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## **The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) calls for major prioritization of allergic diseases in the European political agenda**

*Allergic diseases have become a major epidemic in the EU: more than 150 million Europeans are affected by an allergic disease and they will be 250 million in the next decade<sup>1</sup>*

*Allergy research remains a key need in Europe, and high standard education and a common practice of the speciality is needed to allow free movement of patients and healthcare professionals across EU countries*

*Prioritization of allergic diseases will come through partnerships with organisations seeking similar goals in the field of health and research*

**Copenhagen (Denmark), 11 June 2014** – With more than 150 million Europeans affected by an allergic disease and a prediction of an increase to 250 million in the next decade<sup>1</sup>, allergic diseases have become a major epidemic in the European Union (EU). Indeed, in some countries, more than half of the population is already sensitized, while more than 30% suffer from at least one allergic condition.

Considering the high prevalence, in association with a significant individual and societal burden due to the impact on the quality of life and the direct and indirect costs caused by allergies, the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) has warned during its Annual Congress, held in Copenhagen (Denmark), that **an immediate concerted action is needed**. Therefore, allergic diseases must be prioritized in the European political agenda.

Realising the need for consistent presence and involvement in EU and international political fora, **EAACI has recently reinstated a Brussels Office**. Acting as the contact point for internal and external enquiries, it will provide a platform to help place allergy higher on the EU agenda and translate policy opportunities into meaningful action.

*"Allergy research remains a key need, for symptom control, understanding and prevention. In addition high standard education and a common practice of the speciality is needed to allow free movement of patients and health-care professionals across EU countries",* emphasizes **Nikolaos G. Papadopoulos, EAACI President**.

### **EAACI proposal and actions**

EAACI, as the leading European medical society focusing on allergy, has a key role to play in the formulation of health and research policy at a European level and, further to the opening



of its Brussels' EU liaison office, has recently streamlined its European Affairs strategy with the development of a dedicated Roadmap for European advocacy.

Furthermore, EAACI has joined forces with the European Chronic Disease Alliance (ECDA) and the Alliance for Biomedical Research in Europe (BioMed Alliance), to unite its voice with those of other major academic organisations in the fields of chronic diseases and biomedical research, respectively, increasing its advocacy outreach and impact in Brussels. Looking into the future, prioritization of allergic diseases will come through partnerships with organisations seeking similar goals in the field of health and research.

Over time, and with the right communication tools in place, EAACI aim to establish allergy ambassadors among EU Parliament members and to have consistent interaction with different EU Institutions, to promote allergy awareness.

Several other actions are planned such as the development of an EAACI Advocacy Manifesto for the EU institutions, creating a network of Allergy Research Ambassadors are envisaged.

### **About 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 47 National Allergy Societies.

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#### **REFERENCES**

1. The European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI). A European Declaration on Allergen Immunotherapy. Available at <http://www.eaaci.org/resources/immunotherapy-declaration.html>