

## Advocacy and EU Policy Development



### “ LOBBYING FOR CHANGE IN EU POLICY ”

#### Proactive in policy development

Since 2004, our Society's Brussels Office has been proactively and directly involved in shaping European Union (EU) policies at the highest societal and political levels. From an early stage, we have been able to successfully influence decision-making and initiate public events in the EU. In 2007, we continued to strive to effect change for the better, with particular focus on the key EU policy areas of science and research, environment and tobacco control.

#### Research and the ERS Supporting ERS members in FP7

The Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7) is the EU's chief instrument for funding research and development (R&D). FP7 will run for 7 years and has a budget of €50.5 billion, €6 billion of which is allocated to health research.

Since the FP7's official launch in January 2007, our Society has supported several principal ERS investigators who submitted grant applications under the first and second calls for support in respiratory science R&D. Many of our research-active members have submitted EU project proposals under a range of FP7 topics, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic inflammation, rare diseases, tuberculosis (TB), orphan drugs, air cohort studies, and even information communication technologies.

The ERS is also participating as a full partner in two FP7 consortia (the Emphysema versus Airway disease (EvA) project on COPD, and the TB PAN-NET project), which were successfully selected for funding. Our participation in these projects will involve dissemination activities and the organisation of Postgraduate Courses, School Seminars and an e-Learning platform focusing on these areas.

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“In 2007, ERS advocacy has continued for respiratory and lung science, and for EU regulation relevant to lung health. As climate change has significant implications for lung health, this is emerging as an area of new activity for our Society. Work has also continued in the key advocacy areas of research and tobacco, with significant progression made in relation to the Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7) and the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI). Our presence in Brussels ensures that the reputation that our Society has established in providing authoritative and relevant input to respiratory science and health is maintained and strengthened.”

*Peter J. Helms, Secretary for EU Affairs and Advocacy Committee Chair for 2008*

### **The ERS Fellowship Programme and FP7 Marie Curie Actions**

In 2007, the ERS Scientific and Advocacy Committee jointly agreed on a pioneering attempt to submit an application for funding under the FP7 COFUND call (one of the Marie Curie Actions targeting researchers). COFUND is an action of the European Commission (EC)

to provide organisations that run post-doctoral fellowship programmes with funding for up to 40% of the total cost of the programme. We viewed this as a unique and unmissable opportunity for our Society to increase its visibility at EU-level, gain increased funding for the important area of lung science, and to increase the number of post-doctoral fellows.

### **World COPD Day 2007**

To coincide with World COPD Day 2007, our Society worked with the European Lung Foundation (ELF) and the European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients Association (EFA), to launch a campaign aimed at combating chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The campaign included a variety of activities to raise the profile of COPD among EU policy makers.

Member of the EP Catherine Stihler, together with her colleagues, launched a written declaration on combating COPD. The declaration called on the EU and member states to pay more attention to COPD by promoting prevention, early treatment and research and by supporting smokefree policies, smoking cessation strategies and an EU Green Paper on Indoor Air Quality. The declaration was signed by 184 of the 393 MEPs needed to be adopted by the EP.

To garner support, the ERS, the ELF and EFA also produced a COPD leaflet that presented national data and statistics about the disease. Our Society also sponsored a lunch debate in the EP, as well as a spirometry event and a press conference.



*The World COPD press conference at the EP. From left to right: MEP Catherine Stihler, MEP Avril Doyle, ERS Past-President William MacNee, and EFA Vice-President Marianella Salapatras*

### **The ERS and the Innovative Medicines Initiative**

In early 2007, our Society's leadership was made aware of a major R&D initiative directed at innovative biomedical research, which was to be launched at EU level with significant funding (€2 billion). This public-private partnership, the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), is driven and funded by the EC and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). IMI tackles pre-competitive issues that are currently undermining the European biopharmaceutical industry. Its aim is to increase the speed and efficiency of drug discovery and development by removing bottlenecks that exist in the fields of safety, efficacy, knowledge management and education.

