

EuropaBio sat down with new Member Lithuanian Biotechnology Association

Interview with... Agne Vaitkeviciene



About Agne

Agne Vaitkeviciene holds a BS in molecular biology (Vilnius University, Lithuania) and MS in organ, tissue and cell donation (University of Barcelona, Spain). Since 2006 she has been working in the field of cell therapy. In 2013 Agne Vaitkeviciene co-founded a life science start-up company and managed its activities in the field of advanced therapy medicinal product research and manufacturing as CEO until 2019. Since 2019 she is actively involved as an expert in EU programs, such as IMI2, EIT Health Innostars and consults biotechnology companies in life science product development management. For the last 3 years Agne Vaitkeviciene has been actively involved in life science expert groups within governmental organizations such as "Enterprise Lithuania", Science, Innovation and Technology Agency, "Invest Lithuania" and others. Lithuanian biotechnology association elected Agne as a vice-president in 2019 and delegated responsibilities of coordinating foreign affairs and startup support activities within the association. In 2020 Agne Vaitkeviciene became an executive director of Lithuanian biotechnology association. Agne is a board member at Vilnius University Life Science Center and Center of Innovative Medicine. From 2021 February Agne joined US based company Cureline Group Inc., as a Chief Operating Officer to run the branch "Cureline Baltic" in Vilnius, Lithuania.

1) What inspired the foundation of LBTA?

Since the foundation of the Lithuanian Biotechnology Association in 2003, the association had one main objective: to unite and bring together experts from the country's biotechnology sector. To this day, we aim to foster this idea, while actively striving to involve as many profound biotechnology professionals from business and academia, as well as actively communicating about the ever-changing and growing sector with the society.



2) What are the priorities of your members in Lithuania?

Lithuanian biotechnology association focus on three priority areas covering life sciences, health technologies and bioeconomy. Our members consist of academia, SMEs and corporations operating in the field of biotechnology. We believe that fostering stronger academia-business collaboration and supporting start-up ecosystem acceleration processes, as well as enabling regulatory flexibility for technological implementation are the key priority tasks for our members.

3) How does Lithuania want to position itself within the European biotech economy?

Lithuania's life science sector is one of the fastest growing in Europe. The contribution of the biotechnology industry to Lithuania's GDP grew from 0.82% in 2010 and to 2.38% in 2019. In 2020, during the pandemic, sector's revenue has increased by about 1.5 times and preliminary data shows, that it will be reaching 3.5% of Lithuania's GDP. Our sector has repeatedly demonstrated the impact on the global biotech arena, starting from Lithuanian-based companies like Thermo fisher Scientific, to the development of niche technologies in universities or start-ups. Globally leading technologies are focused in the field of gene engineering, biomolecule synthesis, synthetic biology and omic technologies. Following the direction of EU Green Deal, Lithuania's biotechnology sector emphasises its contribution within biotechnology-based bioeconomy seeking to build strong collaborative initiatives.

4) What partnerships are you looking to achieve in EuropaBio?

We are seeking to support academia and biotech industry in Lithuania to become a significant part of Europe biotechnology progress and growth. Therefore, we are open for collaborative projects, acceleration indicatives, international partnerships. We believe that Lithuania, as well as other Baltic states, are unintentionally overlooked and could become strong force for Europe's goals of the future.

