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**EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM**

Fitter for the future: Building resilience & preparedness in Europe's pharma and healthcare

Summary

6 July 2022



EU Clusters Talk “Fitter for the future: Building resilience & preparedness in Europe's pharma and healthcare sectors”

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform organised this EU Clusters Talk on 6 July 2022, 8:30 – 10:00 CEST, to take stock, look at the lessons learned, and speak about the crisis preparedness of the EU pharma, life-science, and healthcare sectors. Furthermore, we heard from Ukrainian colleagues about the situation of their healthcare system, their challenges, and their needs.

Agenda of the meeting

Moderation: Jennifer Baker

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform
2. Perspectives from the European Commission
Hubert Gambis, Deputy Director-General of Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) and Head of the Task Force for the industrial scale up of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics, European Commission
3. International cooperation in health
Mar Martinez, International Cooperation Officer, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission
4. Panel debate: Are we prepared for a future health crisis?
Ignasi Biosca Reig, Chief Executive Officer at Laboratorio Reig Jofre SA
Francesco Maria Senatore, Business Development, Toscana Life Sciences Foundation
Anaïs Le Corvec, Network Manager, Council of European BioRegions
5. Situation in the Ukrainian healthcare system
Tetyana Vorontsova, Head of Rivne Medical Cluster
Sergey Kutsevlyak, CEO, MedStar
Dmytry Rusnak, Anesthetist, Pirogov First Volunteer Mobile Hospital (PFVMH)
6. Funding opportunities

Key takeaways: crisis preparedness

- The production capacity, particularly, to react quickly is still an issue.
- Public health and crisis preparedness need to be coordinated among all relevant stakeholders and correlated with the industrial capacity.
- The new collaborations between companies, clusters, and institutions that developed out of necessity during the covid crisis need to be consolidated into long-term initiatives and partnerships.
- If we want to be better prepared and be resilient, we need to enhance the enabling environment and improve the business conditions.
- There is a strong need for diversifying global value chains.
- More investment is needed to be better prepared for the future. Even though Europe has many qualified people and is leading in innovation, big production and investment come from America and Asia, which means that intellectual property leaves Europe.
- Preparedness also goes together with the green transition, which is a complicated challenge in the life-science sector because of the regulations.

Healthcare situation in Ukraine: Needs

- Need for mobile hospitals, cars, and the corresponding logistics to place them in safe areas and to be able to attend to the wounded and sick, both military personnel and civilians



- Roll-out of telemedicine and remote consultations are important instruments in unsafe areas. Needed equipment includes infrared thermometry, point-of-care analyser, digital stethoscope, portable urine analyser, portable testing of haemoglobin and lipids in blood, and other portable devices.
- Further needed equipment: ventilators, ambulances vehicles, intubation equipment, perfusors, pumps, portable patient monitors, remote medical care analysis for blood, blood products and substitutes
- Development of physical and psychological rehabilitation
- In areas near the hostilities, there is a need for the integral reconstruction of hospitals, a new network of medical institutions, and the creation of modular field hospitals.
- In safer areas, the healthcare reforms continue. The hospitals need new innovative equipment, training of personnel, exchange of experience and internships in cardiac surgery, oncology, surgery, traumatology, and others.
- Training of people to act in emergency situations, including training of doctors in protocols for providing assistance to the injured
- Funding for systematic creation of training centres

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

After the introduction by moderator Jennifer Baker, the following news items were presented:

