

## Advocacy and EU Policy Development

### “RAISING THE PROFILE OF LUNG DISEASE”

#### Advocacy and policy development objectives of the ERS

The year 2004, was an extremely busy one for the ERS Brussels Office, as we moved into new premises near the European Parliament and employed two new staff members, bringing the total to three. Activities were expanded, existing partnerships with other health and environment organisations were developed and new ones created.

Externally, 2004 was one of the most momentous years in the history of the European Union (EU). May 1, saw the expansion of the EU from 15 to 25 countries. In June, 731 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) were elected to and joined the European Parliament. A new Commission of 25 members took up office on November 23.

#### Research

The research activities have been centred on:

##### 1. Contributing to developments in the future EU research policy

The ERS has been involved with the Commission proposal for the 7th Framework Research Programme (FP7). Two position papers supporting the inclusion of respiratory diseases in FP7, were prepared as a contribution to the consultations that the Directorate General of Research launched in August and November 2004. These position papers were presented to the

European Commission and distributed in the European Parliament. The position papers have also been used by National Societies to gather support at the national level for future discussions on the FP7 proposal.

#### *“Creating and expanding existing alliances”*

##### 2. Raising the profile of the ERS within the EU research environment

Presenting a list of prospective independent experts to the European Commission for project evaluation and monitoring, in addition to attending Commission-organised conferences/workshops on issues of interest for the ERS contributed to raising the awareness of the ERS and its goals. Visits to Commission Officials and MEPs have also reinforced the process.

##### 3. Providing information on research funding to ERS members

Providing information to our members on EU affairs has been improved by the creation of the “EU Corner” on the ERS Website. It holds information on research and other relevant EU programmes. This site is regularly updated with Calls for Proposals and any other issues of importance. Individual advice to ERS Members has also been provided.

#### Environment policy

ERS participated actively in the formulation of the EU Action Plan on Children’s Health and Environment. In

October 2003, Peter Helms (former Chair of the ERS Paediatric Respiratory Epidemiology Group) was asked by DG Sanco (Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs) to Chair the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Children's Respiratory Health, which was set up by the European Commission in October 2003.

The Action Plan was published in May 2004. The European Parliament initiated its own report on the plan and we submitted amendments in support of respiratory health and tobacco control. At the beginning of December the Dutch Presidency held a two-day conference on the Action Plan. The ERS attended this conference and spoke on indoor air issues at a non-governmental organisations event.

### Tobacco control

Much of the tobacco-control activity centred on the production of the European Commission funded ASPECT (Analysis of the Science and Policy for European Control of Tobacco) report: *Tobacco or Health in the European Union: Past, Present and Future*. The report was an overview of EU action on tobacco control over the past 15 years and looked at all aspects of policy,



including health effects, economics, effective interventions and tobacco product regulation and ended with a series of recommendations to national governments and EU institutions. We put together a consortium of health organisations and European and international tobacco-control experts to draft the report. The report was co-written by the ERS Brussels Office and edited jointly with the ERS Journals Office in Sheffield (UK).

The report was published by the Commission on October 22, 2004, and has been welcomed by tobacco-control policy makers and advocates from around the world. The full report is available in English on the ERS website ([www.ersnet.org/eu-corner](http://www.ersnet.org/eu-corner)).

The ERS also actively campaigned for European Community (EC) and member-state ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), and organised a global e-mail campaign to persuade member states to give the go-ahead for EC ratification in June.

**ERS Brussels Office in 2004 and beyond**

The objectives of the ERS at the Brussels Office in 2004 were to:

- Build on work undertaken and gains made in 2003 to raise the profile of the ERS amongst the EU institutions, politicians and policy makers.
- Make available ERS scientists and experts to EU policy makers to assist with EU policy formation.
- Create and expand existing alliances with other partners sharing the same aims to achieve our EU objectives.
- Effectively influence the policy agendas in key areas of interest to the Society. In 2004, these key areas were: research; environment policy; tobacco control.

In addition, the ERS also took part in the first inter-governmental working group to set up the Conference of the Parties (CoP) for the FCTC in June 2004.

**Other activities**

**Lobbying on proposed EU chemicals legislation REACH**

In September, we joined forces with European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) Environment Network (EEN), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the British Medical Association (BMA) to lobby MEPs on the REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorization of Chemicals) regulation proposal. Meetings were set up with a number of individual MEPs to express support for the proposal.

**Conferences and seminars**

The ERS was actively involved in planning, organising and presenting at a number of European tobacco-control events over the year. These events have included workshops on tobacco product regulation, research and indoor air. Key meetings included the European Union Presidency Conference on Tobacco Control in Limerick (June 17–18, 2004) and the World Health Organization Ministerial conference on Children’s Health and the Environment (June 23–25, 2004).

*“EU research policy developments, environment policy and tobacco control are amongst the key focus areas of the ERS Brussels Office”*

**Policy submissions to the Commission**

In 2004, we also coordinated policy recommendations and submissions on respiratory research in FP7, tobacco control research in FP7 and the future of EU public health policy.

**> [www.ersnet.org/eu-corner](http://www.ersnet.org/eu-corner)**

**Advocacy Committee**

**Chair**

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Ronald Dahl