



Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe



Ghent, May 20, 2012

Subject: **Strategic scientific leadership in health research: The European Council for Health Research (EuCHR)**

Dear Mrs da Graça Carvalho,

On behalf of the European Renal Association - European Dialysis and Transplant Association (ERA-EDTA), I would like to draw your attention to the recent call by the Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe ([BioMed Alliance](#)) **for the creation of a specific instrument - the 'European Council for Health Research (EuCHR)' - to provide the best strategic scientific leadership to EU programmes in health research.** Indeed, it is our strong belief that **Horizon 2020, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014-2020, needs to integrate a strategic approach across the entire health spectrum.**

In health, research is the key to identifying causes of disease and developing strategies for prevention, as well as diagnosis and treatment. It helps save lives. However, to date health research collaborations had a poor framework to translate innovations at basic research level for the patient. Indeed there is currently a lack of coordination of research across all disciplines and between health stakeholders, which translates into duplication and fragmentation of research efforts, gaps and significant limitations on Europe's overall progress to innovate.

The EU's 'Innovation Union' initiative aims to create an environment in Europe that supports the translation of novel ideas into products and services and can generate growth, jobs and social well-being. Biomedical research represents an outstanding example of research-driven innovation which, through health promotion and prevention, the development of diagnostic and medicinal products, the improvement of medical treatments, and advances in health services research may boost scientific excellence and knowledge as drivers of future growth in the European Research Area (ERA). However, it is only through scientific involvement from the very beginning that innovation can be realised. Longer-term, sustainable projects that cover the entire 'Innovation Cycle' should be promoted to ensure we are funding projects that really promote health and benefit citizens and patients. The EuCHR, a bottom-up and science-led initiative, will focus on accelerating excellent biomedical research in Europe and promote Europe as a centre for health research innovation.

The Concept Paper outlining the position of the BioMed Alliance on the EuCHR as well as 'case studies' that aim to illustrate the need for scientific-led, strategic input in order to better coordinate biomedical research in Europe and thus boost innovation and growth, are available for your review on the BioMed Alliance website homepage, www.biomedeuropa.eu. Please note that this Paper was initiated by a high-level, multidisciplinary, multi-professional group of experts (a 'Core Group' of eminent experts, the list of which is also online). Annexed for your convenience to this letter are the Alliance's amendments to Horizon 2020, calling for more strategic and coordinated action.



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We do hope you look favourably on our proposal to better coordinate the biomedical research efforts across Europe and ensure more efficient use of resources and expertise, boosting excellent science and innovation, in order to promote a healthier Europe.

Yours sincerely,

Norbert Lameire, MD, PhD
ERA-EDTA Representative
for the Alliance for Biomedical Research

Raymond Vanholder, MD, PhD
ERA-EDTA President