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PRESS RELEASE: LIFTING PATENTS PUTS HARD-WON PROGRESS AGAINST COVID- 19 AT RISK

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Luxembourg, May 7, 2021 - The U.S. administration's decision to support a proposed patent waiver on COVID-19 vaccines is, in the opinion of the Association Pharmaceutique Luxembourgeoise (APL), not the right solution to accelerate vaccine production. Sonia Franck, Secretary General of the APL, said today: "This short-sighted and ineffective decision jeopardizes hard-won progress in the fight against the virus. While we fully support the goal of protecting citizens around the world with vaccines, the patent waiver will make it even more difficult to win the fight against coronavirus."

"Increasing the ability to deliver doses to citizens around the world requires the skills and technical know-how of the vaccine developer to bring partner manufacturing organizations on board. This type of capacity expansion simply cannot be achieved by waiving patents and hoping that previously unknown factories around the world will enter the complex process of vaccine manufacturing. A waiver risks diverting raw materials and supplies from efficient, well-established supply chains to less efficient manufacturing sites where productivity and quality may be an issue. It opens the door for counterfeit vaccines to enter the global supply chain. Expanding capacity is only possible through voluntary and collaborative partnerships between the innovators behind each vaccine and expert manufacturing partners. We should focus on removing barriers to collaboration, ensuring the free flow of materials around the world, and continuing the research effort."

A barrier to innovation

Since the very beginning of the crisis, Europe has been an epicenter for COVID-19, research, development and innovation; ranging from new diagnostics to the mRNA technology used in the first

approved vaccine. This research-based response has given us the tools to fight the pandemic. A response based on an intellectual property framework that has encouraged innovators to explore these new technologies. Recognizing the genesis of these vital tools, the European Parliament voted against the waiver on April 29, 2021, and the European Commission has remained consistent in its support for innovation as the key to fighting the pandemic.

If the WTO approves the waiver, companies will no longer have an incentive to pursue research into new variants, diagnostics, treatments and vaccines to combat the coronavirus. At the same time, it would not increase global manufacturing capacity for COVID-19 vaccines. In addition, the withdrawal of patents on COVID-19 vaccines would also negate any innovation-based response to future pandemics.

Sonia Franck concluded by saying, "It is vital that Europe continues to defend medical innovation as the only permanent way out of this health crisis, by supporting intellectual property and opposing an exemption. As a global hub for vaccine manufacturing, we must continue to focus on building partnerships and investing in facilities to increase capacity to meet the needs of European citizens worldwide."



About [APL, Association pharmaceutique luxembourgeoise.](#)

The APL is the grouping of the innovative and active pharmaceutical industry in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. We regroup 57 pharmaceutical laboratories. Our mission is to promote the best health care in encouraging therapeutic innovation in the field of humane medicines in Luxembourg. The APL is organized in the form of a non-profit association (a.s.b.l.) and is registered in the Register of Commerce and Companies of Luxembourg under the number F8922.

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