1. [Open call for expression of interest](#) to host one of the 13 next “Clusters meet Regions” events in 2022 and 2023. The first cut-off will be on 29 July 2022.
2. [EU-Singapore Matchmaking](#). Two different calls are open: representatives from cluster organisations and small and medium-sized enterprises from EU (and non-EU-COSME countries). New deadline is 17 July 2022.
3. [State aid – exemptions for small amounts of aid \(de minimis aid\) \(update\)](#) These rules are set to expire on 31 December 2023. This initiative aims to revise them to update the exempted amounts in light of inflation and improve transparency. Feedback period: 27 June 2022 - 25 July 2022.
4. [Security Union](#): Commission welcomes agreement on new rules to enhance the resilience of critical entities (CER Directive).
5. [Consequences of war on Ukraine: More support with “Flexible Assistance to Territories”](#). The European Commission adopted a package for additional flexibility for the implementation of Cohesion Policy investments.
6. Private [matchmaking solution for transporting Ukraine's produce](#) from Transporeon, an EU based transportation management platform. Webinar on 14 July.
7. European Commission presented the new [European Innovation Agenda](#) to spearhead the new innovation wave.

2. Perspectives from the European Commission

Hubert Gambs, Deputy Director-General of Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) and Head of the Task Force for the industrial scale up of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics, European Commission



Hubert Gambs reflected on where the European Union stands in terms of resilience and preparedness in the healthcare sector, and he looked at the experience and the lessons learned by the Task Force for the industrial scale up of COVID-19 vaccines.

In the beginning of 2021, we faced an immense industrial challenge to ramp up the production of covid-19 vaccines and the supply of personal protective equipment, respirators, and other medical equipment. The researchers did a phenomenal job in record time. They had two objectives: produce enough COVID-19 vaccines in the EU and live up to Europe's global responsibility to supply vaccine doses beyond the European Union. As a result, the EU became one of the largest COVID-19 vaccine producers in the world with a production capacity that has now reached around 300 million doses per month.

Hubert Gambs stressed that they have learned a lot from this experience and that it is the time to translate the lessons into long-term initiatives. The Commission is active in five work streams. First, the Commission works on identifying and removing production bottlenecks in the European Union. They identified over 150 bottlenecks, for instance bioreactor bags or vials. He emphasized that they not only support vaccine producers, but also suppliers to understand the capacity of manufacturers. In March 2021, they opened a regular dialogue with the United States, which led to a formalised [US – EU joint COVID-19 Manufacturing and Supply Chain Taskforce](#) to ensure the smooth functioning of supply chains across the Atlantic.

He pointed out that they continue identifying vulnerabilities and critical supplies and materials. Moreover, they work on facilitating new partnerships on vaccines and therapeutics production, notably through three matchmaking events that took place in 2020 and 2021. Hubert Gambs thanked the partners European Clusters Alliance and the Council of European Bioregions for the organisation of the matchmaking events.

Another work stream is ensuring sufficient long-term manufacturing capacity in Europe, in addition to addressing supply chain shortages, mapping the production, and stimulating industrial partnership. Hubert Gambs highlighted the strong industrial dimension of the [European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response authority \(HERA\)](#). HERA improves the development of manufacturing and distribution of key medical countermeasures that are needed in case of a health emergency. The work of HERA is crucial to work closely with the industry, address bottlenecks, analyse our dependencies, identify critical production facilities and ensure that the EU has sufficient manufacturing capacities and production sites that are ready to produce. He referred to three initiatives: the [Joint Industrial Cooperation Forum](#), the [EU FAB](#) and "[Important Projects of Common European Interest \(IPCEI\)](#)" in the area of health.

Furthermore, Hubert Gambs introduced the work stream in supporting global vaccine access and maximum sharing efforts. The EU is the biggest exporter of COVID-19 vaccines with over 2.4 billion doses exported to 167 countries. They have organised an Africa marketplace and matchmaking efforts on pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.

Closing his statement, he highlighted who has done all these efforts, starting with the expertise and the commitment from the Commission, HERA, the cooperation with Member States and the close contact with industry and international stakeholders and organisations. There are many challenges ahead, the pandemic is not over, and new variants may emerge. But there is a key lesson that they have learned: the public health and crisis preparedness need to be coordinated among all stakeholders and correlated with the industrial capacity.

