

## GeNeuro and CIRI Renew Collaboration Agreement and Expand Focus to Post-COVID Syndromes

- **New focus expanded to investigate link between HERV-W ENV and long-term damage, in particular neurological, experienced by post-COVID-19 patients**
- **HERV-W ENV may provide biological rationale with temelimab providing therapeutic option for post-COVID-19 neurological and psychiatric syndromes**

**Geneva, Switzerland, June 24, 2021 – 7:30am CEST – GeNeuro** (Euronext Paris: CH0308403085 - GNRO), a biopharmaceutical company developing new treatments for neurodegenerative and autoimmune diseases, such as multiple sclerosis (MS), and the CIRI (International Center for Infectiology Research), in Lyon, France, a world-class research institute against infectious diseases, announced today the signing of an extension to their existing Research Collaboration Agreement.

This joint GeNeuro and CIRI research effort concentrates on understanding the interplay between viruses and human DNA. Viruses from the environment have been found to trigger the expression of pathogenic proteins encoded by human endogenous retroviruses (HERVs), which are the remnants of ancestral viral infections integrated within the human genome.

*“We are very excited to continue our collaboration with the GeNeuro team on COVID-19 and its consequences,” said Dr. Branka Horvat*, who heads the “Immunobiology of Viral infections” team at the International Center for Infectiology Research-CIRI. *“Our previous work showed that in-vitro exposure of human cells to SARS-CoV-2 triggered the expression of the pathogenic HERV-W ENV protein in about 20% of healthy blood donors, suggesting individual susceptibility. Now we will also focus on the link between HERV-W ENV and the long-term neurological damage experienced by a significant subset of COVID-19 patients.”*

HERV-W ENV is known to be pro-inflammatory and pathogenic to nervous system cells. Once its expression is triggered by a virus infection, this expression may continue long-term, independently from the presence or activity of the triggering virus. This is, for example, the case with multiple sclerosis patients, in whom HERV-W ENV is expressed life-long in brain lesions by microglia cells, fueling the neurodegeneration suffered by those patients.

*“We are honored to continue our research partnership with the CIRI to benefit from their world class expertise in understanding the consequences of viral infections,” said Dr. Hervé Perron*, Chief Scientific Officer of GeNeuro. *“We have already made great advances together, as well as with our international partners, in the understanding of the relationship between SARS-CoV-2 and HERV-W ENV, and this expanded focus on post-COVID will open new avenues for understanding and treating the millions of patients affected.”*

According to recent large-scale studies, at least 10% of people infected by SARS-CoV-2 fail to fully recover and/or develop new symptoms, particularly neurological or neuro-psychiatric. With more than 176 million confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide to date, of which more than 80 million are in the USA and Europe, this problem is emerging as a major public health emergency.

GeNeuro’s temelimab, a monoclonal antibody designed to neutralize the pathogenic envelope protein pHERV-W that has already proven its excellent tolerability in Phase 2 trials, could be made immediately available for a clinical trial in post-COVID.

## About GeNeuro

GeNeuro's mission is to develop safe and effective treatments against neurological disorders and autoimmune diseases, such as multiple sclerosis, by neutralizing causal factors encoded by HERVs, which represent 8% of human DNA.

GeNeuro is based in Geneva, Switzerland and has R&D facilities in Lyon, France. It has rights to 17 patent families protecting its technology.

For more information, visit: [www.geneuro.com](http://www.geneuro.com)

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