

EMVS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

TOPICS:

- Surveys on falsified medicines : Romania, Latvia and Finland
- High level update on pharmaceutical legislation
- Upcoming events & communications

Public Awareness of Falsified Medicines: Key Findings from Romania, Latvia and Finland



Above all, the result reflects desperation. A seriously ill person may seek help at any cost, and that is precisely what pharmaceutical criminals seek to exploit. The Internet is full of professionally manufactured falsified medicines that are practically impossible for consumers to distinguish from genuine products

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Recent surveys conducted by NMVOs in Romania, Latvia and Finland provide valuable insights into public awareness of falsified medicines and highlight several common challenges across Europe. Although the studies were carried out independently and used different methodologies, the findings reveal remarkably similar trends.

Awareness Exceeds Understanding

Awareness of falsified medicines was relatively high, with 67% of Romanians, 59% of Latvians and 51% of Finns familiar with the issue. However, practical understanding was limited. Most respondents said they would struggle to identify a falsified medicine, highlighting a gap between awareness and knowledge.

Pharmacies Remain Trusted

Across all three countries, licensed pharmacies were viewed as the safest source of medicines. In Romania, 72% trusted authorised supply channels, while respondents in Latvia and Finland also expressed strong confidence in pharmacies as protection against falsified products.



Different Approaches, Shared Goals

In **Romania**, OSMR and ANMDMR conducted a national study in February 2025. Analyses of media coverage, reader comments, distributor websites and relevant literature were used to design a representative face-to-face survey of 1,200 adults, maximum sampling error: $\pm 2.8\%$.

In **Latvia**, the Latvian Medicines Verification Organisation and research centre SKDS carried out an online survey in early 2026 among 1,005 residents aged 18 to 75.

In **Finland**, FIMVO commissioned Taloustutkimus Oy to conduct an internet panel survey in March 2026 involving 1,117 adults.

→ *Despite their different methodologies, all three surveys aimed to understand how citizens perceive medicine safety and the risks associated with falsified medicines.*

Online Risks Remain Top of Mind

Respondents consistently named unregulated online channels as the greatest danger. In Latvia, 59% cited the internet as the easiest place to obtain falsified medicines and 52% named messaging platforms such as Telegram; Finns reported frequent exposure to suspicious medicine ads on social media and Google, while Romanians flagged street vendors (74%) and other online sites (70%). Putting names to the threat makes it easier to avoid. Public instinct is sound, too: in Latvia, 81% would worry about a falsified medicine bought outside a pharmacy, and 49% would report a suspected fake.

When access is limited, risk tolerance increases

The surveys reveal an uncomfortable truth: risk tolerance climbs when medicines are hard to get. In Finland, one in five would consider illegal channels if seriously ill and unable to obtain treatment normally. In Latvia, around 54% would buy online in an urgent situation, and more than half would purchase prescription medicines without a prescription.

Education Remains Essential

The surveys show that citizens trust pharmacies and recognise the threat of falsified medicines, but many are unaware of the safeguards designed to protect them. In Finland, for example, only 10% had heard of the medicines verification system used in pharmacies.

Looking Ahead

Together, the findings present a clear picture: while public awareness of falsified medicines is growing, significant knowledge gaps remain. Strengthening communication about medicines verification systems and promoting safe purchasing behaviours can help reinforce trust in the legal supply chain and further protect patients.

New EU Pharmaceutical Legislation: What It Means for EMVS

The EU's pharmaceutical legislation reform represents the most significant update of the medicines regulatory framework in over two decades. While the new legislation does not fundamentally change the Falsified Medicines Directive (FMD) or the operation of the European Medicines Verification System (EMVS), it introduces several important developments affecting medicines verification, shortages monitoring and patient information.

