Highlights in this issue

1 December: AE celebrates Glasgow Declaration success
1 December: AE hosts Lunch Debate on dementia
7 December: LU Presidency conclusions adopted by EPSCO
10 December: Glasgow Declaration brings MEPs to EAA
14 December: Austria launches National Dementia Strategy

Editorial

Welcome!

The year has flown by and I am truly proud of our achievements during the past 12 months, and delighted to end 2015 bathing in the glow of the success of the Glasgow Declaration campaign.

The month of December began in Brussels for the Alzheimer Europe team, with our final series of meetings for the year, including a Lunch Debate on the topic of “Dementia, a priority of two EU Presidencies”. During the debate, I presented the results of the campaign to our guests, including MEPs, senior officials from the Commission and IMI, and representatives from the EU Presidencies of Luxembourg and the Netherlands. As well as being a lobbying tool, I am also pleased to announce that another immediate and lasting benefit of the campaign has been the addition of 36 more MEPs to the European Alzheimer’s Alliance (EAA), which now totals 125 MEPs committed to making dementia a public health priority.

Other meetings in Brussels included a Board meeting and a Company Round Table, as well as our very first Alzheimer’s Association Academy, which I am delighted to say was a resounding success. We look forward to organising another one in 2016! Our European Working Group of People With Dementia (EWGPWD) also took part in two project consultations, for PredictND and EPAD. Representatives of both projects expressed their gratitude to the members of the group for their important feedback.

On the subject of the EWGPWD, I am sad to report that one of its founding members, Bojan Spanja has decided to bow out of the group, as he no longer feels capable of attending meetings. He and his wife Mihela will be very much missed and I would like to thank them for their valuable contributions. On a happier note, I offer our congratulations to Vice-Chair Agnes Houston, who was presented with a well-deserved MBE at Buckingham Palace this month, in recognition of her tireless dementia advocacy work.

December has been an exciting month in EU policy terms too, with the conclusions of the Luxembourg Presidency being adopted by the EPSCO Council. Dementia having been one of the Luxembourg Presidency’s priorities, as well as being a priority for the recent Italian Presidency, it seems change is already afoot in the EU in some of the policy areas in which we have been lobbying, along with our members. We are also pleased to have been party to the launch of the AFE-Innovnet project’s Covenant on Demographic Change this month, which hopes to encourage more age-friendly societies throughout Europe.

In national policy terms, there is great news from Austria, with the launch of its National Dementia Strategy, as well from Germany, where the state of Saarland has just become the second German state to adopt a dementia plan.

On that happy note, I wish you all an excellent start to 2016 and am looking forward to the many new and exciting challenges the New Year will bring.

Jean Georges
Executive Director
Alzheimer Europe

30 November: Alzheimer Europe holds a Board meeting

The Alzheimer Europe Board members held their final 2015 meeting on 30 November and 1 December in Brussels. The Board discussed various financial and operational matters, including preparations for the 26th Alzheimer Europe Conference that will take place in Copenhagen, Denmark during 31 October - 2 November 2015. The next meeting of the Board will take place on 29 February in Luxembourg.

1 December: AE celebrates success in reaching ambitious goal of 10,000 Glasgow Declaration signatures

The Alzheimer Europe (AE) Glasgow Declaration campaign is now over and we would like to heartily thank all the people who worked very hard to help us surpass our ambitious goal of 10,000 individual signatures - this would not have been possible without you! We would also like to thank everyone who signed the Declaration: individuals, policy makers and organisations alike.

The final signature counts are (click the links to see the signatories):

- **152** policy makers (of which 83 MEPs) [http://alzheimer-europe.org/Policy-in-Practice2/Glasgow-Declaration-2014/Signatories-Policy-makers](http://alzheimer-europe.org/Policy-in-Practice2/Glasgow-Declaration-2014/Signatories-Policy-makers)

We are also pleased to give a special mention to top “scorers” Slovenia, the UK, Finland and Italy, each of which contributed more than 1,000 signatures. Between them, citizens from these four countries accounted for nearly half of all individual signatures.

The Glasgow Declaration calls for the creation of a European Dementia Strategy and national strategies in every country in Europe. Signatories also call upon world leaders to recognise dementia as a public health priority and to develop a global action plan on dementia and commit themselves to promoting the rights, dignity and autonomy of people living with dementia. It specifically calls upon:

The European Commission to:

- Develop a European Dementia Strategy;
- Designate a high level EU official to coordinate the activities and research in the field of dementia of existing programmes such as Horizon 2020, the Ambient Assisted Living Programme, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, the Joint Programme on Neurodegenerative diseases research and the Innovative Medicines Initiative;
- Set up a European Expert Group on Dementia comprised of Commission officials, representatives of Member States and civil society to exchange best practices;

Members of the European Parliament to:

- Join the European Alzheimer’s Alliance (the EAA has 36 new members as a result of this campaign - see the EAA news section for details);
- Support the campaign of AE and its member organisations to make dementia a European priority and create a European Dementia Strategy;
- Make themselves available for people with dementia, carers and representatives of Alzheimer associations from their country.

National governments to:

- Develop comprehensive national dementia strategies with allocated funding and a clear monitoring and evaluation process;
- Involve people living with dementia and their carers in the development and follow up of these national strategies;
- Support national Alzheimer and dementia associations.

We presented our campaign and results to representatives of the European Parliament, the Commission and two EU Presidencies (Luxembourg and the Netherlands), at our lunch debate in Brussels on 1 December. Shortly after this meeting, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council adopted the Luxembourg EU Presidency conclusions, which recognise some of the demands made in the Declaration for greater EU collaboration.

AE looks forward to collaborating with the Governmental Expert Group on Dementia, with the upcoming 2nd Joint Action on Dementia, and with the Dutch EU Presidency (starting 1 January 2016) for the organisation of its Presidency Conference on dementia.


1 December: AE hosts Company Round Table

On 1 December, Alzheimer Europe (AE) hosted a Company Round Table meeting in Brussels. Twelve representatives from sponsor companies, four AE Board members and two AE staff members attended.

Delegates were provided with an update on the Glasgow Declaration and AE campaign towards recognition of dementia as a European priority. The Glasgow Declaration received the support of 203 organisations from 37 countries, 151 policy makers from 25 European countries, including 85 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and 11,613 individuals.
On 1 December, MEPs Keith Taylor (UK) and Sirpa Pietikäinen (Finland) co-hosted an AE lunch debate entitled “Dementia, a priority of two EU Presidencies” in Brussels.

The first speaker was Jean Georges, Executive Director of Alzheimer Europe, who presented the aims and results of AE’s Glasgow Declaration campaign. The campaign called for the development of national dementia strategies in every European country, a pan-European dementia action plan and the appointment of an EU Dementia Coordinator. At the time of the meeting, the campaign had attracted the support of 190 organisations, 148 policy makers (including 82 MEPs) and over 11,400 individual citizens.

Mr Georges was followed by Anne Calteux, Senior Policy Advisor at the Luxembourg Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, presented “Living with (out) dementia”. She explained that the Dutch presidency team will focus on research for prevention and care and will also encourage innovation in care and society. This will enable people with dementia to maintain their quality of life and remain active in their communities for as long as possible - and also lead to financial sustainability of Dutch care systems. The main public event will be a conference in Amsterdam in May 2016 that will largely focus on the journey through dementia.

Ms Pietikäinen, who also sits on the Alzheimer Europe Board, provided closing remarks. She expressed her appreciation of the fact that dementia was a key agenda item for the Luxembourg and Dutch EU Presidencies. Ms Pietikäinen also emphasised the continuing need to protect the legal rights of memory-disabled people. Despite their memory problems or related conditions, these people are still active citizens with needs, hopes and aspirations. These must be considered at the earliest possible stage and the people should be involved throughout the whole development and launch of new products and services.

Alzheimer Europe was pleased to welcome 67 total delegates to the lunch debate, including the members of the EWGPWD and their carers, senior officials from the European Commission and IMI, representatives from the pharmaceutical industry and colleagues from 18 AE member associations.

Michael Hübel, from the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, was the next speaker. His presentation clearly showed that dementia remains a public health challenge for EU member states. Mr Hübel gave an overview of recent EU-funded dementia activities, such as ALCOVE - the Joint Action Alzheimer Cooperative Valuation - and the Human Brain Project. He also described the EU’s collaborative research programmes, namely Horizon2020, IMI (Innovative Medicines Initiative) and JPND. Another current effort is the second EU Joint Action on dementia: Mr Hübel noted that discussions around this project would very likely be concluded by the end of 2016. Finally, he cited the EU’s involvement in worldwide dementia initiatives with Global Action against Dementia, the WHO and the OECD - the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Heike von Lützau-Hohlbein, Chairperson of Alzheimer Europe, was the final speaker of the day and she introduced AE’s latest publications. “Ethical dilemmas faced by health and social care professionals providing care in care homes and hospital settings” is intended as a training aid, featuring vignettes and commentaries on ethically challenging situations. The 2015 Dementia in Europe Yearbook looks at the development of dementia-friendly communities in Europe, based on input from 33 Alzheimer associations. The report gathers the latest national initiatives and highlights best practices in improving physical environments for people with dementia.

Impressions from the lunch debate
1-2 December: AE organises first Alzheimer’s Association Academy

On 1 and 2 December, Alzheimer Europe (AE) hosted its first ever Alzheimer’s Association Academy in Brussels, Belgium.

20 representatives from AE member organisations, 9 expert speakers, 6 company representatives and 7 AE staff members were in attendance, as well as 11 representatives of the European Working Group of People With Dementia (EWGPWD).

