**Executive Summary (*)**

The Conference, organised in collaboration with EULAR, the European League against Rheumatism, was part of the Belgian EU Presidency’s initiative on chronic illnesses. The purpose of the Conference was to discuss current challenges in RMD prevention and treatment and to exchange ideas and best practices on how to enhance the health of citizens affected by these disorders.

The event particularly aimed at developing specific recommendations on initiatives that could be taken by the European Union and the Member States to improve prevention and management of RMD across EU countries. Around 150 representatives from EU institutions, Member States, patients’ and physicians’ organisations, academic institutions and other stakeholders participated in the development of these recommendations. The recommendations were presented at the EU Presidency Ministerial Conference on 20 October 2010.

**Conference Recommendations**

1. The European Union and its Member States should recognise the socioeconomic importance of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases of all ages and assign them appropriate priority
2. There is an urgent need to prioritise basic and clinical research regarding the causes, predictors, management and impact of these chronic diseases
3. The European Union and Member States should ensure that people with disabilities related to rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases have the right to full inclusion in society; this encompasses optimisation of environmental and life-style factors, the availability of self-management tools, and respect for the right to a flexible education and work environment
4. People with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases should receive prompt access to high quality care, ideally in specialised centres, thus maximising long-term quality of life
5. Management of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases should be in accordance with evidence-based recommendations in every European Union Member State
6. People with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases are experts in living with their condition and should be involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of their services

In order for these recommendations to be implemented, delegates called for two types of overarching actions: a) that a pan-European strategy in RMD is developed at EU level; and b) that Member States develop specific national action plans for addressing RMD. Participants also proposed specific initiatives to be undertaken in the context of these overarching actions for implementing each of the six recommendations.

EULAR will support its member organisations and other RMD community stakeholders in follow-up activities at European and national levels.

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* An extended version of this report, including a list of implementation recommendations, can be downloaded from the EULAR website [www.eular.org](http://www.eular.org).