Science, not Fiction

Who doesn't like a good fiction novel about the future? Join us on this journey of discovery and of realisation that the power to change our future for the better lies within us all.

Science, not Fiction 3: Medicine & Biotechnology
Renaissance Brussels Hotel & Online
Thursday, 18 November 2021, 16:00 – 18:00 (CET)

About the event

Advancements in biotechnology have brought us biosensors, bioprinting of drugs, tailor-made organs, nanobots and innovative treatments using human genome sequencing. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us all the importance of investing in our health and in the medical sector.

Now is the time to support the innovators to turn fiction into reality. How can the EU help this sector flourish in Europe?

Join the discussion to discover the scientific progress made by pharmaceuticals and biotech industries, taking the pulse of innovations in healthcare across Europe.

Event Schedule

15:30 Registration and coffee at Renaissance Hotel

16:00 Introductory remarks

Šárka Shoup, PhD, Executive Director, Institute for Politics and Society & Board Member, European Liberal Forum

Conference moderator: Anna Gumbau, EU Affairs reporter

16:05 Looking beyond the horizon in medicine and biotechnology

Jean-Christophe Pagès, PhD, President, French High Council for Biotechnology (HCB) Scientific Committee & Professor, Cell Biology, CHU & Université Toulouse III

- What is coming up on the horizon in the fields of medicine and biotechnology (particularly in the fields of health, food, agriculture, energy and the environment)?
- How can we move from only looking at what is in front of us to looking two steps ahead?
- Is Europe a continent of passive users rather than active innovators?
- How can we make people feel positive about innovation in the fields of medicine and biotechnology and not consider it a threat?

16:25 Innovators Lightning Talk

Martin Schulz, PhD, Global Senior Medical Director, Gene Therapy Platform, Pfizer

- What innovative products/ideas are you working on currently?
- What are the main problems you are running into?
- What does the perfect innovation-friendly environment look like to you?

16:35 How can Europe make innovation-friendly policies?

Annika Szabo Portela, PhD, Collaboration Lead & Deputy Director, EIT Health Scandinavia

Alexander Natz, Secretary-General, European Confederation of Pharmaceutical Entrepreneurs (EUCOPE)

A short reaction to the lightning talk, followed by a panel discussion focusing on the following questions:

- If we want to have an innovation-friendly business environment in the near future, what type of regulations need to be implemented today?
- What is needed to foster an SME-friendly biotechnology innovation framework in Europe?
- How can the EU promote innovative mindsets? What are the skills we need to foster to make that reality?
- Are citizens feeling the benefit of innovative products in medicine and biotechnology?
- What happens if we leave the monopoly of innovation in the health sphere to countries that do not share our values?

17:10 Innovators Lightning Talk

Isabell Crasto De Stefano, Director, Government & Stakeholder Relations, EMEA, Spectrum Therapeutics, Canopy Growth

- What innovative products/ideas are you working on currently?
- What are the main problems you are running into?
- What more should Europe do in nurturing and retaining innovative talent (businesses or individuals) to stay at the forefront of medicinal and biotechnological progress?

17:25 Are we ready for the next health revolution?

Maya Matthews, Head of Unit (DDG1.B1), Performance of national health systems, DG for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), European Commission

Remko Van Leeuwen, Founder & CEO, Madam Therapeutics and Board Member, BEAM Alliance

A short reaction to the lightning talk, followed by a panel discussion focusing on the following questions:

- Are we ready for the next health revolution? Are we ready to respond to the next pandemic?
- How can we find the legislative balance allowing space for innovation in these areas, whilst being prepared for the ethical and privacy concerns, they might raise?
- What does the EU need to do to ensure that current and future innovations are promoted and encouraged within Europe, in terms of market access and retaining talent?

17:55 Closing Remarks

Lauren Mason, Project Coordinator, European Liberal Forum

18:00 Reception

19:00 END OF THE EVENT

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