The first day began with a session on “Involving people with dementia in Alzheimer associations”, moderated by AE Director for Projects, Dianne Gove. This session included presentations by EWGPWD members, Alv Orheim (Norway) and Helen Rochford-Brennan (Ireland). Both Alv and Helen spoke about the advocacy work they do with the national dementia working groups in their home countries, each emphasising the importance of involving people living with dementia in the work of national organisations and in processes such as the development of national dementia strategies. They encouraged member organisations from countries where no dementia working group exists to start one, as they play a key role in advocacy for people with dementia.

This session was followed by a presentation on “Integrated campaigning thanks to social media”, by Amy O’Connor from Eli Lilly. Ms O’Connor spoke about various aspects of social media campaigning, including: digital engagement and advocacy, “socialnomics” (the value created and shared via social media and its influence on outcomes), the importance of grabbing people’s attention as quickly as possible due to shorter viewer attention spans, and the four different types of media available – paid, earned, shared and owned. She also gave participants some ideas on how to “start a movement”.

Day two began with a session was on “The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) and EU dementia research”, moderated by AE Chairperson, Heike von Lützau-Hohlbein. Presenters in this session were Elisabetta Vaudano from IMI – who spoke about dementia as a research priority of IMI and IMI2 – and Régis Bordet from the IMI-funded project, PharmaCog – who spoke about the key aims and achievements of the project, in which AE has been heavily involved and which comes to a close this year.

The second session of the day was on “Prevention of Alzheimer’s dementia”, moderated by AE Executive Director, Jean Georges. Presenters in this session were Craig Ritchie and Edo Richard from the European Prevention of Alzheimer’s dementia (EPAD) Initiative. Craig Ritchie’s presentation centred on secondary prevention of Alzheimer’s disease (AD) and on “the need for a new disease understanding”, while Edo Richard spoke about the ethical issues arising from secondary prevention trials.

The third session was on “Data protection and privacy and big data projects on dementia”, moderated by AE Honorary Secretary, Charles Scerri. Lauréne Souchet of the European Patients’ Forum (EPF) spoke about the complex subject of EU data protection legislation, and Duncan McHale from UCB about the IMI project, AETIONOMY as an example of data-sharing in the field of dementia.

The fourth and final session of the Academy was on the subject of “Informing the general public about clinical trials
and dementia research”, moderated by AE Vice-Chair, Iva Holmenrová. The first speaker was Adam Smith of Join Dementia Research (JDR) – a UK initiative to connect researchers with people with dementia and their carers – who delivered statistics about the impact JDR is already having on trials in the UK - where, he said, traditional trial recruitment methods were not working as well. The final speaker of the Academy was Karine Fauria from Fundació Pasqual Maragall, who informed delegates about the foundation and its current ALFA project.

The Academy was a very interactive event, with plenty of time for questions and answers from delegates after each presentation and again at the end of each session. The event was organised in lieu of one of AE’s Public Affairs meetings, to try out this more interactive format. So far, participant feedback has been very good, and AE hopes to organise a second Academy in 2016.

10 December: Alzheimer Europe meets for exchange with European Foundation Initiative on Dementia

Alzheimer Europe met for an exchange with representatives of some of the foundations represented in the European Foundation on Dementia: Fondation Médéric Alzheimer (France), Joseph Rowntree Foundation (United Kingdom) and Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany).

The two organisations shared information on their ongoing activities in the field of dementia-friendly communities and discussed Alzheimer Europe’s report “Is Europe becoming more dementia friendly” published in December 2015 and the report commissioned by EFID on dementia-friendly communities to be published in 2016. Both organisations agreed to update each other on their respective activities and to explore areas of collaboration in the coming years.

18 December: EWGPWD Vice-Chair Agnes Houston receives her MBE at Buckingham Palace

Earlier this year we were delighted to report that the Vice-Chair of our European Working Group of People With Dementia (EWGPWD), Agnes Houston was awarded an MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours list, in recognition of the dementia advocacy work she does.

On 18 December, Agnes was invited to Buckingham Palace to receive her MBE (pictured) and we would like to wholeheartedly congratulate her on this impressive achievement.

http://alzheimer-europe.org/News/02/Members-news/Friday-12-June-2015-SDWS-members-recognised-in-Queens-Birthday-Honours-list%2BLanguage%2C%2Eng-GB

20 December: Bojan Španja leaves the EWGPWD

On 20 December, we received news that Bojan Španja will leave our European Working Group of People With Dementia (EWGPWD). His wife, Mihela contacted us to let us know that Bojan will no longer be in a position to participate in meetings and will step down from his position as a member of the group as a result.

EU projects

2 December: EWGPWD takes part in PredictND consultation

On 2 December, the European Working Group of People with Dementia (EWGPWD) took part in a consultation organised by Alzheimer Europe (AE) in connection with the PredictND project.

One of the aims of the PredictND project is to develop a citizen portal which will eventually contain information about dementia, as well as memory tests and games designed to detect possible signs of neurodegenerative diseases before the appearance of any symptoms suggesting a possible progression to dementia. The views of people with dementia were sought as they have all been through the traditional process of diagnosis and the views of carers were sought in their capacity as potential users of such a system.

The first hour consisted of a “thinking aloud”/observation session using several computers to permit hands on access to the portal and monitored by Dianne, Ana and Gwladys. This was followed by a group discussion about the information section, the usability of the portal, including the tests and games, and whether the participants would be (or would have been) motivated to use such a portal. It was a lively discussion and the participants provided very useful feedback which will most certainly lead to improvements in the design of the portal as well as further reflection on its future use.

2 December: EWGPWD takes part in EPAD consultation

On 2 December, members of the European Working Group of People with Dementia (EWGPWD) and their carers took part in a consultation for the European Prevention of Alzheimer’s Dementia (EPAD) study.

Prof. Craig Ritchie from Edinburgh University, lead researcher of the EPAD project, set the scene with an excellent presentation of the EPAD project, covering the aims and methodology, as well as an explanation about possible mechanisms underlying the development of Alzheimer’s dementia.

After a short discussion with the participants, Dr Richard Milne from the University of Cambridge led the consultation which covered issues related to the impact of being informed about different kinds of risk status for Alzheimer’s dementia and how such information should be disclosed in the context of research. The feedback provided by the participants will contribute towards a better understanding of issues related to the disclosure of information about different types of risk and to how such information should be communicated in the context of the EPAD study.
4 December: NILVAD Steering Committee meets in London

The NILVAD Steering Committee members held a meeting in London on 4 December. The agenda consisted of a general update, including news from all the countries taking part in the trial and the substudies on cerebral spinal fluid, blood and genetic markers. The delegates also discussed the progress of the ministudy that will document the experiences of the trial participants and their carers. In addition, there was a presentation on data management and a plan to analyse the final results of the clinical trial.

NILVAD (2012-2017) is conducting a phase 3 clinical trial of nilvadipine, an existing hypertension drug, in people with mild to moderate Alzheimer’s disease. The trial is being conducted in 21 study sites in nine European countries with 510 participants who are receiving the drug or a placebo over an 18 month period. The NILVAD project has received support from the European Commission’s Seventh Framework Programme.

8-9 December: AFE INNOVNET and AFEE organise a workshop on innovation for age-friendly environments in Europe

The event was organised to support the implementation of the Covenant on Demographic Change that was launched the previous day in Brussels.

During the morning, delegates could hear about the outcomes and tools that had been developed by the AFE INNOVNET project. In the afternoon seven different workshops were held where delegates had the opportunity to continue the discussions about the Covenant. Discussions also touched on how to support local and regional authorities in developing and implementing action plans on age friendly environments. Feedback from the seven workshops was presented in a plenary session.

The day ended with a round table moderated by Anne-Sophie Parent, about the way forward for the Covenant on Demographic change. Dianne and Ana attended the workshop. Three AE members were also invited to the workshop (Sabine Henry Ligue Alzheimer Belgium, Krista Pajala Alzheimer Society of Finland and Randi Kili Norwegian Health Association).

9-10 December: The EIP AHA takes stock of its achievements and prepares for the next phase of action

On 9-10 December 2015, the 4th conference of partners of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing took place in Brussels. The main theme was accelerating market uptake of innovation for active and healthy ageing across Europe. The partners looked back at what the partnership had achieved and at how it has influenced policy agendas, generated economic growth opportunities and supported the quality of care to citizens across the European Union. Members discussed the future of the Partnership which emphasises the deployment of innovation and worked together to define strategic priorities for the coming years. There were also regional workshops. Dianne took part in the D4 action group discussion on the new call for commitments 2016-2018.

17 December: AMYPAD project progresses to second stage of applications for IMI2 Call 5

After a positive evaluation of its first stage application, the Amyloid Imaging to Prevent Alzheimer’s Disease (AMYPAD) project consortium has been officially selected to develop a second stage application, together with its European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) partners.

The project aims to:
- improve the diagnostic workup of patients suspected to have AD and their management;
- understand the natural history of AD in a pre-symptomatic stage in order to better select patients for trials; And
- monitor change in β-amyloid deposition to quantify the impact of novel therapies.

AMYPAD will address the above goals in close collaboration with already-up-and-running IMI project, EPAD (European Prevention of Alzheimer’s Disease). The Project coordinator is Amsterdam-based university, Stichting VU-VUmc. Alzheimer Europe would co-lead the work package dedicated to communication and dissemination.

The AMYPAD consortium’s short proposal (SP) was submitted under IMI2 Call 5 Topic 4: “Understanding the role of amyloid imaging biomarkers in the current and future diagnosis and management of patients across the spectrum of cognitive impairment (from pre-dementia to demential”).

18 December: Final meeting of the PharmaCog Steering Committee

The members of the PharmaCog Steering committee held their final meeting on 18 December in Lille (France), as the project will finish at the end of the year. The partners discussed the final results of the various work packages and how these would be presented in the last yearly report to IMI – the Innovative Medicines Initiative.

Dr Jill Richardson and Dr Régis Bordet, respectively the EFPIA and academic coordinators of the project, thanked the participants from all the work packages for their valuable work and looked forward to potential further collaboration in future projects.

The PharmaCog partners have developed models to predict the efficacy of drug candidates by combining past and current data to define a series of biomarkers of dementia progression. Alzheimer Europe was an active partner in communication and dissemination activities and will continue to update the project website in 2016.

www.alzheimereurope.org/Research/PharmaCog
Alzheimer Europe networking

On 30 November-2 December (Brussels, Belgium), AE Board and staff members attended the AE Board meeting, lunch debate, EWGPWD meeting, Company Round Table and Alzheimer’s Association Academy.

On 7 December (Brussels, Belgium) Vanessa, Ana and Dianne attended the Launch of the AFE-Innovnet Covenant on Demographic Change.

On 8 December (Brussels, Belgium) Vanessa attended an EFPIA Think Tank meeting.

On 8 and 9 December (Brussels, Belgium) Dianne and Ana attended the joint AFE INNOVNET and AFEE workshop on innovation for age-friendly environments in Europe.

On 10 December (Brussels, Belgium) Vanessa attended the Mental Health Europe (MHE) EP debate “The role of employment in the lives of persons with mental health problems.”

On 10 December (Brussels, Belgium), Dianne attended the 4th conference of the partners of the EIP AHA.

On 10 December (Luxembourg, Luxembourg), Jean and Ana met with a delegation from the European Foundation Initiative on Dementia to explore areas of collaboration and discuss the work of the two organisations on dementia-friendly communities.


On 14 December (Luxembourg, Luxembourg), Jean and Ana met with a representative of Quintiles for an exchange on clinical trials in the Alzheimer’s field.

On 15 December (Geneva, Switzerland), Jean met with a representative of Axovant to discuss the company’s clinical trial programme and areas of collaboration in 2016.

On 15 and 16 December (Geneva, Switzerland), Jean attended the OECD workshop “Connecting research, regulation and access”.

On 18 December (Lille, France) Alex attended the final PharmaCog Steering Committee meeting.

Members of the European Alzheimer’s Committee’s Alliance

Currently, the total number of MEPs in the Alliance stands at 126, representing 27 Member States of the European Union and six out of seven political groups in the European Parliament. Alzheimer Europe would like to thank the following MEPs for their support of the European Alzheimer’s Alliance:

**Austria:** Heinz K. Becker (EPP); Kappel Barbara (NI); Rübig Paul (EPP); Belgium: Mark Demesmaeker (ECR); Frédérique Ries (ALDE); Bart Staes (Greens/EFA); Marc Tarabella (S&D); Kathleen van Brempt (S&D); Hilde Vautmans (ALDE); Bulgaria: Andrey Kovatchev (EPP); Croatia: Biljana Borzan (S&D); Tonino Picula (S&D); Ruža Tomašić (ECR); Cyprus: Costas MAVrides (S&D); Elena Theocharous (EPP); Czech Republic: Olga Sehnalová (S&D); Pavel Svoboda (EPP); Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP); Denmark: Ole Christensen (S&D); Jens Rohde (ALDE); Christel Schaldemose (S&D); Estonia: Urmas Paet (ALDE); Finland: Liisa Jaakonsaari (S&D); Anneli Jäätteenmäki (ALDE); Miapetra Kumpula-Natri (S&D); Merja Kyllönen (GUE/NGL); Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP); France: Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE); Françoise Grosse-Briée (EPP); Philippe Juvin (EPP); Elisabeth Morin-Chartier (EPP); Gilles Pargneaux (S&D); Germany: Angelika Niebler (EPP); Udo Voigt (NI); Greece: Kostas Chrysogono (GUE/NGL); Manolis Kefalogiannis (EPP); Kostadinka Kuneva (GUE/NGL); Kyrkos Miltiadis (S&D); Dimitrios Papadimonious (GUE/NGL); Sofia Sakorafa (GUE/NGL); Maria Sprykar (EPP); Eleftherios Synadinos (NI); Eliassav Vozemberg (EPP); Hungary: Ádám Kósa (S&D); Ireland: Lynn Boylan (GUE/NGL); Matt Carthy (GUE/NGL); Nessa Childers (S&D); Deirdre Clune (EPP); Brian Crowley (ALDE); Luke ’Ming’ Flanagan (GUE/NGL); Marian Harkin (ALDE); Brian Hayes (EPP); Seán Kelly (EPP); Mairead McGuinness (EPP); Liadh Ni Riada (GUE/NGL); Italy: Brando Benifei (EPP); Elena Gentile (S&D); Pier Antonio Panzeri (S&D); Aldo Patriciello (EPP); Remo Sernagiotto (EPP); Patrizia Toia (S&D); Damiano Zoffoli (S&D). Lithuania: Vilija Blinkvičiute (S&D). Luxembourg: Georges Bach (EPP); Frank Engel (EPP); Charles Goerens (ALDE); Viviane Reding (EPP); Malta: Therese Comodini Cachia (EPP); Roberta Metsola (EPP); Alfred Sant (S&D); Netherlands: Esther de Lange (EPP); Jeroen Lenaers (EPP); Lambert van Nistelrooij (EPP); Poland: Elżbieta Łukacijewska (EPP); Krystyna Lybacka (S&D); Jan Olbrycht (EPP); Marek Pllura (EPP); Bogdan Wenta (EPP); Portugal: Carlos Coelho (EPP); Marisa Matias (GUE/NGL); Sofia Ribeiro (EPP); Romania: Cristian-Silviu Busoi, MEP (EPP); Daciana Octavia Sarbu (S&D); Claudiu Ciprian Tanasescu (S&D); Renate Weber (EPP); Slovakia: Miroslav Mikolášik (EPP); Ivan Stefanec (EPP); Anna Záborská (EPP); Jana Žitňanská (ECR). Slovenia: Franc Bogovič (EPP); Tanja Fajon (S&D); Alojz Peterle (EPP); Igor Šoltes (Greens/EFA); Patricija Sulin (EPP); Romana Tomc (EPP); Ivo Vajgl (ALDE); Milan Zver (EPP). Spain: Soledad Cabezon Ruiz (S&D); Luis de Grandes Pascual (EPP); Rosa Estarás Ferragut (EPP); Juan Carlos Girauta Vidal (ALDE); Sergio Gutiérrez Prieto (S&D); Juan Fernando López Aguilar (S&D); Ernest Maragall (Greens/EFA); Pablo Zalba Bidegain (EPP). Sweden: Jytte Guteland (S&D); Peter Lundgren (EPP); Cecilia Wikström (ALDE); United Kingdom: Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL); Richard Ashworth (ECR); Anneliese Dodds (S&D); Ian Duncan (ECR); Theresa Griffin (S&D); Ian Hudghton (Greens/EFA); Jean Lambert (Greens/EFA); Linda McAvan (S&D); Claude Moraes (S&D); Alyn Smith (Greens/EFA); Catherine Stihler (S&D); Keith Taylor (Greens/EFA); Derek Vaughan (S&D); Julie Ward (S&D); Glenis Willmott (S&D).
European Alzheimer’s Alliance

10 December: Glasgow Declaration campaign adds 36 new EAA members

One immediate and lasting benefit of our successful Glasgow Declaration campaign, which closed on 30 November, is the addition of 36 MEPs to our European Alzheimer’s Alliance (EAA). The EAA now consists of 125 MEPs from 27 Member States and all seven political groups in the European Parliament, all committed to supporting Alzheimer Europe and its members in making dementia a public health priority in Europe.

See all EAA members here: http://alzheimer-europe.org/Policy-in-Practice/European-Alzheimer-s-Alliance/Members

17 December: Three MEPs sign Glasgow declaration

Alzheimer Europe (AE) would like to thank three more MEPs for signing the Glasgow Declaration in December:
- MEP Andrey Kovatchev (Bulgaria), signed on 2 December
- MEP Nathalie Griesbeck (France), signed on 10 December
- MEP Miroslav Mikolášik (Slovakia), signed on 17 December

All three (pictured, in order of signature) were existing members of the European Alzheimer’s Alliance (EAA) prior to signing.

EU developments

2 December: Commission publishes European Accessibility Act

Persons with disabilities currently face barriers to free movement within the EU on an equal basis with others. The European Accessibility Act, published by The European Commission on 2 December, has great potential to bring a positive change. The Act, which takes the form of a Directive, will have a major influence on the accessibility of goods and services for persons with disabilities in the EU.

The publication of the proposal follows the recommendations made by the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, earlier in September, calling on the EU to adopt the Accessibility Act as a step towards better implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD).


7 December: EPSCO Council adopts Luxembourg EU Presidency conclusions, with an emphasis on supporting people with dementia

Yesterday, 7 December, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council met in Brussels, to discuss the Conclusions of the Luxembourg EU Presidency, which draws to a close on 31 December.

The Council adopted conclusions on a number of health-related items, including conclusions on “Supporting people living with dementia”, which call on all Member States to address dementia as a priority, to develop national strategies or actions plans, and to strengthen the collaboration between European countries.

There is particular emphasis on the need to uphold the human rights of people living with dementia, on dementia as a cause of disability, on the need to promote healthy lifestyles – especially where brain health is concerned – to reduce the risk of dementia, but also on the importance of recognising that people can live well with dementia.

"Dementia is a real socio-economic challenge that puts not only patients and their families, but also the viability of our health systems to a serious test. That is the reason why we addressed dementia as a societal phenomenon that requires multisectoral responses”, said Luxembourg’s Minister for Equal Opportunities and Health, Lydia Mutsch (pictured).

The Council specifically invites Member States and The Commission to:
- Recognise that continued collaboration across sectors among Member States and at EU level will allow for a valuable contribution to improve the support of people living with dementia.
- Recognise the benefits of the empowerment of people living with dementia and encourage their inclusion in decision-making processes.
- Support a gender-sensitive, individual-and research based approach in the elaboration of strategies, plans and programmes on dementia.
- Recognise the important role of families and caregivers.
- Emphasise the work of non-governmental organisations and voluntary work in the field of dementia aiming to contribute effectively to national strategies, action plans or programmes.