The ERS was the lead society to coordinate a statement in support of the IMI. The statement was co-signed by the presidents of 9 other medical and scientific societies and, in October 2007, it was sent to Science and Research Commissioner Janez Potočnik, high-level members of the EC and key members of the European Parliament (EP). The EC Regulation setting up the IMI was officially adopted in December 2007.

Following the appointment of ERS Research Director Sven-Erik Dahlén in September 2007, our Society was instrumental in providing high-quality scientific input in framing the first IMI calls, thus maximising the potential of respiratory diseases being amongst the first IMI calls to be officially released in April 2008.

### **Environment**

Over the past year, our Society has also continued to advocate for environmental improvements to outdoor and indoor air quality.

A major legislative initiative voted through in 2007 was the EU Air Quality Directive, originally proposed by the EC in

2005. Before a decisive vote of the EP was taken in December 2007, our Society issued a second position paper on this matter. We urged members of the EP to commit to protecting public health and to adhere to current scientific evidence, the World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines, and existing standards concerning liquid and solid particles in air.

Although the final outcome of the EP vote resulted in certain improvements to the original EC proposal, it could have been more ambitious in its aim to protect the environment and public health. Our Society will therefore continue to promote higher standards in line with current scientific knowledge.

### Tobacco

The past year has been momentous for the ERS, as we moved closer to achieving one of our core goals: to ensure legal protection from secondhand smoke across Europe. The ERS worked hard in collaboration with the Smokefree Partnership (SFP) and the Global Smokefree Partnership to ensure European support for the draft Article 8 Guidelines (which concern protection from exposure to tobacco smoke) of the WHO Framework Convention of Tobacco Control (FCTC). The guidelines were adopted with unanimous support from all 157 Parties, *i.e.* all countries and regional economic integration organisations, such as the EC. Our Society is proud to be a major partner of the SFP, which, in its second year of operation, is now *the* organisation of reference on smokefree policies in Europe.

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Throughout the year, our Society worked in conjunction with the SFP on WHO FCTC issues and, in particular, on investigation of EU funding streams for tobacco control in developing countries and supporting work on FCTC monitoring. In June 2007, two staff members from our Brussels Office attended the Second Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC. The meeting was considered a success as it adopted all but one of the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) recommendations (more information about these recommendations can be found on the SFP website: [www.smokefreepartnership.eu](http://www.smokefreepartnership.eu)). It was also agreed that work would start on a protocol on illicit trade, on a number of guidelines on packaging and advertising, and on relations with the tobacco industry.

### Going beyond key areas

In addition to research, environment and tobacco, our Society's advocacy work is also concerned with the following areas.

#### TB

- In September 2007, staff from our Brussels Office met with the Director of the European Centre for Prevention and Disease Control, Zsuzsanna Jakab, to discuss the ERS' key role in the field of TB control policy and management. We continue to work to achieve this aim through advocacy, education, publishing and clinical research activities.
- As a member of the Executive Committee of the Stop TB Partnership Europe, our Society is helping to achieve the aim of a TB-free Europe, through advocacy for greater political and financial commitment to the fight against this disease.

#### Pharmaceuticals

- In September 2007, our Society was amongst the signatories of a declaration put together by a number of healthcare professionals, patient groups and public health organisations, which suggested a way forward on providing information to patients about medicinal products. The declaration was well covered by the Brussels press and was welcomed by EU officials.

#### Paediatric Regulation

- The Paediatric Regulation will set up a Paediatric Committee, hosted by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). A call for "expressions of interest" to become an expert to the Committee was published in 2007. Our Society's Brussels office coordinated these expressions of interest from members of the ERS Paediatric Assembly, and submitted them on behalf of the Society.

### Advocacy Committee

**Chair:** William MacNee.

**Committee members:** Leonardo M. Fabbri, Jorrit Gerritsen, Peter J. Helms, Sylvia Hartl, Benoit Nemery, Kai-Håkon Carlsen, John Britton, Ineta Grisle.