



European Federation of
Allergy and Airways Diseases
Patients Associations



EAACI
EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY
AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY



To

Commissioner Tonio BORG and Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou

European Commission

Directorate-General Health and Consumers and Directorate-General Education and Culture
B - 1049 Brussels

ENVI Chairman Mr Matthias Groote

European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 12G201
B-1047 Brüssel

Mr Peter Liese and Mr Richard Seeber, Co-coordinators of the EPP Group
European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 10E158 and Altiero Spinelli 08F163
B-1047 Brüssel

Ms Linda McAvan, Coordinator of the S&D Group

European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 13G346
B-1047 Brüssel

Mr Chris Davies, Coordinator of the ALDE Group

European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 10G169
B-1047 Brüssel

Ms Satu Hassi, Coordinator of the Greens/EFA Group

European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 08G351
B-1047 Brüssel

Ms Anna Rosbach, Coordinator of the ECR Group

European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 05M097
B-1047 Brüssel

Mr Oreste Rossi, Coordinator of the EFD Group

European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 07H347
B-1047 Brüssel

Ms Kartika Tamara Liotard, Coordinator of the GUE/NGL Group

European Parliament

Rue Wiertz

Altiero Spinelli 07F253
B-1047 Brüssel



European Federation of
Allergy and Airways Diseases
Patients Associations



EAACI
EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY
AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY



Brussels, May 7, 2013

**SUBJECT: Request for EU Support in the Development of Allergology
Education – ALERT PAPER**

Dear EU Commissioner Borg, DG Health and Consumer Policy,
Dear EU Commissioner Vassiliou, DG Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth
Dear ENVI Committee chair Mr. Groote and dear all ENVI Coordinators,

We are contacting you today on behalf of Europe's allergic patients, health care professionals and researchers working in the field of allergy in order to underscore a topic of seminal importance in the field of healthcare. The European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA), the European Academy of Allergology and Clinical Immunology (EAACI), the European Union of Medical Specialists (UEMS), and Allergic Rhinitis and Its Impact on Asthma (ARIA), formally request endorsement from the European Commission and European Parliament for **three** fundamental changes to healthcare systems across Europe regarding pre- and postgraduate medical education:

1. The formal recognition of a full medical specialty in Allergology and of a formally recognized sub-specialty of Pediatric-Allergology throughout all EU member countries;
2. The increase in quality and the harmonization of education for allergists and primary care physicians (PCPs);
3. The development and implementation of an educational model of Allergology in Medical Schools across Europe.

Recent statistics clearly reveal a deficit and growing disparity in the number of allergists and number of severe allergy patients across Europe. Allergies are the most frequent chronic diseases in Europe today, affecting, with the most conservative estimates, the daily lives of more than 60 million people. Both, their prevalence and severity keep on increasing.

The trend previously described is extremely worrisome for the medical community; however, of even greater concern is the lack of knowledge amongst PCPs in the field of allergology. For experts in allergy, it is one problem to see a growing deficit in healthcare for the allergy patient but a tangible knowledge gap between experts and the general practitioners seeing allergic patients more routinely is an even greater concern. As a result, EFA, EAACI, UEMS and ARIA are united in stating a crisis is pending in public health where an increase in allergy prevalence is mounting pressure on a medical community which is deprived of adequate education in the field.



European Federation of
Allergy and Airways Diseases
Patients Associations



EAACI
EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY
AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY



The current trends suggest, especially since so many people in Europe already suffer from allergic diseases, primary care will diagnose, treat and follow-up with every second patient with an allergy between 2015 and 2040. At that time EAACI predicts that about half of the EU population will suffer from some type of allergy. PCPs will also receive patients with severe and even life-threatening allergies. As a result, primary care *must* have competence to administer first aid and understand how a referral to specialized care can improve the standard of life for their allergy patients. Without the proper knowledge and information available to them, many allergy patients will complacently accept their condition as “normal.” By this rationale, allergology must be introduced as a true and complete medical specialty and should be on the curriculum of medical schools in every European country.

