

**Annual European Congress of Rheumatology
(EULAR) 2018**

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 13-16 June 2018

Launch of the EULAR Strategy 2018–2023

EULAR Strategy launched to bring further dynamism to the field of rheumatology

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 13th June 2018: The European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) has today presented its five-year strategy for the period 2018-2023 at the Annual European Congress of Rheumatology 2018. The strategy is the third strategic cycle in developing excellence in rheumatology in six areas of focus: Education, the annual congress, quality of care, research, advocacy and the internal organisation of EULAR.

The EULAR Strategy 2018-2023 is designed to further enhance the excellent standards and activities established and led by EULAR across the field of rheumatology. Adoption of the third strategy is with immediate effect, and comes after completion of the second strategy, which was executed between 2012 and 2017.

EULAR President, Prof. Johannes W. Bijlsma, stated, “The third EULAR Strategy aims to close the gap between cutting-edge science and day-to-day care for patients with musculoskeletal diseases. The impact of the six EULAR strategic objectives could have far-reaching benefits for humanity: Many people may be able to work again, symptoms could be recognised quicker through better education in the field, and leading scientific research would be delivered in a compelling way that contributes to future thinking. The future holds promise, and the EULAR Strategy holds the action required to let this promise translate into action.”

The six strategic objectives of the EULAR Strategy 2018-2023 are:

1. EULAR School of Rheumatology (ESOR): By 2023, EULAR will be the leading provider of education in rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs).

EULAR aims to maintain its position as the number one provider of education in the field of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases. This position has already been achieved through the wealth of courses EULAR offers, as well as the textbooks and journals that EULAR publishes. A key component of this approach is the development of the EULAR School of Rheumatology, which was launched at the EULAR Congress in 2017. Today, more than 5,000 participants are already enrolled in the online courses that ESOR provides, while many other

individuals from around the world are participating in the numerous EULAR educational offerings and activities.

2. EULAR Congress: By 2023, EULAR will provide the foremost RMD congress experience, building on the heritage of our outstanding annual meeting.

The annual EULAR Congress is the leading European event in the scientific calendar for rheumatology and allied health professionals. Over the next five years, part of the strategy will see the congress become more innovative in the way that information is presented and ideas are exchanged. The strategy includes moving away from the classical lecture format to more intimate and interactive sessions, as well as facilitating social media and non-physical participation in real-time.

3. Quality of Care: By 2023, EULAR will deliver pre-eminent comprehensive quality of care (QOC) frameworks for the management of people with RMDs.

Regarding recommendations, to-date EULAR has formulated extensive recommendations concerning the diagnosis and management of patients with different rheumatic diseases. While concluded as very effective, the recommendations have still not been implemented everywhere. One of the main quality of care objectives is to provide a 'package' that will enable greater uptake of the advice given in the recommendations. EULAR would not only make evidence-based recommendations, but also provide proposals as to how they can be implemented in daily practice, as well as provide insight into the outcomes that should be measured.

4. Research: By 2023, EULAR will have established a European centre for RMD research to advance high quality collaborative research.

As part of the 2012–2017 Strategy, EULAR created a foundation for research: FOREUM, the Foundation for Research in Rheumatology. The foundation's mission is to promote research in rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases as an independent research funding body. EULAR will continue to support FOREUM, which is a not-for-profit organisation based in Switzerland, as part of the 2018–2023 strategy.

The EULAR 2018–2023 Strategy will also use the 'RheumaMap' to help determine what future research needs to be done. The RheumaMap was launched in May 2017 at the European Parliament in Brussels. It highlights knowledge gaps and provides a 'research roadmap' for the field of rheumatology.

A further part of the latest EULAR Strategy is to create a virtual research centre, or platform,

for rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases in order to give researchers the opportunity to work together, should they choose. EULAR is able to stimulate the preparatory work to bring people together – and to thereby spark the brightest minds to focus on the major challenges in the rheumatology discipline.

5. Advocacy: By 2023, EULAR’s activities and related advocacy will have increased participation in work by people with RMDs.

With regards to advocacy: EULAR has been active at both the EU and national levels, promoting rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases and thereby placing them on the public and political agenda. The World Health Organisation, for example, now includes rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases as a stand-alone, recognised topic. The focus in the coming years will be to look more specifically at the effect on people’s working lives with the aim of keeping more people with RMDs at work by the year 2023.

6. Governance, Infrastructure, and Financials: By 2023, EULAR will have established governance, workflows and infrastructure to deliver the EULAR strategic objectives.

Finally, regarding how EULAR is organised, the goal has changed from leaning towards being a relatively small organisation – to one that has more people employed locally to help achieve the strategic goals, without undue reliance on external resources.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

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About Rheumatic and Musculoskeletal Diseases

Rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) are a diverse group of diseases that commonly affect the joints, but can affect any organ of the body. There are more than 200 different RMDs, affecting both children and adults. They are usually caused by problems of the immune system, inflammation, infections or gradual deterioration of joints, muscle and bones. Many of these diseases are long term and worsen over time. They are typically painful and limit function. In severe cases, RMDs can result in significant disability, having a major impact on both quality of life and life expectancy.

About ‘Don’t Delay, Connect Today!’

'Don't Delay, Connect Today!' is a EULAR initiative that unites the voices of its three pillars, patient (PARE) organisations, scientific member societies and health professional associations - as well as its international network - with the goal of highlighting the importance of early diagnosis and access to treatment. In the European Union alone, over 120 million people are currently living with a rheumatic disease (RMD), with many cases undetected.¹ The 'Don't Delay, Connect Today!' campaign aims to highlight that early diagnosis of RMDs and access to treatment can prevent further damage, and also reduce the burden on individual life and society as a whole.

About EULAR

The European League against Rheumatism (EULAR) is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with RMDs. EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

To find out more about the activities of EULAR, visit: www.eular.org