3. International cooperation in health

Mar Martinez, International Cooperation Officer, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission



In her introduction, Mar Martinez explained that the DG for International Partnerships is reinforcing the partnership with Africa in health issues. The main action package is Global Gateway based on four flagships: support COVID-19 vaccine supply, MAV+ (manufacturing and access to vaccines), strengthening health systems, and the capacity for pandemic preparedness and enable the environment for sexual and reproductive health.

Looking at MAV+, she highlighted the strong need for diversifying global value chains. Their partners in Africa need to be self-sufficient. She presented a concentric circles model to tackle the challenges, which includes removing bottlenecks for the local manufacturing and the supply side. In order to make imports and exports possible, there are a number of barriers that need to be removed, for instance the need to upgrade skills.

Mar Martinez explained that they launched their local manufacturing and access initiative that was announced in May last year on the context of the G20 Health Summit. This collaboration was reinforced at the AU-EU Africa Summit in February 2022. She shared insights into the recent EU-Africa Marketplace and matchmaking event that they organised together with DG GROW. Moreover, she explained the Global Gateway partnership on manufacturing vaccines, medicines and health technologies in Latin America and the Caribbean, that was announced on 22 June.

In terms of financing, Team Europe has committed 1 billion EUR from the EU budget, together with Member States and European development financial institutions. On regional level, the Commission mobilised 40 million EUR last year, supporting technology transfer hub in Africa and South America. Furthermore, they are preparing a new financial decision of 20 million EUR by the end of 2022 to support the African Medicines Agency (AMA) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

In terms of concrete projects, they are supporting the first phase of [MADIBA project](#) (Manufacturing in Africa for Disease Immunization and Building Autonomy) in Senegal; the European Commission is supporting the respective medicines regulatory authorities in Ghana and Rwanda; and Team Europe has supported the expansion of vaccine production capacity in South Africa.

Mar Martinez introduced the Joint Intervention Logic that has the objective to integrate the African healthcare industry into global value chains and produces vaccines and health technology products of GMP standard.

Closing her presentation, she highlighted the need to engage with a variety of stakeholders, CSOs, private sector, academia researchers and international partners as the main lesson learned. If we want to be better prepared and be resilient, we need to enhance the enabling environment and improving the business conditions.

4. Panel debate: Are we prepared for a future health crisis?

Before the beginning of the discussion, the three panellists introduced themselves and their organisations:

Ignasi Biosca Reig, Chief Executive Officer at Laboratorio Reig Jofre SA

[Reig Jofre](#) was founded in 1929 in Barcelona, Spain, and works on the research, development, manufacturing, and marketing of pharmaceutical products, especially injectables. The company employs 1,188 employees, most of them in Spain but also in France, Sweden, Portugal, Belgium, and the UK. By the end of 2020, there was a huge demand of injectable products. They signed an agreement with Johnson and Johnson to manufacture the vaccine within the European borders.

Francesco Maria Senatore, Business Development, Toscana Life Sciences Foundation

[Toscana Life Sciences](#) is a non-profit foundation dedicated to scientific research, bio-incubation, and technology transfer. They operate with a public-private partnership approach. They manage the



regional cluster Advanced Life Sciences in Italy (ALISEI) and the National Association for Innovation Ecosystems and startups (InnovUp). He is also a member of the Council of European BioRegions.



Anaïs Le Corvec, Network Manager, Council of European BioRegions

Anaïs Le Corvec is from the [Council of European Bioregions \(CEBR\)](#), a European organisation formed by 40 members. They work with clusters across Europe that are involved in the life-science sector. Their main work is to connect them at local and EU level. Their workstreams include digital health, MedTech, biomanufacturing, connecting ecosystems and cross-sectorial.

Open Dialogue

The panellists discussed about the bottlenecks in the industry, preparedness for future health crises, resilience, and the need of investment.

Francesco Senatore explained that the major bottleneck is still the production capacity. The health sector has done a lot across Europe, and he underlined the importance of the cluster collaborations to create the rights connections in the industry.

