



WHO EURO REGIONAL MEETING

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic and lessons learned, both globally and regionally

Geneva, September 4, 2020

The International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) are pleased to contribute this statement to the 70th WHO Regional Committee meeting for Europe. EFPIA and IFPMA represent Europe's and the world's leading research-based biopharmaceutical companies, as well as national and regional industry associations, respectively.

COVID-19 has had profound health, social and economic impacts world-wide. Coordinated, inclusive, and multi-stakeholder action is the only possible solution to mitigate the devastating consequences of this unprecedented global health emergency.

IFPMA represents the biopharmaceutical industry as a proud founding partner of the ACT-Accelerator and is fully committed to its goals to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to safe, quality and effective COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics. An essential stakeholder in the global concerted response, biopharmaceutical companies are showing a strong sense of responsibility to act together, in partnership with international organizations, governments, and other stakeholders to support health systems across the world.

In the endeavour of finding effective and safe treatments and vaccines at record speed, the private R&D business model, enabled by sound intellectual property incentives, has significantly contributed to the discovery and development of treatments that are currently being tested. Access to COVID-19 related health products is a collective responsibility that calls for global solidarity and coordinated and collaborative action by public and private actors alike. For its part and from day 1 of the pandemic, EFPIA and its members operating in Europe have been working tirelessly with governments and EU institutions to ensure there is no interruption in the supply of innovative medicines for patients, and rapidly launched collaborative research into diagnostics and treatments through the Innovative Medicines Initiative Public-Private Partnership.

We remain committed to the principle of equitable and affordable access to eventual COVID-19-related health products, and call upon governments to do their part and ensure adequate resources are dedicated to building strong, resilient, and sustainable healthcare systems, and on multilateral organizations to value health as an investment to ensure growth and prosperity. With COVID-19 having illustrated major weaknesses in pandemic preparedness across the board, we welcome the WHO's decision to conduct an independent evaluation of the global COVID-19 response in order to identify lessons learned. More broadly, the COVID-19 crisis has led to delayed diagnosis and treatment of many other serious diseases, which will affect people's health in years to come. Therefore, securing the continuity of supply for essential health products is also critical to ensuring global health security.