

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***Climate Change Can Affect Allergic Respiratory Diseases***

**Zurich, 7 December 2009: Experts from EAACI (European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology), the largest European organisation in the field of allergy, immunology and asthma, and the ERS, the European Respiratory Society present their projections on possible effects of climate change on allergic patients and their recommendations to mitigate the impacts.**

Climate change is unequivocal and represents a possible threat for patients affected by respiratory allergy. Projected changes can impact on the physiology and distribution of living organisms, such as plants and fungi producing allergenic pollen and spores. Over the last decades many studies have shown changes in production, dispersion and allergen content of pollen and spores and that nature of the changes may be different in different regions and species.

"Published data suggest an increasing effect of aeroallergens on allergic patients, leading to a greater likelihood of development of an allergic respiratory disease in sensitized subjects and an aggravation in patients already symptomatic" said Lorenzo Cecchi, chairman of the EAACI Interest Group on Aerobiology and Pollution.

"Thunderstorm asthma" is characterized by asthma epidemic possibly caused by the dispersion of more respirable allergenic particles derived from pollen and spores. "Heavy rainfall episodes, including thunderstorm, will increase in terms of intensity and frequency in the next decades, which can be expected to increase gradually the number and severity of asthma attacks both in adults and children" underlines Gennaro D'Amato, chairman of the EAACI-ERS task force together with Isabella Annesi Maesano.

EAACI supports all the measures able to reduce the emissions and the possible impacts of climate change on allergic population. A crucial issue is the need of short and long-term data. For this reason, EAACI recommends to improve and extend national pollen networks, possibly converging in a common European network which should be able to spread information about pollen count. Continuous aerobiological monitoring is the cornerstone for observing changes in pollen and spores production as well as the basis to build up the long time series, prerequisite for studies on the effect of climate change. These networks should be adequately financed.

#### About EAACI:

EAACI - The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology is a non-profit organisation active in the field of allergic and immunologic diseases such as asthma, rhinitis, eczema, occupational allergy, food and drug allergy and anaphylaxis. EAACI was founded in 1956 in Florence and has become the largest medical association in Europe in the field of allergy and clinical immunology. It includes 5'500 individual members from 107 countries, as well as 40 National Allergy Societies.



**For further information:**

EAACI Headquarters  
Head of Communications  
Panthea Sayah  
Genferstrasse 21  
8002 Zurich  
Switzerland  
Tel.: +41 44 205 55 33  
Fax: +41 44 205 55 39  
Mobile: +41 79 551 99 48  
E-mail: [panthea.sayah@eaaci.net](mailto:panthea.sayah@eaaci.net)  
Internet : [www.eaaci.net](http://www.eaaci.net)

Lorenzo Cecchi  
Chairman of IG Aerobiology and Pollution  
Secretary of the EAACI-ERS Task Force on Climate Change and Allergic Respiratory diseases  
Interdepartmental Centre of Bioclimatology  
University of Florence, Italy  
and  
Allergy Clinic  
Azienda Sanitaria Firenze  
Florence  
Italy  
Tel: +390553288257  
E-mail: [lorenzo.cecchi@unifi.it](mailto:lorenzo.cecchi@unifi.it)