



Joint EAACI – EFA Press Release - UPDATE

178 Members of the European Parliament call for coordinated European action on allergies

24.1.2014 Brussels, Belgium - Three months ago, 11 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) proposed a draft **Written Declaration**¹ on recognising the burden of allergic disease, calling upon the Commission and Member States to recognise the burden of allergic disease and develop policy tools to combat this illness. At the end of the consultation period, the Declaration was supported by a total of 178 MEPs.

The MEPs have made a number of recommendations to help mitigate the impact of allergic diseases, which affect over 150 million Europeans: EU Member States were called upon to implement national programmes, to provide better medical training and to encourage scientific research.

One of the co-proposers of the Declaration, MEP Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu, explained: "In some countries, over 50% of adolescents are reporting symptoms of allergic rhinitis. This common chronic disease has a serious impact on people's lives and I urge Member States to develop adequate national allergy programmes."

MEP Marina Yannakoudakis, also a co-proposer, added: "Raising awareness of allergies is important; almost half of Europeans suffering from allergic rhinitis are undiagnosed. We need to take this seriously, highlight the extent and push for better treatment."

Unfortunately, allergies are not fully recognised in Brussels yet. "Already in 2011, we released a study that showed that allergic rhinitis leads to more productivity loss per employee than high stress, migraines or depression, which equals to impaired quality of life" noted Breda Flood, the President of the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA). "Yet, few debates in Brussels focus on tackling allergies. Together with EAACI, we hope to get allergies recognised as one of the major health issues of the 21st century."

Professor Nikos Papadopoulos, the President of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI), explains that "Allergies can make children perform poorly at school, they can make adults miss work and they also cause 80% of asthma cases. We urge the Commission and national governments to follow the example of the European Parliament. Allergic diseases should be included in initiatives concerning chronic diseases at national and European level. The European Commission has the

¹ **Written Declaration**

The proposal for a European Parliament Written Declaration on Recognising the Burden of Allergic disease has been put forward by: Oana Antonescu (EPP, Romania), Nessa Childers (NI, Ireland), Elisabetta Gardini (EPP, Italy), Françoise Grossetête (EPP, France), Philippe Juvin (EPP, France), Antonia Parvanova (ALDE, Bulgaria), Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP, Finland), Frédérique Ries (ALDE, Belgium), Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu (S&D, Romania), Rebecca Taylor (ALDE, UK) and Marina Yannakoudakis (ECR, UK).

capacity to coordinate efforts to respond to the challenges of chronic diseases. Now is the time to act!”

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² **EAACI**

The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, EAACI, 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 over 7,800 members from 121 countries, as well as 42 National Allergy Societies.

³ **EFA**

The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) is a non-profit network of allergy, asthma and COPD patients organisations, representing 35 national associations in 22 countries and over 400,000 patients. EFA is dedicated to making Europe a place where people with allergies, asthma and COPD have the right to best quality of care and safe environment, live uncompromised lives and are actively involved in all decisions influencing their health.