

Editorial

W. Puhl

Published online: 6 November 2012
© EFORT 2012



Dear Members of EFORT
Dear Members of Specialty Societies
Dear Readers of EOTR

On 16 October, EFORT, the European Federation of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, together with EULAR, the European League Against Rheumatism, acting together for the first time as the European Musculoskeletal Health Alliance, a partnership of both organisations, held a series of high level policy events in Brussels, during the Musculoskeletal Health Days.

As EOTR is the official Journal of EFORT, the Journal should provide information concerning EFORT's activities in Brussels, with the intent to inform about musculoskeletal diseases (MSDs), and to bring these diseases, musculoskeletal trauma, and rheumatic diseases to the future European research programs, Horizon 2020.

The first event of the morning addressed the topic of the Prevention of Chronic Diseases, looking specifically at the case of MSDs. EU Policy Makers from the European Commission, European Parliament and Council of the EU, heard about the need to recognise the burden of MSDs in the EU, and the need to adopt specific national and EU strategies that address the diseases. The officials present welcomed the conference and the efforts made by EFORT and EULAR to assess and discuss existing prevention strategies on musculoskeletal diseases. They recognised that more awareness of the common risk factors to other chronic conditions is needed (such as on tobacco and alcohol consumption, poor diet, lack of physical activity), and recognised the health, economic and societal challenges that MSDs pose with the growing ageing population in Europe. The European Commission announced that it is discussing a Joint Action on Chronic Diseases with the participation of EU Member States, and therefore EFORT will closely follow this opportunity to be involved and land its expertise in the field of MSDs. Member of European Parliament Anja Weisgerber suggested the musculoskeletal community push for chronic disease classification of MSDs.

In the afternoon, a workshop was organised to launch discussions on what the research priorities in the field of MSDs should be for the next decade. Scientists, researchers, innovators and policy makers sat together to lay down the grounds for the development of a roadmap for research and innovation in repetitive motion disorders (RMDs). The workshop particularly addressed all existing challenges in advancing research and innovation. EFORT and EULAR agreed that a holistic approach that combines basic, clinical, epidemiological, and outcomes research was needed. As the European Parliament is to vote about the coming European Research Framework Programme, which is to set funding priorities for the next 6 years (Horizon 2020), the musculoskeletal community is and will continue to advocate for the

W. Puhl (✉)
Orthopädische Spezialklinik Oberstdorf,
Trettachstrasse 16,
87561 Oberstdorf, Germany
e-mail: wolfhart.puhl@me.com

inclusion of MSDs in the programme. The workshop was therefore part of a broader strategy of EFORT and EULAR to create a roadmap on research in the field of MSDs, and to increase funding opportunities at both EU and national level. Europe needs to focus on research and innovation, which can truly benefit its citizens and particularly improve their health and mobility. More than ever, National Societies need to engage in this process to link efforts at the national level. EU policy makers are eager to receive data from the musculoskel-

etal community and specific recommendations on how to improve the prevention, diagnosis, management of the MSDs, and what the research priorities should be in the field. Strong with our 43 national associations from 40 countries, EFORT can offer a valuable platform for discussion and sharing of best practice, and set Excellence in Health Research.

Wolfhart Puhl
Editor in Chief EOTR