

Managing tens of thousands of packages daily and supplying a hundred pharmacies

EPC Familia, Wallonia's leading pharmaceutical group, manages logistics operations for over 13,000 SKUs with Mecalux's Easy WMS software.

Country: **Belgium** | Sector: **pharmaceutical**

The EPC (Popular Economy of Ciney) group was founded in this Belgian town in 1919 as a food industry cooperative. Starting in 1953, the company — with roots in the Christian Workers' Movement — achieved great success after specialising in pharmaceutical distribution. With two million prescriptions processed yearly, EPC Familia brings its expertise to over 300,000 customers across its more than 100 pharmacies and an additional 7,500 residents of assisted care facilities.

» **Founded: 1919**

» **No. of employees: 650 direct jobs**

When the goal is to make medications and healthcare accessible to as many people as possible at a fair price, logistics and cost control play a fundamental role. EPC Familia, part of the Popular Economy of Ciney group, understands the need to adopt the latest technological tools to professionalise its supply chain. Therefore, it digitalised its logistics operations responsible for supplying medications across Wallonia (Belgium's French-speaking region) using Mecalux's Easy WMS warehouse management system.



CHALLENGES

- Gain full **traceability** across all logistics operations.
- Improve **service quality** by providing pharmacies with a detailed list for each delivery.

SOLUTION

- **Easy WMS warehouse management system.**

BENEFITS

- Control over minimum inventory levels to **prevent stockouts.**
- **99% reduction in human errors.**



The former food co-op — which became a pharmaceutical company in 1953 — holds over 13,000 SKUs of pharmacy, health and wellness products in its warehouse in the Belgian town of Ciney. EPC Familia is the leading supplier in the Walloon Region and the second-largest distributor of medications in Belgium. It fills two million prescriptions annually and serves over 300,000 customers plus 7,500 residents of assisted care facilities. Additionally, it recently made its foray into e-commerce for pharmaceuticals.

The preparations for fulfilling this major mission are carried out in EPC Familia's warehouse in Ciney. The facility comprises three levels, each spanning 4,000 m², and fills up to 24,000 order lines a day. Every night, the warehouse overseen by Easy WMS supplies

a hundred pharmacies in Wallonia, ensuring patients receive their medication on time.

Professionalising logistics operations EPC Familia decided to implement this software to “transition from logistics 2.0 to a setup fit for the 21st century. We were looking for more rigorous traceability of our operations and to improve our service quality,” says a group representative. Another objective was for the pharmacies integrated into its network to receive a detailed list of the products sent in each shipment.

To streamline the pharmaceutical distributor's flow of goods, Easy WMS interfaces with EPC Familia's ERP software and the warehouse control system (WCS) that runs the conveyors. With this approach, the end-to-end soft-

ware solution provides complete, real-time product traceability and boosts productivity in the facility. Since the WMS was integrated into the company's day-to-day operations, human errors have decreased by 99%.

Easy WMS calculates and optimises the movement of boxes along the conveyor system linking the three warehouse floors. Moreover, it assigns picking tasks to operators in the area where the unit loads stop. With this method, EPC Familia fills 12,000 to 20,000 packages a day that are subsequently sent to pharmacies.

One of the features implemented in EPC Familia's facility is the receipt of advanced shipping notices (ASNs) from suppliers. These facilitate receiving and assigning locations to each medication. Additional advantages



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Supply Chain and Quality Expert,
EPC Familia

include guided stocktaking, zone-based replenishment, pre-packaging and minimum inventory level monitoring, a capability essential for preventing stockouts. To ensure control over its IT infrastructure, the business chose to install Easy WMS in the on-premise model. This allows for greater customisation in line with the group's evolving needs.

By reorganising its workflow, EPC Familia has achieved full traceability of its pharmaceuticals and improved the quality of its service. Furthermore, it has optimised picking operations with a pick-to-light system and increased its container fill rate for pharmacy delivery. Bernard Devriendt, Supply Chain and Quality Expert at EPC Familia, affirms that the company's partnership with Mecalux has strengthened the network's performance. “Mecalux's customer care in the implementation phase was key to our success. We felt fully supported and valued their commitment and availability,” says Devriendt.

