



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cagliari, Italy — June 15, 2026

AVITHRAPID Consortium Welcomes New Partners to Strengthen Europe's Antiviral Preparedness

The AVITHRAPID consortium — the European research initiative developing “Antiviral Therapeutics for Rapid Response Against Pandemic Infectious Diseases” — today announced the expansion of its partnership network with the addition of two leading European research institutions: the Università degli Studi di Perugia (UniPG) and the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI). The new members bring complementary scientific expertise that will accelerate the development of broad-spectrum antiviral therapies and reinforce Europe's readiness to respond to emerging viral threats.

Funded under the Horizon Europe programme, AVITHRAPID aims to establish a pipeline of small-molecule antiviral agents that can be rapidly developed and widely deployed against emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases. The integration of new partners marks an important milestone in the project's mission to unite academic, clinical, and industrial excellence across the continent.

University of Perugia joins the mission

The Università degli Studi di Perugia strengthens the consortium with a sophisticated integration of molecular genetics and pharmaceutical technology. Prof. Katia Cappelli and Dr. Samanta Mecocci, of the Department of Veterinary Medicine, contribute specialised expertise in milk-derived extracellular vesicles (EVs) as natural nanostructures, while Prof. Stefano Giovagnoli, of the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, leads the engineering of an innovative biohybrid EV-liposome platform. Together, this expertise will enable the consortium to transform antiviral molecules into bioinspired therapeutic systems, optimising delivery and efficacy against viral infections.

Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research strengthens drug discovery capacity

The Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI), one of Europe's leading institutions dedicated to understanding infectious diseases and developing innovative therapeutic strategies, further expands the consortium's drug discovery capabilities. Prof. Dr. Mark Brönstrup and the Chemical Biology team contribute their expertise in chemical biology and drug discovery, supporting the identification and optimisation of small-molecule antiviral candidates that will advance through the AVITHRAPID pipeline.

A stronger consortium for pandemic preparedness

By combining complementary expertise from academia, research institutes, and industry, AVITHRAPID is accelerating the development of next-generation antiviral solutions and strengthening Europe's preparedness for future viral threats. The addition of the University of Perugia and the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research reflects the project's collaborative model, in which no single institution can address pandemic threats alone and collective intelligence becomes a multiplier of scientific quality and societal impact.

"We are proud to welcome these outstanding institutions to the AVITHRAPID consortium," said a representative of the project coordination team. "Their expertise expands our scientific capabilities and reinforces our shared commitment to delivering broad-spectrum antiviral therapies that can protect Europe and the world against the next generation of infectious disease threats."

The consortium looks forward to the scientific advances that these new collaborations will achieve together as the project continues its work toward a promising portfolio of broad-spectrum antiviral compounds.

About AVITHRAPID

AVITHRAPID (Antiviral Therapeutics for Rapid Response Against Pandemic Infectious Diseases) is a European research project funded under the Horizon Europe programme and monitored by the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA). The project brings together academic, clinical, and industrial partners from across Europe to establish a pipeline of small molecule-based antiviral agents that can be widely used and rapidly developed into therapies against emerging infectious diseases, strengthening global pandemic preparedness.

Media Contact

AVITHRAPID Communications Team

Email: silvano.coletti@cheloniaswiss.ch

Website: www.avithrapid.eu

###