

EAACI's going green!

Over the past decade, environmental issues such as climate change and global warming have become more and more evident in our daily lives and are now ranked highly on the global agenda.



The world is changing and adapting to this latest challenge and sincere efforts are being made on local, national and international levels to try and rectify the damage done to this planet over the past hundred years.

All these findings come in the “Year of Air” which has seen the EU push for stronger air quality laws. However, at this time no major measure has been taken concerning asthma and other similar diseases.

Environmental stewardship and preservation of natural resources is becoming a priority and a strategic initiative for the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

Several strong positions were already formulated:

- EAACI conducted jointly with ERS a **Task Force on “Effects of climate change on respiratory allergic diseases and on asthma prevalence”**. The main TF conclusion is that “climate change is unequivocal and represents one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet. Projected global warming this century is likely to trigger serious consequences for mankind and other life forms, including those plants and fungi, which produce allergenic pollen and spores” (*Allergy 2010; 65:1073–1081*). In consequence TF participants urge for “collection of aerobiological data in a structured way at the European level supported by the creation of multidisciplinary research teams in this area and by lobbying the European Union and other funders to finance this research”

- A **COST-EAACI Meeting** on Epidemiological evidence on the links between aerotoxins and allergic diseases was successfully held at the Charité Hospital in Berlin, with the purpose to collect major European experts to present the state of art in the field and identify unmet needs. Clinical and epidemiological

data were presented on exposures to bioaerosols and chemical pollutants and associated allergic health effects having a major public health impact, including allergic sensitization, allergic rhinitis and asthma as well as intermediate phenotypes. Advantages from modeling of meteorology, chemicals, pollens and moving from pollen to allergen counts were put forward. Respiratory symptoms and diseases are among the most widely studied aerotoxicant-associated health effects, however the skin also constitutes a privileged outdoor target. Associated

risks increase when chemical and biological contaminants interact. Methodologically, major attention was given to the threshold issue as no dose–response relationship has been established for most agents and knowledge about threshold values is sparse. Specific recommendations for standardization and homogenization of aerobiological data from the patient’s point of view were implemented.

- **The EAACI Interest Group “Aerobiology and Air Pollution”** organised a Workshop in the EU-Parliament in Brussels. The aim was to make politicians aware of the ongoing epidemic in allergic disease (Isabella Annesi-Maesano, France, and Peter Burney, UK), that current therapies are still insufficient Antonella Muraro, Italy), that changed land use in the EU can lead to more allergic sensitizations (Carmen Galan, Spain), and that allergies are an environmental, multifactorial disease that need a concerted research approach (Jeroen Buters, Germany). A 30 minutes panel discussion led by Lorenzo Cecchi (Italy) and supplemented with Mikhail Sofiev (Finland) gave stakeholders time to vent their interests. A Member of Parliament, Esther de Lange, sponsored and spoke at the meeting. WHO, FP7 and patient organisation (Allergy UK, European Federation of Allergy, EFA, European Public Health Alliance, EPHA) stakeholders also attended.

“We need everybody to pay attention to both air pollution levels and respiratory allergic diseases”

Nikos Papadopoulos, EAACI President

• During PAAM 2013 researchers revealed the strongest evidence to date that air pollution is biologically linked to childhood asthma: an average of 1 in 7 children living within 75 metres of a busy road are likely to develop asthma, while in areas with the heaviest air pollution, 1 in 4 children could potentially develop asthma. "What these results help illustrate is that environmental factors such as air emissions, against which prevention is possible, can be directly linked to diseases such as asthma," Isabella Annesi-Maesano, EAACI Interest Group on Aerobiology and Pollution Chairperson, and Research Director at INSERM and Head of the EPAR Department said. "With air pollution currently second on the World Health Organisation's Global Ranking of Risk Factors, asthma and other similar illnesses need to be taken seriously." Additionally, outdoor levels of air pollutants continue to aggravate asthma in sufferers despite industrial air pollution generally decreasing. "It is studies such as this one which help underline just how important it is to protect children from environmental risks," continued EAACI President Nikolaos G. Papadopoulos. "We need everybody, but most importantly the EU, to start paying more attention to both air pollution levels and respiratory allergic diseases, in order to make significant strides towards improving the lives of children."

"Environmental factors such as air emissions, against which prevention is possible, can be directly linked to diseases such as asthma,"

Isabella Annesi-Maesano, EAACI Interest Group on Aerobiology and Pollution Chairperson

How can I go green?



Why should I go green?



Worldwide paper consumption is constantly growing - paper use has reached almost 400 millions of tons of paper per year. The number of trees used for newspapers is uncertain, but must be in the millions, since 24 billion copies are published a year, and only 30% are recycled. Then, there are the 350 million magazines; again, the tree usage is uncertain. Needless to say, purchasing digital copies of your favourite books, journals, and newspaper,

and one of the easiest aspects of going paperless!

It is a sobering call to action even as our world's ecosystems face tremendous and increasing overuse. By respecting and understanding the beauty and spectacular capability of the living world, we can learn to live increasingly happy and high-quality lives in harmony with nature.

As the Eurobarometer survey shows, the impact of air pollution is something that European citizens feel strongly about. The decision to designate 2013 as the Year of Air reflects both the economic seriousness of the problem, but also the impacts on humans. Lives are being cut short by air pollution and chronic respiratory disease makes life miserable for many across the continent"

Jacqueline McGlade, EEA Executive Director

An important benefit of being an EAACI Member is your subscription to the EAACI official journals Allergy and Pediatric Allergy and Immunology. All EAACI members have access to full electronic versions of the journals and also receive printed copies (*printed copies are only available for Junior Members with subscription).

Reflecting the feedback from our recent Membership Benefits Survey we are asking you to support the "Go green with EAACI" initiative by keeping only the online access to Allergy and/or Pediatric Allergy and Immunology. We are offering you the possibility to opt out from receiving printed versions of Allergy and/or PAI by selecting the opt out box(es) at the Membership Renewal page.

EAACI will continue this scheme with all its activities from now on, including its Annual Congress.

As always we are happy to hear any thoughts or ideas you have as members for ways to reduce our carbon footprint as we as an organisation look to become more environmentally responsible. Please send any comments you may have to info@eaaci.org

"Design something that makes oxygen, sequesters carbon, fixes nitrogen, distills water, accrues solar energy as fuel, makes complex sugars and food, creates microclimates, changes colours with the seasons, and self-replicates. Well, why don't we knock that down and write on it?"

William McDonough, Designer