

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EPF seminar agrees meaningful involvement of patients in HTA processes can make a difference to patient-centred equitable healthcare throughout Europe.

Brussels, May 19 - the European Patients' Forum's (EPF) spring seminar on Health Technology Assessment (HTA), involving more than 80 patient organisations from around Europe was an important milestone in EPF's strategy towards ensuring that more patient leaders across the EU play an effective role in HTA.

The aim was to enable participants to learn more about the science, methodologies, processes and policies behind HTA, and to reflect together on how they can get involved in a constructive, meaningful way as patient representatives.

A plenary session brought together the perspective of HTA agencies, clinicians and industry. It also provided a 'helicopter view' of HTA from the patient's perspective, by HTA expert Jean Mossman, working with the European Federation of Neurological Associations. The European Commission highlighted the added value of EU cooperation on HTA – building Member States' commitment to collaboration through the EUnetHTA Joint Action (www.eunetha.net)

The seminar's participants contributed to parallel workshops that examined the barriers and opportunities linked to harnessing the patient's experience and expertise and the politics around HTA. Panos Kavanos, of the London School of Economics led the feedback session that outlined what the key issues are, and discussed substantive recommendations on how we move forward in providing the crucial patient's voice.

HTA is increasingly seen as a priority at the EU level to ensure the sustainability of current healthcare systems supporting evidence-based decision-making. "Patients and patient organisations are becoming more involved in HTA processes, but it is still happening in an ad hoc, piecemeal fashion across the Member States - our participation in the EUnetHTA Joint Action on HTA as one of the stakeholders is an important signal that we need to play a more expansive role," said EPF President Anders Olauson.

Also present was Dr. Andrzej Rys, Director of Public Health and Risk Assessment (SANCO) at the European Commission who highlighted that "patients are individual experts allowing full understanding of HTA issues. That is why it is important for patients and patient groups to unite as one single voice and become involved".

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For further information and for presentations of the seminar visit EPF's website at www.eu-patient.eu. 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.