

Biomedical Alliance in Europe

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1. COVID-19 pandemic spreads throughout Europe



In these challenging times, the BioMed Alliance is closely following the developments related to COVID-19 in Europe. We admire the efforts of health professionals and researchers across Europe to contain the spread of the virus and to take care of affected patients. We also urge everyone to take precautions and to follow the advice of the relevant authorities.

The pandemic has had a major impact on our activities and on the policy developments at EU level. As the situation changes with the day, we will try to keep you updated as much as possible via e-mail and our website. We also recommend that you keep an eye on our Twitter account where we post regular updates on news regarding COVID-19.

2. Teleconference on the consequences of the coronavirus for societies



As a direct result of the outbreak of the coronavirus disease, many European medical and research associations have decided, or are envisioning, to postpone, or to cancel some of their meetings, events or congresses. This is a common issue for most of BioMed Alliance members, and the consequences of the decisions made, or to be made, are numerous: the responsibilities as learned society leaders, the mission, and financial stability are at risk.

Therefore, the BioMed Alliance took the initiative to organise a teleconference related to this issue on 18 March. It was attended by over 60 participants and moderated by President Wilfried Ellmeier.

Isabel Bardinet (ESC), Carin Smand (EHA) and Werner Bill (ERS) shared their experience and discussed relevant questions with participants.

Main conclusions:

- The COVID-19 pandemic will significantly affect medical and research societies and the organisation of many events including the main congresses.
- All relevant actors should be involved early on in the decision-making process.
- Different options include cancellation, postponement or using virtual solutions.
- Several factors affect the decision including faculty availability, industry positions, delegate interests, insurance and contractual considerations and local conditions.
- Effective and targeted communication is key.

Next steps:

- The BioMed Alliance will raise awareness at EU level on the role of European medical and research societies, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their activities (see below). Several BioMed Alliance Members have already published information on similar initiatives.
- BioMed Alliance will organise another teleconference (end of April/beginning of May) to discuss the latest developments and any follow-up questions that societies may have.



3. Open letter to EC President Ursula von der Leyen



As a follow up of the Coronavirus consequences TC, the BioMed Alliance released a new statement and a letter to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen calling for support for medical and research societies to ensure continued guidance for healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As medical congresses are being cancelled or postponed, many societies are faced with substantial financial losses that may threaten their ability to provide clinical guidance to health professionals and even their very existence. Therefore, the Biomedical Alliance in Europe calls on the EU and Member States to support medical and research societies to ensure they can continue providing their services now and in the future.

Read the letter to President Ursula von der Leyen [here](#) and the statement [here](#).

4. Spring Meeting goes digital



The BioMed Alliance leadership has decided that all face-to-face meetings that were planned until the end of May will take place online. This means that the Spring Meeting on 13 May will be converted into a teleconference from 14.00-16.30.

As an active player in the health field, and an organisation that represents health professionals, the leadership concluded that under the current circumstances it would be irresponsible to bring groups of people active in the health field together. We will continue monitoring the situation to see how to proceed with events organised later in the year.

5. EU Policy during the current COVID-19 pandemic



The responses of national health systems to the present pandemic have mainly been overseen at member state level. Nonetheless, EU institutions have implemented a range of measures to assist member states and to some extent coordinate the approach at European level. The EU has e.g. introduced economic measures, facilitated repatriation of EU citizens and supported calls and projects related to COVID-19 research (see the [European Commission](#) and [IMI](#) websites).

The pandemic has also affected the implementation of European legislations and programmes. The European Union will e.g. **extend the deadlines of upcoming Horizon 2020 calls**. As negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (European budget) have become less of a priority, and it may take more time to reach an agreement, the **implementation of Horizon Europe may be delayed**. In addition, the European Commission is working on a [proposal](#) to **postpone the application date of the Medical Devices Regulation** by one year to 26 May 2021.

