



FEND and IDF Europe welcome the 'Vienna Declaration on Diabetes'

The Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND) and the International Diabetes Federation – European Region (IDF Europe), welcome the outcome of the Austrian EU Presidency Conference on the Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes, which took place in Vienna on 15th and 16th February 2006 and resulted in the announcement of the '**Vienna Declaration on Diabetes**'.

Significantly, the Austrian Health Minister, Maria Rauch Kallat, concluded that there is an urgent need for an **EU diabetes strategy**, leading to the development of an **EU Council Recommendation for Diabetes Prevention, Diagnosis and Control**, improved data collection across the EU and the creation of a permanent forum for the exchange of best practice on diabetes. The Minister referred to Dr Anne Dornhorst's paper presented to the working group, which highlighted the devastating outcomes in relation to pregnancy, and this particular at-risk group. As type 2 diabetes is developing much earlier it is imperative that women in their early reproductive years are counselled and screened for type 2 diabetes much earlier in pregnancy, particularly in the high-risk groups. Furthermore, she emphasised the need for:

- Prevention strategies for population and high risk groups
- National diabetes plans and disease management programmes
- Greater awareness of the link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease
- Equity of access to care
- Tackling discrimination against those living with diabetes

- Increased funding for diabetes research.

FEND and IDF Europe particularly welcome the commitment from the Austrian Health Minister to deliver the conclusions of the conference, in the name of the 'Vienna Declaration', to the informal Health Council in April and later to the formal Health Council in June 2006. Rauch-Kallat claimed 'a new era in the fight against diabetes' and described it as Europe's 'paramount political challenge.'

Furthermore, the speech of EU Health Commissioner, Markos Kyprianou, assured participants in the conference that he would do 'everything in [his] power to make sure that tackling the factors behind the diabetes epidemic will continue to be a priority on the European Union's health agenda.' John Bowis MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament diabetes working group, also issued a challenge to his fellow politicians to 'come out' and defeat the stigma associated with diabetes and to support 'a framework of best practice for diabetes and a recommendation to Member States as to how we can work together in support of this growing epidemic.'

We regard this as an encouraging step forward for people suffering from diabetes in Europe. To ensure that this unique opportunity will be used to deliver tangible and meaningful outcomes for those living with diabetes, there must now be a decisive move towards an EU policy framework in the form of a proposal for an **EU Council Recommendation on**

Diabetes Prevention, Diagnosis and Control.

FEND, together with IDF Europe, were pleased to present their new paper *Diabetes: EU Policy Recommendations* as a contribution to the Austrian Presidency of the EU (January–June 2006), and as input to the future work of the European Commission on one of Europe's most critical public health issues. The paper, which was well received by participants, outlines a set of EU policy recommendations on diabetes which the Commission could draw upon in developing such a proposal.

We believe strongly that it is now time to move beyond awareness-raising and towards tangible EU policy action on diabetes. We call upon the EU's leaders to support these recommended actions for the benefit of those suffering from, treating, or affected by diabetes. This will also contribute to making the EU directly relevant to its citizens, which today is genuinely needed.

Anne-Marie Felton, Chairman,
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Executive Committee

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