

EuropaBio celebrated its inaugural National Associations Council Summit: Collaborations and trust are vital to build a responsive and competitive biotech sector in Europe

NEWS RELEASE

Brussels, 11 May 2021

This week EuropaBio organised its inaugural National Associations Council Summit 'Building on Biotechnology: From vaccines to economic Growth for Europe'. The Summit was co-hosted by P-Bio and supported by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU.

This Summit kicked off with welcome message of **Manuel Heitor**, Portuguese Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education. The Minister acknowledged the critical role of networked national associations representing the biotechnology sector. 'We need to enrich diversity and understand the opportunities to build networks, and EuropaBio can be a game changer in the overall European context', he said.

Dr Claire Skentelbery, Director General of EuropaBio stressed that biotechnology has an important impact on the economic performance within the EU countries and shared the results of the recent [economic report](#) published with the Wifor Institute. 'Biotechnology is an economic force: a substantial employer and skills generator, which grows additional services' sectors and creates major clusters within Europe', she said.

The first part of the event was devoted to **discussing new biotechnology ecosystems in Europe**. Companies active in the current response to Covid-19, **P-Bio** presented the biotech landscape and economic ambitions for Portugal, before **Novartis and Pfizer** shared with participants how they have built vital collaborations across the biotech-pharma spectrum to deliver breakthrough vaccine technologies to patients at unprecedented speed and how they envision future potential in the sector, including a change to their own perspectives learned from working with agile SMEs.

The second session invited us to **look into the future - speed and strength from biotech**. SMEs **Immunethp and UNION Therapeutics** discussed the critical framework needed to build further from national and European ecosystem advances from Covid, accelerating biotech contribution to Europe's economic development.



The event was wrapped up with a panel discussion with representatives from the National Councils of **Lithuania, France, Portugal** and **Norway**. The representatives discussed the top priorities to build a competitive biotech economy in Europe. Speakers stressed the importance of collaboration between academia, small companies and large companies. 'Biotech is not only about vaccines, we have to look beyond it and use the full potential of the sector for the benefit of society,' said **Simão Soares, P-BIO**.

Agne Vaitkevičienė, the Lithuanian Biotechnology Association emphasised the importance of national strategies. 'Biotech in Lithuania is one of the fastest growing in Europe. However, on the national level we are learning to build a clear strategy and better investment in innovations.'

Chloe Evans, France Biotech highlighted the importance of late-stage funding, biomanufacturing, market access and technology transfer 'It is important to be very quick when it comes to transferring the technology. International collaboration is the key aspect in ensuring that this process runs smoothly'.

Hanne Mette Dyrllie Kristensen, The Life Science Cluster (Norway) shared experience, challenges and lessons learnt from the pandemic in the light of biotechnology, particularly as a country Associated to the EU. According to her, collaboration and knowledge exchange are vital in developing new solutions in the sector.

The conclusions from the Summit will be summarised in the report which will be published in the upcoming weeks.

ENDS

Media contact

Dovilė Sandaraitė, Communications Manager

Email: d.sandaraitė@europabio.org

About EuropaBio

EuropaBio, the European Association for Bioindustries, promotes an innovative and dynamic European biotechnology industry. EuropaBio and its members are committed to the socially responsible use of biotechnology to improve quality of life, to prevent, diagnose, treat and cure diseases, to improve the quality and quantity of food and feedstuffs and to move towards a biobased and zero-waste economy. EuropaBio represents corporate and associate members across sectors, plus national and regional biotechnology associations which, in turn, represent over 2500 biotech SMEs. Read more about our work at www.europabio.org.