The European Commission has also launched a **“COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System”**, which is based on experiences with the European Reference Networks and aims to help create rapid connections across Europe among the hospitals identified by Member States as reference centres for COVID-19. There will be a dedicated Commission helpdesk, which

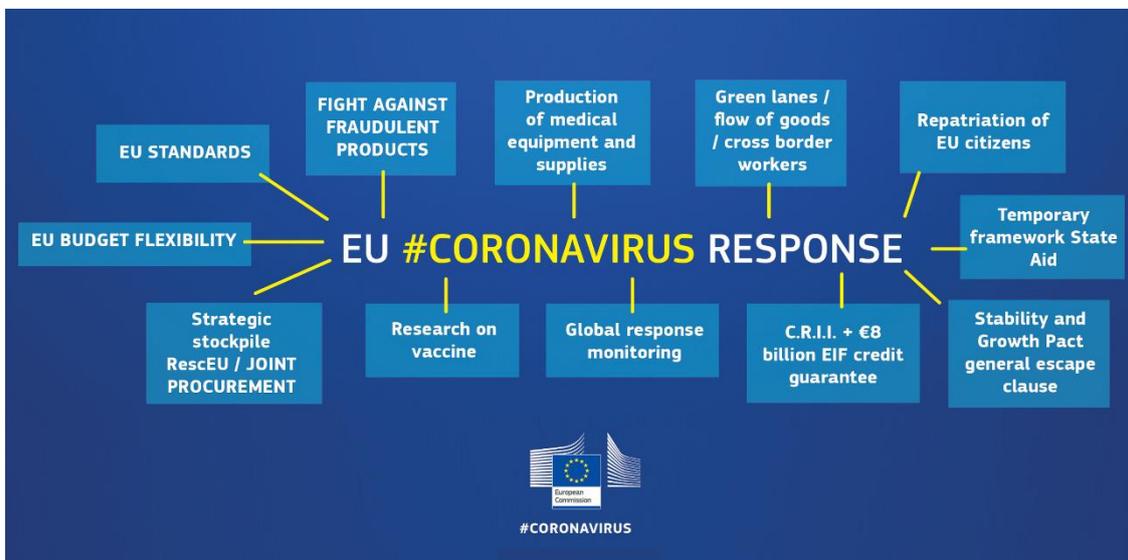


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will set up teleconferences to facilitate information exchanges between clinicians across Europe on the treatment of COVID-19.

Experts across Europe that are jointly engaging in research on COVID-19 also face practical barriers, for example when it comes to **GDPR application**. Therefore, the European Data Protection Board released a [statement](#) on the processing of personal data in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Take a look at some of the main elements of the EU's coronavirus response below:



6. Webinar announced on working with patients with chronic diseases



The first [Webinar](#) of the EU Health Policy Platform 2020 Thematic Network on “Profiling and training the health workers of the future” is planned for Tuesday 7 April from 11.00 to 12.00 (via WebEx). The BioMed Alliance has contributed to the proposal for this thematic network and the first webinar aims to discuss how health care professionals could be even better prepared to meet the needs of patients with chronic

conditions. Specifically, the webinar will explore heart failure and diabetes. Case studies will be presented to give practical examples on how education and training can improve continuity and coordination of care for those in need.

7. Upcoming

- The first [Webinar](#) of the EUHPP 2020 Thematic Network on “**Profiling and training the health workers of the future**” is planned for Tuesday 7 April from 11.00 to 12:00
- The 2nd **EU Health Summit** organised by the [EU Health Coalition](#) was supposed to take place on 4-5 May 2020 but **will be postponed due to COVID-19. The new date will be announced in the near future.**
- The **BioMed Alliance Spring Meeting** 2020 will take place on 13 May 2020 (from 14:00 to 16:00) **as a teleconference.**
- The next meeting of the **Regulatory Affairs and Medical Devices Taskforce** will take place **online** on 14 May
- The **General Assembly** will be held on 26 November 2020