We realize a surplus of allergy specialists in some countries (e.g. Italy or Spain) while in other countries (e.g. UK or France) a lack of allergologists exists. However, the free movement of allergologists is hampered by some bureaucratic issues, even if Allergology is an officially recognized specialty in those countries.

Although a patients’ acceptance of their disease as a “normal condition” is a tragic consequence of the lack of specialist management on the one hand with the general under-education of PCPs in the other hand, there are other consequences as well. In the present time of economic recession and austerity, the effects of allergic diseases are especially relevant. Statistical evidence clearly show declines in productivity at work among adults and in schools among children. It is estimated that the annual cost of asthma in Europe is over € 18 billion; allergic rhinitis may cost up to € 100 billion, according to unpublished data from the Global Allergy and Asthma Network of Excellence, GA²LEN, investigators. Skin allergy care costs may be as high as that of asthma (see details in the attached literature). In addition, the costs within healthcare systems of allowing allergy patients to remain untreated are enormous and extremely difficult to ignore. The burden of allergic diseases on society arrives in the form of absenteeism from work and school, strains upon entire family units, creating problems with concentration and sleeping abnormalities. The cumulative risk to European society of allowing the growing epidemic of allergic disease to go unnoticed is both expensive and irresponsible.

EFA, EAACI, UEMS and ARIA jointly request the commitment of the European Commission and ENVI Committee of the European Parliament to endorse the following suggestions be implemented across Europe:

1. The recognition of a common educational curriculum, realized through educational programmes in medical schools and nurse training, including post-graduate specializations in allergology for ALL EU countries;
2. The admission of PCPs to similar programmes to ensure the guarantee of quality education in the field of allergology;



European Federation of
Allergy and Airways Diseases
Patients Associations



EAACI
EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY
AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY



3. It is essential to harmonize education for allergologists across Europe, by founding a common educational model in the field of allergology. Mutual recognition of allergology among all member states would be a first step.

In summary, the current trends for allergic diseases in Europe will not reverse itself without proper attention from the medical community and policymakers. Best practice models, such as the National Allergy Programme in Finland, are emerging to show how the societal burden of allergic diseases can be effectively alleviated. Nevertheless, such models are an exception to the general status quo for most European healthcare systems struggling to cope with the needs of an increasing number of allergy patients. EFA, EAACI, UEMS and ARIA strongly encourage the European Commission and European Parliament to act as swiftly as possible to begin to reverse the tide of allergic disease.

Yours sincerely,

Breda Flood

Breda Flood
EFA President

Nikolaos G. Papadopoulos
EAACI Secretary General & President Elect

Jan G.R.de Monchy
UEMS President

Jean Bousquet
ARIA Chairman



European Federation of
Allergy and Airways Diseases
Patients Associations



Enclosure: Relevant literature

Relevant Literature (in the follow up of the year of publication)

