

## Discussions led by the Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma drive consensus on key steps towards a new direction for allergy and asthma health in Europe

**BRUSSELS, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019** – The European Parliament Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma convened its first meeting of the 2019-2024 legislature on 20 November 2019, laying out the route to policy successes in Europe for allergy and asthma research, prevention and quality management.

Hosted by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) Sirpa Pietikäinen and Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, leading Interest Group members, the meeting explored policy improvements to address two of the most prevalent chronic diseases, which affect one in three Europeans and represent an ever-growing burden on societies and healthcare systems.

**Allergic diseases and asthma prevention as a priority for the incoming Commission:** Wojciech Kalamarz (European Commission DG SANTE) highlighted that chronic diseases' prevention will be a priority of the Von der Leyen Commission and called on Member States to increase investment in prevention, noting the cost-effectiveness of preventive measures.

**Taking action across sectors building on the "exposome" concept:** Prof Ioana Agache (Past-President, European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI)) advocated for policies looking at the interconnections between human, animal and plant health, and food and water safety to improve prevention in the field of allergy and asthma, which are essentially multifactorial diseases stemming mainly from biological responses to a variety of environmental triggers and less from individual-genetic factors.

**Improving allergen labelling to better protect patients:** Salvatore D'Acunto (European Commission DG GROW) noted the importance of fragrance allergens labelling for patients. He stated that the Commission is exploring different on- and off-product labelling options, and invited stakeholders to respond to the ongoing public consultation on fragrance labelling.

**Interconnecting the health, air quality and climate change agendas** came across as a key message from representatives of the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, the European Environmental Bureau and EAACI. The EU Green Deal has the potential to deliver important steps in this direction, by allowing a cross sectoral approach to air pollution, investment in sustainable agriculture and green financing – with the promise of considerable benefits to the health of future generations. Prof Stefano del Giacco (EAACI Vice-President Education and Speciality) underlined the importance of efficient city planning to reduce risks associated with exposures, as well as registries, machine-learning, and integrated surveillance networks to monitor air quality as tools to provide independent evidence and data support for science-based policy-making. MEP Karima Delli, Chair of the European Parliament TRAN committee, reaffirmed her commitment to reducing emissions from the transport sector, linked with many chronic diseases including allergy and asthma.

**A joint call for increased research funding and accelerated uptake of personalised medicine:** Reflecting on MEP Dr Cristian-Silviu Buşoi's perspectives, Dr Amalia-Irina Vlad (European Commission DG RTD) encouraged the allergy and asthma community to seize the opportunity of an enhanced Horizon Europe budget for research and innovation. Prof Vera Mahler (Paul-Ehrlich-Institut) noted that research should address the existing knowledge gap between biomarkers and clinical outcomes so that new treatments and products can be authorised. EAACI President Prof Marek Jutel highlighted the central role of implementing translational research and real world evidence to foster the integration of patient-oriented and population-based studies. Mikaela Odemyr, President of the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA), called for universal patient access to personalised medicine which requires a reorientation of healthcare systems, with a focus on individual patients' needs.

*"We need better national programmes and their implementation, early action to protect our biodiversity and improved urban environments to prevent allergies and asthma. We need European Allergy and Asthma reference centre, we need more efforts to improve urban air quality and indoor air quality, we need better information about chemicals in our daily environment and food ingredients. We need to enter a new era where no one suffers from allergy and asthma."* – MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen.

The summary event report is available via [this link](#).

### Note to editors:

The **European Parliament Interest Group on Allergy and Asthma** is an informal group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) committed to address unmet needs of allergy and asthma at EU level and improve prevention, care and research to the benefit of people living with allergy and asthma in Europe.

For more information visit <https://allergyasthmaparliament.eu>, follow us on Twitter ([#EPAllergyAsthma](#)) or contact [office@allergyasthmaparliament.eu](mailto:office@allergyasthmaparliament.eu).