

Life Science: A Catalyst for
European Competitiveness

High-Level Conclusions

Copenhagen Life Science Summit,
October 9, 2025



Pictured: Elizabeth Kuiper, Associate Director and Head of the
Social Europe & Well-Being Programme, European Policy Centre



Danish Life Science – A Catalyst for European Competitiveness

Held under the Danish EU Presidency, the Copenhagen Life Science Summit gathered leading European stakeholders across politics, industry, research, and patient organizations.

Many perspectives, but one shared vision: Europe has a global window of opportunity to strengthen its role in life sciences and health innovation – an opportunity that must be seized now. The European Competitiveness Compass sets the direction, while Choose Europe for Life Sciences is the vehicle to position the EU as the world's most attractive destination for life sciences by 2030.

Life science has long been a driver for innovation, growth and healthcare resilience in Denmark. By inviting key stakeholders from EU institutions, member states, patient organizations, universities and industry together, the aim was to support Europe's efforts in shaping a common path for future growth, resilience, and patient impact.

This High Level Conclusions paper dives deeper into the key takeaways. Below is a summary of the key themes, challenges, and potential solutions/cross-cutting conclusions discussed at the Copenhagen Life Science Summit 2025. It is designed to provide input for policy development, partner engagement, and the next European steppingstones for life science, health innovation, and global competitiveness.

Disclaimer: the conclusions aim to summarize different points made by panelists during the discussion and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations involved.



Pictured: Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen, Chair, Healthcare Denmark

Panel 1 Closing the Gap: How to Design a European Industrial Policy for Public Health and Innovation

Focus Debating priorities of the Choose Europe for Life Sciences strategy, with emphasis on investment tools, policy reforms, European coordination, and public procurement to foster breakthrough innovation while advancing public health.



Participants (pictured left to right)

- **Walter Ricciardi**, Professor of Hygiene and Director of the School of Hygiene and Public Health, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Rome and former President of the World Federation of Public Health Associations, and the European Public Health Association
- **Christian Elling**, Senior Vice President, Managing Partner, Lundbeckfonden BioCapital
- **Rui Santos Ivo**, Portuguese National Authority of Medicines and Healthcare Products
- **Stefan Oelrich**, President of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) and Member of the Board of Management of Bayer AG

A Competitive and Attractive Europe for Health Innovation

Europe needs to establish a framework that attracts both capital and top talent, accelerates the translation of innovation into impactful health solutions, and ensures access for citizens to better and faster treatments.

Investing in Innovation and Outcomes

What matters in healthcare is especially the power and quality of innovation. To strengthen this, Europe must increase investment in innovation and create better conditions and returns on investment. At the same time, adopting outcome-based policies is essential to foster a thriving environment where already existing good research is transformed into real-world solutions in Europe.

Making Europe the Preferred Place for Innovation Investment

Europe needs to find a formula that makes it more attractive and valuable for maintaining and increasing investments in European innovation — to the benefit of industry, citizens, and Europe as a whole. This includes the willingness of Europe to properly value innovation.

A Mission-Oriented Approach for Competitiveness and Citizens' Well-being

Europe must adopt a mission-oriented approach that actively involves industry, regulatory and other public authorities, healthcare professionals, and citizens. This is essential to strengthen competitiveness, accelerate progress, and enhance transparency — while ensuring that industrial growth serves the needs and well-being of citizens.

Highlights from the debate

- “Europe needs to establish a framework that attracts both capital and top talent.”
- “Increase investment in innovation and create better conditions and returns on investment.”
- “Outcome-based policies are essential to transform good research into real-world solutions.”
- “Europe must adopt a mission-oriented approach that actively involves industry, regulatory and public authorities, healthcare professionals, and citizens.”

Panel 2 Public-Private Partnerships: A Catalyst for European Competitiveness and Health?

Focus Examining the role of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in strengthening Europe's research, innovation and health ecosystems and identifying models for effective national and cross-border collaboration that enhance both competitiveness and health outcomes.



Participants (pictured left to right)

- **Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat**, Director of Country Health Policies and Systems, WHO Europe
- **Niklas Blomberg**, Executive Director of Innovative Health Initiative (IHI)
- **Thomas Klee**, Senior Vice President, Major Europe & Canada, Lundbeck

Building Trust and strong Governance

Effective PPPs require mutual trust between stakeholders, transparent governance, and clear accountability. A balanced policy and regulatory framework are essential to accelerate innovation in health systems while safeguarding public confidence and ethical integrity.

