

EuropaBio sat down with new member MabDesign, to find out about its work with the French biopharmaceutical industry

Interview with... Nicolas Groux, CEO at MabDesign



About Nicolas Groux

Nicolas has a double degree with a Master in Biotechnology and biochemistry engineering from the Claude Bernard University Lyon 1 and a specialized MBA Management of Innovation and Technology from the EMLyon Business School. Nicolas has been leading the MabDesign project since its inception in 2011. He has been the Chief Operating Officer of MabDesign until 2021. He is now the CEO.

1) What inspired MabDesign to join EuropaBio?

For the past 6 years, MabDesign has been structuring and supporting the development of the French biopharmaceutical industry through major actions on continuous training, events organization, communication and consulting to companies. The MabDesign association, which now has more than 215 members, is ready to bring its message and the voice of the French industry at a European level. Indeed, its initial work to structure the French biopharmaceutical industry was the first step of a greater initiative that must now lead to a reflection at the European level.

2) What are the policy areas which offer opportunities and potential challenges for biotherapy in the EU?

The pandemic has shown that France and Europe are highly dependent on a number of issues, including access to certain raw materials, laboratory equipment and the ability to produce vital therapeutics on its territory.

There is now an opportunity to implement new policies, particularly through the PIIEC project, to accelerate reindustrialization and make Europe the leader it should be in the development of tomorrow's biotherapies.

In terms of regulations, Europe must also take the lead to optimize the development of biomedicines and the access to clinical trials in order to offer innovative solutions to European patients as soon as possible.



Finally, in terms of financing, Europe faces a major challenge in supporting the growth of its companies. Although high-quality collaborative tools exist in terms of public support (e.g. IMI, PIIEC), European companies are struggling to raise enough private money to meet for instance clinical trial expenses.

3) What are the priorities of your members in France?

MabDesign's priority for its members is both simple and ambitious: to make biomedicines accessible to as many people as possible, especially in Europe, by optimizing their development and production costs in order to make their use sustainable for the health systems of the various countries.

Let's take production as an example. France, like Europe, has undergone massive deindustrialization of its healthcare industry over the last few decades to produce in lower-cost countries. The Covid-19 crisis has demonstrated the limits of this system.

Furthermore, the bioproduction capacity in France has decreased throughout the last decade. Indeed, in France, 95% of biomedicine used to treat patients are imported. Nevertheless, there are currently more than 500 biomedicines under development in France, making France the 3rd European country for the development of biomedicine candidates. This lack of bioproduction capacity can be also extended to Europe, which must regain control of its health independence.

On the pharmaceutical side in the broad sense (bio and chemical), of the 404 products marketed in Europe since 2016, only 33 are produced in France making France at the 6th ranking position in Europe.

Faced with this situation, France has nevertheless considerable assets, with a dense and high-quality network of innovative service providers, offering biomedical developers all the services they need to develop new biotherapeutics in France and in Europe. These companies are becoming more than just service providers; they are becoming true partners on whom we must rely.

4) How does France want to position itself within the European biotech economy?

France must regain its position as European leader in the healthcare industry and Europe must continue to structure itself collectively in order to meet the challenges of tomorrow, which include health independence, the use of Artificial Intelligence to accelerate the development of tomorrow's therapies, and the need to reconcile ecology and health, particularly through Factory 4.0.