Some important initiatives at EU level, mentioned by the Council in its conclusions are:
- The Joint Programming Initiative on Neurodegenerative Diseases (JPND).
- The 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7).
- The Declaration of G8 Health Ministers on Dementia, adopted on 11 December 2013 at the G8 Summit, to foster innovation to identify
a cure or a disease-modifying therapy for dementia by 2025.

- The Italian Presidency Conference "Dementia in Europe: a challenge for our common future", held in Rome on 14 November 2014.
- The Call for Action signed by participants at the first WHO Ministerial Conference on Global Action Against Dementia in Geneva on 17 March 2015.
- The discussion at the informal meeting of EU Health Ministers on 24 September 2015 on fostering development and implementation of national strategies, action plans or programmes on dementia.
- The 2nd Joint Action on Dementia, to be launched in 2016.
- The Governmental Expert Group on Dementia
- The European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP AHA).
- The ALCOVE Joint Action.

Some key reports mentioned in the Conclusions are:

- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report of 13 March 2015 entitled “Better dementia care and a future cure require action today”.

The full Conclusions can be found here: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/docs/councilconclusions_1505515_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/major_chronic_diseases/docs/councilconclusions_1505515_en.pdf)

The EU Presidency mantle passes to The Netherlands on 1 January 2016. The official Netherlands Presidency website is [http://english.eu2016.nl/](http://english.eu2016.nl/)

### 7 December: AFE-Innovnet Covenant on Demographic Change is launched

On 7 December, The Covenant on Demographic Change was launched in Brussels. The Covenant builds on the outcomes of the AFE-Innovnet project’s Thematic Network on innovation for age-friendly environments, based on WHO Age-friendly Cities Guide and in the spirit of the 2013 Dublin Declaration on Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe. The launch gathered European public authorities at local regional and national level committed to developing and implementing an action plan on age-friendly environments.

All stakeholders including Universities, research centres, civil society organisations and businesses involved in the Covenant were present at the launch to share their expertise and learn from others’ experience.

If you are interested in joining the Covenant on Demographic Change, please visit [http://www.agefriendlyeurope.org](http://www.agefriendlyeurope.org) and [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sipaha/news/index/show/id/818](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/sipaha/news/index/show/id/818)

### 10 December: Mental Health Europe hosts its annual event at European Parliament

On 10 December, Mental Health Europe (MHE) hosted its Annual European Parliament event on the topic of "The Role of employment in the lives of people with mental health problems".

The event gathered about 70 participants, including key speakers Iris Arends from OECD, who presented the OECD Mental Health Work review 2011-2015, Steven Bevan from the Work Foundation, and Simona Giarratano from the European Disability Forum, who talked about the UNHCR Persons with Disabilities Act. Ms Giarratano asked whether the legislation currently in place is effective, or could there be room for improvement? Both Mr Bevan and Ms Arends concluded that work was a meaningful activity but there was still lots to be done for mental health and work support. At least 25% of people will encounter some form of mental health issue in their lifetime, but these issues are still stigmatised, which is an issue needing to be addressed.

Two members of MHE Board, Guadalupe Morales and Stephanie Wooley shared their personal insight and experiences, giving the audience the chance to hear about the positive and negative impacts of employment from a user perspective.

The event was co-hosted by MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen (Finland), MEP Liadh Ní Riada (Ireland) and MEP Marian Harkin (Ireland), who chaired the discussions.

### 15-16 December: OECD organises workshop on international efforts to speed up drug discovery in the Alzheimer’s field

On 15-16 December, scientific experts, global patient advocates, government officials and industry representatives met in Lausanne to discuss actions needed to speed up the development of effective treatments and diagnostics for Alzheimer’s disease by 2025, the target date agreed by G7 leaders in 2014. The two-day meeting was held under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and was entitled “Global Action to Drive Innovation in Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Dementias: Connecting Research, Regulation and Access”. It focused on the drug development process critical to both bringing a drug to market and delivering treatment to patients.

The event was hosted by the Swiss government, in partnership with the Global CEO Initiative on Alzheimer’s Disease (CEOI) and Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI). “The discussions at this forum were a natural progression of last year’s meeting, where we discussed strategies to meet the global goal of developing a disease-modifying drug by 2025,” stated Dirk Pilat, Deputy Director, Directorate for Science, Technology & Innovation at the OECD.

The different sessions organised during the two days focused on:

- Facilitating drug development
Newsletter: December 2015

- Mobilising the global patient community
- Improving how biomarkers get to market
- Ensuring access for future therapies and diagnostics
- The way forward in Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.

“It is clear that no single country, sector or organisation can overcome the challenge posed by Alzheimer’s. It represents a significant health burden and, therefore, should have a significant public health response – an effort to which Switzerland is committed,” said Tania Dussey-Cavassini, Vice-Director General of Swiss Federal Office of Public Health and Switzerland’s Ambassador for Global Health. “We hope to build on the work of this year’s forum, and contribute to a comprehensive, global victory over Alzheimer’s. That is why Switzerland is also advocating for a resolution on Alzheimer’s to be adopted by the World Health Assembly.”

The forum’s attendees and organizers committed to ongoing efforts following the event, and plan to reconvene in 2016 to assess progress, new developments and new opportunities.

Alzheimer Europe was represented at this meeting by its Executive Director, Jean Georges. Hilary Doxford, the Vice-Chairperson of the European Working Group of People with Dementia reminded participants about the experience of living with dementia and shared her personal difficulties in receiving a diagnosis and the lack of information on research opportunities.

18 December: IMI 2 Call 7 launched, with a focus on AD

On 18 December, the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) launched its 7th Call for proposals under the IMI2 programme, with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) featuring as a topic.

The deadline for submitting short proposals (SPs) is 17 March 2016.

More information on this new call for proposals, including all topic texts and details of how to apply, can be found here: http://www.imi.europa.eu/content/stage-1-18

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Members’ news

28 October: Alzheimer Portugal COGWEB project wins inaugural Health Collaboration Award

At EFPIA’s inaugural Health Collaboration Summit, held in Brussels on 28-29 October, the Portugal-based COGWEB Network – in which Alzheimer Portugal is involved - won the first ever Health Collaboration Award, designed to showcase and share best practice in collaborative projects between patient organisations, healthcare systems and industry. COGWEB is a web-based platform that allows psychologists to choose a brain workout plan suited to individual needs, previously assessed through psychometric tests. The exercise plan is individually oriented by the cognitive profile according to the respective performance in each cognitive domain. It also allows for a plan design, taking into account individual preferences, thus promoting closer and more productive collaboration therapy.

Furthermore, exercises can be performed online in the comfort of the subject’s home. This feature allows the psychologist to assess whether the proposed plan is being followed, and provides an opportunity for the integration of caregivers in cognitively stimulating activities.

According to one of its regular users, psychologist Graça Maria Fernandes, at Alzheimer Portugal care home Casa do Alercim, the platform is “very user friendly” and “most patients find it intuitive”, which she says is particularly impressive considering most patients had little or no prior contact with computers.

18 November: EMDA holds a conference in Haifa on the subject of Alzheimer’s disease among young people

“What life and cinema know and science has not yet learned: The experiences of young people with Alzheimer’s disease” was the title of a recent conference, co-organised by EMDA – The Alzheimer’s Association of Israel. Ile Kermel Schiffman, Gerontologist and project manager at EMDA, and Ruthi Itzchke, editor of EMDA’s magazine, reported on the event, which was held on 18 November in Haifa, Israel:

As in the past seven years, the organisations EMDA, “Eshel” and Haifa University held an annual conference focussing on Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Three hundred professionals and family members of patients gathered at Haifa University on 18 November to hear lectures regarding young patients.

Keynote Speakers included Professor Perla Werner, Vice Rector of the University of Haifa, Department of Community Mental Health in the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences at the university, Professor Hanoch Yerushalmi, Head of the Department of Community Mental Health at the University of Haifa, and Yossi Heiman, Eshel’s CEO.

Lecturers included Professor Judith Aharon-Perez, Director of the Institute of Cognitive Neurology at Rambam Medical Center, Professor Perla Werner and Ms Lilach Raviv from the Department of Community Mental Health at Haifa University, Dr Arad Kodesh, psychiatrist, Head of the National Mental Health Medical Division of Meuhedet Health Services and professor in the Department of Community Mental Health at the University of Haifa, and Mr Itzhak Rozen, Lecturer in the Film Graduate Program at the University of Haifa.

Prof. Aharon-Perez discussed the similarities and differences in the clinical picture of AD between younger and older patients. The lecture by Prof. Werner and Ms Raviv focused on the experiences of young people with AD and included a comprehensive review of the literature on the subject. Dr Kodesh and Mr Rozen presented a thorough analysis of AD reflected in film.
Following the lectures, a panel discussion was held, posing the question: “Are we ready to treat young people with Alzheimer’s disease?” Panel participants were Ms Susan Levin, the spouse of a younger patient, Dr Rachel Ben Hayon, a neurological specialist at the Rambam Medical Center, social worker Odaya Levneh from the Cognitive Neurology Institute at Rambam and Ms Tali Sheetrit, CEO of the Association for the Elderly in Upper Nazareth (ALMA).

Early detection of dementia, awareness-raising - particularly of younger onset dementia - and the need for strengthening relations and improving communication between families and professionals were some of the topics discussed.

The conference was led by Dr Sarah Alon. EMDA Chairman Yona Eliad and EMDA CEO Gery Rot congratulated Dr Alon and presented her with a plaque in recognition of her work.

25 November: Alzheimer Austria celebrates 25 years

25 years ago, “Alzheimer Angehörige Austria” was founded by Lisl Pammer. Ms Pammer recalls the euphoric mood at the beginning and the difficulty in finding answers to the many questions and concerns of carers, as common knowledge about the disease was scarce and research still in its infancy.

