



EUROPEAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY AND VENEREOLOGY
ACADEMIE EUROPEENNE DE DERMATOLOGIE ET DE VENEREOLOGIE
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EADV and the EU - start of a dialogue

The historic Blerot designed EADV House at Avenue General Charles de Gaulle in Brussels was recently the venue of a reception where EADV officers informally met a number of leading European personalities to inform them about current strategies and problems in dermato-venereology (diseases of the skin and sexually transmitted diseases) within Europe and the pivotal role of the Academy in research, prevention, and treatment. The European Parliament and the European Commission as well as Brussels correspondents of European mass media were represented at this event.

In his welcome address, EADV President Professor Johannes Ring noted the demographic development and the worldwide mobility that confront dermatology with new challenges. Allergies, skin cancer including the very serious melanoma that is fatal unless diagnosed and treated early, venous leg ulcers and sexually transmitted skin diseases continue to increase in Europe. Currently, Europe-wide epidemiological studies regarding the prevalence of many skin diseases are rare, as the EADV President pointed out: "There is however indications of a large hidden iceberg of unmet dermatological need." For example, a recent survey of youths in London (referred to in the invitation to the reception) concluded that while 22.5% had a skin disease that could benefit from medical care, yet only 6% consulted their physician. Skin disease patients often do not receive adequate medical support from national health care systems since they rarely result in death and are not perceived as "high profile" in comparison with for example transplant surgery. On the other hand morbidity resulting in seriously impaired quality of life and days taken off work are both increasing significantly in all countries.

Mara Maccarone, President of the Association for the Defence of Psoriasis Patients (ADIPSO), strongly supported Professor Ring and referred to the significant disturbances in the quality of life which accompany chronic skin diseases. She commented that European parliamentarians need to be better informed about skin diseases.

On skin cancer, Professor Ring mentioned the Melanoma Monday initiative when in order to sensitise the public to the increasing risk of malignant melanoma, free screening will be offered throughout Europe. The Melanoma Monday 2006 took place on the 15th May under the direction of Professor Andreas Katsambas.

The Academy also improves the Europe-wide dialogue of dermatologists by establishing the EADV Fostering Dermatology program: The training programme offers trainee dermatologists high quality theoretical and practical training from experts throughout all of Europe. Similar supported exchange programmes also exist for dermatologists in practice. EADV is involved with the medical support of poor countries - and will target African countries in particular - by helping them to provide better dermatological training for young physicians as outlined by EADV President Elect, Professor Alberto Giannetti. In this context where HIV and AIDS are a perpetual topic, EADV Secretary General Professor Joseph Pace pointed out that 14.000 persons get

infected with AIDS every day. In Europe approximately 1.6 million people are affected, and in 2005 nearly 62.000 patients died of this disease.

Since its foundation 19 years ago, EADV now unites approximately 2.500 dermatologists from the four corners of Europe together with an ever increasing number of non European members from every continent. Since the mid 90's the number of the dermatologists from Eastern Europe has significantly risen. High profile Task forces address the major problems in dermato-venereology in an on-going manner and provide a precious resource in both training and continuing education for EADV members.

Mr Louis Grech, EU parliamentarian for Malta, commented that he was pleased to be present and most interested in the information that was forthcoming. This had strongly brought home the important problems of dermato venereology in Europe, the aspirations of those suffering from mostly chronic disease, and the important role of EADV in expanding medical education, bringing high standards of care throughout Europe, and being the advocate of the patient. He promised to maintain his interest and attempt to positively influence others in this respect.

This first dialogue meeting between EADV and the EU was deemed to be successful by all present and it is intended further meetings will be scheduled on a regular basis.

Professor Johannes Ring
EADV President

Professor Joseph Pace
Secretary-General

Dr. Klaus Fritz
Chairman Media & PR Committee

EADV Press Contact:

Mrs. Stefanie Blum
EADV Administrative Office
38, Avenue General de Gaulle
1050 Brussels - Belgium
Tel: +32 2 650 00 90
Fax: +32 2 650 00 98
e-mail: stefanie@eadv.org