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SEIMAS

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LT27EU

H.E. Mr Lauri Hussar
President of the Riigikogu
Republic of Estonia

Vilnius, 19 November 2026

Dear Mr President,

As the host of the event, I have the honour of inviting you to the inter-parliamentary conference titled *Contribution of Higher Education to Strengthening the Life Sciences and Research Ecosystem: the EU Leadership in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Rare Diseases* to be held at the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in Vilnius on 9–10 May 2027 during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

The conference coincides with Europe Day and the 10th anniversary of the European Reference Networks and takes place in the seventh year of the European Health Union.

Since the Schuman Declaration, Europe has overcome some of its greatest challenges through collective solutions, including post-World War II reconstruction, food insecurity, and barriers to the free movement of people, goods, services and capital.

Today, science, education and health play an ever-greater role in developing such solutions. This is reflected in four policy directions on the EU agenda that bring these fields together. Ultimately, it is our citizens and the parliaments they elect who will shape these directions:

- the fifth freedom – the free movement of research, innovation, knowledge and education within the single market;
- the European Health Union – stronger joint preparedness, prevention and healthcare across Member States;
- the Savings and Investments Union – directing European savings towards productive investment, including research and innovation;
- European and global public goods – knowledge, research infrastructures and health security, supported by sustainable funding from national and EU budgets and private investment.

Rare diseases are among the fields where the added value of European cooperation is most evident. No single Member State has a sufficiently large patient population, or the breadth of knowledge and expertise required to address these challenges alone. The Vilnius conference will explore the journey from knowledge to patients: how universities and research ecosystems generate the knowledge, innovation and talent that drive the EU's competitiveness; how these resources, when pooled at the European level, can enable earlier diagnoses and better treatments for people living with rare diseases; and how the European Health Union can ensure that such cooperation becomes the norm rather than the exception.

As the agenda is currently being finalised, we would warmly welcome your suggestions on topics or perspectives that you consider valuable for inclusion in the programme. Your experience and insights would greatly enrich our discussions and contribute to the success of the conference. We would be grateful if you could confirm your participation by 1 March 2027 at ipc-science-health2027@seimas.lt. Further practical information will be shared in due course.

I look forward to welcoming you in Vilnius.

Yours sincerely,

Juozas Olekas
Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania