

PRESS RELEASE: 15th September 2011

European Written Declaration on Epilepsy is Approved Declaration receives record number of MEP signatures

A Written Declaration on Epilepsy was passed in the European Parliament yesterday, 15th September 2011. Submitted by the European Advocates for Epilepsy Working Group in collaboration with Epilepsy Advocacy Europe – a joint task force of the International League Against Epilepsy and the International Bureau for Epilepsy, approval of the declaration marks a significant step in the efforts of both groups to increase the quality of life of people with epilepsy.

Written Declarations are a tool used by the European Parliament to launch a debate on a subject which comes within the European Union's remit. In order to be passed, a declaration must be signed by a majority of Members of the European Parliament (in this case, 369 signatures). The declaration on epilepsy received **459 signatures**, 90 more than the minimum required, the highest number received by any declaration in the current EU term. This is clear indication of the recognition of MEPs across Europe for the need for improvements in epilepsy healthcare.

Having received the required number of signatures to be passed in the European Parliament, the Written Declaration will be officially communicated from the Parliament to the Commission and to the Parliament of each EU Member State together with the list of signatories.

The declaration calls on the Commission and Council to:

- encourage research and innovation in the area of prevention and early diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy;
- prioritise epilepsy as a major disease that imposes a significant burden across Europe;
- take initiatives to encourage Member States to ensure equal quality of life, including in education, employment, transport and public healthcare, for people with epilepsy, e.g. by stimulating the exchange of best practice;
- encourage effective health impact assessments on all major EU and national policies;

First signatory to the declaration, Mr Gay Mitchell MEP stated: "Last February, we launched the first ever European Epilepsy Day. Seven months later, we successfully garnered the support of a large number of MEPs to pass this Declaration, which I have no doubt will raise awareness for epilepsy in Europe and improve prevention, care and quality of life of people with epilepsy. This Declaration is a step in the right direction for people with epilepsy, as well as their close family members."

Epilepsy Advocacy Europe, in thanking the members of the European Advocates for Epilepsy MEPs Working Group and the national epilepsy organisations across Europe, who worked tirelessly over the last months to ensure the success of the declaration, believe that it is an important first step to address the current situation in Europe where there are 6 million people living with epilepsy, with 300,000 cases diagnosed each year. In Europe up to 40% of people with epilepsy still do not receive appropriate treatment and care yet, with appropriate treatment, up to 70% of people with epilepsy could be seizure-free.

ENDS

Further information:

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