- 1) Nikolaos G Papadopoulos, Savvas Savvatiannos: The vital need for Allergy Training: removing the doubts. *Prim Care Respir J* 2013; 22(x): xxx-xxx
- 2) Bousquet J, Schünemann HJ, Samolinski B, et al. Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma (ARIA): Achievements in 10 years and future needs. *Allergy* 2012; 130: 1049-1062.
- 1) Calderon et al: EAACI: A European Declaration on Immunotherapy. Designing the future of allergen specific immunotherapy. *Clinical and Translational Allergy* 2012 2:20.
- 2) Chivato T, Valovirta E, Dahl R, de Monchy J, Thomsen A, Palkonen S, Jacobsen L. Allergy, Living and Learning: Diagnosis and Treatment of allergic Respiratory Diseases in Europe. *Investig Allergol Clin Immunol* 2012; 22(3): 168-179
- 3) Jacobsen L, Wahn U, Bilo MB: Allergen-specific immunotherapy provides, immediate, long-term and preventive clinical effects in children and adults: the effects of immunotherapy can be categorized by level of benefit –the centenary of allergen specific subcutaneous immunotherapy. *Clin Transl Allergy*. 2012, 2:8
- 4) Papadopoulos et al. *Clinical and Translational Allergy* 2012, 2:21. Research needs in allergy: an EAACI position paper, in collaboration with EFA
- 5) Virchow JC, Kay S, Demoly P, Mullol J, Canonica W, Higgins V: Impact of ocular symptoms on quality of life (QoL) work Productivity and resource utilization in allergic rhinitis Patients – an observational, Cross sectional study in four countriesin Europe. *J Med Econ.* 2011, 14(\$): 305-314.
- 6) Kohen D. Asthma and school functioning. *Health Rep.* 2010; 21 (4): 35-45
- 7) Wertz DA, Pollack M, Rodgers K, Bohn RL, Sacco P, Sullivan SD: Impact of asthma control on sleep, attendance at work, normal activities, and disease burden. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol.* 2010, 105(2): 118-123.
- 8) Accordini S, Corsico A, Cerveri I, Gislason D, Gulsvik A, Janson C, et al: The socio-economic burden of asthma is substantial in Europe. *Allergy* 2008, 63(1): 116-124.
- 9) Biardini I, Braido F, Tarantini F, Porcu A, Bonini S, Bousquet PJ, et al: ARIA – suggested drugs for allergic rhinitis: what impact on quality of life? A GA2LEN review. *Allergy* 2008, 63(6): 660-669.
- 10) Haahtela T et al. Finnish Allergy Programme 2008-2018. *Allergy* 2008; 63:634-645
- 11) Mancini AJ, Kaulback K, Chamlin SL: The socioeconomic impact of atopic dermatitis in the United States: a systematic review. *Pediatr Dermatol* 2008, 25(1):1-6.
- 12) Walker S, Khan-Wasti S, Fletcher M, Cullinan P, Harris J, Sheikh A: Seasonal allergic rhinitis is associated with a detrimental effect on examination performance in United Kingdom teenagers: case-control study. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2007, 120: 381-387.



European Federation of
Allergy and Airways Diseases
Patients Associations



EAACI
EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY
AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY



- 13) Council of the European Union: Review of the EU Sustainable Developmental Strategy (EU SDS): Renewed Strategy. 2006. 10917/06.
- 14) Passalaqua G, Bousquet PJ, Carlsen KH, Kemp J, Lockey RF, Niggemann B, Pawankar R, Price D, Bousquet J: ARIA update: I-Systematic review of complementary and alternative medicine for rhinitis and asthma. *J Allergy Clin Immunol.* 2006; 117(5): 1054-1062.
- 15) Malling H-J, Gayraud J, Papageorgiou-Saxoni P, et al. Objectives of training and specialty training core curriculum in Allergology and clinical immunology. *Allergy* 2004; 59: 579-588.
- 16) Reed SD, Lee TA, McCrory DC: The economic burden of allergic rhinitis: a critical evaluation of the literature. *PharmacoEconomics* 2004, 22(6): 345-361.
- 17) Stuck BA, Czajkowski J, Hagner AE, Klimek L, Verse T, Hörrmann K, et al: Changes in daytime sleepiness, quality of life, and objective sleep patterns in seasonal allergic rhinitis: a controlled clinical trial. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2004, 113: 663-668.
- 18) Oude Elberink JN, Dubois AE. Quality of life in insect venom allergic patients. *Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol* 2003; 3: 287-93
- 19) Verboon P, Hakkaart- VanL, Sturkenboom M, De Zeeuw R, Menke H, Rutten F: The costof atopic dermatitis in the Netherlands: an international comparison. *Br J Dermatol* 2002, 147(4): 716-724.
- 20) European Respiratory Society , [ERS]: European Lung Book. The first Comprehensive Survey on Respiratory Health in Europe.