Aligning Innovation with societal Priorities

Partnerships must align with public health needs and policy objectives. Defining shared goals and measurable outcomes—such as addressing healthcare workforce shortages—innovation becomes a meaningful tool for improving health and system resilience.

Collective Action for sustainable health systems

In the future, no single actor can tackle the growing pressures on health systems alone. To maintain sustainable healthcare expenditure while addressing rising demands, collaboration across public, private, academic and civil society partners is critical. PPPs are key enablers of joint investment, shared risk, and scalable solutions.

A United and Competitive Europe for Health Innovation

Europe should aim to lead globally in health innovation, through coordinated partnerships, strong political leadership, and a defined path forward for PPPs and health innovation with a highly competitive edge. A thriving, collaborative life science ecosystem will be essential to ensure that innovation reaches patients across the EU and beyond.

Highlights from the debate

- “Effective PPPs require mutual trust, transparent governance, and clear accountability.”
- “Partnerships must align with public health needs and policy objectives.”
- “No single actor can tackle the growing pressures on health systems alone.”
- “PPPs are key enablers of joint investment, shared risk, and scalable solutions.”

Panel 3 Unlocking the Societal Value of Innovation

Focus Discussing how investments in life sciences and cutting-edge research can strengthen healthcare systems, promote economic growth, and improve patient outcomes in Europe.



Participants (pictured left to right)

- **Søren Nedergaard**, Chief Portfolio Officer – Portfolio, People & Partnerships, Novo Nordisk Foundation
- **Rainer Becker**, Director, DG for Health and Food Safety (SANTE), European Commission
- **Teresa Graham**, CEO, Roche Pharmaceutical
- **Marco Greco**, President, European Patients' Forum

A new European mindset - from cost to investment

Europe needs to redefine healthcare as a value-creating investment rather than a budgetary burden. Sustainable healthcare depends on strategic alignment across research, innovation, and public health goals, ensuring that access and availability are recognized as core pillars of a common European health agenda. Only by viewing health as a long-term investment in people, productivity, and resilience can Europe strengthen its competitiveness and societal well-being.

Collaboration and investment at the backbone of progress

Public-private partnerships are an essential tool for strengthening Europe's health resilience. No single actor—whether government, industry, or patients—can deliver innovation alone. Progress requires collective effort and shared responsibility. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of common European structures and coordinated investment and data frameworks to enable faster, more equitable access to care and innovation.

Translating excellence into competitiveness and patient values

Europe is home to world-leading universities, research environments, and data resources, yet these strengths must be better connected and translated into tangible outcomes. The challenge lies not in early-stage science, but in turning discoveries into new companies, technologies, and patient-centered solutions. Industry carries a crucial responsibility to ensure that innovation reaches patients and delivers measurable value for both individuals and society.

Highlights from the debate

- "Europe needs to redefine healthcare as a value-creating investment rather than a budgetary burden."
- "Public-private partnerships are an essential tool for strengthening Europe's health resilience."
- "Progress requires collective effort and shared responsibility."
- "The challenge lies in turning discoveries into new companies, technologies, and patient-centred solutions."

How to Boost Private Investment in Start-ups and Scale-ups

Focus Debating how the EU can bridge the private investment gap in life science research and innovation – in particular which regulatory reforms and public support mechanisms are needed to unlock private funding and how the EU can steer capital markets towards socially beneficial purposes.



Participants (pictured left to right)

- **Felicita Riedl**, Director of the Innovation & Competitiveness Department, European Investment Bank, European Investment Bank
- **Jens Nielsen**, CEO, BioInnovation Institute Foundation
- **Adam Kostyál**, Head of European Listings, Nasdaq

The EU must build a predictable and flexible framework for life science investment

To unlock Europe's full potential in life science innovation, the EU must focus on building a more predictable, transparent, and flexible regulatory environment. Stable frameworks are essential to give private investors the confidence to commit long-term capital, particularly in a sector where scientific progress and regulatory approvals are complex and time-consuming. Streamlined approval processes and clearer guidance can help bridge the gap between breakthrough research and market-ready solutions.

Public funding should be used to de-risk early innovation and attract private capital

Public funding and investment instruments should be deployed strategically to de-risk early-stage innovation. Mechanisms such as blended finance, guarantees, and co-investment schemes can help attract private capital by sharing the inherent risks of developing new technologies and therapies. Public institutions, including the European Investment Bank, play a crucial role in setting examples and crowding in private investors.