Ignasi Biosca Reig added that investment in health has various results. Firstly, the health sector in the European Union will always be ready to provide better services to our population. During the pandemic, we have learned that not having the right health system can generate a huge crisis and a social problem. Secondly, investment generates the necessary know-how, research and innovation. Thirdly, investment in healthcare is investing in education and consequently in a gender-equal and advanced industry. He underlined that these characteristics make the industry attractive from further foreign investments.

Anaïs Le Corvec explained that in terms of the cluster activity, the activation turned into productivity and the clusters really connect to the companies and shared the information with the European Commission. In terms of preparedness, Anaïs Le Corvec affirmed that we are better prepared now. The lesson learned is that more investment is needed to be prepared for the future. Even though Europe has many qualified people and is leading in innovation, big production and investment come from America and Asia, which means that intellectual property leaves Europe. Therefore, we need to better equip the European ecosystems financially.

In term of resilience, Francesco Senatore underlined that the main challenge is to keep the new connection alive. One of the main lessons that we have learned from the pandemic is that if the network of connections exists, we will be more effective. Clusters are a good instrument to activate this network between companies, international organisations, and academia.

When it comes to the relationships to other sectors, Ignasi Biosca Reig explained that sectors and industries are already very much linked. In the pandemic, pharmaceutical industry ensured that there was no lack of essential medicines anywhere in Europe, but there was a lack of masks and other textile elements. He affirmed that his feeling as a European citizen has always been that the European Commission and DG GROW were very active and practical in their approach to make things happen. Ignasi Biosca Reig explained that they had problems to supply themselves with very basic components for the manufacturing process, for example filters. He emphasized that the ability of the European Commission to work with our partners around the world to make sure that those long value chains were not broken was extremely powerful and important.

Anaïs Le Corvec underlined the importance to connect the different ecosystems. The healthcare sector has a very long value chain, and it is relevant that all the actors are connected. Preparedness also goes together with the green transition, which is a complicated challenge in the life-science sector because of the regulations.

Finalizing the panel debate, Francesco Senatore highlighted that the pandemic has taught us that prevention is better than cure and the importance of investment in healthcare and life science and to keep those networks alive.



5. Situation in the Ukrainian healthcare system

Tetyana Vorontsova, Head of Rivne Medical Cluster

Tetyana Vorontsova represented the Rivne Medical Cluster, which is only a year old, and they have united the leading hospitals and organisations in the field of healthcare in Western Ukraine. She spoke about the needs of the hospitals according to their location and situation:

1. The needs for hospitals in a safer area

In safer areas in Western Ukraine, healthcare reforms continue, and new technological interventions and the latest methods of treatment are introduced. The hospitals need new innovative equipment and training of personnel to use it, as well as the exchange of experience and internships in cardiac surgery, oncology, surgery, traumatology, and others. Furthermore, the development of physical and psychological rehabilitation is highly important due to a huge number of wounded among the military and civilians. They need to develop the production of modern prostheses so that patients can easily service them.

2. The needs for hospitals near the area of hostilities

Hospitals in the East of Ukraine have been destroyed during the hostilities. There is an urgent need for integral reconstruction, taking account the changed structure of the population and the number. It would be beneficial to develop a new network of medical institutions that would be able to cover the full spectrum of medical services.

There is a clear need for the creation of modular field hospitals that can be deployed in an hour and where the wounded and traumatised from the front line could be taken. These should exist every six kilometres and should be available to both military personnel and civilians living in the territories where hostilities are taking place.

3. Training of people to act in emergency situations

People need to be able to act in emergency situations and in combat conditions in case of injury, for which they need to be trained. There is also a need for the training of doctors in protocols for providing assistance to the injured (such as ALS or UTLIS). A solution could be the systematic creation of training centres with certified and motivated instructors who can train people. Tetyana Vorontsova explained that one of the members of their cluster, "RIVE-TAKMED", has 8 years of experience in training the civilian and the military, implementing systemic changes in education in schools and decreed population groups. However, they need funding to create such a training centre.

