

EULAR EU affairs strategy

1. Introduction

Given the relevance of its EU affairs activities based on the achievement of the last years, the EULAR Strategic Plan 2013-2017 has established “Advocacy” as one of its strategic objectives (see all EULAR strategic objectives [here](#)). The purpose of this paper is to present the strategic lines of the EULAR EU affairs activities for the next years and to link them to the overall EULAR strategy.

2. EU political context and the EULAR advocacy objectives

Thanks to its EU affairs activities since 2004, EULAR is now better established in the EU arena. EULAR will focus on consolidating its position while advocating for new policy results.

For the coming years, the EU institutions have prioritised some working lines in areas that are of particular interest for EULAR: **chronic diseases, active and healthy ageing, health and safety and work, disability and research funding**.

Beyond the policy developments envisaged by the EU institutions, the RMD community still expects more EU concrete results in the fields of **research** (e.g. adequate support to research activities), **public health** (e.g. actions to improve access to early diagnosis, treatment and care); **social policies** (e.g. actions to facilitate the integration of people with RMDs in work and social life); and **disability** (e.g. more specific disability legislation).

In order to account for these challenges, the strategic plan 2013-2017 specifically defines political advocacy as one of the eight strategic objectives:

Strategic objective 4: Advocacy: By 2017, EULAR will have a significant influence on EU level, and assist actions on national level, towards improving research funding, social policy legislation and quality of care.

The achievement of the advocacy objectives will feed into other strategic goals committed in the EULAR strategic plan. In particular:

Strategic objective 1: Research. By increasing support to research in RMD;

Strategic objective 5: Standards of care. By advocating for EU actions to disseminate and implement standards of care in Member States, and for further developing standards of care;

Strategic objective 7: National relations. By providing support to member organisations in implementing national political initiatives.

3. Definition of strategic policy goals and tactical objectives

EULAR advocacy activities will mainly focus on three areas: research, public health and employment, social affairs and rights of people with disabilities.

Research

- In this area, EULAR will advocate for the EU and other international organisations to provide support to research and innovation in RMD-related issues.
- EULAR will also collaborate in providing advice and support to EU institutions on health research issues, in collaboration with other scientific societies.

Public health

- In the public health field, EULAR will aim to further collaborate with EU institutions and national and/or regional governments in strengthening the prevention and management of RMDs.

- EULAR will advocate for the implementation of the methods and tools developed by the eumusc.net project, particularly the standards of care and the health care quality indicators;

Employment, social affairs and antidiscrimination policies

- EULAR will encourage further EU actions to improve working conditions, which will help prevent musculoskeletal occupational diseases, and will allow people with RMDs to remain at work;
- EULAR will collaborate with EU institutions and Member States in the implementation of the EU Disability Strategy and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

In order to contribute to the achievement of strategic objective 4 (see above), EULAR has defined three tactical objectives:

1) By 2017, EULAR will have established that RMDs will be recognised at EU, national and global levels as equivalent to the other major diseases.

For a long time, RMDs were not recognised as one of the major chronic diseases, even if the burden of musculoskeletal conditions were comparable to the ones considered as the most important ones. This was partly due to the fact that policy makers and the public were not aware of what RMDs stood for nor of the individual, family and social impact of these conditions.

In this sense, the aim of EULAR is to keep raising awareness about the burden and characteristics of RMDs as well as about the need to implement concrete actions at both the EU and national levels to reduce such a burden.

2) By 2017, EULAR will have developed a widely coordinated public affairs strategy and a platform for both EU and national campaigning.

EULAR will further systematise its public affairs strategy planning. Among other things, such a strategy will aim to strengthen the interface of European and national advocacy; to provide support to EULAR member organisations in the implementation of national advocacy actions; and to strengthen synergies between public affairs actions and other EULAR activities,

3) By 2017, EULAR will be collaborating internationally on priorities such as age and disability related issues, rare diseases, and early diagnosis.

EULAR will identify and strengthen collaboration with European and international stakeholders in order to create synergies around specific policy issues as well as work together in joint endeavours.

4. Additional information

For more information on the EULAR EU affairs strategy, please contact the EULAR Brussels Office:

EULAR Brussels Office

Avenue des Arts 39 – 1040 Brussels

T : +32.2.513.77.02

F : +32.2.502.77.03

Brussels@eular.eu