

## COVID 19

### Where do we go?

**Although it may create the impression of predicting the past, the new pandemic of viral disease should not have come unexpectedly. Indeed, in the last decades, the world was under threat of a new pandemic several times. The current COVID-19 virus pandemic rages across the whole world causing unprecedented morbidity and mortality rates beyond compare. The most important question is what have we learned from the present pandemic and how will we master these crises better in the future?**

We are already confronted with two outbreaks of coronavirus disease, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2012. Both were associated with high mortality rates and could have become world-wide epidemics as well. Also, Ebola, Dengue and Zika-virus had devastating effects on local epidemics.

Although the present pandemic has thus far caused immeasurable human suffering and death, we also have **developed several tools and attitudes which will help us to master future crises.**

The availability of an effective vaccine seems closer than ever and is expected for early 2021, which would be in time to prevent a second winter outbreak of the virus. Some experts, however, are critical about the feasibility of vaccine development against coronaviruses.

A large array of anti-viral chemotherapy is currently being tested for its activity against COVID-19. It seems plausible that at least some of the available medications will show activity. Others can be developed based on a better understanding of the biology of the virus. Also, accumulating evidence appears to suggest that the inflammatory response to the virus causes damage to the lungs, even when the virus itself is already wiped out.

This opens perspectives for anti-inflammatory medication reducing the inflammatory process and hence, lung injury.

Along these lines, study and follow-up of the lung disease observed in association with viral pneumonia may help to shed light on the pathophysiology of at least some forms of IPF (idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis).

**Besides medical progress, many societal lessons are also being learned.** The arrival of a common threat to public health undoubtedly increased solidarity and cooperation between nations. The widespread use of meeting software for videoconferencing is unlikely to disappear after the pandemic. Besides the time saving this provides, it may also help to solve our seemingly insoluble traffic problems. Homework has shown to be effective and is now accepted by many more businesses and institutions.

Daycare for children is viewed very differently when parents can work from home. Distant learning is on the verge of a breakthrough in most of our teaching institutions, not in the least in universities.

This opens new opportunities for the international mobility of our students and the internationalization of our universities. It seems that our societies progress the most in ages of darkness and times of need.

**"It seems that our societies progress the most in ages of darkness and times of need."**





With support of  
the eu.reca partners :



Point of View

## Article written by: Prof.dr. Marc DECRAMER



Prof. dr. Marc Decramer

Prof. dr. Marc Decramer is a pneumologist, was professor at KU Leuven, Chief of the Respiratory Division and CEO at the University Hospital UZ Leuven. His research activity dealt primarily with respiratory rehabilitation and pharmacotherapy of COPD, leading to more than 400 papers in international peer reviewed journals. He was a member and President of numerous national and international societies, including President of the European Respiratory Society (2010-2011), and Editor of the European Respiratory Journal (1999-2002). He currently is a member of the Board of Trustees of the University Medical Centre of Leiden (LUMC).

### Join eu.reca today

The European Respiratory Cluster Antwerp (eu.reca) is a dynamic knowledge platform with a focus on the lung. In order to improve therapies and quality of life of patients, develop new products, reduce societal costs and deal with the challenge of air pollution, we believe it is necessary to connect and unite all stakeholders in an expert community.

"As a catalyst for innovation, we want to bring promising start-ups into contact with leading companies, pharma with product designers, academics with entrepreneurs, and investors with patients. That is why our approach is based on interaction. Our extensive network ensures a quality pool of participants. Our workshops and symposia encourage in-depth dialogue." Frank Pieters, Founder and Chairman of the Board.

Interested? Find us at [www.eureca.world](http://www.eureca.world).

### eu.reca gold sponsors



eu.reca - Galileilaan 15, 2845 Niel, Belgium  
+ 32 3 443 04 00 - [info@eureca.world](mailto:info@eureca.world) - [www.eureca.world](http://www.eureca.world)