Summary

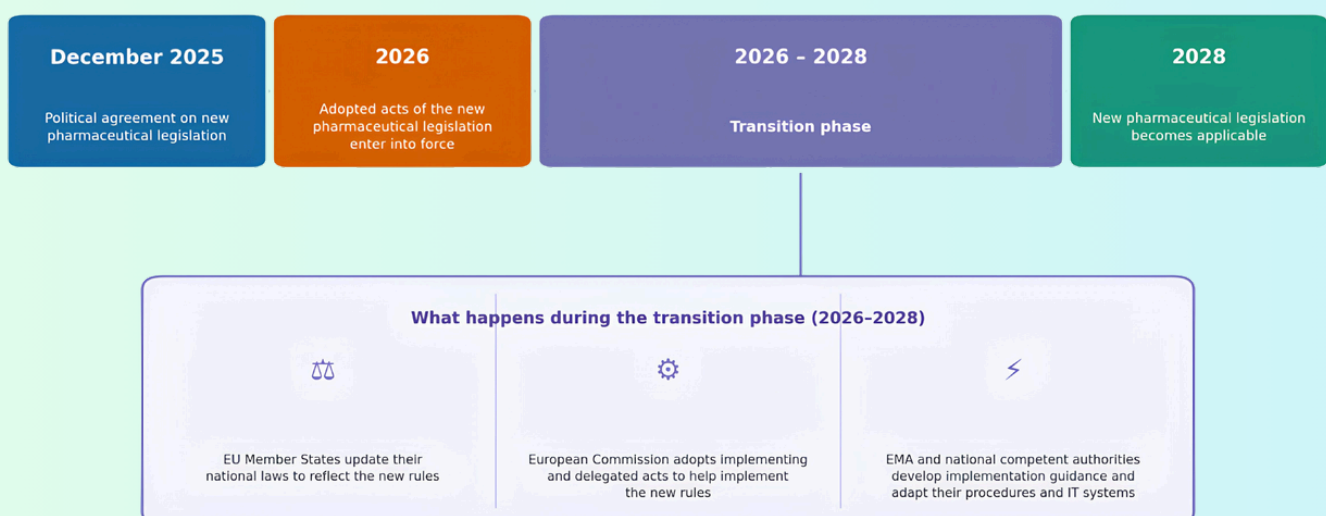
Key takeaways for the EMVS community:

- **EMVS data for shortages monitoring:** National competent authorities and EMA will be able to use EMVS data to monitor expected, potential and actual medicine shortages.
- **New role for EMA:** For the first time, EMA will have access to EMVS data to support shortages monitoring activities.
- **Voluntary serialisation of OTC medicines:** Marketing authorisation holders (MAHs) may choose to apply safety features to non-prescription medicines.
- **Repository funding clarified:** The legislation explicitly confirms that repository system costs are to be borne by MAHs or manufacturers.
- **Mandatory electronic patient leaflets (ePILs):** Electronic product information will become mandatory for all medicines.
- **Returned medicines:** New optional provisions allow Member States to introduce systems for re-dispensing certain unused medicines under strict conditions.

As implementation progresses, EMVO and the NMVOs will continue to assess the impact of the new legislation and engage with stakeholders to ensure that the EMVS continues to safeguard patients from falsified medicines across Europe

EU Pharmaceutical Legislation - Implementation Timeline

From political agreement to full applicability of the new rules



Sources:

- European Commission, Reform of the EU pharmaceutical legislation: https://health.ec.europa.eu/medicinal-products/reform-eu-pharmaceutical-legislation_en
- European Medicines Agency (EMA), Reform of the EU pharmaceutical legislation: <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/about-us/what-we-do/reform-eu-pharmaceutical-legislation>
- IMVO, FMD Impact Analysis of New EU General Pharmaceutical Legislation (Updated 12 May 2026).

**UPCOMING EVENTS & COMMUNICATIONS****October:**

- **20** October: FMD Workshop F2F register [here](#) & Deployment EU HUB SR1.20 Prod-ITE.
- **21** October: EMVS Community Steering Meeting F2F.
- **22** October: Deployment EU HUB SR1.20 Prod-IQE.
- **29** October: AGM

November:

- **18** November: European Antibiotic Awareness Day.
- **19** November: EMVS Information Session (online).
- **24** November: AGM.