

Roundtable

A Fifth Freedom for Health Innovation in Europe

Friday, 19 December 2025, 15:00

*The meeting will be held at Arel, Piazza Sant'Andrea della Valle, 6 – Rome
and online via Zoom.*

Innovation is the main driver of progress in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals. It directly contributes to public health, strategic security and Europe's global competitiveness, by accelerating the development of new therapies, vaccines and advanced treatments.

However, the European Single Market still presents significant internal barriers that weaken the innovation ecosystem and limit the sector's full potential, making it harder for biotechnology and pharmaceutical actors to innovate, scale and bring new therapies to market. Fragmentation across Member States slows down innovation, prevents scale-up and reduces Europe's ability to compete with other global ecosystems.

In this context, the Letta Report proposed the creation of a fifth freedom of the Single Market, focused on the free movement of key innovation enablers, such as data, knowledge, skills and research. For biotechnology and life sciences, this could represent a systemic change, enabling faster innovation, stronger collaboration and better access to therapies across Europe.

The roundtable – promoted by the Arel Single Market Lab and the IE Brussels Competitiveness Hub of IE University – will discuss the main barriers to innovation affecting the biotech and pharmaceutical sectors, and how the fifth freedom can help remove these obstacles and strengthen the European innovation ecosystem through concrete European policy action.

PROGRAMME

Opening remarks Enrico LETTA

Open discussion with participants