In the early nineties there was little help and support from the public healthcare system and care organisations for people with dementia and their carers. Facilities that met their needs had yet to be created. The newly-formed self-help group offered information, a place to swap stories and experiences, as well as individual consultations.

Ms Pammer was President for 10 years, and she and Roswitha Bartsch offered their experience as former carers. From the beginning there was a lot of support from doctors, the City of Vienna, and various pharmaceutical companies.

In the year 2000, Antonia Croy President, a position which she still holds today. Ms Croy has brought in training weekends for carers, workshops, small discussion groups to share experiences, brain-training for people with dementia, and a monthly Alzheimer café.

On 25 November, Alzheimer Austria celebrated at the medical self-help centre in Vienna. In the presence of Former President Ms Pammer, Honorary Chairperson Prof. Lotte Tobisch-Labotyn, as well as families and supporters, Ms Croy gave a photo presentation of the organisation’s 25 years

Sandwiches and a celebratory cake (pictured) were served to guests, while poems written by people with dementia were presented, giving the event a personal feel. Some members of the group sold painted stones, telling guests that “we can turn a stone in our path into something beautiful”, in the same way that a “silver lining” can be seen in some of life’s more challenging moments. Proceeds from all sales were donated to Alzheimer Austria.

As with every birthday, there was a present: A new website - a work in progress for the past three years - is now up and running and was announced at the press conference the day after these celebrations: http://www.alzheimer-selbsthilfe.at/

6 December: Alzheimer Albania holds its 1st national conference

On 6 December, Alzheimer Albania held its 1st national conference, under the motto “Alzheimer’s, Dementia and the Challenge of Ageing in Albania”. The conference attracted neurologists, psychiatrists, GPs, social workers, psychologists, nurses, students and family members of people with dementia from Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Norketa Merkuri, Executive Director of Alzheimer Albania, welcomed 320 participants and also presented Alzheimer Albania’s objectives. Prof. Dr Mira Rakacoll, Dean of Medicine at the University of Medicine of Tirana and President of the Albanian Society of Neurology congratulated the organisation for its efforts.

The programme was divided in two sessions, with the first being chaired by Dr Ilirjana Zekja, neurologist and Vice Dean of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, with a focus Alzheimer’s disease (AD). Dr Eris Ranha and Dr Pavillo Diamandi spoke about dementia diagnosis particularly early onset, followed by Dr Ilirjana Zekja, who spoke about disease causes. Prof. Dr Mira Rakacoll, Dean of Medicine at the University of Medicine, Tirana and President of Albanian Society of Neurology presented treatment strategies, followed by Dr Klejda Hudhra on polypharmacy and "potentially inappropriate prescriptions". Finally, Clinical Psychologist Suela Ndoja presented her work at the Italian-Albanian Association "Progetto Speranza", on evidence-based practice.

The second session included a presentations by Dr Ilir Allimehmeti about new approaches around brain insulin resistance and AD. Then the focus turned to patient care and the rights of people with dementia in a session chaired by Norketa Merkuri: Dr Florida Dobi talked about the Albanian strategy and about support structures for people with dementia, neuropsychiatrist Dr Sadik Lala discussed the best treatments for agitation, and Skender Dule - President of AUEC and Stela Muca, University of Medicine - described two different care models - respectively the Mauetika model and the communication models between nurses and older patients with Alzheimer’s disease.

The Universities of Vlora, Shkodra and Elbasan were represented at the conference, which Alzheimer Albania takes a positive sign for dementia awareness in the country. A local journalist, Laureta Roshi was also present, giving another angle to the way dementia was represented.

The conference ended on an invitation to next year’s edition, and with a commitment to organise more activities for people with dementia, their caregivers and healthcare professionals.
7 December: Mayor of Zagreb signs Dementia-friendly charter

Alzheimer Croatia is delighted to announce that on 7 December the Mayor of Zagreb, Milan Bandić signed the Global Dementia-friendly charter, launched by Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) and UK healthcare company BUPA.

The document was signed by Mr Bandić during the 2015 edition of the EdukAl conference. EdukAl is an annual educational conference on Alzheimer’s disease in Croatia. [http://www.alz.co.uk/global-dementia-charter](http://www.alz.co.uk/global-dementia-charter)

7 December: Two young students collaborate with EMDA to organise a film screening for people with dementia

Agam and Or, two elementary school students at Ariel Sharon School in Holon, Israel recently initiated a project for people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias. Their first project event took place on 7 December and included a film screening for people with dementia and their families.

The project started from Agam’s personal experience: her great aunt became ill three years ago with dementia of the Alzheimer’s variety. During the event, she talked to the audience about her great aunt, who lives far away from her, which makes it difficult to visit. She and Or chose to do volunteer work for people with dementia because they wanted to make them happy - to see people with dementia smiling means the world to them.

School students and parents attended the event, as well as EMDA CEO Gary Roth, who also addressed the audience.

Agam and Or are planning to continue this project in cooperation with EMDA.

8 December: Symposium on “People with dementia in communities” held in Germany

On 8 December, the German project “On the way to dementia-friendly communities” (Unterwegs zu demenzfreundlichen Kommunen) officially came to a close after six years, with an event held in Berlin. The overarching project was made up of 78 smaller projects, all funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung Foundation (RBS), a major philanthropic foundation in Germany, which is set to take over leadership of the European Foundations’ Initiative on Dementia (EFID) in 2016. RBS contributed more than EUR 1 million to the overall project - approximately EUR 15,000 per project.

The projects’ target groups were the general public, and several local Alzheimer’s Associations were involved. The aim was to raise awareness, involve people with dementia, and initiate networks of different stakeholders to enhance the daily lives of people with dementia and their carers. The emphasis was always on sustainability and involvement of the local authorities.

For the jury it was important to select small as well as large projects to ensure variety and creativity. Monitoring and coaching of the projects was done by “Aktion Demenz”, in particular Verena Rothe, and the selected projects were evaluated by Dr Charlotte Jurk.

At the event of 8 December, project examples were presented and panel discussions aimed to summarise them. It was made clear that there is no single idea of what a dementia-friendly community might look like, but rather that there are many possible incarnations.

A fuller description of this impressive program is available in the publication “Im Leben bleiben” (in German only) by Verena Rothe, Gabriele Kreutzner, Reimer Gronemeyer.

Pictured: Dr Bernadette Klapper, Robert Bosch Foundation (left) and Heike von Lützau-Hohlbein, AE Chairperson and Board Member of Aktion Demenz (right)

14 December: Alzheimer Scotland invites people to “have their say” on national dementia strategy

Alzheimer Scotland held a number of “National Dementia Dialogue” events around the country, between 11 November and 14 December, in partnership with the Scottish Government. Scotland’s National Dementia Strategy was launched in 2013 and during 2016 the Government will produce its third Strategy, so these events were arranged to help inform the process.

Alzheimer Scotland reports:

The events in Hamilton, Aberdeen, Fort William, Edinburgh, Stirling and Dumfries have provided the opportunity for anyone with an interest in dementia to have their say in shaping the key priorities for transforming the lives of people with dementia, and those who care for them, in the next national strategy.

Alzheimer Scotland’s Policy and Engagement Managers and Dementia Advisors have also been hosting smaller local discussions with local groups to make sure that as many people with dementia and those who care for them are able to participate in the national dialogue.

Alzheimer Scotland has a clear vision for change which has been informed by our members and our local and national groups representing people with dementia and carers. Our vision sets out the change required if people with dementia and those who care for them are to be properly supported in Scotland, and if their human rights are to be respected. Timely, skilled and well-coordinated support from diagnosis to end of life care is essential if we are to avoid the human, societal and the financial costs of crisis-driven care. Alongside that we must continue work to improve the care of people with dementia in hospital, and other care settings and we must continue to support the development of dementia friendly communities.

A key theme of the dialogue events so far has been the importance of ensuring that national priorities for improving the lives of people with dementia are delivered at local level within the new integrated health and social care partnerships. These partnerships decide how
resources for adult health and social care are spent in your local area so having your say has never been more important if we are to deliver the transformational change set out in our vision.

These events are only part of the dialogue so don’t worry if you have been unable to attend any. You can still have your say by emailing us at PublicPolicy@Alzscot.org or by writing to Alzheimer Scotland at 22 Drumshaghe Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7RN. We will collate the information and pass it to the Scottish Government. To make sure that you have your say please send us your views before the end of January 2016.

http://www.alzscot.org/dialogue

15 December: The Alzheimer Society of Finland launches peer support group for children of people with dementia

The Alzheimer Society of Finland (Muistiiliitto) has launched a peer support group for young people (aged 13-30) whose parents have dementia.

“When Daddy Forgot” (Kun isä unohti) is a closed group moderated by peers and professionals. It allows youngsters to openly discuss the feelings and experiences evoked by having a parent living with dementia.

The group is seen as an important forum by its members, for matters that they may otherwise have had to ponder and experience alone.

17 December: Norwegian Health Association reports on new national dementia plan

Earlier this year (18 June), Alzheimer Europe reported on the new Norwegian dementia strategy 2020, which will follow on from the current dementia plan. This month, on 17 December, our Norwegian member association, Nasjonalforeningen for folkehelsen (the Norwegian Health Association) sent us the following report, to give our readers further details:

Norway’s Dementia Plan 2020 sets new goals and provides the framework for further cooperation between state, municipalities and voluntary sector so that people with dementia can live better with the disease.

“We must be allowed to live full lives, even when we have dementia. Using our own resources makes it easier to cope with life and to live with the disease. Therefore we want to enable people living with dementia to participate more actively in society”, said Minister of Health Bent Høie, when the plan was launched.

He highlighted the Norwegian Health Association’s campaign for a more dementia-friendly society, and the new strategy is titled “A more dementia-friendly society”.

