EUROPA DONNA takes Breast Health Day to the European Parliament with a “healthy reception” and information event

EUROPA DONNA – The European Breast Cancer Coalition began its Breast Health Day events on 12 October at the European Parliament in Brussels with a “healthy reception” and a two-day information event for MEPs. The event aimed to reach EU parliamentarians with the message that healthy lifestyle choices can have a positive influence on breast cancer risk. This message was also promoted through EUROPA DONNA’s digital campaign and throughout its 46 member countries.

“While our members were reaching women, girls and politicians in their countries, it was fundamental for us to also reach the European Parliament and ensure that MEPs are aware of Breast Health Day and, above all, the importance of breast health for future generations. They must be aware of the lifestyle factors that are scientifically linked to breast cancer and the importance of early detection through mammography screening programmes set up in accordance with the European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis. We are pleased with the MEPs’ response to our message,” said Ellen Verschuur, EUROPA DONNA President.

EUROPA DONNA’s information event and reception were hosted by MEP Liz Lynne (UK), who with the support of three other MEPs and the efforts of the Coalition, put forward the Written Declaration on the Fight Against Breast Cancer in the EU, signed by a majority of MEPs and adopted in March 2010. The October information event also served to remind MEPs of the need to implement the Declaration and the European Parlia-

ment Resolutions on Breast Cancer of 2003 and 2006, which aim to reduce inequalities in breast cancer care across Europe.

“Breast Health Day is a successful initiative by the European Breast Cancer Coalition to share information on the latest research on the most effective strategies and to keep up the pressure for change,” Ms. Lynne commented.

The 15 October 2010 Breast Health Day campaign focused on raising awareness that engaging in physical activity, maintaining a normal body weight and eating a healthy diet can help protect breast health. Breast Health Day was launched in 2008 in recognition of definitive International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) data showing the role of lifestyle factors in reducing the risk of breast cancer. In Europe alone there are some 430,000 new cases of breast cancer each year, 25-33% of which may be avoided through changes in lifestyle, especially physical exercise and maintaining a normal body weight.

“We have the data and we have a positive, non-threatening message for the young women of Europe. We would ultimately like to see the European Parliament declare every 15 October to be Breast Health Day,” said Susan Knox, Executive Director of EUROPA DONNA.

The daily progress of the European Parliament event and the Breast Health Day campaign could be followed online on the EUROPA DONNA Facebook and Breast Health Day Twitter pages, part of the extensive digital campaign launched for Breast Health Day in 2010. The campaign is detailed inside.
The 2010 Digital Campaign

The 2010 Breast Health Day campaign had a large digital component, aiming to reach out to younger women and a new audience of people who are involved in social networking and digital activities.

An online application available on www.breasthealthday.org for women to identify and commit to positive lifestyle resolutions. Women can use the application to receive reminders about their commitments and deadlines and be rewarded with Breast Health Day Points that they can display on social networks like Facebook.

Video messages from Prof. Carlo La Vecchia, Epidemiologist at the Mario Negri Institute for Pharmacological Research and the University of Milan and Susan Knox, Executive Director of EUROPA DONNA, available on www.breasthealthday.org and on YouTube.

The Breast Health Day T-shirt, the Breast Health Day Mini Diary and Poster file can be downloaded from the Breast Health Day website and printed.

www.breasthealthday.org was the core of the campaign hosting main activities and links to social networking sites.

An interactive video game

18,000 total views

4,000 visits from 74 countries

Facebook 582 fans and 5,956 visits

EUROPA DONNA pages on Facebook and Twitter. By the end of October, the Facebook page had 582 fans and 5,956 visits and 12 EUROPA DONNA Fora had their own Facebook pages. The Twitter reach was 153,630 and messages were also posted on www.breasthealthday.org.

www.youtube.com/BreastHealthDay

17,773 channel views

18,000 total views

www.facebook.com/EuropaDonna

Breast Health Day Widget

An online application available on www.breasthealthday.org and YouTube, about healthy choices to share with friends to encourage them to join the campaign. The viewers were tracked on a global map on the campaign website.

