AN INVITATION TO JOIN THE

European Parliament
Osteoporosis Interest Group

You are invited to join an informal, all-party group of MEPs dedicated to improving national and European policies to prevent osteoporosis and related fractures.

www.iofbonehealth.org
Why should MEPs be concerned?

Osteoporosis is one of the most common, debilitating, and costly chronic diseases in Europe. It is a disease in which the density and quality of bone are reduced, yet often there are no symptoms until the first fracture occurs. Without intervention the patient is at double the risk of subsequent fractures, and a future of pain and disability.

Osteoporosis affects 27.5 million people in the European Union (EU) and is projected to increase to 33.9 million by 2025. There are 3.5 million new fractures in the EU each year: 9,500 per day or 390 per hour, which results in a huge burden on health care systems and economies.

THE HUMAN COST

In the year following a hip fracture, approximately 24 per cent of women and 33 per cent of men die, with 33 per cent remaining totally dependent or in a nursing home, never regaining their independence and quality of life. Yet the sad reality in Europe is that osteoporosis is usually not diagnosed and treated in time, and many people continue to suffer fractures which could have been prevented.

THE ECONOMIC COST

In 2010, European health care authorities spent more than €37 billion for fracture care and costs are expected to rise by 25 per cent in 2025. Despite these enormous costs, there is a significant ‘treatment gap’ whereby people at risk are not being identified and treated to prevent future fractures. Given the growing number of seniors in Europe, this current model of care is shortsighted and will prove costly to health authorities.

THE GOOD NEWS

Osteoporosis is now a largely treatable condition and, with a combination of lifestyle changes and appropriate medical treatment, the risk of fractures can be reduced significantly.

What does the Interest Group do?

The European Parliament (EP) Osteoporosis Interest Group is an informal, all-party group founded in 2001, now co-chaired by Mary Honeyball (MEP, UK), Nathalie Griesbeck (MEP, France) and Sirpa Pietikäinen (MEP, Finland).
The aim of the group is to help stimulate much needed policy developments at both national and European levels.

WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF OSTEOPOROSIS

To prevent the unnecessary suffering and costs caused by osteoporotic fractures, the EP Osteoporosis Interest Group aims to:

- Develop political awareness and prioritization of osteoporosis and musculoskeletal diseases among EU and national policymakers.
- Ensure that osteoporosis is included in relevant EU strategies and activities such as health and research objectives and their related programmes.
- Actively support the need for EU legislation on the prevention of osteoporosis and related fractures to assist Member States with further implementation of the European Commission’s recommendations.

In addition, the Interest Group calls for specific actions to be taken by national health authorities and insurance agencies:

- Improve the availability and reimbursement of bone densitometry scans and proven therapies for people at risk of osteoporosis, prior to the first fracture.
- Facilitate the implementation of coordinator-based fracture liaison services in Europe to prevent secondary fractures.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE THINGS HAPPEN?

Once a year the members of the EP Osteoporosis Interest Group are invited to join a meeting of the EU Osteoporosis Consultation Panel, comprised of scientific and policy experts. Organized by the Interest Group co-chairs and the International Osteoporosis Foundation.
(IOF), the meeting brings together policy makers and key figures in osteoporosis to stimulate policy development. In addition, Interest Group members are kept informed of developments by IOF throughout the year, and are invited to participate in awareness events.

**WHAT CAN INTEREST GROUP MEMBERS DO TO SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST OSTEOPOROSIS?**

- Publicize your Interest Group membership at all appropriate opportunities. For example on your personal MEP profile, website or social media channels, newsletters etc.
- Ask oral or written parliamentary questions about osteoporosis as appropriate
- Ensure osteoporosis is on the agenda of the ENVI, FEMM and ITRE committees
- Work together/coordinate activities with the European Osteoporosis Consultation Panel to further leverage advocacy efforts; encourage MEP colleagues from other Member States to join
- Stimulate national policy action by using personal networks

**WHAT CAN IOF DO FOR INTEREST GROUP MEMBERS?**

- Provide the most current evidence-based information on osteoporosis
- Provide independent, non-political support for your osteoporosis policy activities
- Facilitate a network of osteoporosis experts to brief you on the situation and developments in your country
- Coordinate policy and awareness initiatives

**How to join?**

Only MEPs are eligible to join the European Parliament Osteoporosis Interest Group. To join, or to learn more, please contact the Interest Group co-chairs or contact IOF.

- **MARY HONEYBALL** mary.honeyball@europarl.europa.eu
- **NATHALIE GRIESBECK** nathalie.griesbeck@europarl.europa.eu
- **SIRPA PIETIKÄINEN** sirpa.pietikainen@europarl.europa.eu