

ORS & RAS supported by EULAR

Improving the Health of Patients Suffering from Rheumatic Diseases

First draft Serbian strategy on RMDs and national action plan

Belgrade, Serbia, 21 – 23 February 2013



DRAFT Conclusion document

Table of Contents

Overview	2
Participants	3
Ministerial representatives.....	3
National Insurance representatives.....	3
Employment sector.....	3
Other important organisations	3
EULAR,.....	3
The European League Against Rheumatism	3
RAS, Rheumatology Association of Serbia.....	4
ORS,.....	4
The Association of Rheumatic Diseases Patients of the Republic of Serbia	4
Serbian Association of Health Professionals in Rheumatology	4
Objectives & Outcomes.....	5
Concrete outcomes	7
First draft Serbian strategy on RMDs and national action plan	8
Media attendance.....	11
Links available from published material before event.....	12
Further Information / Assistance	12

Overview

The events included several components.

<p>Thursday 21 February</p> <p>Preparation & internal event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations by national organisations about structure, activities, funding and challenges and situation of health system in Serbia • Scientific Lecture on “New Possibilities in the Use of CORTICOSTEROIDS” by Prof. M. Cutolo. <p>On the first day the organisations introduced themselves to each other by sharing presentations on structure, activities, funding, challenges by ORS and RAS and the Serbian Association of Health Professionals in Rheumatology (SAHPR) following a visit and guided tour of the Institute of Rheumatology. A lecture by Prof Cutolo on "New Possibilities in the Use of CORTICOSTEROIDS" concluded the first day.</p>
<p>Friday 22 February</p> <p>Public awareness and alliance building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press conference • Panel discussions with senior Serbian Government Officials, public figures • Signing of the Brussels Declaration • Workshop to draft national strategy and action plan on RMD's in Serbia <p>The morning of the second day was designated to external audiences by organising multi stakeholder panel discussion and press conference, followed by the informal signing of the Brussels Declaration.</p> <p>The afternoon was designated to review the outcomes and achievements of the morning and stakeholders of the national associations and societies in rheumatology developed a first draft of a Serbian strategy and national action plan to fight against RMDs.</p>
<p>Location</p>	<p>Hotel IN Bulevar Arsenija Čarnojevića 56, New Belgrade http://www.inhotel-belgrade.rs/</p>

Participants

The attendance was widespread across many sectors of society and governmental and public institutions.

Ministerial representatives

- Dr Perisa Simonovic, Secretary, Ministry of Health
- Milica Djuric, Department for Protection of People with Disabilities Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social policy
- Ljubisa Antonijevic, MA., Assistant Minister for preschool and primary education and adult education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development
- Bogoljub Lazarevic, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development

National Insurance representatives

- Marija Kalaba, National Health Insurance Fund

Employment sector

- Dejana Kuzmic, Director, Serbian Association of Employers
- Zeljka Burgund, Director of the Association Family Circle

Other important organisations

- Ivanka Jovanovic, Executive Director, National Organization of Persons with Disabilities of Serbia
- Volga Ilic, President, Association of Parents of Children Suffering from Rheumatism
- Sonja Ilic, Association of Parents of Children Suffering from Rheumatism

EULAR, The European League Against Rheumatism

- Neil Betteridge, Vice President EULAR, representing People with Arthritis /Rheumatism in Europe (PARE)
- Maria Batziou, Chair EULAR Standing Committee of People with Arthritis /Rheumatism in Europe (PARE)
- Prof Dr Maurizio Cutolo, President Elect, EULAR
- Prof Dr Nemanja Damjanov, General Secretary, EULAR



- Florian Klett, EULAR Secretariat

RAS, Rheumatology Association of Serbia

- Prof Dr Nemanja Damjanov, RAS President, Director of the Institute of Rheumatology Belgrade and Professor of Internal Medicine, Rheumatology, Belgrade University School of Medicine
- Prof Dr Dusan Stefanovic, rheumatologist, Head Rheumatology Clinic, Military Medical Academy
- Prof Dr Jelena Vojinovic, Dept Pediatric Rheumatology, University Clinical Center, Faculty of Medicine Nis and ORS Board Member
- Dr Milijanka Lazarevic, Director of the Specialized Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases Novi Sad

