

CONTINUING TO MAKE DEMENTIA A EUROPEAN PRIORITY

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland European Election Manifesto 2014

**We are calling on you as an Irish European Parliament candidate,
TO CONTINUE TO MAKE DEMENTIA A EUROPEAN PRIORITY.**

We ask you to:

- 1. Sign the Dementia Pledge**
- 2. Create Dementia Friendly Communities across the European Union**
- 3. Support a dementia research agenda**
- 4. Highlight dementia as a major public health and social care issue at European and national levels**
- 5. Promote the human rights of people with dementia**

DEMENTIA is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain. These changes significantly affect a person's quality of life, changing their memory, thinking, language and their ability to perform everyday tasks. In Europe there are almost **8 million people** living with dementia and it is estimated that for every one person with dementia three family members are significantly affected. Regardless of which member state you live in, people with dementia face common issues and concerns.

The European Union has played a significant role in addressing the issue of dementia. In 2008 for example, the Council of the EU recognised dementia as a European priority and a major public health issue of concern. More recently, in 2011 the **European Parliament's Resolution** on a *European Initiative on Alzheimer Disease and other Forms of Dementia* urged member states to develop national dementia strategies or action plans.

As an Irish candidate we are depending on you, when elected, to continue to support people living with dementia in Ireland and across Europe.



**THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY of IRELAND**

1. 2.
3. 4.
5.

1. Sign the Dementia Pledge

Please sign the Dementia Pledge. This campaign is run by Alzheimer Europe, of which we are a member, and asks you to commit to make dementia a European priority.

On my election to the European Parliament, I will

- *Join the European Alzheimer's Alliance comprised of Members of the European Parliament*
- *Support greater European collaboration on dementia and ensure dementia is recognised as a priority in the European Union's public health and research activities*
- *Make myself available to my national Alzheimer's society and people with dementia from my country.*

To sign the European Dementia Pledge and to show your commitment to people with dementia and carers contact advocacy@alzheimer.ie

As candidates sign up to this pledge, the list of signatories will be updated on The Alzheimer Society of Ireland website and on the Alzheimer Europe website.

2. Create Dementia Friendly Communities across the European Union

A dementia friendly community (DFC) is one which transforms villages, towns, cities and countries into better places to live for people with dementia and their families. We ask you to:

- Promote the concept of dementia friendly communities in all health policy discussions and debates related to the implementation of current policy and in the development of new EU health and social policy.
- Create funding opportunities at European level to support the development of dementia friendly communities throughout Europe.
- Work to develop an EU network to share best practice amongst stakeholders interested in DFC.
- Promote the Integration of the DFC concept into the European Innovation Partnership on Smart Cities and Communities¹.
- Ensure the integration of the DFC concept into EU policy areas related to the WHO Age Friendly Environments² Programme.
- Develop a European framework and guidelines on how to create age friendly and dementia friendly communities in Europe.

3. Proactively support a dementia research agenda

To ensure a good quality of life for people with dementia we need to generate evidence on the therapies that improve care and treatment, as well as therapies that prevent dementia. We ask you to:

- Prioritise investment in dementia research within the context of Horizon 2020.
- Ensure that investment in dementia research is brought in-line with other chronic disease areas such as cancer and stroke, as current investment lags significantly behind.
- Seek dedicated investment in dementia research projects, joint programming and initiatives on a pan European basis.
- Work with other European and international agencies (OECD, WHO, G8, Alzheimer Europe) to share information, identify strategic priority areas and develop initiatives for collaboration and co-operation in dementia.

4. Highlight dementia as a major public health and social care issue at European and national levels

A lack of awareness of dementia and of its prevalence and impact, adds to stigma and misunderstandings surrounding the condition. We ask you to:

- Promote the issue by talking about dementia in your everyday work as an MEP. This will help to reduce stigma and breakdown the barriers experienced by people living with dementia.
- Encourage the continued publication of co-ordinated national plans to address dementia in each member state.
- Make dementia a significant public health issue on the political agenda of member state governments.
- Ensure the voices of people with dementia and their carers are heard in policy making at all levels.
- Advocate for EU Presidency conferences to address dementia (such as those that took place in France in 2008 and Belgium in 2010).

5. Support the human rights of people with dementia

People with dementia and their carers have the same human rights as all other citizens. However, it is widely recognised that they face cultural, social and economic barriers to fulfilling their rights. We ask you to:

- Act at an EU level to ensure the European Parliament supports the human rights focus of the recent G8 communiqué³.
- Support written declarations, resolutions, directives and any policy proposals at an EU level that promote and address human rights for people with dementia.
- Hold relevant events at a European level to highlight the human rights of people with dementia.
- Recognise the European Working Group of People with Dementia as the key advocacy organisation of people with dementia at a European level.
- Work towards ensuring that the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities is ratified and implemented by all EU Member States, including Ireland.



¹ The European Innovation Partnership for Smart Cities and Communities combines Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), energy management and transport management to come up with innovative solutions to the major environmental, societal and health challenges facing European cities today.

² World Health Organisation (2007) Age-Friendly Environments Programme





³ This G8 communiqué asks that people with dementia are treated with dignity and respect and calls for the perspective of those living with dementia to be integrated into the work of the UN Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by older persons.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland works across the country in the heart of local communities providing dementia specific services and support and advocating for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia and their carers.

Our vision is an Ireland where no one goes through dementia alone and where policies and services respond appropriately to the person with dementia and their carers, at the times they need support.

A national non-profit organisation, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland is person centred, rights-based and grassroots led with the voice of the person with dementia and their carer at its core.

CONTACT US:

-  National Office, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co Dublin Phone: 00 353 1 207 3800
-  www.alzheimer.ie
-  www.facebook.com/pages/The-Alzheimer-Society-of-Ireland/10641011020
-  twitter.com/alzheimersocirl

Dementia in Ireland (ref: Cahill et al, 2013)

- There are 48,000 people living with dementia in Ireland.
- This figure will increase to 68,216 people in 2021 and to 132,000 people by 2041.
- 63% of people with dementia live at home.
- There are approximately 50,000 dementia family carers in Ireland.
- Ireland's first National Dementia Strategy is due to be published in 2014.

Dementia in Europe (ref: Alzheimer Europe (in press))

- There are almost 8 million people with dementia in the 28 member states.
- In line with population ageing the number of people with dementia in Europe will increase, doubling in Western Europe by 2040 and trebling in Eastern Europe.
- Although not a normal part of the ageing process, the prevalence of dementia does increase with age. For example, in Europe 1 in 20 people over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease (the most common form of dementia) and 1 in 5 people aged over 85 years.
- In the European Union less than half of all countries currently have a national dementia strategy or action plan.

