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## Message from the President

Let me begin by wishing you all a very happy and prosperous 2006. I also wish you good health, although I am a little bit cautious in wishing you this, since someone recently said to me that, "... good health is an incomplete diagnosis ... "!



Looking back at the work of the IDF European Region over the past few months, it is too difficult for me to highlight in this message all the wonderful activities that have taken place. I will therefore restrict myself to a selection of noteworthy items:

- The General Assembly and Together We Are Stronger meetings in Munich, Germany, were very well attended. Aside from the over 70 official delegates, there were also almost 60 observers present. The good spirit during the meetings was very inspiring.
- Health First Europe invited us to write a chapter about diabetes in a publication (working title: "2050: A Health Odyssey - Thought provoking ideas for policy making") that will be launched in February 2006. A foreword was also written for the 2006 European Endocrine Review (to be published at the beginning of the year), which focuses extensively on diabetes.
- The European League against Rheumatism invited us to speak about the successful activities of IDF within the European Union during their annual arthritis/rheumatism conference that took place in Cyprus.
- The Diabetes Experts' Panel of Accessing Countries (DEPAC) has collected very good information about diabetes in the eight new EU member states. The country-specific survey results will be analysed and discussed in these countries during the first half of 2006.
- On the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Diabetes Association, the book "Type 1 Diabetes" by the Swedish paediatrician Ragnar Hanas was translated into Russian and distributed in Russia and 11 other Eastern European Countries.
- In December, the European Commission and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation organized an impressive meeting to coordinate global research efforts to find a cure for diabetes. Also in December, the European Commission organized a very informative conference on stem cells that was attended by the EU Commissioner for Science & Research, Mr. Janez Potočnik.
- An EU conference on the prevention of type 2 diabetes will be held in Vienna on 15-16 February during the Austrian Presidency of the EU (first semester 2006). The conference is a joint effort of a number of organizations, among them DG SANCO of the European Commission, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women, the Austrian Health Institute, IDF Europe, and EASD. The outcome of the discussions during the conference will be compiled into an expert paper that will include the main findings and the recommendations to be brought to the attention of EU Health Ministers when they meet informally in April and formally in June, of this year.

Finally, I would like to mention the increasing support that we have received from our industry partners at both the national and regional level. The result is that the current financial situation of IDF Europe allows us to increase the number of our activities.

**Dr Wim Wientjens, President IDF Europe**

## EU Affairs

- ◆ **Diabetes: "The Policy Puzzle: Towards Benchmarking in the EU 25"** - The International Diabetes Federation-European Region (IDF-Europe) and the Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND), have joined forces to support an audit of diabetes across EU member states. It is presented as a contribution to EU politicians and to the work of the Austrian Presidency in the first half of 2006 and beyond. The aim of the audit is to help establish a coherent EU strategy and policy that can provide a solution to the diabetes problem across the EU. The report is intended to present a snapshot, easily digested, of the actual picture of the type 2 diabetes situation in the EU in 2005, and primarily to be a guide for future EU policy development. The undertaking of this inventory shows considerable variation in approaches taken by EU member states today, hoping that this will be used as a basis for a benchmarking process to follow in the near future. The report can be accessed in the European Region section of the IDF website, [www.idf.org/European\\_Region](http://www.idf.org/European_Region).
- ◆ **Gluciform Pre-diabetes** – Gluciform is an initiative of IDF Europe which brings together doctors, nurses and members of associations representing people with diabetes. The group is working actively at all levels; with the general public, healthcare professionals, patient associations and at the political level. The Gluciform website ([www.gluciform.org](http://www.gluciform.org)) has both professional and lay sections, which give user-friendly information on pre-diabetes and its prevention, and looks at who is most at risk and what can be done to help improve health. Members of Gluciform have just published an important paper on this subject entitled *Pre-diabetes essential action: a European perspective* (Valensi P, Schwarz PEH, Hall M, Felton AM, Maldonato A, Mathieu C. *Diabetes Metab* 2005;31:606-620).
- ◆ **Policy recommendations on diabetes prevention, diagnosis and control** - The Board has recently undertaken a project which aims to prepare an EU strategy. After consultation with a number of diabetes stakeholders and through the formation of a policy working group, comprised of national and EU policy makers and experts in the field, we hope to reach a broad consensus on ways in which the EU and its Member States can and should be tackling the diabetes epidemic. Once agreed, we hope that these policy recommendations will be considered and subsequently incorporated in an EU strategy or, specifically, in any proposal that might eventually emanate from the Commission regarding an EU Council Recommendation on diabetes. All our member associations have been invited to contribute by way of a questionnaire and their comments and opinions will be considered by the policy working group when preparing the document.
- ◆ **A Declaration by the European Parliament** - We have continued to work with the EU Diabetes Working Group led by MEP John Bowis. This influential group of parliamentarians and EU officials meets twice a year to be updated by IDF Europe on diabetes and undertakes to raise awareness of diabetes amongst European decision makers. At a recent meeting they agreed to set down a Parliamentary Declaration which will call on the Commission and Council to:
  - prioritise diabetes in the EU's new health strategy as a major disease demonstrating a significant burden across the EU.
  - encourage Member States to establish national diabetes plans.

