



In October 2013 11 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) proposed a draft [Written Declaration](#) on recognising the burden of allergic disease, calling upon the Commission and Member States to recognise the burden of allergic disease and develop policy tools to combat this illness. At the end of the consultation period, the Declaration was supported by a total of 178 MEPs.

The MEPs have made a number of recommendations to help mitigate the impact of allergic diseases, which affect over 150 million Europeans: EU Member States were called upon to implement national programmes, to provide better medical training and to encourage scientific research.

One of the co-proposers of the Declaration, MEP Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu, explained: "In some countries, over 50% of adolescents are reporting symptoms of allergic rhinitis. This common chronic disease has a serious impact on people's lives and I urge Member States to develop adequate national allergy programmes."

MEP Marina Yannakoudakis, also a co-proposer, added: "Raising awareness of allergies is important; almost half of Europeans suffering from allergic rhinitis are undiagnosed. We need to take this seriously, highlight the extent and push for better treatment."

Unfortunately, allergies are not fully recognised in Brussels yet. "Already in 2011, we released a study that showed that allergic rhinitis leads to more productivity loss per employee than high stress, migraines or depression, which equals to impaired quality of life" noted Breda Flood, the President of the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients' Associations (EFA). "Yet, few debates in Brussels focus on tackling allergies. Together with EAACI, we hope to get allergies recognised as one of the major health issues of the 21st century."

Professor Nikos Papadopoulos, the President of the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (EAACI), explains that "Allergies can make children perform poorly at school, they can make adults miss work and they also cause 80% of asthma cases. We urge the Commission and national governments to follow the example of the European Parliament. Allergic diseases should be included in initiatives concerning chronic diseases at national and European level. The European Commission has the capacity to coordinate efforts to respond to the challenges of chronic diseases. Now is the time to act!"

EAACI Skin Prick Test at the European Parliament

From 7-9 January 2014, EAACI conducted three days of diagnostic tests for allergies in the European Parliament in Brussels. In total 350 people took the opportunity to be examined for sensitivity to the most common allergens and to be given an expert advice, and **47% of them tested positively**

The event was organised with the sponsorship of [Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu MEP](#) and the tests were conducted by a medical team led by

Professor Peter Hellings

, Professor at the Catholic University of Leuven and Clinic Head at the Department of Otorhinolaryngology of the University Hospitals Leuven.

"My team and I conducted diagnostic tests and provided advice non-stop on each of the three days. Some of the participants had quite severe symptoms. A first step towards helping patients with allergy should be to provide them with easier access to diagnosis", Professor Peter Hellings said.

"I am very happy that together with EAACI we have managed to facilitate an allergy test for a considerable number of people in the European Parliament. This common chronic disease has a serious impact on people's lives, and I urge Member States to develop adequate national allergy programmes", Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu MEP said.

Strasbourg

EAACI and EFA also travelled to the European Parliament in Strasbourg to raise awareness on the burden of allergies. On this occasion, the presidents of [Federasma](#), Giorgio Salerni, and [Asthme et Allergies](#)

, Christine Rolland, joined the team to help discuss the many issues facing allergy sufferers.

EAACI would like to thank all those who supported the Written Declaration campaign across Europe.

Useful links:

[MEP supporters - Picture gallery](#)
[European Parliament/Written Declarations](#)
[EFA](#)
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The MEPs proposers are:

[Elena Antonescu \(EPP group, Romania\)](#)
[Nessa Childers \(Independent, Ireland\)](#)
[Elisabeta Gardini \(EPP group, Italy\)](#)
[Françoise Grossetête \(EPP group, France\)](#)
[Philippe Juvin \(EPP group, France\)](#)
[Antonyia Parvanova \(ALDE group, Bulgaria\)](#)
[Sirpa Pietikäinen \(EPP group, Finland\)](#)
[Frédérique Ries \(ALDE group, Belgium\)](#)
[Rebecca Taylor \(ALDE group, UK\)](#)
[Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu \(S&D group, Romania\)](#)
[Marina Yannakoudakis \(ECR group, UK\)](#)

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