The new plan is both an extension and a renewal of the previous one from 2007. New measures include education for people with dementia, models for systematic follow-up after diagnosis, a municipal duty to offer day programmes from 2020, and a programme for raising awareness in different sectors of society.

Efforts to implement the objectives of the Dementia Plan 2015 are well underway, and it is important that this work continues, and receives adequate resources.

“We are concerned that both existing and new initiatives are to be implemented without granting additional resources”, commented Lisbet Rugtvedt, Secretary General of the Norwegian Health Association.

Mapping shows that there is some way to go before the goals of the previous dementia strategy are reached. In particular, only about 15% of people living at home with dementia in Norway, have a day programme.

Also, all too often people with dementia experience difficulties in getting a diagnosis, and even with a diagnosis there is little or no follow-up. The Dementia Plan 2020 emphasises the importance of diagnosis, and models for follow-up.

The Norwegian Health Association is, overall, satisfied with the new strategy:

“When the Minister of Health started to work on a renewed plan last year, it was a great victory. We are particularly pleased with the process, whereby both people with dementia and their carers had the opportunity to participate in the preparatory work of the plan, through dialogue conferences across the country. We are proud of the input our members have contributed, by giving politicians an insight into what it is like to live with dementia”, said Lisbet Rugtvedt. You can download the full plan here:


19-20 December: PanHellenic Federation reports on new training program in Greece

On 19-20 December, Alzheimer Hellas in collaboration with Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) launched a pilot training program for caregivers and health professionals in Greece. The program “Train the trainers” aims to train 1,000 caregivers and 600 health professionals all across the country.

The training focuses on a person-centred approach, to provide trainees with practical guidelines for caring for a person with dementia. Alzheimer Hellas will carry out the trainings in the coming months, with the collaboration of other Alzheimer’s associations and relevant organisations throughout Greece.

This training has been made possible by a grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

21 December: Udruzenje AIr – Center for Dementia Sarajevo embarks on new diagnosis project

On 21 December, Alzheimer association in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has announced it has entered into an agreement with two charitable organisations: the Red Cross and Merhamet. The three charities have embarked on a project to test some of the Center’s users - people over the age of 65 with no previous diagnosis of dementia.

Over the past three months (September, October and November) the Center’s psychologist has tested a few
dozen subjects and the results were surprising and worrying: 52% of those tested had dementia symptoms.

The three project partners plan to spend the next year working on this project together, as a research project in the local community.

21 December: Jersey Alzheimer’s Association raises awareness of dementia with new refuse truck

Following a decision by the Parish of St Helier, the Jersey Alzheimer’s Association (JAA) is delighted to have been chosen as one of only a few charities able to promote their cause on a brand new refuse truck, which started its work on 21 December.

“The Parish of St Helier takes great pleasure in providing this fantastic signpost for the support available locally for anyone affected by dementia. Four of the St Helier refuse trucks are now promoting key messages to the public at no additional cost to the ratepayer,” said St Helier Constable, Simon Crowcroft.

“We are thrilled to have been given this opportunity to raise awareness of dementia in such an original way. I am sure that seeing our message and contact details on the refuse truck will encourage many people to come and see us if they are worried about dementia”, said JAA Chairman, Jim Hollywood.

22 December: Alzheimer Nederland develops online tool to help older Turkish and Moroccan people recognise dementia

On 22 December, Alzheimer Nederland reported on a new initiative it has launched in the Netherlands:

Older Turkish and Moroccan people and their caregivers can recognise dementia online in their own language. SignaLeren (“learning to recognise”) is a unique online tool with videos and questions in Turkish, Moroccan, Arabic, Berber and Dutch about the most common signs of dementia.

In the Netherlands 260,000 people are living with dementia. More than 10% of them are not of European origin. Unfortunately, older Moroccan and Turkish people and their carers often have little knowledge of dementia. It also appears that talking about dementia is very difficult in these cultures, due to shame and fear of “gossip”. With this in mind, gerontologists Nienke van Wezel and Gözde Duran of Alzheimer Nederland developed SignaLeren.

If people from this group are worried about their own memory or changes in behaviour, or those of a loved one, they can use SignaLeren on their own - or work with a doctor or health counsellor - to fill in the questionnaire.

Ms Van Wezel said:

“Cultural recognition is key. Moreover, it is unique that Turkish and Moroccan people can use this tool in both the Netherlands and the country of origin. This promotes mutual open communication within families and communities about memory problems and dementia.”

Within this project more than 25 Turkish and Moroccan volunteers are trained to “start the conversation” and provide information about dementia within the Turkish and Moroccan communities. More than 50 meetings have been organised, which reached more than 750 Turkish and Moroccan visitors, and the SignaLeren online tool has been installed on 75 so-called “health computers” stationed in 75 general practices in the Netherlands.

SignaLeren is part of the wider program “Proficient in self-care” - a project of Alzheimer Nederland in collaboration with the Network of Associations of Older Migrants (NOOM), Pharos and the Cardiovascular Group. The project is funded by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS).

22 December: Spominčica reports on recent events from Slovenia

Alzheimer Slovenia (Spominčica) sent us the following reports on its events from late November and during December.

24 November – the first centre for dementia in Slovenia opens

The first “Centre for strengthening of the memory” (pictured, bottom left) was opened in Celje on 24 November, co-financed by the funds of the EEA Financial Mechanism and Norway Grants.

The opening was performed by Slovenian Ombudsman Vlasta Nussdorfer and was attended by Štefanija Lukič Zlobec, Spominčica President, who also encouraged people to sign the Glasgow Declaration.

30 November - Slovenia tops the Glasgow Declaration signatures list

The end of November was the deadline for signing the Glasgow Declaration, and Slovenia was a “two-time winner”: Firstly, we gathered the highest number of signatures per capita of any country, and secondly the organisation was also the leader in terms of total signatures collected, with 1752. In addition to this, we also managed to gather signatures from seven out of eight Slovenian Members of the European Parliament (MEPs).

We welcome the growing recognition of dementia as a problem also in Slovenia and we hope that this will help us to make it a public health priority.

5 December - Spominčica attends conference in India

Spominčica President Štefanija Lukič Zlobec and Milka Tratnik were invited to represent their association at the 19th national conference on dementia in Mumbai, India (pictured, top). The conference was held under the motto: "Remember those who cannot remember", with the theme of "Dementia: Prevention, Care and Cure".
The conference was also attended by former ADI President, Dr Jacob Roy. India has more than 4 million people with dementia and by 2030 the number is expected to double.

Among other things Mrs Lukč Zlobec gave a speech about dementia-friendly societies and Alzheimer Cafes, and was invited to visit the state hospital for patients with dementia.

22 December – “Where was I?” - a play on dementia – premieres

In December, a theatrical group of young Slovenian artists (pictured, bottom left) premiered their play about dementia, titled “Where was I?” Inspiration for the performance was drawn from the personal experiences of young director Nina Sorak and screenwriter Urša Adamič, whose grandparents were affected by the disease.

The performance was extremely successful and the group has been invited to perform in Croatia also.

We welcome such creative initiatives as they contribute to de-stigmatisation of dementia and raising awareness about the disease.

Policy watch

1 December: Campaign to end fuel poverty in Northern Ireland identifies new risk group: people with dementia

“People with Alzheimer’s and other dementias are much more likely to die in winter than at other times of the year”, was the message from the “Manifesto for Warmth” conference organised by the Northern Ireland (NI) Fuel Poverty Coalition on 1 December.

Over 100 delegates gathered at the Dunadry Hotel in County Antrim, NI to hear about the University of Ulster’s new research, which highlights the previously unidentified risks of cold weather for this particular group of people. Prof. Christine Liddell’s team at the University analysed 25 years of data on deaths in the UK, and statistics showed that around one-third more people with dementia die in the colder months of winter than at other times of the year.

Speaking at the conference, Pat Austin, National Energy Action Director and Chair of the NI Fuel Poverty Coalition said: “It has been really important to hear about the University of Ulster’s research which found that loss of memory can mean people forget how to use their heating system or when they may need to order a fill of home heating oil. They might also be unsure which clothes are appropriate for the season and additionally some forms of medication can lower dementia patients’ sensitivity to temperature.

“These findings reinforce the importance of energy efficiency in the home, including the need to install the best possible insulation in the most vulnerable people’s homes. Ahead of next year’s Assembly elections in NI the discussion has prompted some really useful debate on current initiatives and next steps in the campaign to end fuel poverty in Northern Ireland,” said Mr Austin.

3 December: ADI and DAI call for global recognition of dementia as invisible disability

On 3 December, the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) and Dementia Alliance International (DAI) joined forces to call for global recognition of dementia as an invisible disability.

Since 1992, the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities aims to promote a better understanding of disability issues and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and wellbeing of people with disabilities. This year, the campaign focussed on including people with invisible disabilities in society.

ADI and DAI are urging policy makers, in high income countries in particular –to integrate dementia-friendly communities (DFCs) into their policy commitments.

Underpinning the campaign is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the first Convention to have been written in full and equal partnership with people living with disabilities.

http://links.com/www.adi.co.uk/news/OwlT

3 December: French national plan for development of palliative and end of life support is launched

On 3 December, Marisol Touraine, French Minister of Social Affairs, Health and Women’s Rights, announced the new 2015-2018 National Plan for the Development of Palliative care and end of life support. Faced with unequal access to health care across France, this plan fulfils two priorities: placing the patient at the heart of decisions and support at home. The implementation budget is of EUR 190 million.