- develop an EU diabetes strategy and draft an EU Council Recommendation for Diabetes Prevention, Diagnosis and Control.

To be successful, the Declaration requires support from at least half the MEPs. It will be set down in January and we shall be asking Member Associations to lobby their own MEPs to sign it.

## IDF Europe Association News

- ◆ In Cyprus, the **Cyprus Diabetes Association** marked World Diabetes Day 2005 by organizing a series of awareness-raising activities throughout the island. These included a press conference with the Minister of Health, live television and radio programmes, and the setting up of booths offering diabetes testing in a number of locations, including the House of Representatives. A few of the activities were organized in collaboration with the Cyprus Turkish Diabetes Association.



- ◆ In France, the **Association Française des Diabétiques (AFD)** has initiated a project in Uzbekistan that will involve two healthcare professionals and a coordinator training local ophthalmologists to diagnose and screen for diabetic retinopathy. The initiative will include the collaboration of the AFD affiliate 'Midi-Pyrénées', which participated in a similar AFD project that was implemented in Russia in 2004.
- ◆ In Germany, the National Action Forum Diabetes Mellitus (Nationales Aktionsforum Diabetes mellitus – NAFDM), coordinated by the **Deutsche Diabetes Union (DDU)** and launched in 2004, has gathered widespread political support. The initiative offers all organizations, associations, institutions, financial supporters and political groups a long-term platform, through a National Diabetes Program, for coordinating efforts in diabetology and improving the situation of people with diabetes and those at risk in the country. Research, treatment and prevention are the cornerstones of the NAFDM.



Since its launch, the NAFDM has met at a kick-off event involving over 400 participants and at a subsequent series of workshops. It has developed a clear organizational structure consisting of a steering committee, a coordinating unit, and of a variety of working groups which include representatives of groups promoting the rights of people with diabetes. Activities of the NAFDM include an intranet platform for all projects on diabetes prevention in Germany, support for diabetes practice guidelines, and the submission of a proposal to the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research for a National Diabetes Study

(involving over 5,000 participants) for the Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes.

Thanks to the NAFDM, the study of diabetes in Germany is on its way to speaking with one voice and the implementation of an effective multi-year programme is becoming a reality. The German Federal Ministry of Health and Social Security (BMGS) recently renewed its support for the initiative, which is set to run until 2010. The NAFDM also received the support of political parties during the recent parliamentary

elections in the country, and it is hoped that the new German government will embrace the NAFDM process without delay. For more information, visit [www.nafdm.de](http://www.nafdm.de).

- ◆ In Malta, the **Maltese Diabetes Association** organized a five-day free blood glucose and foot monitoring initiative in various locations throughout the country on the occasion of World Diabetes Day 2005. Several thousand people took part. A press conference was also held involving representatives of the association and the Minister of Health.



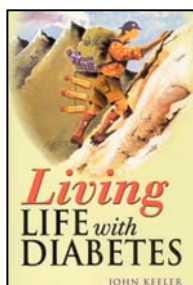
- ◆ In Portugal, the **Portuguese Diabetes Association (APDP)** celebrated World Diabetes Day 2005 by organizing a day-long event in Lisbon, during which participants could take part in a variety of activities aimed at raising awareness of diabetes and diabetic foot care. APDP also organized a press conference on November 14 in Coimbra along with the Ministry of Health and the Portuguese Society of Diabetology. Also in November, APDP held its 4<sup>th</sup> Congress of Diabetes Educators (held every two years).