Twitter reach 153,630

18,000 total views

http://twitter.com/BreastHealthDay

Twitter reach 153,630
Breast Health Day across Europe

Breast Health Day was celebrated across Europe in most of EUROPA DONNA’s 46 member countries.

Croatia
- A Pink Ribbon Day event in Zagreb and in 30 other towns, focusing on primary and secondary prevention, healthy lifestyles and promotion of the national mammography screening programme
- A symposium on the link between unhealthy lifestyles and breast cancer

Czech Republic
- A “Prevention of Breast Cancer” campaign featuring pink stands at hobby markets in main cities
- Distribution of leaflets and educational materials at stands
- Benefit concerts in Prague

Denmark
- A lecture by a famous physiotherapist on activities including physical exercise for women who have undergone breast surgery in order to help with post-surgical problems

Estonia
- Distribution of a BHD press release
- Wide media coverage, including an interview with a mammographer-surgeon on national television, a radio interview and articles in newspapers, on the web and in women’s magazines about the campaign and breast cancer in general

Finland
- A press conference in Helsinki with panel members from several fields, such as nutrition, physical training, nursing and screening, and launching of an exercise challenge to the Prostate Cancer Organisation
- Distribution of 1500 Breast Health Mini Diaries (translated into Finnish) in Helsinki. The event venue was decorated with a large pink carpet and 1000 pink balloons. Floor displays presented information about breast health, breast cancer and screening

Georgia
- A mass media campaign with media coverage nationwide
- Discussion of breast cancer prevention and post-rehabilitation at a meeting of the Committee on Healthcare and Social Issues at the Georgian Parliament
- Decoration of the “Muza” statue in front of Tbilisi National Event Hall with a large pink ribbon. City buses were also decorated with posters and pink balloons
- An event in Tbilisi featuring a women’s musical band and decoration of a pink tree of “wishes”

Greece
- Creation of a TV, radio and press campaign and distribution of 6,000 copies of the BHD information materials in Athens
- A public reception featuring speeches by the General Secretary of the Ministry of Health
- Distribution of information materials to women in the Greek Parliament and the Ministry of Health, including a meeting between ED Greece and the Prime Minister
- Co-organisation of a meeting about prevention and early detection of breast cancer
- Participation in a 5-km race in the 28th Classical Marathon of Athens. The team wore the BHD T-shirts

Hungary
- A public meeting “EUROPA DONNA Day: Your Health Is Your Responsibility” at the Ministry of Health in Budapest including discussions with a psychologist, a medical doctor and a sports expert, art entertainment programmes and a fashion show

Ireland
- Local events nationwide, including a “Community Conga” walk, walkabouts, aqua aerobic classes, talks about breast screening, book displays at a local library and belly dancing
- The Anna Livia Mile Walk with additional exercises with an Olympic sports nutritionist. The event was featured on television
- Hosting of a lunch in the Irish Parliament

Israel
- Participation in a television panel to discuss prevention with the presentation of the 2010 Breast Health Mini Diary
- Annual “Celebrating Life” seminar in Ramat-Gan covering medical innovations, nutrition and general health issues
- The main national Breast Health Day event in co-operation with a fashion magazine featuring a volunteer performance by a famous Israeli singer and a fashion show

Italy
- Meetings with the Health Commission of the Italian Senate
- Media relations activities highlighting the BHD campaign
- A stand at the “Weekend Donna” event

Kazakhstan
- A “Healthy Asia” campaign to raise awareness of the importance of lifestyle factors in breast health. Women were offered information, screening in clinics and through mobile units

Kyrgyzstan
- Seminars at health promotion centres and family physicians’ clinics with distribution of information materials
- A press conference attracting coverage on several TV channels
- Free mammography and ultrasound for about 180 women
- A conference to promote breast cancer prevention as well as training on breast cancer, early detection and prevention for nurses

Luxembourg
- A conference on “Breast Cancer and Physical Activity”, also an introduction to the medical aspects, a presentation by the Oncology Sports Group, the AquaGym Group and the Cancer League Sports Group, and a performance by an artistic gymnastic group
- Pink lighting of the theatre tower
- A Silent Walk around the theatre with participants carrying 350 pink dolls

"Breast health is up to you"
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