

PRESS RELEASE

MEPs Launch Call to Action for Better Oral Health to Commissioner Dalli

Broad support to improve oral health prevention and access to dental care in Europe

BRUSSELS 14 September 2010 – Dr Thomas Ulmer MEP and Dr Cristian Silviu Busoi MEP marked the 3rd annual World Oral Health Day by issuing a **Call to Action for Better Oral Health in Europe** to John Dalli, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, challenging the European Union (EU) to make progress in combating oral diseases and reducing the burden of oral health maintenance for all citizens.

The Call has been signed by leading Members of the European Parliament and is supported by the FDI World Dental Federation, the European Association of Dental Public Health (EADPH), the Council of European Chief Dental Officers (CECDO), the Association of Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), and the Wrigley Oral Health Programs (WOHP).

“Oral health diseases are easily preventable,” Dr Ulmer MEP and Dr Busoi MEP said in a written statement. “Today’s Call to Action is intended to spur Commissioner Dalli and other EU leaders to support Member States in making best use of the various routine, achievable oral health solutions that are already in existence. These solutions include using fluoride-containing toothpaste, flossing, chewing sugar-free gum and having regular dental check-ups.”

Oral diseases, including dental caries and periodontal disease, affect a broad segment of European citizens, with a disproportionate effect on those from a disadvantaged socioeconomic background. “Every year, Europeans spend more than 54 billion euros on oral healthcare, yet, still, only 41% of European adults currently have all their natural teeth. This imbalance needs to be addressed.”

The aim of the Call to Action is to improve oral health in Europe in a comprehensive and cost-effective way. To achieve this goal, Dr Ulmer MEP and Dr Busoi MEP call on the European Commission to:

- Make oral health a priority under the Community Health Action programme;
- Address existing oral health inequalities as part of the implementation of the corresponding EU Strategy¹;
- Provide funding for oral health and oral prevention research under the Research Framework Programme—specifically funding for research into effective strategies for more inclusionary dental care as well as the development of innovative approaches to oral prevention.

¹ Communication from the European Commission on “Solidarity in health: reducing health inequalities in the EU”, 10 October 2009