

## NEWS ADVISORY

### EASO and EOD launch 'European Obesity Community' to combat obesity in Europe

*31 January 2011:* The European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) and European Obesity Day (EOD) today agreed a strategic partnership, launching the 'European Obesity Community' to combat soaring obesity rates across Europe. EASO is the **cornerstone of European obesity science and innovation** while EOD provides a **high-visibility campaigning platform** to engage patient and consumers, healthcare professionals and politicians.

As highlighted by the December 2010 OECD report 'Health at a Glance: Europe 2010', more than half of the total adult population across the EU is now overweight or obese and the rate of obesity has more than doubled over the past 20 years in most EU countries. Obesity is also linked to significant additional health care costs.

By bringing together their complementary areas of expertise, EASO and EOD will increase the reach and impact of their **collective efforts to tackle overweight and obesity in Europe**. EASO and EOD have agreed that:

1. EASO will support and help to establish an **EOD Scientific Board**. This Board will offer scientific advice to EOD, to ensure that all messages are consistent, scientifically sound and evidence based.
2. EASO and EOD will co-organise **consumer-education workshops**. These moderated workshops will establish interaction between the medical profession and patient and consumer groups.
3. EASO and EOD will joint launch the **European Obesity Community online portal** - a stand-alone website supported and managed by both organisations.

By establishing a strategic partnership under the 'European Obesity Community' banner, interested parties can join forces to establish dialogue and collaborations and to develop educational and advocacy initiatives - all underpinned by scientific evidence and credibility.

EASO president **Professor Jean-Michel Oppert** said, *"EASO supports European Obesity Day as we believe that a multi disciplinary approach is needed to effectively tackle the epidemic. Approaches should include a wide range of actions including prevention strategies, management (treatment), research, education and monitoring. No singular action will be successful. EASO strongly supports collaboration and interaction between all parties involved in tackling obesity and its consequences. For those reasons we believe that this important strategic partnership between EASO and EOD will have far reaching and long-term benefits for both the scientific and patient communities."*

EOD president **Jean-Paul Allonsius** said, *"The strategic partnership between EASO and EOD will help European Obesity Day align its communications and campaigning activities with the latest developments in obesity science. This underpins EOD's ultimate goal of supporting overweight and obese European citizens in making the necessary lifestyle changes to manage their weight and improve their overall health and quality of life. While prevention is the right place to start, the EU and national governments should understand that overweight and obese citizens urgently need support from healthcare professionals to reach and maintain a healthy weight."*

In the context of the partnership, EASO and EOD remain independent organisations with independent financing.

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### [The European Association for the Study of Obesity \(EASO\)](#)

Established in 1986, EASO aims to promote research into obesity, facilitate contact between individuals and organisations, and promote action that tackles the epidemic of obesity. EASO is a leading biomedical association in Europe with networks in over 30 countries. It hosts the annual European Congress on Obesity (ECO), has dynamic and active Task Forces, organises educational activities throughout the region and plays a major role in EU/WHO projects. EASO is a registered charity in England & Wales (UK). EASO's objectives are:

- To promote the preservation and protection of health and relief of sickness for the public benefit in the field of obesity and its related disorders.
- To promote research, the dissemination of the results of such research and exchange of scientific information in the field of obesity within Europe.
- To develop a deeper understanding of how to achieve and maintain a healthy bodyweight, and to manage and prevent obesity and its related conditions by those engaged in the study of obesity - healthcare professionals, health related organisations, governments and the European community.

### [European Obesity Day \(EOD\)](#)

EOD is an international charity (AISBL) bringing together medical, patient and political communities. It supports overweight and obese European citizens in making the necessary lifestyle changes to manage their weight and improve their overall health and quality of life. While its focus is the annual European Obesity Day in May each year, its broader objective is to raise awareness of the need for action at a European level. The first European Obesity Day (EOD) disease awareness day took place on 22 May 2010 in the majority of EU Member States.

EOD's mission is to create a healthier Europe today by significantly reducing the number of EU citizens suffering and prematurely dying from overweight and obesity.

### [Health at a Glance: Europe 2010](#)

Key findings from the December 2010 OECD report include:

More than half of the total adult population across the European Union are now overweight or obese. This is also true in 15 of the 27 EU countries. The prevalence of obesity -which presents greater health risks than overweight -varies from less than 10% in Romania, Switzerland and Italy to over 20% in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Malta and Iceland. On average across EU countries, 15.5% of the adult population is obese.

The rate of obesity has more than doubled over the past 20 years in most EU countries for which data are available. The rapid increase occurred regardless of what the levels of obesity were two decades ago. Obesity more than doubled in both the Netherlands and the United Kingdom between 1988 and 2008, even though the rate in the Netherlands is currently less than half that of the United Kingdom.

Because obesity is associated with higher risks of chronic illnesses, it is linked to significant additional health care costs. A recent study in England estimated that total costs linked to overweight and obesity could increase by as much as 70% between 2007 and 2015, and be 2.4 times higher by 2025 (Foresight, 2007).