

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis: MEPs call for more funds for research into complex illness

- An estimate of 2 million Europeans affected by the disease
- ME/CFS is still poorly understood and consequently, underdiagnosed
- Increasing awareness is crucial to advance recognition of the illness and to improve lives of patients

Parliament wants to increase EU funding in order to advance research on diagnostic tests and treatment of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS).

In a resolution adopted on Wednesday with 676 votes in favour, 4 against and 8 abstentions, the European Parliament calls for additional EU funding for research on ME/CFS and the prioritisation of projects focused on biomedical research.

This comes after Parliament has received a number of petitions raising concerns over the absence of treatment and insufficient funding for research related to the disease that affects an estimate of 2 million people within the EU.

Support for biomedical research

“Myalgic encephalomyelitis is a chronic neuro-immune disease which affects many people, but unfortunately little is known about its causes and possible cure. We want to improve the everyday lives of patients and their families who are suffering and at risk of social exclusion.” said [Dolors Montserrat](#) (EPP, ES), Chair of the Petitions Committee.

“By adopting this resolution, Parliament gives voice to patients’ concerns and supports their legitimate requests for greater awareness and funding for research. We urge the Commission to allocate additional funds for EU biomedical research on ME/CFS, in order to quickly develop diagnostic tests and ensure patients have access to effective treatment.”

Promoting cooperation

The resolution calls for more European and international cooperation on research into ME/CSF, in order to speed up the development of objective diagnostics standards and treatment. In

addition, the Commission should look into the feasibility of an EU fund for prevention and treatment of ME/CFS, suggest MEPs.

Raising awareness

Due to insufficient knowledge among healthcare providers and absence of appropriate testing, ME/CFS is still poorly understood and as a result, underdiagnosed. Poor knowledge also can lead to stigmatisation and psychological distress, remind MEPs. The resolution emphasises the lack of recognition and awareness on this type of diseases and calls on the Commission and member states to launch information and awareness campaigns among health professionals and the public.

Background information

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) is a disabling and complex chronic disease of unknown origin, whose symptoms, severity and progression are extremely variable. The absence of treatment and insufficient funding for research on the disease, which affects an estimate of [2 million people](#) in the EU, was already highlighted in several questions to the Commission and petitions from citizens. The economic burden of the disease across Europe was estimated to amount to [EUR 40 billion each year](#).

Further information

[Committee on Petitions](#)

[Motion for resolution on additional funding for biomedical research on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis](#)

[Petition No. 0204/2019 \(2791 Supporters\) calling for more funds for biometric research into ME/CFS and patient support](#)

[EP question for written answer to the Commission on Myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome \(11 March 2020\)](#)

[Press release from vote in Committee with more details \(30-04-2020\)](#)

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