



Alliance Boots eyes rapid international growth for Alphega network

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Chemist + Druggist

Alliance Boots chief Ornella Barra wants to extend the company's independent pharmacy network rapidly beyond Europe to increase its membership.

As Alphega Pharmacy celebrated its 10th anniversary and 5,000th member at its annual European Convention in Monaco last week (November 29), Ms Barra told delegates the next meeting would involve "many more countries and at least twice as many pharmacies".

"My objective is to increase the European network but I want to go even further – I want to create an international network," said Ms Barra, chief executive of Alliance Boots' wholesale division. She added: "I don't want to wait; I want to do it very fast."

Independent pharmacies needed to join forces to affect government policy and resist threats from the economic climate and supermarkets, she said. "In the next few years we are going to have a very, very difficult economic situation," Ms Barra said. "In order to cut the costs of health, pharmacies are going to be very easy targets.

"The time has come to be united – this way it will be easier to have influence on the authorities and governments trying to change our profession."

But supermarkets were "the true risk to independent pharmacy", she added, so the latter needed to differentiate themselves from "a simple retailer". "We need to be proud of our profession," Ms Barra said.