

RE: Written Declaration at the European Parliament on combating COPD

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Associations (EFA)¹ is a network of 31 allergy, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD) patient organizations in 18 countries across Europe with 500.000 patient and carer members committed to improve the health, quality of care and participation of patients with these diseases and their prevention.

Ms. Catherine Stihler, MEP, has tabled a Written Declaration (86/2006) calling on the European Commission and Council for more research in COPD and urging the Commission to adopt a green paper on indoor air and to develop smoking cessation policies.

On behalf of the European patients with COPD, and together with European Respiratory Society (ERS) we ask for your support and urge you to sign this declaration and to ask for your colleagues' support.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is currently the fourth biggest cause of death in the European Union and is predicted to become the third biggest killer within the next 15 years². Up to almost three out of four patients with COPD report difficulty in the simplest of everyday activities, being out of breath after simply walking upstairs³. Despite these alarming figures, COPD continues to be under recognised at European level.

COPD is a condition which causes gradual restriction of airflow and consequent difficulty in breathing. Because of this, shortness of breath, cough and sputum production are common symptoms in COPD. Approximately 200,000-300,000 people die each year in Europe because of COPD. Among respiratory diseases, COPD is the leading cause of lost work days, and it is estimated that in Europe productivity losses due to COPD amount to a total of €28.5 billion annually.

Given the social and economic impact of COPD, we ask you to sign the Declaration, and thus help in fighting this debilitating disease.

Thank you for your help. We remain at your disposal for any further information,

Yours sincerely,

Svein Erik Myrseth
EFA President

Susanna Palkonen
EFA Executive Officer

¹ For more information <http://www.efanet.org>

² European Lung White Book. European Lung Foundation and European Respiratory Society. 2003.

³ The burden of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. P. Vermeire. Respir Med (2002); 96(Suppl C): S3-S10