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## Competitiveness Council 2-3 March 2015

Ref: RB/67.114

Brussels, 27 February 2015

Dear Ministers,

In advance of your important discussions on Big Data at the Competitiveness Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, I am writing to invite the Council to consider establishing a working group on big data in healthcare. Drawing on the expertise of health, research and industry ministries, the group could make a significant contribution to improving coordination and alignment of national and EU policy, advancing both Europe's digital economy and its social agenda. We believe that by creating this collaboration we can improve the chances of Europe taking the opportunity offered by Big Data and deliver real tangible benefits for its citizens.

Big data affords significant opportunities to advance patient care. It can help us understand how to better support patients right across the patient journey and deliver truly-personalised care.

Data generated through electronic patient records, clinical research and by patients themselves can be used to address a number of the challenges faced by EU healthcare systems. It can increase efficiency and effectiveness by showing us which interventions work and why, ultimately leading to more sustainable models of healthcare delivery, based on better patient outcomes.

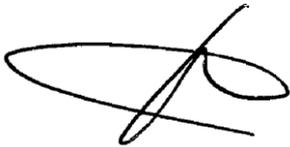
Big Data can help the research community address the cost and efficiency of research and development, aligning processes with the needs of patients. Europe has a huge resource of relevant data in biobanks, registries and healthcare records which we are just beginning to use to advance healthcare and research.

There are a number of challenges in realising the potential of big data in healthcare. Industry is keen to work with stakeholders to address these. Through the Innovative Medicines Initiative, EFPIA and the European Commission are pioneering the use of real world data. The Commission's work in establishing European networks is creating a valuable organisational infrastructure. One significant challenge is privacy

regulation, particularly in the context of the re-use of data in research. We support the need to revise the European legislation and believe that the right balance of individual rights and support for the societal interest in research can be found, but we are not there yet. Ensuring the right regulatory infrastructure will be critical to Europe's future in healthcare innovation.

Through the creation of a working group on big data in healthcare I hope we can work together to advance patient care and support the long-term sustainability of healthcare systems generating real benefits for patients and citizens in the EU.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Richard Bergström', written over a horizontal line.

Richard Bergström  
Director General EFPIA