



# Building a stronger Life Science Sector

Considerations of healthcare professionals and researchers for the new Strategy for European Life Sciences

European medical societies represented within the Biomedical Alliance in Europe (BioMed Alliance), call for a reform of the European Life Science Sector. While the EU Life Science Sector can benefit from a wealth of knowledge including top universities, prominent researchers and innovative companies, Europe is falling behind compared to its global counterparts such as the USA in terms of Life Science Sector attractiveness<sup>1</sup>. Change is necessary to keep research and innovation in Europe and build a stronger Life Science Sector that can compete at a global level, and that can ensure rapid access for patients to new health innovations.

## Towards a Life Science Strategy

The BioMed Alliance, a non-profit organisation representing 35 leading European medical societies and hundreds of thousands of researchers and health professionals, welcomes the European Commission's ambition to create a new strategy for European Life Sciences. This new strategy proposes action to strengthen life science research and innovation in Europe, and identifies key challenges and opportunities to strengthen European knowledge in life science and support the digital and green transitions.

Healthcare professionals and researchers urge policy makers to embrace health and biomedical research as a strategic investment. Europe needs to take a proactive approach to life science research and policy. Strengthening investment in research and innovation will increase the number of healthy years lived by European citizens as well as give European patients earlier access to innovative healthcare solutions. This will result in helping the EU to remain competitive on the global stage, be at the forefront of scientific progress as well as driving societal well-being and economic prosperity.

Despite the growth of life sciences in Europe, the gap with the United States and China is increasing significantly, and there are persistent barriers to the translation of scientific knowledge to their application in clinical care. The USA outperforms Europe on most life science innovation indicators while China shows a more contrasted picture but benefits greatly from its size and low costs<sup>2</sup>. Industry partners have indicated that the USA remains the preferred jurisdiction for developers to file innovations, and new active substances authorised by all agencies are submitted to the US FDA before being submitted to the EU<sup>1</sup>. For Europe, strong efforts are required to enhance and strengthen the attractiveness of the EU countries for timely and affordable availability of innovations to all European patients.

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<sup>1</sup> See the study in support of the evaluation and impact assessment of the EU general pharmaceuticals legislation by the European Commission in 2022 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1ef02afc-e3e7-11ed-a05c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>2</sup> See Gijssels (2023). Attracting Life Science Investments in Europe [https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Life\\_Science\\_Attractiveness\\_-\\_2023\\_November\\_22\\_Final\\_Final\\_LR2.pdf](https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Life_Science_Attractiveness_-_2023_November_22_Final_Final_LR2.pdf)



### Key recommendations

#### **Provide sufficient funding for health research**

Healthcare professionals are concerned that health funding at EU level may be reduced in the next Multiannual Financial Framework, particularly with current geopolitical developments and the shift of prioritisation towards funding for Defence and AI. Although key health policy and funding instruments have an impressive track record of generating new insights on human health, policy makers are likely to consider cutting the budget attributed to health and biomedical research which seriously impedes protection of the health of European citizens. This is concerning considering that the number of threats to the health of EU citizens is increasing, with COVID-19 pandemic fresh in our memory and other health crises on the horizon including a rising incidence of chronic diseases, population ageing, anti-microbial resistance and the emergence of new pathogens with pandemic potential. In addition to providing health improvement, health and biomedical research has proven to be a key driver for the economy. Competitive investments in life science research is essential to be able to close the gap with the USA and China<sup>3</sup>

Funding of multidisciplinary collaborations in translational research is needed to foster knowledge, entrepreneurship and partnership between stakeholders. Top-down funding for defined thematic research areas for collaborative, interdisciplinary and translational research projects should be complimented with similar funding schemes that support bottom-up approaches.

#### **Ensuring the necessary building blocks are in place**

The creation of the European Health Data Space (EHDS) can play an important role in reducing current barriers to health data sharing, to facilitate the delivery of healthcare and the reuse of data for research and policy making. Policy makers at EU and national level must put in place sufficient support and resources to ensure that EHDS can live up to its ambition to become a useful tool for researchers, healthcare professionals and patients across Europe.

