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Restore Health – Therapies that cure

Shifting from treating symptoms to curing diseases and making Europe the world leader in Advanced Therapies is the aspiration of RESTORE – the Large-Scale Research Initiative, led by Charité. On February 8, the European Commission (EC) backed that vision and announced that RESTORE will receive initial funding of EUR 1m and invited the consortium to fully develop their concept and to further expand the community that strives to propel Europe to the forefront in Advanced Therapies.

As a successful Large-Scale-Research Initiative RESTORE will eventually disburse up to EUR 1 billion over ten years from the EC to deliver a pipeline of transformative cures for the benefit of struggling patients. RESTORE will promote groundbreaking research, nurture innovative companies and engage the public; its concept is supported by a broad international and interdisciplinary community of stakeholders, who united behind the mission to make patient-centered value at high ethical and quality standards a reality.

The implementation of newly developed Advanced Therapies (Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products and Biologised Medical Devices), frequently called “living drugs”, in clinical routine holds tremendous promise and is the unifying goal of the RESTORE initiative. Formed by eminent leaders from European academia, clinics and industry, RESTORE is coordinated by Professor Hans-Dieter Volk, a clinical immunologist and his team at the BIH-Center for Regenerative Therapies (BIHCRT) and the Berlin Center for Advanced Therapies (BeCAT) of Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin and Berlin Institute of Health (BIH).

“Advanced Therapies are a potential game changer in health care and aim to shift the current focus from the ‘chronic treatment of disease’ towards the ‘regeneration of health’. We see a growing number of breathtaking success stories with patients cured suffering from end-stage disease; at the same time there are many challenges to implement these promising therapies into routine. The ambitious RESTORE initiative provides a unique opportunity for us to overcome current hurdles in technology, manufacturing, clinical management, and reimbursement; we are determined to translate promising research into safe therapies that cure patients by working together across disciplines and country borders on this mission”, says Professor Volk.

The RESTORE core team are world leaders from basic and clinical research and biotech industry: Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany), University of Zurich (Switzerland), Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult (United Kingdom), TissUse GmbH (Germany), Pluristem Ltd (Israel), Miltenyi Biotec GmbH (Germany), INSERM – Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche (France), Innovation Acta S.r.l. (Italy), Fondazione Telethon Milan (Italy) and University Minho (Portugal). More than 250 stakeholders from basic and clinical science, industry, non-profit organizations and patient advocates throughout Europe and beyond have pledged support for RESTORE’s urgent mission, underlining the potential of Advanced Therapies for science, the economy and public health.

Professor Volk adds: “We read the EC’s decision to support RESTORE in three ways; appreciating patients’ need for better therapy options, recognizing the underlying quality of research efforts across Europe and encouraging a highly collaborative endeavor to lead in this important area. Today we celebrate and thank our partners and supporters – we are fortunate to have them. Tomorrow, we will begin our yearlong journey towards the competition’s final round: engaging the community, defining the challenges and setting out our RESTORE plan to make Advanced Therapies a clinical reality that works for every patient who need it.”