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CureVac, CEPI to develop Coronavirus Vaccine

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CureVac and CEPI extend their Cooperation to Develop a Vaccine against Coronavirus nCoV-2019

CureVac AG, a clinical stage biopharmaceutical company pioneering the field of mRNA-based drugs, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a public-private partnership set up to accelerate development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases, has announced a collaboration to develop a vaccine against the new coronavirus nCoV-2019. The aim of the cooperation is to safely advance vaccine candidates into clinical testing as quickly as possible. The agreement will build on the existing partnership between CureVac and CEPI to develop a rapid-response vaccine platform and includes additional initial funding of up to $8.3 million by CEPI for accelerated vaccine development, manufacturing and clinical tests.

“CureVac’s technology and mRNA platform are especially suitable to rapidly provide a response to a viral outbreak situation like this,” said Dr. Mariola Fotin-Mleczek, Chief Technology Officer of CureVac. “Thanks to the funding by CEPI, we will be able to support the fight against this health emergency in an expedited manner. Currently, we are in the process of developing a vaccine that, after successful preclinical tests, could be tested rapidly in humans in a clinical study.”

Richard Hatchett, CEO of CEPI, said: “In view of the rapid spread of the coronavirus, CEPI has moved quickly to expand our collaboration with CureVac, so that we can apply their mRNA vaccine development platform to this disease. Our aspiration is to bring the pathogen’s gene sequence to a vaccine candidate for clinical testing within a few months – which is significantly shorter than where we are now. This is an extremely ambitious timeline and even if we are successful—and there can be no guarantee—there will be further challenges to navigate before we can make vaccines widely available.”

In addition, CureVac is working on the development of The RNA Printer™. This is a mobile, automated production unit for rapid mRNA supply. In February, 2019, CEPI agreed to provide up to $34 million in support of this technology. This innovative platform will provide a rapid supply of lipid-nanoparticle (LNP)-formulated mRNA vaccine candidates that can target known pathogens (including Lassa Fever, Yellow Fever, and Rabies) and prepare for rapid response to new and previously unknown pathogens.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is one of the founding members of the Coalition for Epidemic

Preparedness Innovations and has committed a total of 90 million euro to its work. CEPI brings together a range of diverse stakeholders to develop much-needed vaccines for the prevention of future pandemics.