



Dear Mr. Greco, dear EPF Members, dear Patients,

Thank you for your open call for continuing to work together during these troubled times. EuropaBio and the entire innovative health biotechnology industry stand together with you. The rapid spread of the coronavirus has tested the collective resolve of our society. In these trying times, working together for patients is more critical than ever before in our past collaborations. We commend your continued commitment highlighting the needs of all patients alike and support your recent call to safeguard and ensure their uninterrupted and secure access to healthcare.

We are closely following the on-going situation regarding COVID-19, in particular for patients with chronic and rare diseases, who EuropaBio members are trying to serve with innovative and often life-saving therapies. In the recent weeks, we have been prioritising our focus on patients and the accelerated contribution of our industry towards innovative biotechnology solutions.

Like you, at EuropaBio we strive to understand the wide range of issues which the pandemic presents. Uninterrupted access to medicines and increased demand, continuity of treatment for patients suffering rare and chronic diseases, and continuation of clinical trials for advanced therapies are but a few of these. Working in close contact with the European Medicines Agency and the European Commission, we have raised these issues and are actively working in collaboration with our members in the life sciences and biotechnology sector to address such concerns.

Today, we can reassure you that while supply chains are being tested, the demands of the EU healthcare systems are being met. Our members have found alternatives to hospital-based treatments, for example, in providing for home infusion systems for rare disease patients. This ensures patients receive the treatment they need, decreasing the burden on the healthcare system, and offering them the ability to remain safely at home. We are also exploring

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other remote solutions with the competent health authorities, particularly in relation to clinical trials.

At the same time, the members of EuropaBio are at the forefront of providing biotechnology derived solutions to COVID-19 patients. Drawing on a wealth of scientific expertise, we are confident that it is not a question of *if* we can find a solution – it is *when*. A safe solution is paramount, and once it is available, we will work tirelessly to ensure its widespread accessibility in a transparent and ethical manner.

The engagement of patients in the entire research and development lifecycles of medicines has always had our full support. We welcome the recent publication of the EMA's Regulatory Science Strategy to 2025, which heavily emphasises the need to engage with patients. We pledge to work towards that end with the EMA and all patient organisations through EuropaBio's Patients BioForum on which the EPF sits.

The coronavirus has shone a light on many of the strengths and weaknesses which face our society. It is essential for us to consider the lessons learned from dealing with COVID-19. Life sciences and biotechnology will play a key role in the healthcare environment of today and of the future. At EuropaBio, we are already actively working with our members to reflect on the role of our industry in ensuring the resilience and sustainability of our healthcare systems after this crisis is overturned. EuropaBio is also anticipating major threats to the European research and innovation engine with the looming economic crisis. In particular, there are threats to the role of start-ups and SMEs in the life sciences and biotechnology ecosystem. All efforts need to be made to preserve these critical sources of research and innovation for the future.

Dear Marco, you can count on us. We pledge our full commitment to working together to solve this. With the EPF and all patient organisations, with other industry representatives, with regulators, and with national and international political institutions. We all have our part to play. Ours is to provide novel solutions and treatments and our industry is more motivated than ever to do so, to rise to the challenge of this pandemic. Together we will come out stronger.

Stay safe.

Best wishes,

Bernard J. Grimm

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