Support is also necessary for the training of healthcare professionals and researchers, including to help with the digital transition, and to inform them on regulatory aspects that impact their work. Healthcare professionals and researchers often wear a broad variety of different hats and can be active in patient care, academia, research, clinical trials, ethical committees, scientific committees and/or regulatory procedures. A broad skillset is therefore necessary to empower researchers and healthcare professionals and to reduce the gap between bench, regulatory approval and bedside. In addition, healthcare professionals often have to balance these various engagements and involvement in health research related activities with a busy academic and/or clinical career, that does not always recognise them as 'hours spent on the job'. As these activities provide an essential contribution to the life science sector and regulatory systems, they must be recognised by healthcare and academic institutions as part of healthcare professionals' appointment, so they can dedicate the necessary time to them.

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<sup>3</sup> See Gijssels (2023). Attracting Life Science Investments in Europe [https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Life\\_Science\\_Attractiveness\\_-\\_2023\\_November\\_22\\_Final\\_Final\\_LR2.pdf](https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Life_Science_Attractiveness_-_2023_November_22_Final_Final_LR2.pdf)



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It is also essential that stakeholders such as healthcare professionals, researchers and patients are involved in the development and implementation of the Life Science Strategy.

### **Address bureaucratic and regulatory complexity**

The European regulatory framework for medicines, medical devices and digital solutions is becoming increasingly complex. For example, the Medical Devices Regulation interlinks with several key new regulations including the Artificial Intelligence Act, the In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation, the European Health Data Space, the Regulation on Health Technology Assessment, and the Clinical Trials Regulation. There is an important need for legal clarity on the overlap between these regulations, and others.

Upholding high safety standards is essential, but unnecessary regulatory complexity and a large number of overlapping, and sometimes contradictory, regulations can create uncertainty and differential interpretation, thus creating a hurdle for conducting research and bringing innovation to patients. In particular, academic researchers, innovators, start-ups, SMEs and manufacturers of health innovations catering to unmet medical needs may not have the resources or expertise to navigate such a complex system. We must strike the right balance with sufficient support, mechanisms for early dialogue and advice, and regulatory science funding to ensure the proper implementation of regulatory files and better coordination across proposals.

Similarly, administrative burdens and unnecessary bureaucracy can hinder research and reduce life science attractiveness. For instance, in the area of clinical trials, excessive bureaucracy can slow down or hamper academic clinical trials, thus limiting patient access to novel therapeutics<sup>4</sup>. A broad variety of measures will be necessary to address this issue, building on the recommendations of the Coalition for Reducing Bureaucracy in Clinical Trials<sup>5</sup>. In addition, there is a need for greater harmonisation of reviews of ethical committees across member states to support cross-border research and reduce duplication. This includes mutual recognition of approvals of ethical committees for projects submitted by recognised academic or health institutions.

### **Improve coordination in the system**

Various stakeholders have been calling for a strengthened coordination and cooperation across the health research ecosystem, starting with earlier support from the Biomed Alliance in 2012<sup>6</sup> and the Scientific Panel for Health in 2018<sup>7</sup>. There is a need for robust governance as well as safeguarding scientific integrity. The creation of a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder health research and innovation structure that would provide guidance, leadership and coordination for health research in Europe would increase the impact of health research and create societal and

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<sup>4</sup> See for instance Ianiro, Ollivier and Ricciardiello (2022), Reducing bureaucracy in clinical trials, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9731653/>

<sup>5</sup> See the recommendations of the Coalition for Reducing Bureaucracy in Clinical Trials here: <https://bureaucracyincts.eu/publications/>

<sup>6</sup> See Biomedical Alliance in Europe (2012). Urgent need for a pan-European strategic platform for health research [https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/BioMed\\_HealthResearchConceptPaper\\_2012-2.pdf](https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/BioMed_HealthResearchConceptPaper_2012-2.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> See Scientific Panel of Health (2018). Building the future of health research. Proposal for a European Council for Health Research [https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Building\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_health\\_research\\_SPH\\_22052018\\_final.pdf](https://www.biomedeuropa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Building_the_future_of_health_research_SPH_22052018_final.pdf).



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economic value for the EU. Such an entity would create long-term vision and strategy for health research, engage Member States and the EU in joint action to fund health research, train/upskill appropriately adapted healthcare professions and provide visibility for European health research and innovation<sup>8</sup>.