ORS, The Association of Rheumatic Diseases Patients of the Republic of Serbia

- Prim Dr Mirjana Lapcevic, ORS President
- Marija Kosanovic, ORS Vice-President
- Zivan Pavlovic, ORS Board Member
- Olga Vasic, Novi Sad Branch President
- Prof Dr Branislava Belic, Novi Sad Branch Member
- Tamara Mladenovic, Nis Branch President
- Marija Bucic, Military Medical Academy Branch President
- Prim Dr Danica Besevic, Uzice Branch President
- Tanja Djurdjevic, Kragujevac Branch President

Serbian Association of Health Professionals in Rheumatology

- Svetlana Zekovic, SAHPR President
- Jelica MIsic, SAHPR member

Objectives & Outcomes

The event pursued the following objectives:

General objective

- Improving the health and quality of life of patients suffering from rheumatic diseases in Serbia through promotion of Brussels declaration

Specific objective

- To promote the “Early Diagnosis and Treatment of Chronic Arthritis” project in order to encourage broader support for it by the Serbian Government officials and national institutions.
 - More governmental support for existing project of early diagnosis of chronic arthritis including GPs’ education programme.
 - Early referral to specialists through educated GPs.
 - Support for the development of early arthritis units within the referent rheumatology centres in Serbia.
 - Support for the future improvement of standards of education in rheumatology, standardised diagnostic process and standardized treatment/care plans for chronic arthritis, systemic diseases and osteoarthritis according to the European Standards of Treatment/care.
 - Need for more rheumatologists settled in smaller cities and in rural areas.
- To encourage discussion with the relevant governing bodies in Serbia and provide further support for higher quality treatments i.e. increase in biologics availability, rehabilitation treatments that help maintain working capacity, better availability of rheumatologists and rheumatology services throughout Serbia, etc.
- To promote improvements in disability legislation and its better implementation since it existentially affects the lives of people with rheumatic diseases.
- General awareness by public and public authorities about issues of people with RMDs and development of public awareness programmes for prevention, early diagnosis, difficulties that people with RMDs encounter in society every day, challenges in gaining employment
- Motivating people with RMDs to get back to work / stay at work
- Educating people about their rights.
- To provide opportunities for education of young people with RMDs
 - Programs to raise awareness about RMDs among students and teachers in schools
 - Support for professional orientation considering the present and future limitations in working ability



- To provide support for improvement in employment environment for people with RMDs
 - To recognise RMDs as the conditions that can cause visible and invisible disabilities and ensure all rights that are arising from these conditions
 - Encourage the employers to employ people with RMDs
 - Enable employment of people with disabilities in public sector instead of only in private sector

- To provide support for improvement of the rehabilitation treatment and social care through:
 - Different pressures on local government institutions that sufferers from RMDs, regardless of age, be provide with easier access to home care and treatment
 - To lobby for the change in Republic Health Insurance Fund regulations to allow that all RMD cases be granted treatment in specialised centres once per annum (with the costs paid by the Fund).

Concrete outcomes

The panel discussions and press conference which was attended by several TV stations (please see page 8, media attendance) have been very successful and led to a series of positive statements by the Ministry of Health representative, the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social policy and Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Union of Employers.

Concretely the Secretary General of the Ministry of Health confirmed support for all objectives of the event:

- 1) Establishment of Early Arthritis Clinics
- 2) Training for primary care doctors
- 3) Establishing a new Commission for Rheumatology to promote a new National Strategy for RMDs
- 4) Pledge to increase investment in biologics and infrastructure eg hospital facilities

This support plus positive statements issued by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy and Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development plus support signalled by the Union of Employers mean that the Serbian organisations could now start to work on the development of a national strategy on RMDs.

“Proud to be able to sign” the Brussels declaration

- Signing of the Brussels declaration by Dr Perisa Simonovic, Secretary, Ministry of Health was commented by him with the statement that this document and resulting strategy would not only mean signing this important document but would

“lead the way to important developments in the health sector of Serbia and that he would be very proud to be able to sign the Brussels Declaration” (Dr Perisa Simonovic, Secretary, Ministry of Health).

