



Press Release
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IPCRG and EFA welcome the European Parliament's Plenary vote on FP7, which makes respiratory diseases and allergies an EU research priority for the next seven years.

On 30 November 2006, the European Parliament voted on the 7th Research Framework Programme (FP7) which specifies European research areas and objectives from 2007 to 2013 with a budget of more than €54 billion euros. The vote took place in line with the Council's position, so the Programme will come into force 1st January 2007.

Unlike other diseases such as HIV, cancer or diabetes, the European Commission's original proposal on FP7 did not specifically mention respiratory diseases. The *International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG)* and the *European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Associations (EFA)* are therefore very pleased that "respiratory diseases including those induced by allergies" are now part of the priority list as they have asked for, and that food allergies are covered in the food safety theme of the Programme.

Susanna Palkonen from EFA explains: "With this vote, the EU acknowledges that allergic and respiratory diseases constitute a growing healthcare problem as well as an increasingly heavy cost for patients and society at large, in terms of medical care and working/living conditions. The financial burden of asthma alone in the EU amounts to nearly €17.7bn and productivity loss due to poor asthma management is estimated at €9.8bn per annum."

Sian Williams from the IPCRG adds: "Increased European research efforts are necessary to tackle the inconsistent approaches to allergy, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) prevention, diagnosis and management in Europe which currently result in varying and suboptimal management." IPCRG and EFA now hope that investment will be made in 'real life' studies that bear generalisable results that support patient-centred care.

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The EFA is a non-profit network of allergy, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patient organisations who represents its 33 members on European level and provides a platform for members to exchange experiences and for capacity building. Our aim is to reduce the frequency and severity of allergies, asthma and COPD, minimise their societal implications, improve the health-related quality of life and ensure full citizenship of people with these conditions, as well as pursuing equal health opportunities in the field of allergy and airways in Europe.

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The IPCRG is a charitable organisation that acts as an international umbrella organisation for national primary care respiratory interest groups. Our aim is to use our international network to undertake research in community settings; to lead the production of evidence-based guidelines appropriate for primary care professionals; and to disseminate these findings.