



3rd European Patients' Rights Day
A growing European concern and framework for action

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3rd European Patients' Rights Day: A Brief Note

Why a *European Patients' Rights Day*

Patients' rights are becoming an increasing concern of EU institutions and stakeholders, as can be seen by the New Directive on Patients' Rights and cross-border care presented on July 2008 as well as other European initiatives encompassed in the Europe for Patient Campaign launched in September by Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou.

Active Citizenship Network (ACN)¹ together with a group of European citizens organisations in 2002 established a European Charter of Patients' Rights, which includes the following 14 rights: the right to preventive measures; access care; information; consent; free choice; privacy and confidentiality; respect of patients' time; observance of quality standards; safety; innovation; avoidance of unnecessary suffering and pain; personalised treatment; to complain; to receive compensation. All these rights, based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, are fundamental in relation to European citizens and healthcare services. The majority of these rights are also embodied within the Councils conclusions on Common values and principles in EU Health Systems adopted in June 2006.

The reinforcement of these rights will become effective only with the cooperation and commitment of all healthcare stakeholders in every EU country. It is thus essential to increase awareness regarding the importance of patients' rights and everyone's responsibilities in guaranteeing their respect. We believe that celebrating a *European Patients' Rights Day* every year in all EU Member States would greatly contribute to this goal. It is a common occasion to inform, discuss and take commitments to improve patients' rights in Europe and in each member state.

The 1st European Patients' Rights Day 2007 celebrated at the European Parliament in Brussels

on 29 March 2007 was co-supported by both the ALDE and Socialist group and had over a 180 delegates from 25 countries. More than 23 MEPs from various political groups all spoke of the importance of a European Patients' Rights Days. The event concluded with the commitment from ACN and participating organisations to push forward for the institutionalization of the European Day, the adoption of the Charter, and campaign for its implementation in all countries along with the celebration of the 2nd *European Patients' Rights Day* in all EU countries. In addition there were two Parliament Resolutions calling for the adoption of a European charter of patients' rights on the basis of existing charters in the Member States and of the *work carried out by non-governmental organisations*² and the EESC *called on the European Commission to establish a European Patients' Rights Day*³.

The 2nd European Patients' Rights Day 2008 celebrated in 26 countries

on April 18 2008 with 80 national and local events with a European conference in Gorizia, a small city on the border between Italy and Slovenia that embodies the European dimension of patients' rights and the concreteness of cross-border care. The European Patients' Rights Day activities received the patronage of the European Parliament, the European Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and European Economic and Social Committee.

¹ ACN, Cittadinanzattiva's European program, is a network of about 80 citizens' organisations from 30 countries aimed at contributing to the development of a European Active Citizenship (www.activecitizenship.net).

² European Parliament's Resolution on Community Action on the Provision of Cross-Border Healthcare, March 15th 2007. P6_TA(2007)0073

³ European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) approved an opinion on Patient's rights (September 26, 2007) that "welcomes and acknowledges the *European Charter of Patients' Rights, promoted by ACN since 2002*".

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European Patients' Rights Day



The 3rd European Patients' Rights Day will take place on 18 April 2009. As last year, the European Day celebration consists in national events in each EU country organized by national patients and citizen organizations followed by a central European event with the patronage of the European Parliament, European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee.

European Event 22 April in European Parliament

European Parliament election will be held in June 2009 and for that reason this year the *European Patients' Rights Day* is an important opportunity for citizens to voice to their MEP candidates their opinions, needs and expectations as to the role Europe should play with regards to their health and health care services. At the present moment there are some important pieces of legislature being discussed that are related to patients rights such as the Directive on Patients' Rights in cross border care and the Proposal for Council Recommendations on Patient Safety. For that reason ACN has decided to host the final European event of the European Patients' Rights Day on **22 April at the European Parliament in Strasbourg**. This event will be an opportunity for citizens' organizations, public officials and other important stakeholders to be able to interact, and to hear each other's opinions on the concrete situation of patients' rights and the challenges being faced in a continually growing and changing Europe. **The EU Commissioner Vassiliou has confirmed her participation.**

National Events in all EU countries 18 April 2009

At the present moment the Directive on Patients' Rights in cross border care is being discussed by the European Parliament and the EU Council, the national events can be an opportunity for citizens and patients' organisation to promote this debate and provide their opinion. Moreover, information and educational material regarding the European Charter of Patients' Rights will be distributed in all events. ACN will include a brief description of all national events with links to the organizations website and contact information. In addition, all participating organizations will include a link to the European Patients Rights Day web page.

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3 rd EUROPEAN PATIENTS' RIGHTS DAY 2009:
Patients Rights: A growing European concern and framework for action

22 April 2009
European Parliament, Strasbourg: room SDM S5
Draft program

Chairperson: Antonio Gaudio: *Deputy Secretary Cittadinanzattiva*

9:15 **Opening remarks:** Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou: *European Commissioner for Health*
Mr. Graham Watson: *Leader of ALDE group*
Mr. Gianni Pittella: *Leader PSE Italian group*

10:00 **The European Patients' Rights Day: a citizens' initiative**
Melody Ross: *Director, Active Citizenship Network*

10:15 **Patients Rights: a growing European concern and framework for action**
Magda Bojarska: *Institute for Patient's Rights & Health Education, Poland*
Nicola Beddington: *European Patient Forum*
Karin Kalthoff: *Zorgbelang Gelderland, Netherlands*
Laure Albertini: *Directeur du Département des droits du patient et des associations Services centraux, Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Paris, France*
Liene Sulce: *Patients' Rights Ombud Office, Latvia*

Debate

12:30 **Closing remarks** : Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou: *European Commissioner for Health*

12:30 *Small lunch*

1:00 **Patients' Rights in Europe: the role of EU institutions**
Andrezj Rys: *European Commission, DG Health and Consumers*
Lucien Bouis: *Member of the European Economic and Social Committee*
Francesco Ronfini: *Region of Veneto*
Ivana Silva: *Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union*

2:00 **Conclusions:** Teresa Petrangolini: *Secretary General Cittadinanzattiva, Italy*

Note: Various MEPS have been invited to participate when they participate depends on the plenary session.

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