

PRESS RELEASE

## **EPF brings the patient electorate to the heart of European democracy with full support from the Greek EU Presidency**

**Brussels, 18 March 2014 – The European Patients' Forum (EPF) is honoured that MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt (S&D, Germany) is hosting our European Parliament Election Campaign Exhibition at the European Parliament from 17 to 20 March 2014 (1) under the auspices of the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union.**

Ms. Dagmar Roth-Behrendt said that *"This campaign is absolutely crucial to make national and EU decision-makers understand that health policy needs to be further developed. Patients are often the weakest part of the chain while they can contribute to make health systems more effective."*

A high-level Greek Delegation represented by the Greek Minister of Health and President of the Health Council, Mr Adonis Georgiadis, visited the exhibition on Tuesday 18 March 2014.

*"From the 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> May, we, as European citizens, will decide for the future of Europe. I support this campaign because it is important we also decide for a 'Healthier Europe', where patients are part of the policy decisions towards making health systems more effective and accessible to all of our citizens,"* said Minister Georgiadis.

With this exhibition, EPF brings the patients' campaign "Patients + Participation = Our Vote for a Healthier Europe" and our electorate to the heart of European democracy. We encourage the Members of the European Parliament going for re-election to sign the EPF Manifesto (2) and therefore commit to including a patient perspective in their work for the new parliamentary session (3). Those not standing are also important allies of the patient's movement and we encourage their continuing support too, in their future endeavours.

The next EU Elections offer a unique new opportunity for the European Patients' Movement to encourage politicians and policy-makers at all levels to highlight patients as part of the solution in addressing fundamental roadblocks in patients' access to high-quality, effective and sustainable healthcare.

Patients need to be empowered to be full partners in the management of their conditions, according to their individual capacities and situation. We need also to make equal access to quality healthcare a reality for all of us, even in times of economic crisis.

*"We represent a high proportion of voters in the next EU elections (4). We hope our voice will be heard by decision-makers and that they will add a patients' perspective in their work,"* said Mr. Anders Olauson, President of the European Patients' Forum.

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(1) The exhibition will take place from 17 to 20 March 2014 at the Forum Area (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor), European Parliament, Brussels. Accredited journalists are invited to attend the EPF Cocktail Reception on Wednesday 19 March 2014, 18.30, hosted by MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt (S&D, Germany).

(2) Link to sign the EPF Manifesto: <http://www.eu-patient.eu/whatwedo/EPFCampaign2014Elections/I-support-EPF-Campaign/>

(3) The European Patients' Forum Manifesto call on policy-makers to:

- Engage patients collectively and pro-actively through patient organisations in policy decision-making to ensure that all policies and practices reflect patients' real-life needs, preferences and capabilities.
- Adopt an EU strategy on patient empowerment, including an action plan on health literacy and high quality information for patients on all aspects of our care.
- Support an EU initiative on equitable access to healthcare for all European citizens, through a multi-stakeholder Platform
- Develop a clear framework for patient involvement across the spectrum of health research, through the entire cycle of the innovation chain.
- Ensure that patients' rights is part of the next Health Commissioner's portfolio

(4) We are supported by our 63 members - which are chronic disease specific patient organisations working at European level, and national coalitions of patients organisations. EPF reflects the interests of an estimated 150 million patients affected by various diseases throughout Europe.

More information about the campaign is available on <http://www.eu-patient.eu/whatwedo/EPFCampaign2014Elections/>.

### **About EPF**

The European Patients' Forum (EPF) was founded in 2003 to ensure that the patients' community drives policies and programmes that affect patients' lives to bring changes empowering them to be equal citizens in the EU.

EPF's vision for the future is that all patients with chronic and/or lifelong conditions in the EU have access to high quality, patient-centred equitable health and social care.

The EPF strategic goals focus on areas such as health literacy, health and social care sustainability, patients' involvement, patients' empowerment, strong and effective patients' organisations and discrimination on the grounds of health status.

[www.eu-patient.eu](http://www.eu-patient.eu)

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