

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LAUNCH OF THE MEP ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE INTEREST GROUP

**BRUSSELS, 27 January 2015 - Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) launch the Access to Healthcare Interest Group, a caucus where EPF will provide patients' expertise to tackle health inequalities and enhance proper access to high-quality healthcare for all patients.**

The economic crisis has strongly affected our society. Health systems were already facing the pressure of growing demand for healthcare due to an ageing population, have been particularly affected. Access to quality healthcare needs to be secured now and more than ever.

*"Some patients in Europe cannot access proper diagnosis and treatment. Innovation in healthcare does not reach EU Member States in an equal way"* said MEP Andrey Kovatchev (Bulgaria, EPP) in August 2014 on [EPF blog](#).

*"The problems of patients deserve more commitment from the EU institutions! Therefore, the Interest Group on Access to health is set up to bridge health stakeholders with EU policy-making in search for solutions"*, he added, talking about the MEP Interest Group.

MEP Biljana Borzan (S&D, Croatia), MEP Marian Harkin (ALDE, Ireland) and MEP Kateřina Konečná (GUE/NGL, Czech Republic) will join him as co-chair of this new MEP Interest Group.

Previous work on health inequalities led us, with our Bulgarian member, the National Patient Organisation (NPO), to set up the [Patient Access Partnership](#). This patient-led network brings together the patients, the public health community, the industry and policy-makers to move forward on solutions to access that really work for patients and address the current barriers and inequities. The MEP Access Interest Group will therefore ensure this problem reaches the European institutions and ranks high among their priorities.

Besides giving a platform of discussion for stakeholders and policy-makers, the Group will promote synergies between disease-specific initiatives in the EP relating to access, and other thematic interest groups to ensure maximum effectiveness.

*"The setting up of this MEP Interest Group is a real milestone in putting access and equity issues for patients on the European agenda. EPF sees it as a strong signal towards finding real solutions to put an end to the unacceptable and dramatic situation faced by many patients across the EU"*, concluded EPF Secretary General Nicola Bedlington.

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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 currently represents 64 members, which are national coalitions of patients organisations and disease-specific patient organisations working at European level, and. EPF reflects the voice of an estimated 150 million patients affected by various chronic diseases throughout Europe.

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, healthcare design and delivery, patient involvement, patient empowerment, sustainable patients' organisations and non-discrimination.

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

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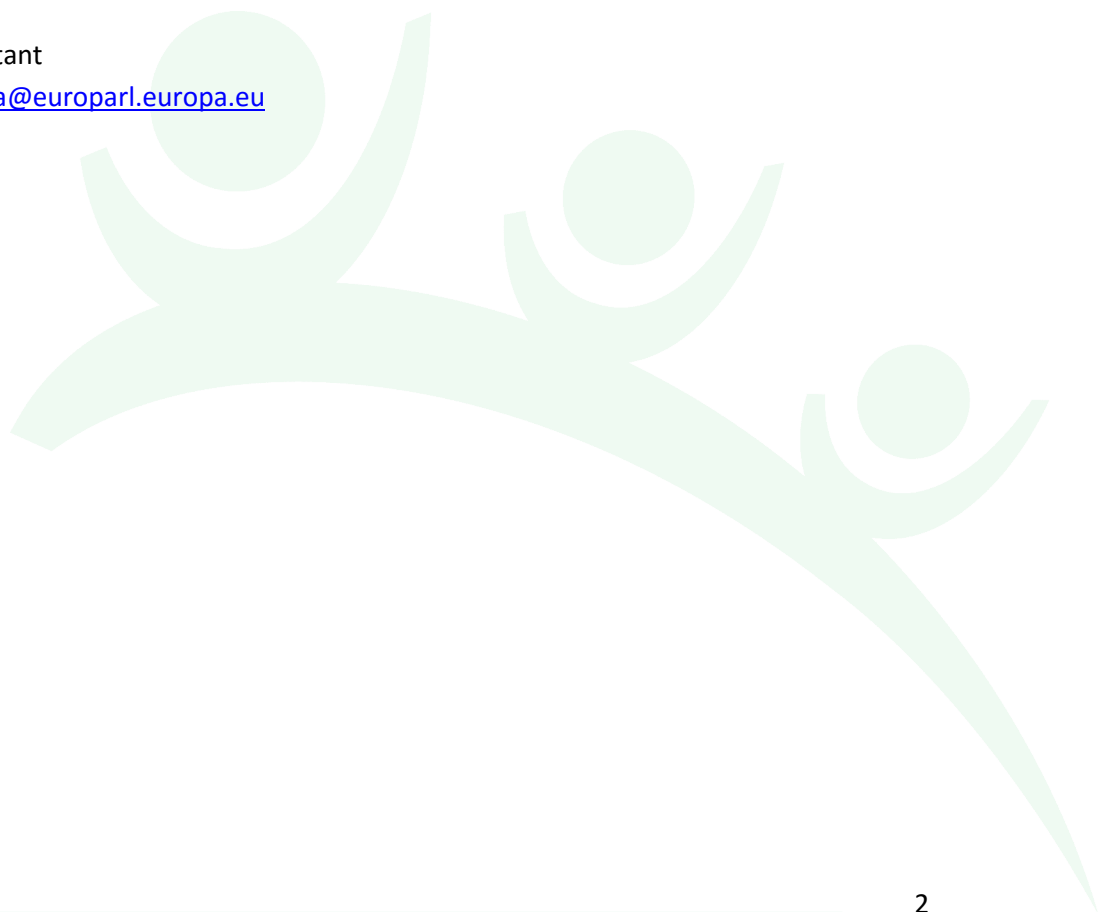
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