Svala (VP of European Affairs), who referred to a first paper highlighting the key issues recently prepared and published on the EIPG website. She also reported on the position paper of EIPG about the revised pharmaceutical legislation and the commitment to monitoring its impact on the activities of industrial pharmacists.

With the contribution of Maurizio Battistini (Treasurer and past VP of European Affairs), it was recalled several initiatives on the medicine shortages issue where EIPG has been involved during the last few years and the willingness to continue its contribution with new actions was confirmed.

In the absence of Rebecca Stanbrook (VP of Technical and Professional Development), Piero Iamartino highlighted, among other activities, EIPG's participation as an official member in the multi-stakeholder platform on Accelerated Clinical Trials (ACT), an EMA initiative with the final goal of increasing the number of clinical trials in Europe.

An updated overview of the EIPG communication tools and their impact was the object of the presentation by Giorgos Panoutsopoulos (VP of Communications), who showed, in particular, the significant increase of interest in EIPG news based on the data collected over the last year. He also reported on the successful choice of hot topics for the proposed webinars and the issue of the EIPG newsletter covering different areas of competence for industrial pharmacists.

At this year's General Assembly, EIPG invited three speakers to present and discuss topics of interest.

Raffaella Vaiani (ISPE-Italy Affiliate) talked about the "Digital Revolution in Pharma", Sini Eskola EFPIA "The Changing European Regulatory Framework" was presented, and Antonio Conto (a toxicologist from Chemsafe) presented the "New Scientific Approach to ERA" (Environmental Risk Assessment).

These presentations were followed by two working groups: one considered the changing profile of industrial pharmacists, continuous education, and digital transformations, and the second looked at the contribution of industrial pharmacists

to pharmaceuticals' environmental sustainability. At the end of their work, both groups presented some proposals for actions that were considered to prepare the EIPG updated strategic plan for 2024-2025.

At this General assembly, Carmen Garcia, a Spanish delegate, was elected Vice President of Technical and Professional Development for three years, while Anni Svala was confirmed Vice President of European Affairs. Rebecca Stanbrook was thanked for her two years of work on technical and professional development.

Paul Andreianu (observer) presented the Romanian newly formed Associations of Industrial Pharmacists (AFFI) application for full membership of EIPG. The Romanian Industrial Pharmacists Forum was welcomed with acclamation and congratulations.

Next year's General Assembly will be held in Madrid during May.