



To the attention of:

Mr Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission
Sent via email: jean-claude.juncker@ec.europa.eu

Mr Carlos Moedas
European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation
Sent via email: carlos.moedas@ec.europa.eu

Mr Neven Mimica
European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development
Sent via email: neven.mimica@ec.europa.eu

Brussels, 13 May 2019

Dear Mr Juncker, dear Mr Moedas, dear Mr Mimica,

Having noted the alarming report on the unexpected acceleration of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) of 26 February 2019 and the announcement of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on the same day to start an investigation into the effectiveness of the European Commission's efforts in tackling this pre-eminent threat to our times, the undersigned call on you to immediately free adequate funds for the earliest possible development of new antibiotics. Frequent outbreaks of multiple- or even totally resistant bacteria in certain countries have spurred the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group (IACG) on AMR to finalise a report with the best possible ways to prevent the start of a post-antibiotic era. UN Member States particularly look at the European Union for guidance and leadership that appears to be lacking, according to the ECA. Securing the availability of new antibiotics may well be the European Union's best contribution to the avoidance of a pandemic.

The European Lead Factory (ELF), an innovative early drug discovery platform (Attachment 1), was established by the European Commission to develop new medicinal discoveries. In their letter of 11 February 2019, Commissioners Moedas and Mimica highlight ELF's quality and added value, stating "we look forward to building on this investment" (Attachment 2).

Furthermore, both Commissioners indicate that, overall, EUR 950 million have been dedicated to AMR since 2013. However, less than half (EUR 400 million) can realistically be expected to contribute to antibiotic drug discovery. This is obviously insufficient to address the problem that of the last two effective last-resort antibiotics – colistin and carbapenem – the first may soon be rendered ineffective. Following the public statement of 28 February 2019¹, and during a recent meeting between senior representatives of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and ELF, EFPIA highlighted that the current economic model makes it unattractive to innovators and investors to take on the necessary risk and uncertainty that comes with the development of new antibiotics and vaccines. They join the view of most AMR experts globally that only pre-competitive operations such as implemented by ELF have a chance to, in time, develop new antibiotics within the next 10 to 12 years. May we refer to the attached statement while noting that those in support of the statement include the most senior representatives of patient organizations, Europe's pharmaceutical industry, academic experts, medical doctors, public health experts, etc. (Attachment 3).

This is exactly the promise held by the European Lead Factory in their proposal to develop around 80 new medical inventions within the next 12 years. Their estimated budget requirement is EUR 650 million. Importantly, EFPIA – potentially through the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) – is ready

¹ <https://efpia.eu/news-events/the-efpia-view/blog-articles/the-need-for-incentives-and-concerted-collective-commitment-to-fight-against-amr/#>

to add their scientific potential to such an effort. As suggested by Commissioners Mimica and Moedas, the European Investment Bank also has an important part to play in mobilizing the needed funds.

Already in 1999, the European Commission's Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) strongly advised to radically limit production, distribution and sales of antibiotics and enforce this. Recent documents and the volume of antibiotics used in husbandry and public health suggest that this advice still awaits implementation. This has also allowed other world regions to overuse antibiotics systematically and structurally, causing an estimated 500,000 deaths annually today and an estimated total of 300 million AMR deaths in 2050. While the overuse of antibiotics has to stop now, the world needs new antibiotics in the next few years. We call on this European Commission to ensure that no further time is lost and to immediately employ the facilities and experience of the European Lead Factory to address this urgent issue.

We look forward to an opportunity to discuss the earliest possible action by the European Commission. Thank you very much for your understanding and support.

Yours sincerely,

Pavel Poc (S&D, CZ), also on behalf of:

Ms Laima Andrikiene (EPP, LT)
Mr Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL, IE)
Mr Fredrick Federley (ALDE, SE)
Mr Peter Liese (EPP, DE)
Ms Annie Schreijer-Pierik (EPP, NL)
Mr Bart Staes (Greens/EFA, BE)
Mr Tiemo Wölken (S&D, DE)

Encl.:

- Attachment 1: IMI Executive Summary on ELF
- Attachment 2: 11 February 2019 letter from Commissioners Moedas and Mimica
- Attachment 3: Statement on antimicrobial resistance and requirement to secure the development of new antibiotics before the last two last-resort antibiotics lose their efficacy