What is the MEP Group for Kidney Health?

I launched the MEP Group for Kidney Health in collaboration with the European Kidney Health Alliance as a forum for important issues surrounding kidney health to be discussed at EU level. It brings together experts from the kidney community (physicians, patients, researchers, health economists, nurses and allied professionals) and European policymakers to discuss key topics and activities related to kidney health. In this way, MEPs receive valuable information relevant to their current work and are better able to hold the European Commission to account as it drafts new proposals that impinge on kidney health. The Group meets once to twice yearly for concise and focused meetings.

Frieda Brepoels, MEP Chair MEP Group for Kidney Health

Why is the MEP Group for Kidney Health needed?

Chaired by Mrs Frieda Brepoels, the MEP Group for Kidney Health is an informal Group that relies on the participation of all MEPs who support the need to place CKD and its associated diseases as a priority on the EU’s agenda.

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) affects at least 8% of European populations and is usually symptomless in its early stages. Symptoms appear in the late stages of CKD where often rather expensive renal replacement therapies, including chronic dialysis and kidney transplantation are needed. In view of the long asymptomatic period, over two thirds of people with CKD are unaware of their condition and there is a huge disparity between frequency of CKD and awareness of the problems it causes. Diabetes and hypertension are two of the most important risk factors and we therefore advocate early and effective actions to control it – by both the affected individual and medical professionals alike.

Effective early intervention can prevent kidney failure by reducing the rate at which CKD progresses. Europe needs to rise to the challenge of CKD first by recognizing the scale of the problem and second by putting in place the strategies required to reverse its consequences. Hard work will be needed and we call on competent authorities in Member States and EU Institutions alike to join us in our goal to improve European health through policies designed to reduce the incidence of kidney disease and the factors that predispose to it.

Professor Norbert Lameire, MD, PhD, Chairman of European Kidney Health Alliance

Objectives of the Group

- To promote the inclusion of kidney health as a priority on the EU’s agenda
- To act as a permanent forum for exchange of information between the European kidney community and EU policymakers
- To provide kidney-specific expert input to EU policymaking such as the public health and research agendas, technical legislation related to organ donation and transplantation as well as pharmaceuticals, action addressing the determinants of chronic diseases as well as options for chronic disease management including e-Health applications and self-management strategies.

The MEP Group for Kidney Health is funded by the European Kidney Health Alliance, which also runs the Secretariat.
Past meetings

Chronic kidney disease, Europe’s silent epidemic (March 2008)

The costs and policy implications of chronic kidney disease in Europe (October 2008)

Chronic kidney disease and hypertension: Twin challenges for 21st century Europe (March 2009)

Chronic kidney disease and diabetes: A major threat to Europe’s health (March 2010)

Chronic disease in Europe: United for Prevention (October 2010)
Joint meeting of the MEP Group for Kidney Health, MEP Heart Group, MEPs against Cancer II and the EU Diabetes Working Group

Chronic Kidney Disease and cardiovascular risk: policy options for tackling Europe’s major health burdens (March 2011)

For documentation previous meetings or further information about the MEP Group for Kidney Health please contact the EKHA Secretariat: info@ekha.eu or +32 2 639 6230

About The European Kidney Health Alliance

The European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA) is an Alliance of not-for-profit organisations who represent the key stakeholders in kidney health issues in Europe.

EKHA takes a multidisciplinary approach involving patients and their families, doctors and nurses, researchers and other healthcare professionals who work cooperatively for a European health environment in which there is a sustained decrease in kidney disease and its consequences.

The present meeting, ‘Chronic kidney disease – organ donation and transplantation’ was supported by Abbott, Novartis and Roche.

Abbott is a global, broad-based health care company devoted to the discovery, development, manufacture and marketing of pharmaceuticals and medical products, including nutritional, devices and diagnostics. Our commitment to kidney care and kidney patients stretches back more than two decades and extends across our pharmaceutical, nutritional, diagnostic and vascular divisions. We produce and market a wide range of products that benefit kidney disease patients in more than 130 countries around the world today, and have an industry-leading pipeline focused on bringing continued innovation to patients tomorrow.

Novartis is leader in developing immunosuppressant medicines. Nearly 30 years ago Novartis launched cyclosporine, transforming organ transplantation from experimental therapy into standard of care for transplant patients. Novartis offers the broadest portfolio of immunosuppressive medicines and continues its unique commitment in transplant with a robust clinical program that includes more than 25 clinical trials.

Roche diagnostics solutions support physicians in obtaining actionable diagnostics information. We develop new diagnostic products based on unmet medical needs for many disease areas, including Kidney diseases. These include improved detection, prognosis, and support improvements in patient management. CKD is considered an important risk factor of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality. In addition, there is an association between risk factors for CKD and cardiovascular risk factors such as hypertension.