

Clinical trials: to strengthen the research ecosystem, Europe needs to function as a unified region



The **12,700 medicines** in today's pipeline are not invented or developed in labs alone, or by pharmaceutical companies alone. They are **developed in partnership** and that biggest partnership is called clinical development where **clinical trials** bring researchers, doctors and patients together.

- Clinical trials can provide early access to new medicines: usually **5–10 years** before launch.



- Sometimes they are the last treatment option, often the only option for rare or advanced diseases.



- EU health systems benefit from **€1 to 1.5 billion** in savings and revenue annually.
- Research-active hospitals experience lower staff turnover and improved morale.
- They also have **lower mortality rates** —even among patients who do not participate in trials.



- Trials drive innovation and investment: the pharma industry invested **€50 billion in R&D** in 2023 in Europe.

- Anchor advanced manufacturing and scientific talent: **130,000 people** work in pharma R&D across Europe.

- A strong clinical trial ecosystem **drives further medical research**, placing European patients at the heart of scientific progress.

The future of clinical trials in Europe is at stake

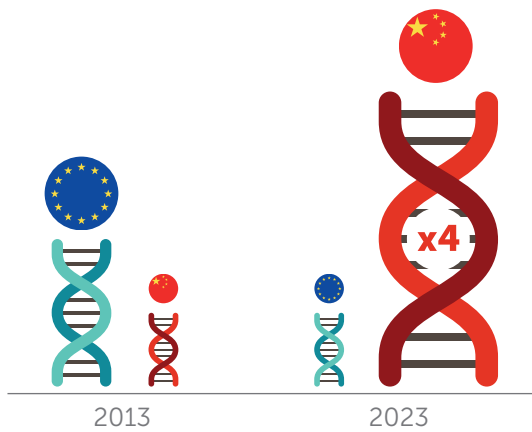


Despite a 38% increase of clinical trials globally over the past decade, **Europe's global share of clinical trials has reduced from 22% in 2013 to 12% in 2023.**

This translates to

60,000

fewer clinical trials places for Europeans.



Asia is emerging as a major location for new clinical trial starts.

This is especially visible for cell and gene therapies which saw a dramatic rise in China (42% share in 2023, rising from 10%) due to a favourable regulatory environment, funding streams, and strategic focus on advanced technologies.

In the meantime, Europe's share of cell and gene therapy trials has steadily decreased from 25% in 2013 to 10% in 2023.

Moves by US and China to attract research, development and manufacturing away from Europe could rapidly accelerate the negative trends of the last 20 years.

Main issue: F R A G M E N T E D ecosystem

Despite the variation in country-level performance, the number of clinical trials has declined in most EU countries and across most therapeutic areas. This indicates **systemic issues** in the ecosystem.

For Europe to remain competitive, it needs to function as a **harmonised market** and be supported by policies that attract **global research investment**.



EU's moment to reclaim its place as a global leader in life sciences innovation

Strengthening Europe's clinical trial ecosystem requires urgent, coordinated action.

No extra national rules:

implement the EU Clinical Trial Regulation without adding national layers of complexity.

Faster, harmonised processes for multi-country trials, including how Ethics Committees work across Europe.

Enable cross-border access, so patients can join clinical trials anywhere in Europe.

Make CTIS work for users: ensure the Clinical Trials Information System is simple, reliable, flexible, and user-friendly.



Imagine if Europe was a global centre for clinical trials

With the upcoming EU Biotech Act, Europe has a unique opportunity to strengthen its clinical research ecosystem and regain global competitiveness in life sciences.

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