



## **IBD World Day – EFCCA raises awareness of Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis**

Brussels, 19 May 2011

On 19 May 2011 the European Federation of Crohn's & Ulcerative Colitis Associations (EFCCA) joined forces with worldwide patient organisations from four continents to mark IBD World Day and raise awareness of Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis.

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are two serious, chronic digestive diseases generally referred to as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Together, they affect over 2.2 million people in Europe and 5 million worldwide. In most cases the illness can be kept under control with medication, but despite extensive research, there is currently no known cause or cure for IBD.

*“Beating IBD does not only mean finding a cure, but limiting the effect of the disease, erasing the terrible social impact of IBD, and restoring hope to patients who suffer from it,”* says Marco Greco, EFCCA chairman. Mr. Greco also pointed to a recent IMPACT<sup>1</sup> study, carried out by EFCCA and aimed at measuring the effect of IBD on patients’ quality of life and the social, educational, employment, and holistic aspects of IBD on a European level. Referring to the study, Mr Greco highlighted alarming figures that show that over 66 % of respondents feel that their IBD has had a negative effect on their career, opportunities for advancement and earning/income potential. One in three respondents say that their IBD has prevented them from pursuing intimate relationships, and 22% indicate that IBD has been a reason for ending an intimate relationship.

*“Sadly, there is not a great deal of awareness of IBD amongst general society, but we will not renounce our rights because of this. Today, we want to make our voices heard and to say to politicians and society that we are here and that our needs must be reflected in EU policies”,* said Mr. Greco. EFCCA members from 26 European countries will meet in Brussels on 19 May to exchange information with representatives of the European Commission’s Directorate General for Health and Consumer Policy (DG Sanco) as well as to attend a street performance at Schuman Roundabout that took place from 12-14.30h. These events form part of a wider awareness raising campaign that will culminate in the presentation of the final results of the IMPACT study to Members of the European Parliament this fall.

EFCCA was founded in 1990 and is an umbrella organisation representing national patients’ associations from 26 European countries.

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