



Press Release January 17, 2024

# Fighting Medication Shortages

b+b's track & trace technology supports ambitious pharmaceutical reform

With the largest reform of pharmaceutical law in 20 years, the EU Commission responds to the drug shortage in Europe. To achieve its goals, innovative technologies such as the Track & Trace solutions from b+b are crucial.

## Winter Challenge: Forecast of Medication Shortage for Seasonal Infections

Physician associations are once again predicting a significant shortage of popular standard medications for seasonal infections, especially for children, this winter. It's not just painkillers and fever reducers that have been consistently strained in recent years; even more sensitive medications like antibiotics or those used in cancer therapy have been at risk of shortages.

The reasons for this phenomenon, unprecedented in Germany for a long time, are primarily attributed to the increasing globalization of the pharmaceutical industry. Medications or their active ingredients have been limitedly produced in Germany and the EU for years, with China and India emerging as market leaders. Supply disruptions due to COVID-19, interruptions in supply chains, and international competition have led to recurring shortages, impacting pharmacies over extended periods.



Figure 1: Vial Labeler (Model VRM)



Figure 2: Ampoule Labeler (Labeler Model RML)

## EU Commission Takes Action: European Health Union as a Response to Medication Shortages

In response, the EU Commission has decided to take measures to relocate all relevant processes of drug production for urgently needed medications back to EU countries. In the form of a „European Health Union,“ conditions will be created to enable manufacturers to compete against the currently overwhelming competition from the Far East.

In addition to laws and regulations in pharmaceutical regulation and patent protection, technological prerequisites must be established to create a performance- and competition-oriented environment. The success of pharmaceutical reform, not least, depends on the logistical challenges that will arise in the European drug supply.

A core element of any strategy to ensure the necessary supply chains and monitor intra-European supply flows is product labeling for the pharmaceutical industry. With b+b trace, b+b Automations- und Steu-

erungstechnik GmbH from Oberzent, Hesse, delivers software, systems, and custom solutions for the serialization, coding, and aggregation of pharmaceutical products. These Track & Trace solutions enable seamless tracking of products across the entire value chain, in addition to complying with the Falsified Medicines Directive (FMD). This establishes the foundation for exchanging data between different interest groups, ensuring medication supply through optimized control and targeted management.



Figure 3: Folding Box Labeler (Model TE)



„For more than 30 years, we have been developing and constructing custom machines, including those tailored for the pharmaceutical industry. With specialized and industry-specific labeling solutions and high-performance labeling machines, aligned with the requirements of pharmaceutical labeling, we are capable of making a significant contribution to the success of pharmaceutical reform and the expansion of the industrial sector in Germany and Europe.“

*Alexander Beck, CEO*

## Technological Solutions for Pharmaceutical Reform: The Role of b+b trace and Innovative Labeling Systems

The pharmaceutical-specific labeling systems developed by b+b combine processes such as printing, identification, labeling, and verification. Examples of the use of these fully automated labeling solutions include ampoule labelers (RML model labeler), folding box labelers (TE model), tube labelers (RML60pharma model), and vial labelers (VRM model).

As an example, labeling a folding box with a unique serial number, aggregating it in the next higher packaging unit, and subsequently in a shipping unit, along with providing serial numbers and aggregation data for global systems, offers crucial advantages for the contemporary design of the pharmaceutical industry. This lays the groundwork for improving quality management and ensuring secure medications. Medications can be tracked seamlessly from the manufac-

turer to the end consumer, optimizing supply chains and reducing losses due to product aging within the supply chain. Additionally, cross-border delivery traffic is simplified, with reliable data available to customs authorities for individual shipments. Product recalls or loss reports can also be processed more efficiently and reliably.

„For more than 30 years, we have been developing and building special machines for the pharmaceutical industry,“ explains Alexander Beck, CEO of b+b Automations- und Steuerungstechnik GmbH. „With specialized and industry-specific labeling solutions and powerful labeling machines tailored to pharmaceutical labeling requirements, we are able to make a significant contribution to the success of pharmaceutical reform and the expansion of the industrial sector in Germany and Europe.“

For more information on the Track & Trace solution **bb trace**, visit <https://www.bb-trace.com>.



**S A F E**  
SERIALISATION  
LABELLING  
AUTOMATION

**b+b Automations- und Steuerungstechnik GmbH**

Beerfelden Werk I · Dieselstraße 18 · Airlenbach Werk II · Eichenstraße 38a · 64760 Oberzent

phone: +49 (0) 6068 9310-0 · fax: +49 (0) 6068 9310-8990

info@bb-automation.com · www.bb-automation.com