First draft Serbian strategy on RMDs and national action plan

In a workshop, the Serbian organisations ORS, RAS and SAHPR then drafted the following overview as a first written draft on the Serbian strategy and national action plan on RMDs.

Strategic Area? Working Package	Actions /Deliverables
1. Establish “Early Arthritis” Clinics	<p>Establishment of Early Arthritis Clinics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of diagnostic devices and health professionals • Clinics need to follow same standards nation wide • At least one surgery, one doctor, one nurse, more if needed • Naming of “Surgery for early arthritis clinics” for better recognition • Reference office for these clinics • Laboratory with: CVP CCC, Ultrasound, (MRI optional) • Working methods need to be aligned across the country - unified methodology is essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determination of specific indicators • Questionnaire to be filled in by patients, standardized for different diseases • Creating a computer system to enable patients directly giving input on medication intake and HAC score • Implementing this in all regions, avoiding duplication of data, • All healthcare professionals and patients get access to input
2. Education	<p>EDUCATION: Different audiences, areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising public awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education of citizens, children society to achieve primary prevention on diet, nutrition. • Education of patients • Education of GPs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early recognition of system to come to educated doctors, then referral to early diagnostic center to rheumatologists without delay • Education by primary healthcare doctors, educated

	<p>citizens , rheumatologists to non-educated members of society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educated GP's, patients, rheumatologists and citizens then are asked to raise awareness and to educate others at upcoming events. • Secondary prevention: • Education of Rheumatologists by patients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start events for patients to educate, at Serbian congress of rheumatologists (ORS to participate in congress and at other opportunities raising awareness and educating medical audiences) • Establishing a system of information of newly diagnosed patients by ORS; or rheumatologists about ORS. • Encouraging more audiences on becoming members of ORS. • Developing a joint congress
<p>3. Constant communication and requests relevant to the ministries /public</p>	<p>Constant communication and requests relevant to the ministries/public authorities and national health insurance fund</p> <p>Establishing a an expert Commission for Rheumatology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to promote a new National Strategy for RMDs • to monitor, evaluate implementation of strategic plan and send recommendations to government • Creating structures, procedures and protocols e.g. on how arthritis clinics should be constituted • Expert Commission needs to develop a sincere protocol to base decisions on. • Inclusion of patients and patient associations in ministerial and governmental bodies and public authorities to ensure patient associations influence on development of all of the above...
<p>4. Invest in treatment & infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledge to increase investment in biologics and infrastructure e.g. hospital facilities • Increase nr of patients treated with biologics, • Equal access to drugs for all patients • Commission would upgrade existing proposal of guidelines on treatment of biological therapy and officially accepted by state authorities.

5. Inclusion of patients and patient associations	Inclusion of patients and patient associations in ministerial and governmental bodies and public authorities to ensure patient associations influence on development of all of the above...
6. Work and social protection	<p>Work and social protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines relevant to employment of disabled persons need to recognize RMDs as diseases potentially leading to disability • Recognition of invisible disabilities to receive same treatment as e.g. MS
7. Activities towards ministry of education and science Actions for youth with RMDs	<p>Activities towards ministry of education and science (For young people with RMDs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish legal acts that will allow children and young people to have easier access to professional education adequate to their abilities • Education of teachers and students about RMDs and limitations of people with RMDs so they can be better recognized and adaptations can be implemented. • Expand existing legislation to RMDs..
8. Collaboration with union of employers	<p>Instant collaboration with union of employers Encourage employment of people with RMDs especially younger women</p>



Media attendance

Media representatives:

During the event there were presented following media:

- Radio Television of Serbia (Public Service of Serbia)
- Radio Belgrade
- Blic (newspapers)
- Kurir (newspapers)
- Informer (newspapers)
- Economic review (newspapers)
- InfoBiro
- Tanjug (agency)
- Beta (agency)

The information about the event were published in 6 printed media, 10 electronic media and 5 portals.



Links available from published material before event

www.ors.rs

www.ures.org.rs

www.reumatologija.org.rs

www.eular.org

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