A POLITICAL CALL TO ACTION

UNITED ACTION FOR ALLERGY AND ASTHMA

Patients

Policy Makers

Doctors

Public health programmes
Funding for research
Prevention and early diagnosis
Root cause analysis of diseases
Personalised medicine
Economic benefit

A political call to action in Europe  #CallAllergyAsthma
United Action for Allergy and Asthma
A political Call to Action in Europe

This is a Call to Action to all European and national stakeholders who are able to improve public policies which address allergy and asthma, supporting patients’ rights. It marks the start of a pan-European advocacy campaign initiated by Members of the European Parliament Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma, the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI) and the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients’ Associations (EFA).

Foreword

Unlike many infectious diseases, the prevalence of allergy and asthma has been shown to increase with a country’s improving economic output and technological development. The outlook for allergy and asthma is therefore alarming, and must be addressed in Member States, as well as on a European and global level.

By uniting the voices of patients, healthcare professionals, and policy-makers both at European and national levels, we aim to bring about positive policy changes regarding:

- Public health – implementing European strategies and programmes across Member States
- Funding for research – advancing our understanding of allergy and asthma
- Prevention and early diagnosis – achieving early detection for timely and effective treatment
- Root cause analysis of diseases – addressing underlying triggers such as air quality, food allergens, chemicals
- Personalised medicine - working towards pioneering individualised treatment
- Economic benefit – reducing direct and indirect costs on health systems and society

The current burden of allergy and asthma on our society

Allergy and asthma are among the most frequent chronic diseases in the European Union (EU). Over 150 million EU citizens – almost one in three people – suffer from allergy, 70 million Europeans have asthma, around 100 million live with allergic rhinitis, and 17 million with a food allergy. By 2025, it is estimated that one half of the entire EU population will be affected by these diseases.

Allergy and asthma severely impact the quality of life of patients, with dramatic effects on their professional and educational performance. A considerable number of allergy patients (15-20%), live with a severely debilitating disease and under fear of death from a possible asthma attack or anaphylactic shock.

In addition to the detriment to individuals, allergy and asthma challenge the sustainability of our healthcare systems, in terms of direct care costs and indirect costs. The total spend on asthma alone in Europe is estimated at €72.2 billion per year, while the latest scientific evidence review, conducted by GA(2)LEN (Global Allergy and Asthma European Network of Excellence), estimates that absenteeism due to insufficiently treated allergy incurs costs of between €55–151 billion per year across the EU. Appropriate treatment would cost only 5% of this sum, allowing savings of up to €142 billion.

As members of the European Parliament, healthcare professionals and patients, we call out to you

Today, there is still no cure for allergy and asthma, and large discrepancies in monitoring, prevention, early diagnosis, treatment and care exist across Europe. Strong and unified European political leadership is urgently needed to successfully curb this dramatic epidemic for the benefit of our patients, economies and society.

We call upon EU Member States to:
- Urgently define or revise national chronic diseases policies to include allergy and asthma
- Develop national allergy and asthma programmes built on evidence-based, successful, preventive and tolerance-inducing approaches
- Invest in allergy and asthma prevention and early detection, including awareness campaigns and training programmes for healthcare professionals
- Dedicate national public funding to allergy and asthma research and generate evidence to further inform tailored national policies
- Encourage placing allergy and asthma as a health priority in the agenda of the upcoming EU Council Presidencies

We call upon the European Commission to:
- Place allergy and asthma at the forefront of EU chronic diseases action
- Encourage coordinated European and national policy responses on allergy and asthma with a health-in-all-policies approach
- Lend coordination support to collect public health indicators and monitor trends on allergy and asthma
- Promote and support financially, via the EU Health Programme, the exchange and dissemination of good practices and programmes among Member States
- Promote and support financially, via Horizon 2020 and future programmes, scientific research to address environmental triggers and develop innovative treatments to cure allergy and asthma
- Encourage greater cooperation and coordination between Member States for; 1) the promotion of allergy and asthma programmes, 2) conducting cross-country collaborative research
- Foster European legislation to address the adverse human health effects of allergy and asthma triggers and risk factors including; 1) poor indoor and outdoor air quality, 2) allergens in packed and non-packed food 3) reactions to chemicals in products of daily use, such as fragrances in cosmetics

We call upon Members of the European Parliament to:
- Support this Call to Action and its pan European advocacy campaign
- Support awareness-raising among EU and Member States policymakers and the general public
- Encourage the development of coordinated European strategies to foster allergy and asthma programmes
- Prioritise addressing allergy and asthma in EU and national health and environment policies
- Fight against disease triggers, many of which are common to all chronic diseases, by fostering supportive legislation at EU level on 1) outdoor and indoor air quality, 2) food safety, 3) chemicals

We call upon civil society, particularly patients, healthcare professionals and health advocates to:
- Endorse and relay this Call to Action
- Engage in joint advocacy at EU and national levels to improve awareness, monitoring, prevention and management of allergy and asthma across Europe
- Engage in dialogue with national governments and EU institutions to share knowledge, expertise and strategic advice to shape sound policies and successfully act on allergy and asthma in Europe
- Promote personalised allergy and asthma medicine and contribute to shifting European healthcare systems towards person-centred and outcome-based models, that benefit patients, economies and societies