



For Immediate Release

'Starting with patients' - EPF paves the way for the EU Hungarian Presidency through a unique regional seminar strengthening young patient advocacy

Brussels, Belgium, October 27, 2010 – The European Patients' Forum (EPF), together with the Hungarian Osteoporosis Patient Association (HOPA) held their annual regional advocacy seminar in Budapest October 25-27. More than 60 patient representatives from Hungary, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Romania attended the seminar to gain insight on how to work effectively with EU institutions and become involved in policy-making at EU level through the European Patients' Forum.

A major focus of the seminar was to increase involvement of young patients to become strong advocates in patient organisations. The seminar enhanced participants' communication and advocacy skills to influence policies that affect their lives but also the lives of their communities. Building capacity among patient groups and involving young advocates within patient organisations leads to patient empowerment which is not only good for their well-being but for the well-being of society as a whole - and will contribute more effectively to patient-centred, equitable healthcare throughout the EU.

"It is absolutely critical that we work as closely as possible with patient groups from different regions of the EU to understand their needs, and to understand how they can help to shape the policy work of EPF" said EPF Treasurer, Timo Nerikko who opened the meeting.

Seminar participants had the opportunity to contribute to workshops that looked at how patient groups can build partnerships with EU institutions and key health stakeholders and how patient groups can build a relationship with youth associations. Participants were also provided with an overview of youth and health on the European landscape and good practices on how to become a young advocate.

Speaking at the seminar, Hungarian Secretary of State for Health Dr. Miklós Szócska in relation to the upcoming Hungarian EU Presidency said, "We wanted to propose a topic that would start with patients". This is a clear indication that patient-centred healthcare and patient involvement are at the core of Hungary's Presidency approach to health.

EPF will work closely in the coming months with the Hungarian Presidency to continue integrating effectively the patients' voice in the Presidency's EU health priorities.

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For more information on EPF and the seminar, please visit EPF's [website](#). EPF is a not-for-profit, independent organisation and umbrella representative body for patients' organisations throughout Europe. Representing the EU patient community, we advocate for patient-centred, equitable healthcare, and the accessibility and quality of that healthcare in Europe.