The plan has been developed in conjunction with stakeholders, scientific experts, patient representatives and institutions and general practitioners (GPs), and is structured around four axes:

- Informing patients about their rights and place at the heart of decisions that concern them, creating a national centre dedicated to palliative care and end of life, which within a year will include the development of a large national communication campaign;
- Developing support at home: By 2016 30 new mobile palliative care teams will be deployed across the country; giving professionals more expertise and allowing them to coordinate better. A budget of EUR 9 million will fund innovative local projects.
- Increasing the skills of professionals and stakeholders, by structuring and breaking down
barriers to palliative care training, and creating a university course dedicated to palliative care and end of life support.

- Reducing inequalities in access to palliative care, by creating palliative care units in those territories where none exist - with the goal being that each region has at least one palliative care bed per 100,000 people by 2018 - and by setting specific projects to improve access to health care.

A steering committee will meet soon, under the chairmanship of Dr Vincent Morel, to implement this plan.

Marisol Touraine said: “Palliative care helps to alleviate the suffering of people in later life. But access to such care remains very uneven across regions. With this plan, we give our citizens the means to consider more serenely the end of their life, we give professionals the means to support them so they have the ability to prepare, organise, with peace and dignity”.


9 December: Scotland launches its first ever Technology Charter for people with dementia

The first ever Technology Charter for people living with dementia in Scotland was launched at the Scottish Digital Health Conference in the Strathclyde Technology and Innovation Centre, Glasgow on 9 December.

The Technology Charter is a call to action, calling for the delivery of health and social care to people with dementia to incorporate and promote the use of technology; helping people with the condition to live healthier, safer, more active and more confident lives as valued citizens. It also seeks to raise public and professional awareness of how technology can enhance lives, promote independent living and assist and complement care and support.

The work was funded by the Technology Enabled Care fund, and was written in collaboration with Alzheimer Scotland, NHS Scotland, the Scottish Government, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Tunstall and Tynetec.

Jamie Hepburn, Scotland’s Minister for Sport, Health Improvement and Mental Health, said: “I welcome the launch of the Technology Charter. Innovative uses of technology can greatly help people who are living with dementia and those who love and care for them. It can help people to live more safely and with a greater sense of independence.”

The key values of the new Technology Charter are:

- Practice and service provision is rights based, personalised and free from discrimination.
- Unpaid carers and families are recognised and valued as equal partners in care.
- Information and advice about technology is available in clear everyday language and in a variety of formats.
- Routes and access to technology are ethical, equitable, simple, understandable and user-friendly.
- Consideration of technology is embedded at all key points in the integrated dementia care pathway.

Technology augments - but does not replace - human intervention.

http://www.alzscot.org/assets/0002/0289/Technology_Charter_for_People_with_Dementia_in_Scotland.pdf

10 December: Dementia Strategy for state of Saarland is launched

Despite there being no National Dementia Strategy in place in Germany to date, on 10 December the state of Saarland – the most western state in Germany – became the second state in the country to develop its own dementia strategy, with Bavaria being the first, in 2013.

The main topics of this Saarland plan are:

- Awareness
- Support of people with dementia and carers
- Enhancement of care pathways, and
- Research.

These topics are in line with the German “Alliance for people with dementia” signed in September 2014 as a first step towards a National Dementia Plan. The Saarland plan was introduced by the Minister for Social Affairs, Health, Women and Family, Monika Bachmann, and was presented in further detail by one of its authors, Sabine Kirchen-Peters.

Heike von Lützau-Hohlbein - in her role as Chairperson of Alzheimer Europe (AE) - spoke about dementia in both the national and international context. She commented that she hopes these state initiatives will “result in a powerful movement towards a German plan.”

Pictured: Group of people involved in authoring the Saarland dementia plan.

14 December: Austria launches its National Dementia Strategy

On 14 December, Austria’s new National Dementia Strategy, news which was welcomed by national association, Alzheimer Austria.

Antonia Croy and Monika Natlacen from Alzheimer Austria were involved in two of the six working groups during the planning of this new strategy, to ensure the needs of people with dementia and family carers are met. As supporters of the rights of people with dementia in general, they supported their right to an active role in this process, to ensure they have a say in decisions about their care.

Under the theme “Living well with dementia”, objectives and recommendations for actions for inclusion in the strategy were developed over the course of 10 months:

- To enhance the participation and autonomy of people with dementia.
- To disseminate information about the available help and services for carers.
To provide high quality care to people with dementia, irrespective of their place of residence.

To ensure better education and training for professional carers.

To encourage better understanding of dementia and to defeat the stigma attached to it.

At the launch ceremony, Health Minister Sabine Oberhauser and the Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundsdorfer clapped along with the opening act - a dementia percussion group from Northern Austria.

“It is now up to the commitment of politicians, stakeholders and service providers to implement the strategy and improve the situation of people with dementia and their carers”, concluded Alzheimer Austria.

14 December: France adopts draft law on change for an ageing society

On 14 December the French Parliament adopted the draft law to put in place changes for an ageing society. The law was passed by 324 votes in favour, none against and should come into force on 1 January 2016.

Marisol Touraine, Minister for Social Affairs, Health and Women’s Rights and Laurence Rossignol, Secretary of State in charge of Family, Children, Older People and Autonomy stressed that this constitutes a “strong presidential commitment. It will mark the history of collective management of the aging population through concrete actions.”

The main actions identified by the Ministers are:

- The creation of new social rights with the reform of personal autonomy allowance (APA).
- Support for caregivers, whose status will be recognised and who will have a right to respite.
- Support for the prevention of loss of autonomy of older people through the development of a coordinated prevention program, in all counties, for people aged 65 and over.
- Enhancing transparency and information about care homes costs.

This new law is to be financed in a sustainable manner through the additional solidarity contribution for autonomy (CASA), valued at approximately EUR 700 million.


16 December: US Congress makes historic research funding commitment

On 16 December, US Congress voted to increase Alzheimer’s research funding by USD 350 million (EUR 323 million), as from the start of the financial year 2016.

The US Alzheimer’s Association - which has worked hard, alongside congressional leaders, to make this happen – welcomed the news.

“When signed into law, these funds will begin to be released immediately to launch new, groundbreaking Alzheimer’s research; research that will accelerate our progress toward ultimately eliminating the disease," said Harry Johns, president and CEO of the Alzheimer’s Association (US).


18 December: Assisted Decision-Making Bill passes into Irish Law

For the past few years, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) - as part of a broad disability rights alliance - has been calling on the Irish Government to replace outdated “ lunacy” laws and end the crisis of widespread human rights violations against people with disabilities in Ireland.

ASI therefore welcomed the historic passing of the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Bill into law in mid-December: “This is an important piece of legislation, which may apply to any person now or in the future", writes ASI.

The new Bill replaces the current Wards of Court system, enhances the Enduring Power of Attorney and gives legal recognition to Advance Healthcare Directives.

“For people living with dementia, the legislation means that their right to be involved in decision making has a legislative basis. It also means that Ireland is a step closer to ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”

Science watch

11 November: Pomegranates are good for our neurons, study suggests

Eating pomegranates regularly could provide protection from neurological disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease (AD), according to a study by the American Chemical Society, published in its journal ACS Chemical Neuroscience on 11 November.

In previous studies, pomegranates have been shown to have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and anticarcinogenic effects. This latest study focuses on the anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective action of compounds called urolithins, which are found in the fruit.

These protective agents are produced when ellagitannins - a type of polyphenol present in pomegranates - are metabolised by intestinal bacteria. Polyphenols are powerful antioxidants which are found in many fruits and vegetables.

The researchers observed, in vitro, that these urolithins lowered the levels of the beta amyloid protein responsible for the formation of toxic clumps, one of the hallmarks of AD.

The team of chemists sought to understand how the pomegranate compounds were able to cross the blood-brain barrier, which protects the brain, and prevent the formation of these harmful proteins.
Interventions reports that Probiodrug’s Alzheimer’s disease (AD) QC inhibitor drug, PQ912, has passed muster in a phase I tolerability and efficacy trial, despite some concerns.

Probiodrug in Berlin, Germany is pioneering immunotherapy approaches to eliminate pyroglutamated (pGlu) Abeta, a highly toxic peptide that has been linked to the progression of AD. A key enzyme (Glutaminyl Cyclase – QC) which leads to pGlu-Abeta, is also the target.

Phase I trial results evaluated PQ912’s effect in over 200 younger and older healthy volunteer adults, with a single- and multiple-ascending dose trial design.

Generally, the safety and tolerability effects were good, however the maximum tolerated dose was not reached. Put simply, not reaching the maximum set dose in the trial suggests that too many adverse effects were observed in the lower dose cohorts. So, although the phase I trials technically achieved their primary endpoint, the maximum dose has essentially been ruled out from the pipeline’s future trials, which means there is the possibility that the primary endpoint might not be achieved in phase II or III due to an insufficient concentration of the drug.

The phase Ila trial, for which recruitment completed in March this year, is already fully underway and Probiodrug hopes to obtain clinical proof of concept for PQ912.

6 December: US study says negative beliefs around ageing may lead to reduced hippocampus volume and memory loss

A study conducted by the Yale School of Public Health in the US, and published on 7 December in the journal Psychology and Aging suggests that people who hold negative beliefs about ageing are more likely to be susceptible to brain changes such as shrinking of the hippocampus - the part of the brain linked to memory. Reduced hippocampal volume can cause memory problems and may be an indicator of Alzheimer’s disease (AD).

This shrinking of the hippocampus is thought to be due to an increase in the level of stress generated by these negative beliefs.

The study investigated the linkages between views of aging, self-perceived abilities, and performance within and across the domains of memory and hearing. For both domains, 301 older adults completed measures of their views of aging, their self-perceived abilities and behavioural tests. Using structural equation modelling, researchers tested a hypothesised model in which older adults’ negative views of aging predicted their performance in the domains of memory and hearing through negatively affecting their self-perceived abilities in those domains.

The Yale researchers concluded that “hearing influences memory with respect to both behavioural and self-perception measures” and that “negative views of aging influence self-perceptions in both domains”.

