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EFAnews

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May The world looks at asthma and allergy

May is traditionally the month when the eyes of the world are turned to allergy and asthma. This year is no exception: 3 May is World Asthma Day, 12 May is World Allergy Awareness Day, and 31 May is the WHO's World No Tobacco Day.

This cluster of asthma and allergy-related events represents a good occasion to reflect on the role of patients' associations and on the role of professional scientific/medical societies in counteracting the increase in allergy and asthma that is particularly acute in our countries. One thing is certain, patients' associations and professional societies together are much stronger than each working individually; this is true both nationally and at European level. Consequently, it is important that patients' associations and professional societies join forces to strive for better conditions and rights for asthma and allergy patients, and to arrest the increase of these disorders.

Moreover, how patients 'live' and 'view' their condition impacts enormously on treatment compliance and often has a remarkable effect on the outcome of the

disease. Therefore, 'cross-talk' between patients and doctors is essential to maximise the effect of treatment.

We know that more than 80 million people in Europe are affected by allergy or asthma, and the quality of life of nearly three-quarters of the people affected is diminished by their condition. Our aim is to change these statistics by improving the quality of life of patients and by campaigning for more research into these diseases.

The European Federation of Asthma and Allergy Associations will celebrate this year's World Allergy Awareness Day in Berlin, jointly with the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (EAACI), with a workshop devoted to 'The Patient's View of Quality of Life'. The same day the EAACI will organise a workshop in remembrance of our late President on a topic dear to Kerstin Hejdenberg's heart: 'Challenges for Children with Allergies'.

*Mariadelaide Franchi
Erkka Valovirta*

Dear Friends in EFA Member Associations,

Don't miss EFA's 6th Conference and 10th Anniversary meeting (Stockholm, 7-9 June 2001), and EFA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) that will take place between 14.00 and 17.00 on 9 June. At the AGM the Board will present their Activity Report for the year 2000 and the 2000-2 Programme to Member Associations. In addition, the new EFA Board will be elected, so don't miss the opportunity of contributing to this important step.

Furthermore, the Board needs your input; we need to know what kind of EFA you want for the future. Is EFA fulfilling your needs? How can we do better? Come to the AGM and help plan the growth of EFA.

Mariadelaide Franchi

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