Europe needs stronger links between markets, ecosystems, and institutions

Europe needs a stronger and more integrated capital market that can provide scale and liquidity for life science ventures. Policy reforms should not only simplify access to funding but also incentivize long-term, mission-driven investment. Closer collaboration between capital markets, innovation ecosystems, and EU institutions is essential to steer investments toward sustainable and socially beneficial innovation—ensuring that European science translates into societal and economic impact.

Highlights from the debate

- “The EU must build a predictable, transparent, and flexible regulatory environment.”
- “Public funding should be used to de-risk early innovation and attract private capital.”
- “Blended finance and co-investment schemes can help share the inherent risks of new technologies.”
- “Closer collaboration between markets, ecosystems, and institutions is essential to steer investments toward sustainable innovation.”

Panel 5

Spreading the Gains: Enhancing Access to Innovative Healthcare Across the EU

Focus Exploring how industrial strategy can be matched with measures to ensure equitable access to treatments across Member States through regulatory reforms, financing conditions, coordination, and joint procurement.



Participants (pictured left to right)

- **Matthias Pfannkuche**, Vice President & Head of Global Value Demonstration, Market Access & Pricing Operations, Merck
- **Claudia Louati**, Head of Policy, European Patients' Forum
- **Benjamin Rochette**, Vice President, Global Regulatory Affairs, Coloplas
- **Agnès Buzyn**, CEO, Evidences; former Minister of Solidarity and Health, France

Health deprioritized Post-Pandemic

Despite the lessons learned during COVID-19, political focus and funding for health have declined across Europe. A 20% cut to the EU4Health Programme has weakened support for patient-centered initiatives, illustrating how the priorities in the political agenda have shifted. This raises concerns about Europe's ability to sustain long-term investments in prevention, innovative solutions, resilience of supply chains, and equitable access to care.

Equitable Access as a Core European Value

Persistent inequalities in access to medicines and treatments continue to undermine the EU's commitment to universal healthcare. Ensuring fairness across Member States requires stronger European coordination, resilient supply, shared assessment mechanisms, and harmonized access frameworks. Access to innovative sustainable solutions is no longer optional - it is a strategic advantage and European stronghold. But the barriers are multifactorial, and they can be solved only by stakeholders working together. Access must be prioritized not only as a health issue, but as a reflection of European solidarity and shared values.

Evolving Regulation to Unlock Innovation

Collaborative efforts among EU member states, regulatory bodies, and the pharmaceutical industry to ensure the free movement of research, innovation, knowledge, and education, would be essential to navigate complexities and create a transparent system that benefits all stakeholders and markets. While the Medical Device Regulation (MDR) has delivered on its promise of safeguarding patients, it has led industry to shift resources away from developing new solutions toward re-certifying existing ones to secure the availability of longstanding devices. Adapting the MDR to actively foster innovation is now essential. Future approaches must ensure predictability, protect innovation and promote early dialogue, efficient data use, and real-world evidence integration to accelerate patient access to safe, effective technologies and keep Europe competitive in the global innovation race.

European Strategy and Partnerships as the Engine of Progress

Implement a comprehensive industrial life science strategy that prioritizes regulatory simplification, investment in innovation infrastructure and a strong political commitment to enhance the pharmaceutical ecosystem and ensure timely access to innovative medicines. Across all perspectives, there was a shared recognition that partnerships are central to driving positive change. Collaboration between policymakers, regulators, industry, patients, and academia is essential to translating innovation into equitable access and sustainable health systems. By combining public leadership, private expertise, and shared accountability, Europe can align industrial competitiveness with better and sustainable health outcomes for all citizens.



Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen, Chair, Healthcare Denmark



Walter Ricciardi (Left), Former President, World Federation of Public Health Associations, and the European Public Health Association
Stefan Oelrich (Center), Member of the Board of Management, Bayer AG; President, EFPIA
Lykke Friis (Right), Director, Think Tank EUROPE



Morten Bødskov, Minister for Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, Denmark



Rainer Becker (Left), Director, DG for Health and Food Safety (SANTE), European Commission
Teresa Graham (Center), CEO, Roche Pharmaceutical
Marco Greco (Right), President, European Patients' Forum



Musical Opening by Copenhagen Girls Choir



Felicitas Riedl (Left), Director of the Innovation & Competitiveness Department, European Investment Bank
Jens Nielsen (Center), CEO, BioInnovation Institute
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