

Press release

Brussels, 23 February 2022

The FAMHP publishes its 2020 annual report with testimonials about the first year of the pandemic

In addition to the usual facts and figures, the FAMHP's 2020 annual report includes testimonials from staff members who had to face difficult situations in the field. These stories show that there was tremendous stress and pressure, but also a lot of dedication and professionalism. You might recognize some topics from the daily press coverage we received at the time. Other topics give you a glimpse behind the scenes. In any case, you can now read at first-hand how our staff helped create solutions.

The year 2020 can undoubtedly be summed up in one word: coronavirus. In 2020, many organisations focused primarily on the COVID-19 pandemic, the FAMHP being one of them. The health crisis had an unprecedented impact on our staff and internal operations. As an agency, we therefore took on various roles that were not part of our regular workload, with one goal in mind: to help as many people as possible.

This mission was also a priority in 2021. As a result, you are receiving [this annual report](#) a little later than usual. We hope that the additional information and insight into the crisis management, in all its aspects, makes up for it.

Interviews about the fight against the coronavirus

A special feature of this annual report is that we let our experts talk about their experiences with the corona crisis. You will find out how we managed to develop and approve the COVID-19 vaccines so quickly, how the vaccination campaign was prepared and much more. The supply and shortages of medicines, medical devices and oxygen are also tackled in this report. Read all about the crisis management, the communication strategy and how we did everything possible from the start to facilitate the research and development of treatments.

Some quotes from the interviews

- "We were facing an unknown disease. We had to collect all the available information so we could almost simultaneously evaluate the safety of potential treatments."
- "Thanks to Belgium's reputation for clinical trials, patients in Belgium have been able to access a whole range of treatments."
- "There was an enormous drive to succeed in our goal, which was to save as many lives as possible."
- "We assisted in home searches of people who had set up a business in illegal face masks, with interrogations that went on late into the night."
- "To the outside world, we were the annoying people holding back the shipments of face masks. The pressure from outside to release masks was enormous."
- "It has been a close call on a few occasions but there was never a shortage of medicines that prevented anyone from receiving treatment."

In addition to the interviews, there is a coronavirus timeline through which we look back at the agency's key achievements in 2020.

Our milestones and key figures

In 2020, our routine tasks often had to make way for the management of the corona crisis: our annual figures show the impact of the crisis on our internal operations. Nevertheless, we want to highlight our achievements.

In 2020, the FAMHP services received 12 326 reports of side effects, incidents and adverse reactions. 552 applications for new clinical trials were processed and 623 authorisation files for medicines were closed. 572 marketed products were analysed, 1 369 inspections were carried out and 626 investigations into illegal medicines and medical devices were conducted.

In 2020, the FAMHP also achieved several milestones. Readers will be able to look back on three major, long-term projects: the Brexit, the switch to a new personnel and payroll administration system and the preparation of our relocation together with the NIHDI and the FPS Public Health.

Discover all 2020 achievements [in the FAMHP digital annual report](#). We also invite you to give your opinion on the annual report by completing the [online survey](#).

Xavier De Cuyper, CEO of the FAMHP:

"Everyone at the Agency has worked harder than ever to serve our fellow citizens, even at the expense of his or her private life. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to both FAMHP staff and our external partners for their boundless dedication and professionalism. Only by working together have we been able to achieve these results, and only together will we be ready to face new challenges."

More information

[The annual report of the FAMHP for 2020](#)

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For more information

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The FAMHP is the Belgian competent authority that oversees the quality, safety and effectiveness of medicinal and health products in clinical development and placed on the market, in the interests of public health.

