



The Intensive Connection

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European Parliament **Intensive Care Interest Group**

Newsletter

Dear Members of the European Parliament Intensive Care Medicine Interest Group (EPIC-IG),

Dear Friends of the Intensive Care Community,

Following the recent establishment of the European Parliament Intensive Care Interest Group (EPIC-IG) and the first meeting held on the 25th of January 2022, this first edition of the newsletter will share insight into the priorities identified by members of the interest group and expose key challenges facing European Intensive Care Medicine and healthcare generally.

However, we must highlight first and foremost the consequences of the deplorable war of aggression recently launched against Ukraine by the Russian Federation led by Vladimir Putin. As a new humanitarian crisis unfolds on the EU's doorstep, the focus is once again on specialists working in ICUs to save the lives of those most critically injured by, or in fleeing conflict.

We are reminded once again that ICUs often find themselves at the frontline in healthcare, and that the quality of care given there is often of strategic importance during and outside of emergencies. In order to operate effectively, these specialist units require readily available competences and resources, both of which are difficult to guarantee during crisis situations, requiring special attention from policymakers.

ESICM is doing everything in its power to help its Ukrainian colleagues in this terrible situation, using its resources to disseminate training and expertise, organise donations and liaise with organisations and European institutions trying to help in any possible way.



The EPIC-IG will also be dealing with the issue of Ukraine and possible assistance to local hospitals and intensive care units at the next meeting.

The Interest Group holds its inaugural meeting

The European Parliament Intensive Care Interest Group is constituted by Members of the European Parliament who wish to act as advocates for ICUs in Europe and further afield, bringing together policymakers and experts from the field to work on challenges and developments facing ICUs.

The first meeting of the Interest Group saw the election of MEPs Sirpa Pietikäinen and Istvan Ujhelyi as co-chairs, bringing together a group of MEPs from all over the political and geographical spectrum alongside the president and president-elect of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine. These experts presented to MEPs the history of and work carried out in ICUs, giving a valuable look into their life saving work with patients and their families.

Further discussions within the group focused on what kind of sustainable solutions can be found to increase the standards of care for all patients over the EU, and to boost attractivity of the profession to bring newcomers into this highly specialised field.

The role of Intensive Care Medicine in the creation of the European Health Union was also discussed, with the need for support for ICU doctors and nurses at EU level emphasised as a prerequisite for this project, and reflects the spirit of solidarity which the EU has taken from COVID-19. In this context, several challenges such as building ICU capacity, availability of training programmes in Europe, the involvement of ICUs in the European Health Data Space, and the European framework for free movement of intensivists under Annex V of the Professional Qualifications Directive were all discussed. A key takeaway from the discussion was that many of these initiatives can be taken prior to the creation of the European Health Union, and will serve as a solid basis for measures taken under that title.

Next meeting

The Interest Group will be meeting again soon to discuss challenges for the Intensive Care Community, be it issues that have been experienced by Intensive Care specialists for several years, problems uncovered by the COVID-19 crisis, or difficulties of the most urgent nature presented by the current humanitarian crisis. The aim of the interest group is to discuss with experts from the ground experiencing these issues, understand them and offer in turn their expertise of any political and regulatory tools that might be used to solve them. The next meeting of this group will focus on training in general terms and in urgent and tragic circumstances such as a global pandemic or war.

If you wish to receive any further information or participate in the Interest Group, don't hesitate to contact us on epic-ig@esicm.org