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The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Association (EFA) launches the first European Call to Action on Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease at the European Parliament

EFA has united EU officials, patients and the medical community to address this major chronic disease and present the EFA book on COPD with a detailed Call to Action for Europe .

Today, EFA is organising an event at the European Parliament to gather support on the need to adopt a common approach at EU level on COPD. COPD affects 44 million people in Europe and stands to become the third leading cause of death by 2030. The disabling disease, which causes gradual restriction of airflow and consequent difficulty in breathing, can greatly impact patients' social lives and ability to work. With the adoption of this Call to Action, EFA aims to ensure that each European citizen has the best chance of being informed about COPD, an opportunity to prevent the disease and for those living with COPD the best chance of an early diagnosis and effective treatment.

The event is being chaired by MEP Catherine Stihler, who has been a leading advocate within the European Parliament on COPD since 2007, when she launched a Written Declaration on combating COPD, signed by 226 MEPs. Catherine Stihler is in favour of a common approach to address the socio-economic and patient burden of COPD. She has also highlighted the need for more data on the prevalence of the disease and studies on the best policy approach to ensure a targeted response. *"Hopefully the event will raise awareness of COPD and the cost to our health, families and health services, and we can begin to combat COPD"* she said.

On this occasion, EFA is presenting the key findings from the Book on COPD entitled *Europe 'Sharing and Caring'* which highlights the existing shortfalls in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of COPD across Europe from the patient perspective for policy-makers. Marianella Salapatas, President of EFA will present the first Call to Action on COPD urging the EU to take the necessary steps to develop a strategic, comprehensive and integrated European approach to respiratory diseases with a focus on COPD, which supports the launch and implementation of national plans on COPD.

About EFA

The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) is an alliance of 35 member organisations in 22 countries, founded in 1991. EFA is committed to improve the health and quality of care of patients with allergy, asthma and COPD and encourage patient participation through advocacy, capacity building and sharing best practices. EFA's priorities include indoor and outdoor air quality, greater access to and quality of medical and social care and prevention, patient centred research and meaningful patient participation in research, involvement in policies, commissioning of patient care services & society and having a voice in care delivery & society.

<http://www.efanet.org>

Acknowledgment

The EFA Launch event is sponsored by unrestricted educational grants from EFA sustainable corporate partners Boehringer Ingelheim and GlaxoSmithKline.

The event is also part of the Year of the Lung 2010 initiative, organised by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS).

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