- ◆ In Slovenia, the **Slovenian Diabetes Association (SLODA)** held a variety of activities to mark World Diabetes Day 2005. The main event took place in the city of Celje under the patronage of the President of the Slovenian Parliament. Other activities included the seventh edition of an amateur radio event to raise awareness of diabetes, and the seventh 'My Knowledge About Diabetes' competition, testing the awareness of diabetes among school-children aged 14 to 18. Some 5634 adolescents from 243 schools took part.
- ◆ In Turkey, the **Turkish Diabetes Foundation (TURKDIAB)** marked World Diabetes Day by holding a week-long series of activities throughout the country in November. One of the highlights was the opening of an art, culture and education centre in Istanbul named after Prof. Dr. Ustun Korugan, who worked in the field of diabetes for 35 years and died in 2003. The centre provides people with diabetes with the opportunity to participate in a variety of social and cultural activities, including courses on subjects such as painting, photography and drama.
- ◆ In the United Kingdom, **Diabetes UK** launched the report 'Diabetes: State of the Nations 2005' at a reception in Westminster on December 14. Drawing on a range of information and data, the report provides a full picture of diabetes care in the UK today. 'The report has provided a voice for people with diabetes, their families and friends, carers and health professionals. We can use it to work with the government to ensure that all people with diabetes get the care they deserve,' said Benet Middleton, Director of Campaigning at Diabetes UK. The report is available for download from the Diabetes UK website, [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk).

Diabetes UK also joined forces, for the second consecutive year, with 36 other UK health organizations to promote health issues at the annual conferences of the various UK political parties.

## Other News

- ◆ In Ukraine, the **International Diabetes Association of Ukraine (IDAU)** will be celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2006. Over the years, the IDAU has been successful in defending and promoting the rights of people with diabetes in the country by carrying out a variety of activities such as working with local and national decision makers to adopt legislation that assists people with diabetes, celebrating World Diabetes Day every year, and opening a school for children with diabetes in the city of Dnipropetrovsk (picture right). In August 2005, the IDAU initiated a meeting with the Prime Minister of Ukraine to discuss the introduction of a new model regarding the provision of insulin and diabetes equipment for people with diabetes.



- ◆ **Living Life with Diabetes** – a book by John Keeler. Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of four, John Keeler's life has been marked by a determination to make it as fulfilling and rich as possible. In this honest and heart-warming book he describes his journey from childhood to adulthood; from that initial diagnosis, through dealing with pain, fear and ignorance, to his situation today, where he feels in control of his diabetes. Published by Wiley, it can be ordered online at <http://eu.wiley.com/WileyCDA/>.

- ◆ **DESA International Conference 2006** – In 2006, The Diabetes Exercise and Sports Association (DESA) will be holding its biannual international congress on September 7-9 at the National Sports Centre Papendal, the Netherlands. The theme of the event is 'Diabetes Exercise and Sports: A Health(y) Challenge!'

The international congress is intended for endocrinologists, diabetologists, primary care physicians, diabetes educators, diabetes nurses, dietitians, physiologists, researchers on exercise and sports, and individuals with or without diabetes interested and/or involved in diabetes, exercise and sports. The three-day programme includes scientific plenary sessions on diabetes, exercise and sports, sessions on the implementation of lifestyle changes and exercise in daily practice, and practical 'hands-on' sports and exercise activities.

Education, motivation and creating opportunities for exercise and sports are among the goals of DESA, and the development of a scientific basis and the exchange of knowledge on exercise and sports is a major aim of the 2006 conference. For more information, contact Theo Lintmeijer ([theo.lintmeijer@wxs.nl](mailto:theo.lintmeijer@wxs.nl)).



For over 30 years, Servier has been a leading partner in the field of diabetes research, with partnerships with leading diabetes associations such as: IDF, IDF Europe, EASD, The Diabetes Education Study Group, The Mediterranean Group for the Study of Diabetes, The European Union Geriatric Medicine Society and the International Group of Insulin Secretion.

In addition, Servier collaborates with the European Foundation for the Study of Diabetes (EFSD) in a Research Grant Programme, and with the University of Padova for the Morgagni Prize.

Servier also endows the Robert Turner Professorship in Diabetic Medicine at Oxford University.

**If you have any diabetes related news that you would like to share with IDF Europe, please send us the information either by e-mail ([newsletter@idf.org](mailto:newsletter@idf.org)) or fax (+32-2-5371981) and we shall be pleased to include it in our future newsletters.**

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