

European patients launch #ShowLeadership campaign for better care and prevention of allergy and airways diseases

BRUSSELS, 08 April, 2019 – Today, the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) launches #ShowLeadership, a patient-driven campaign encouraging action among all decisions-makers who could help allergy, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) patients take control of their lives.

Living with allergies and airways diseases has become a daily burden for over 200 million people in Europe. The drastic increase of people living with allergy, asthma and COPD has overwhelmed the European healthcare systems but has not triggered an adequate policy response. (1, 2, 3) To draw attention to the burden such diseases present, EFA has launched #ShowLeadership, an awareness campaign aimed at encouraging European policy makers to improve current policies and tackle this issue by working together.

Coinciding with the launch of #ShowLeadership EFA shares results from its *Active Patients Access Care* survey

To mark the celebration of World Health Day on the 7th of April, EFA launches #ShowLeadership. The campaign will run throughout 2019 and reveal ground-breaking results on access to early diagnosis, care, prevention, patient participation in care and research on allergy and airways diseases across Europe. The data is derived from a survey carried out by EFA and shows that despite receiving treatment and care 25 % of Europeans living with asthma, and 31 % of those living with COPD, still end up in the emergency room at least once a year. (4)

Patient-centred survey carried out in 7 EU countries – Results unveiled monthly

The EFA *Active Patients Access Care* survey was conducted in 2018 amongst asthma and COPD patients from seven European countries from all EU geographical areas. (5) The results will be unveiled on a monthly basis, highlighting the current situation of people living with asthma and COPD, the needs that remain to be addressed, and linking it to key international and European moments, e.g. April's theme is about including *health in all policies*, and May will be focused on risk factors such as smoking.

Illustrating the multi-factorial causes of allergy and airways diseases and the need to promote the inclusion and consideration of allergy and airways diseases in all policies beyond health. For example, EFA's survey reveals that only one third of people living with asthma and COPD are satisfied with public authorities' attempts to reduce the level of exposure to pollution, both indoors and outdoors, whether it comes from transport, chemicals or tobacco smoke.

Health is not in all policies, patients dissatisfied

In reference to the #ShowLeadership campaign launch, and April's theme on *health in all policies*, EFA President Mikaela Odemyr said: "The *Active Patients Access Care* survey is showing us shocking facts about the number of patients who end up in the emergency room, even though they have access to treatment. What this tells me is that we need a better and more holistic policy response to ensure this number does not increase further. It means that actions ought to be taken, in the healthcare space and beyond, to improve the situation".

On the need to address all the dimensions impacting people living with allergies and airways diseases, Mikaela Odemyr added: "We know our community is dissatisfied with the current approach to addressing the multi-factorial causes of allergy and airways diseases. One of the steps we need to take is to do a better job of protecting people from breathing all sources of pollution, especially the ones triggering the development and exacerbation of allergy, asthma and COPD. With #ShowLeadership we urge European institutions and countries to adopt prevention and care measures for people with respiratory diseases by including allergy and airways diseases in all policies. We are ready to partner."

PRESS STATEMENT

For more information on the campaign follow us on twitter (@EFA_Patients) and visit the #ShowLeadership webpage: www.efanet.org/campaigns/showleadership

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The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA) is a network of 42 allergy, asthma and COPD patients' organisations in 25 European countries and it works for European patients with allergy, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) to live uncompromised lives, have the right and access to the best quality care and a safe environment.

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Notes to editors:

- (1) Asthma is the most common chronic disease in children (European Respiratory Society, White Book (2013): <https://www.erswhitebook.org/chapters/childhood-asthma/>)
- (2) COPD is the third leading cause of death in the world and it costs European healthcare and social systems 141,4 billion Euro a year (European Lung Foundation, Lung Health in Europe Facts and Figures (2013): https://www.europeanlung.org/assets/files/publications/lung_health_in_europe_facts_and_figures_web.pdf)
- (3) 150 million Europeans live with allergy and if no action is taken this could reach 1 in 2 people by 2025 (European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, Advocacy Manifesto (2013): https://www.eaaci.org/documents/EAACI_Advocacy_Manifesto.pdf)
- (4) European Federation of Allergies and Airways Diseases, Annual Report 2018: <http://www.efanet.org/annual-report/2018/projects/active-patients-access-care>
- (5) The countries surveyed are Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and United Kingdom