Italy: EU support for biotech's red blood cell technology to treat rare diseases

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- **EIB awards €30 million loan to EryDel for development of novel RBC treatment of rare diseases.**
- **EryDel's treatment platform under development for use in treating rare childhood diseases such as Ataxia Telangiectasia (AT).**
- **Financing supported under the European Fund for Strategic Investments, the main component of the European Commission's Investment Plan for Europe.**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) and Italian biotech company EryDel SpA have signed a contract to provide a loan of €30 million to EryDel. This late-stage biotech company aims to develop and commercialise therapies based on its proprietary RBC technology for the treatment of rare diseases. The EU bank's loan is backed by a guarantee from the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), the main pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe under which the EIB and the European Commission are working together as strategic partners, with the EIB's financing operations boosting the competitiveness of the European economy.

EryDel's proprietary platform technology is an easy-to-use, fast and

automatic bedside procedure for encapsulating small and large molecules including therapeutic enzymes in patients' own red blood cells. The cells are immediately re-infused into patients, providing prolonged half-life in circulation, reduced immunogenicity, better tolerability and predictable vascular distribution. EryDel's most advanced product is being developed to treat AT, a rare neurodegenerative childhood disease that causes severe disability. EryDel's platform RBC technology will be applied to treat other rare diseases as well. The financing will support ongoing R&D by the company and its network of partners, which encompasses research institutes, clinical centres and patient associations.

EIB Vice-President **Dario Scannapieco** commented: "*The fact that EryDel is developing therapies for very rare diseases is all the more reason for us to be proud to support this initiative. With the backing of the EFSI, the EIB is happy to finance EryDel's development of their autologous RBC encapsulation therapy to treat very serious childhood diseases. As the bank of the European Union, we have to ensure that new innovative EU-based companies continue to have access to finance, so that they can bring their technologies to market to help improve people's lives.*"

European Commissioner for the Economy, **Paolo Gentiloni**, said: "*The Investment Plan for Europe has a very strong track record in identifying and supporting innovative technology companies. With the financing of the Italian company EryDel and its pioneering RBC technology, we will help push the boundaries of what is possible in the treatment of rare diseases to the benefit of patients in Europe and across the world.*"

EryDel CEO **Luca Benatti** said: "*We're delighted to receive this financing from the EIB, which supports our vision of becoming a fully integrated company that can bring innovative therapies to patients. The EIB clearly recognises the unmet medical need for effective therapies for rare diseases and the potential to help patients in Europe and around the world, and supports our belief that in the future there will be effective therapies developed by EryDel for a wide range of rare diseases. The funds will be used for planned expenditures for research and development and capital expenditure activities. Now that we have completed enrolment for our Phase 3 clinical trial ATTeST, the largest clinical study ever conducted in Ataxia Telangiectasia, the support and collaboration we are receiving from the EIB is significant.*"

EryDel CCO **Ronan Gannon** said: "*We're honoured to have the EIB as a partner who shares our market view and technology vision and trusts EryDel to play a leading role in the global rare disease market. It also demonstrates that Europe plays an important role in leading-edge innovations.*"

EryDel SpA is a global, late-stage biotech company aiming to use its proprietary red blood cell (RBC) technology to develop and commercialise therapies for the treatment of rare diseases. Its most advanced product EryDex is under late-stage development for the treatment of Ataxia Telangiectasia, a rare autosomal recessive disorder for which no therapy is currently available. A completed Phase II trial in AT patients demonstrated statistically significant efficacy of EryDex on both the primary and secondary endpoints. An international multi-centre Phase III pivotal study,

ATTeST, is currently being conducted. EryDel has a pipeline of pre-clinical programmes that are working with its proprietary RBC delivery technology in treating other rare diseases, which includes the use of enzyme replacement therapies.