The team isolated and identified 21 compounds, most of which were polyphenols, from pomegranate extract. These polyphenols could not cross the blood-brain barrier, but some of their metabolites, the urolithins, were able to do so.

The beneficial role played by urolithins has been demonstrated in previous research, notably in the prevention of certain cancers (of the colon, breast and prostate) and in lowering cholesterol (triglyceride levels in the blood).

http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/acschemneuro.5b00260

25 November: Microscopic particles may offer some hope for AD

“Particles so small that they could carry drugs directly into the brain are offering a new hope for a way to stop the progression of Alzheimer’s disease (AD), or even prevent it from happening at all” prints Horizon – the EU Research & Innovation Magazine, on 25 November.

The article describes particle technology, developed under a EUR 14 million research project spanning Europe known as NAD http://www.nadproject.eu. It is one of a new breed of nano-scale treatments that hold out the promise of being able to stop the progression of AD, or maybe even improving the condition. They work by passing directly into the brain and cutting away at beta-amyloid tangles that contribute to memory loss.

As part of the EU-funded project, the microscopic particles, known as nanoparticles, were injected into mice. They travelled to the brain, where they hooked onto tangled proteins, removing about 1/3 of them, and up to 70 % of smaller, highly toxic forms.

“AFTER treatment for about a month, we found a strong reduction in beta-amyloid and plaques in the brain and a strong recovery in impaired memory in the mice,” said Professor Massimo Masserini, who is leading the research from his laboratory at the University of Milano-Bicocca in Monza, Italy.

The secret to the success of the tiny nanoparticles is in two add-on parts. Firstly, part of a blood protein was glued onto the particle. It acts like a key connecting to a lock in the blood-brain barrier, allowing the entire particle to cross directly into the brain.

Secondly, a compound inside cell membranes was added to the particle, which weakens the bonds in the tangled proteins so that single molecules are released, which can then leak out of the brain into the blood.

The research team now hopes to raise enough money to begin trials on healthy humans in about two years’ time, before moving on to AD patients.


30 November: New AD drug candidate has mixed Phase I trial results

A study published in the November edition of the journal Alzheimer’s & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical

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http://www.pubfacts.com/detail/2647587376281592900020/abstract

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A study published in the November edition of the journal Alzheimer’s & Dementia: Translational Research & Clinical
7 December: Prostate cancer therapy, ADT may increase risk of AD

A standard treatment for prostate cancer may be linked to an increased risk of Alzheimer’s disease (AD), according to a study published on 7 December in the Journal of Clinical Oncology. Androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) lowers levels of the hormone testosterone. Since testosterone helps protect against AD, this could double the risk of AD, the study authors say, though they can’t be certain of a direct cause-and-effect association between ADT and AD, but rather they have strong suspicions.

When the research team - from the University of Pennsylvania and Stanford Medical School in the US - looked at hospital records of 16,888 prostate cancer patients, they discovered that double the number of the 2,400 men given ADT went on to develop AD, compared with others who weren’t using the therapy. The risk also seemed to rise along with the dose of ADT being given, and with the length of time the therapy was used.

http://jco.ascopubs.org/content/early/2015/12/07/JCO.2015.63.6266

8 December: Molecule may help clear toxic Amyloid beta protein build-ups, animal study shows

New research, published on 8 December in the journal Nature Communications has found a new chemical that may help to break down some forms of amyloid beta protein deposits, at least in the brains of mice. Amyloid beta is a toxic molecule that builds up to form plaques in the brain, and is a hallmark of AD in humans.

The study, conducted by the Korea Institute of Science and Technology, used AD mouse models to see if a molecule known as EPPS could be added to the animals’ drinking water in order to break down amyloid beta plaques.

The research indicated that EPPS may indeed be orally ingested by mice without being toxic and crosses the blood-brain barrier. Further investigation is needed to confirm this, however, as well as to look at the mechanisms behind how the molecule works to clear the plaques, which was not investigated in this study.

http://www.nature.com/ncomms/2015/151208/ncomms9997/full/ncomms9997.html

8 December: Phase II trial of drug candidate DU-28,853 looks to have positive results in AD aggression

Amarantus Bioscience Holdings, Inc. a biotechnology company developing therapeutic and diagnostic product candidates in neurology and orphan indications, announced positive data for its drug candidate DU-28,853 in a Phase II clinical trial of elderly patients with Alzheimer’s disease (AD) who display symptoms of aggression.

DU-28,853 is a selective SHT1a/1b partial agonist in development by Amarantus for the treatment Parkinson’s disease levodopa-induced dyskinesia, and is now poised for further clinical development as a symptomatic treatment in adult ADHD and AD aggression.


9 December: EPAD project publishes its first paper in The Lancet journal

On 9 December, the European Prevention of Alzheimer’s Dementia (EPAD)’s first project paper was published in the journal, The Lancet Psychiatry.

The paper, “Development of interventions for the secondary prevention of Alzheimer’s dementia: the European Prevention of Alzheimer’s Dementia (EPAD) project” lays out the need for EPAD, and its key design elements are described. The project is also discussed in relation to other, similar projects in progress.

http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpsy/article/PIIS2215-1607%2815%2900454-4/abstract

11 December: Moderate alcohol consumption may increase life expectancy in early-stage AD

A study published online in the journal BMJ Open on 11 December, has found that people with early-stage Alzheimer’s disease (AD), who consume alcohol moderately may increase their life expectancy, as compared with those who consume little or no alcohol at all. For the purposes of this study, drinking moderately meant two to three alcoholic drinks per diem. The study was led by Dr Sine Berntsen of the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

Dr Berntsen and her team used data from a previous study designed to assess a 12-month psychosocial counselling and support program for people with early-stage AD. That study followed 321 participants in Denmark during the year-long program and for three years afterward, with study authors collecting data from patients’ primary caregivers about lifestyle factors, such as how many alcoholic drinks each patient tended to have on a daily basis.

During the four-year study, 53 of the 321 participants died. Those who had two to three units per day had a 77 percent lower risk of death than those who had one or fewer units per day after accounting for gender, age, education and smoking, the researchers reported in BMJ Open.

“These results are somewhat surprising because Alzheimer’s disease is a neurodegenerative disease and we know that alcohol can have harmful effects on the brain,” said Dr Berntsen.

While she conceded that she and her team were unable to offer a concrete explanation for the reasons behind this, Dr Berntsen did say that earlier studies on alcohol and mortality had proposed some possible explanations such as reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, modification of inflammation and increase in insulin sensitivity.

People with moderate alcohol intake may have a richer social environment, she thought, which could in itself have benefits, “however, we cannot solely on the basis of this study encourage nor advise against moderate alcohol consumption in patients with Alzheimer’s disease.”

http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/5/12/a007851.abstract
Job opportunities

14 December: The Dementia Services Development Centre is looking for Senior Associates

The Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC) at Stirling University is seeking to further develop and strengthen its capacity and capability by recruiting a number of people to the new position of DSDC Senior Associate.

The aim of this new role is to extend the Centre’s influence and impact both in the UK and internationally, with the ultimate objective of improving the lives of people with dementia and their carers across the world. This is an opportunity for a progressive and inspiring senior figure to become part of an already internationally recognised organisation.

Applications close on 1 February 2016.

Find out more about these positions and about the application and recruitment process here:

http://dementia.stir.ac.uk/about-dsdc/current-vacancies

Contact Alzheimer Europe

Alzheimer Europe, 14 rue Dicks, L-1417, Luxembourg; info@alzheimer-europe.org, www.alzheimer-europe.org

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AE Calendar 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>AE representative</th>
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<tr>
<td>12 January</td>
<td>Joint meeting of EP interest Groups on Carers and on Mental Health (Brussels, Belgium)</td>
<td>Vanesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 January</td>
<td>Joint Innovation Information and Matchmaking Event on 'Using well with dementia (Brussels, Belgium)</td>
<td>Ana</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 January</td>
<td>Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting of Neighbourhoods and Dementia Study (Manchester, UK)</td>
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Conferences 2016

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Place</th>
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<tr>
<td>9-12 March</td>
<td>14th International Athens/Springfield Symposium on Advances in Alzheimer Therapy, <a href="http://www.ad-springfield.com">www.ad-springfield.com</a></td>
<td>Athens, Greece</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-20 March</td>
<td>The 10th World Congress on Controversies in Neurology (CONy), <a href="http://www.contactmed.com/cony">http://www.contactmed.com/cony</a></td>
<td>Lisbon, Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-15 April</td>
<td>25th European Stroke Conference, <a href="http://www.eurostroke.conventus.de">www.eurostroke.conventus.de</a></td>
<td>Venice, Italy</td>
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<td>28-31 May</td>
<td>2nd Congress of the European Academy of neurology, <a href="http://www.eaneurology.org">www.eaneurology.org</a></td>
<td>Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 June-2 July</td>
<td>4th International Conference on vascular dementia</td>
<td>Valencia, Spain</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-28 July</td>
<td>AAIC Annual Conference, <a href="https://www.aai.org/aaic/">https://www.aai.org/aaic/</a></td>
<td>Toronto, Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-9 September</td>
<td>2016 IPA International congress, <a href="http://www.ipa-online.org">www.ipa-online.org</a></td>
<td>San Francisco, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Oct-2 November</td>
<td>26th Alzheimer Europe Conference (26AEC) on &quot;Excellence in dementia research and care&quot;</td>
<td>Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-11 December</td>
<td>2016 IPA Asian regional meeting, <a href="http://www.ipa-online.org">www.ipa-online.org</a></td>
<td>Taipei, Taiwan</td>
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26th Alzheimer Europe Conference
Excellence in dementia research and care
Copenhagen, Denmark
31 October – 2 November 2016
www.alzheimer-europe.org/conferences

The Alzheimer Europe newsletter received funding under an operating grant from the European Union’s Health Programme (2014-2020). The content of this newsletter represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.