

General Assembly 2026

Lisbon, 16 and 17 May 2026

Country Report and Position

Finnish Pharmacists' Association
Salla Silén

Association Insight

1. **Major structural reform** (pharmacies becoming more integrated into healthcare)

- The most significant development relates to the ongoing **reform of the medicines** and pharmacy sector:
- The medicines and pharmacy economy reform project (2024–2026)
- **Key objectives:** improving medication safety and quality, controlling costs, enhancing medicine availability
- **Key change:** Pharmacies are being integrated more closely into the healthcare system and Development of a national medication list (Kanta system)
- **Insight:** Pharmacy is shifting from a distribution-focused role toward an active part of the care pathway

2. **Ongoing challenges in medicine availability**

- - Medicine shortages continued in Finland (and across Europe)
- -Small market size → limited availability
- **Insight:** Supply disruptions remain one of the key challenges in the sector

3. **The role of pharmacies is becoming more important**

- According to research by Finnish Medicines Agency: Finns highly value medication counselling
- Pharmacies are the primary source of medicine-related information
- Use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines is very common
- **Insight:** Pharmacists' expertise is increasingly critical, At the same time, the risk of misuse increases → counselling becomes even more important

Association Insight

4. Growth in skills development and training

Increased emphasis on continuous learning

Topics include: AI in healthcare, leadership, medication management development

Insight: Pharmacy work increasingly requires diverse and evolving skill sets (beyond clinical knowledge)

5. Sustainability moved to the forefront

“Sustainable pharmacy” gained importance in research and education

Focus areas: environmental impact of medicines, full lifecycle (production → use → disposal)

Insight: Pharmacy is no longer only about health → environmental responsibility is becoming essential

6. Organizational changes and sector development

The Finnish Pharmacists’ Association appointed a new Executive Director in 2026. Active networking and professional events continued

Insight: The sector is being developed not only structurally, but also through leadership and professional collaboration

Summary:

In 2026, Finnish pharmacy: moved toward a more integrated, expertise-driven role in healthcare, while addressing Challenges related to medicine availability, sustainability, and increasing competence requirements.

My Association Activities Plan 2026-2027

- The activities of the Finnish Pharmacists' Association for 2026–2027 mainly consist of **training programs, networking events, career development initiatives, and advocacy work.**
- Training and Webinars
- In 2026, the focus is strongly on professional development: Job search and career coaching (e.g., online job search training)
- Leadership and workplace well-being training
- LinkedIn, recruitment, and career planning topics
- Entrepreneurship-related training
- Examples: “Strategic Job Search” (10/2026), “How Recruiters Use LinkedIn” (09/2026), “Managing a Career Change” (08/2026)

Networking and Well-being

- The association also offers more informal and community-oriented activities:
- Regional events (e.g., sports, culture, leisure activities), Member network meet-ups, Events for entrepreneurs and students Examples: Pre-May Day gathering for entrepreneurs (Helsinki), Sports and recreational activities

Professional Seminars

- Current topics in the pharmaceutical field (e.g., vaccinations, pharmacy services)
- Webinars on hospital pharmacy and medicine availability issues

My Association Activities Plan 2026-2027

Representation and Advocacy

- Training for shop stewards and union representatives (basic and advanced), Regional representative days across Finland, Advocacy related to collective agreements and salaries
- Major Events which where we are part of organization group: Pharmacy Days 2026 (November 13–14, 2026, Helsinki)
 - → One of the most important training and networking events in the field and
 - My Future in Pharmaceuticals → Organized annually (next event on April 3, 2027)
- Long-term Programs (2026–2027): Mentoring Program Running during 2026–2027
 - Aims to support career development, networking, and knowledge sharing
 - Open to both mentees and mentors
- Governance and Participation: Board members elected for the 2026–2027 term
 - Opportunities to participate in decision-making and strategy work
- Strategic Activities (2025–2027) The association's strategy includes: Advocacy for the profession, Development of the pharmaceutical sector, Influencing changes in working life

How could EIPG contribute to your activities

1. European perspective & policy insight

Access to EU-level discussions on pharmaceutical regulation

Understanding of how policies affect industry practices

Example idea: EIPG would provide valuable insight into European pharmaceutical policies and regulatory developments, helping better understand the broader context of work.

2. Professional development: Conferences, workshops, and expert knowledge sharing

Updates on industry trends and best practices

Example idea: EIPG's resources and events would support continuous learning and help stay up to date with current industry standards.

3. Insight into industrial pharmacy

Deeper understanding of: GMP (Good Manufacturing Practice), Quality systems. Drug development lifecycle

Example idea: EIPG would strengthen understanding of industrial pharmacy practices, particularly in quality assurance and regulatory compliance.

4. Career opportunities; Guidance on international careers , Exposure to mobility opportunities within Europe

Example idea: EIPG could open pathways to international career opportunities and support long-term professional growth. The European Industrial Pharmacists Group could significantly contribute to activities by providing a broader European perspective on pharmaceutical industry practices and regulations. Through its network and resources,

I would gain valuable insight into industrial pharmacy, develop my professional competencies, and build connections with experts across Europe, supporting both my current work and future career development.

How could my association contribute to the EIPG activities

1. National expertise & best practices

- Finland has a highly regulated, high-quality pharmacy system
- Strong focus on medication safety and counselling
- Contribution:
Sharing best practices from the Finnish pharmacy system, particularly in patient safety and professional standards.

2. Insights on medicine availability challenges

- Finland faces medicine shortages as a small market
- Experience with managing supply disruptions
- Contribution:
Providing real-world insights into medicine availability challenges and potential solutions at a European level.

3. Strong professional advocacy model

- Well-organized union/association structure
- Experience in collective agreements and workforce advocacy
- Contribution: Contributing knowledge on professional advocacy and workforce development within the pharmaceutical sector.

How could my association contribute to the EIPG activities

4. Leadership in sustainability

- Growing focus on sustainable pharmacy in Finland
- Environmental impact of medicines is a key topic
- Contribution:
Supporting EIPG initiatives by sharing approaches to sustainability in the pharmaceutical lifecycle.

5. Active participation & collaboration

Members can join:

- working groups
- discussions
- joint projects

Contribution:

- Actively participating in EIPG activities, fostering collaboration, and strengthening cross-border knowledge exchange.

Structural reform

Changes in OTC Medicine Sales Channels in Finland (5/2025–5/2026)

- The government advanced a comprehensive reform of the pharmacy sector.
- The proposal allows a limited range of OTC medicines to be sold outside pharmacies.
- Possible product groups include heartburn medicines, laxatives, and moisturizing eye drops.
- The law was approved at the end of 2025, and implementation preparations continued in 2026.
- The first OTC medicines could enter grocery stores in 2027.
- The reform sparked debate: competition and accessibility vs. medication safety.



Thank you,



any questions, comments ?