Sergey Kutsevlyak, CEO, MedStar

Sergey Kutsevlyak explained that the doctors continue to perform their duties and provide despite unsatisfactory provision and working conditions and the destruction of hospitals in the combat zones and frontline areas. He assured that the medical institutions in the rear regions provide medical care despite the enormous overload due to internally displaced people and refugees.

He underlined that hundreds of hospitals will need rebuilding and modernisation. The hospital equipment shall be provided according to recovery plan drafted by the Ministry of Health. In the Lugano talks that took place on 5 July, Ukraine formulated a request for 5 billion Euro or Dollars for medical equipment. After the war, a new medical infrastructure will need to be established.

Sergey Kutsevlyak highlighted the importance of telemedicine and remote consultations for Eastern Ukraine. Laboratory diagnostics are very difficult, and diagnostics must be performed on site



in one visit with immediate delivery of results and treatment. Remote diagnostics and telehealth solutions can simplify healthcare delivery to everyone and everywhere. As an example, he presented the telehealth medical diagnostic system IDIS2GO developed by SK-Telemed (AT). More than 3500 kits of IDIS2GO were used in family care ambulatories since 2019, and 10,000 doctors and 6.3 million patients are involved in their telehealth information system. However, a big part of the equipment in East part of Ukraine has been lost under the bombs.

He pointed out some of the medical equipment and instruments to be used on mobile, portable units, and trucks and that can be used by middle personal technicians and nurses. These include infrared thermometry, point-of-care analyser, digital stethoscope, portable urine analyser, portable testing of haemoglobin and lipids in blood, and other portable devices.

Dmytry Rusnak, Anesthetist, Pirogov First Volunteer Mobile Hospital (PFVMH)

While on duty, Dmytry Rusnak join the call to inform that Russia targets medical facilities in the Eastern part of Ukraine. In terms of concrete needs of equipment, he referred to ventilators, ambulances vehicles, intubation equipment, perfusors, pumps, portable patient monitors, remote medical care analysis for blood, blood products and substitutes. In addition, he said that Ukraine needs educators to train new medical personnel and managers to keep together the networks and logistics for medical support. Like Sergey Kutsevlyak, he highlighted the need for mobile hospitals, cars, and the corresponding logistics to place them in safe areas.

6. Funding opportunities to strengthen resilience

Nina Hoppmann, team member of the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

Closing the EU Clusters Talk, Nina Hoppmann presented the following funding opportunities:

From the European Commission:

1. Tender for [lessons learnt from the rollout of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns transferrable to the implementation of routine immunisation programmes in the EU/EEA](#). Estimated total amount: €60,000. Deadline to express interest: 6 July 2022 16:00 CEST. Indicative launch of procedure: 7 July.
2. Call for [access and integration of heterogeneous health data for improved healthcare in disease areas of high unmet public health need](#). The initiative has the objective of providing a scalable platform for the seamless integration or linkage of these diverse data at scale and develop tools to allow the data to be used in clinical care. Deadline: 20 September 2022.
3. [Setting up a harmonised methodology to promote uptake of early feasibility studies for clinical and innovation excellence in the European Union](#). Deadline: 20 September 2022.
4. [Better understanding of citizens' behavioural and psychological reactions](#) in the event of a disaster or crisis situation. Deadline: 23 November 2022.
5. [Enhanced citizen preparedness in the event of a disaster or crisis-related emergency](#). Deadline: 23 November 2022.

From cluster partnerships:

1. Advanced Materials & Manufacturing Technologies United for LightEight (AMULET): [First call for proposals](#). The funding to exploit the innovation of advanced lightweight materials will include a lump-sum of up to 120,000 per project (up to 60,000 per SME). New deadline: 20 July 2022.
2. [URBAN TECH Open Call](#) will support SMEs and start-ups in developing new or significantly improved products or services in Healthtech, Greentech and Smart City. Cascade funding for SMEs with different voucher schemes, with a budget of €2M. Deadline: 14 September 2022.

