

NEWS RELEASE

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NEW EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM TO TACKLE THE GROWING THREAT OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE AND THE NEAR EMPTY PIPELINE OF NEW DRUGS

Geneva, Switzerland, 27. October 2014 – A major new European initiative to tackle the growing global threat of antibiotic resistance began this month with the launch of DRIVE-AB (Driving Reinvestment in R&D and Responsible Antibiotic Use).

DRIVE-AB is a €9.4 million public-private consortium, funded by the EU Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), that aims to define a standard for the responsible use of the dwindling reserve of effective antibiotics, and to develop, test and recommend new economic models for pharmaceutical industry investment in producing new ones.

The World Health Organization has identified antimicrobial resistance as one of the three greatest threats to human health. An estimated 25,000 people die each year in the European Union from infections that are resistant to multiple drugs. The annual societal costs are estimated at €1.5 billion, although the true economic and societal burden is unknown. New forms of resistance continue to emerge and spread, incrementally reducing doctors' ability to bring infections under control. Despite the recognized and growing need for new antibiotics, only two new classes of antibiotics have been brought to the market in the last three decades, as industry has withdrawn from the antibiotic research and development (R&D) arena because it is considered a high-risk/low-return market with little to satisfy shareholder expectations.

DRIVE-AB is a powerful coalition comprising partners across 11 European countries from academic institutions, research organisations, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. Over the next 3 years, partners will combine their experience, expertise and capabilities to create and test new economic models for antibiotic R&D to reinvigorate investments in this vital area. Simultaneously, the consortium will examine how the efficacy of existing and new drugs can be maintained and preserved by defining their responsible and appropriate use. The project brings together experience and knowledge spanning all phases of antibiotic R&D, financing, clinical use, antibiotic stewardship, quantitative economic modelling and evaluation of public health policies. The DRIVE-AB consortium will engage with multiple stakeholders and existing likewise consortia and projects across the globe to ensure expertise is harnessed, shared and used to greatest advantage. Most importantly, the consortium includes partners and stakeholders with global perspectives and who have the ability to implement outcomes to maximum impact.

Project leader, Stephan Harbarth, University of Geneva said *"I am very excited about the ambitious DRIVE-AB agenda that will be delivered by uniting a unique panel of experts across a range of disciplines including medical, scientific, business and economic sciences across clinical, academic and commercial sectors"*. He continued: *"The dual crisis of antibiotic resistance and the near empty antibiotic pipeline pose a very real threat to human health. Only collaboration on this scale, involving stakeholders worldwide will be sufficient to address the crisis. I am confident the worldwide renowned expertise, motivation and diversity of the DRIVE-AB partners are an appropriate match for the complexity and scope of the problem to be confronted."*

Project partners (in alphabetical order) are: British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy, Chatham House, Center for Anti-Infective Agents, Heidelberg University, London School of Economics and Political Science, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Radboud University Medical Center, Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, University of Antwerp, University of Geneva, University of Lorraine, University of Rijeka Medical Faculty,

University of Strathclyde, University of Tübingen, Uppsala University, Wageningen University and EFPIA members Astellas Pharma Europe LTD, AstraZeneca AB, Cubist Pharmaceuticals GmbH, GlaxoSmithKline Research & Development, F. Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd, Pfizer Limited and Sanofi-Aventis Research & Development.

Notes to reporters:

DRIVE-AB is one of several projects of the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI). IMI, launched in 2008, is the world's biggest public-private partnership (PPP) in the life sciences, with a €3.3 billion budget for the period 2014-2024. A joint undertaking between the European Union and the pharmaceutical industry association EFPIA, it currently has 46 ongoing projects aiming to speed up the development of better and safer medicines for patients. Further information about the DRIVE-AB project is available at www.drive-ab.eu. A comprehensive overview of IMI projects is available at www.imi.europa.eu.

For more information, please contact:

DRIVE-AB

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