

The Decade of the Kidney™: Bridging Oceans with Patients' & other Stakeholders' IDEAS

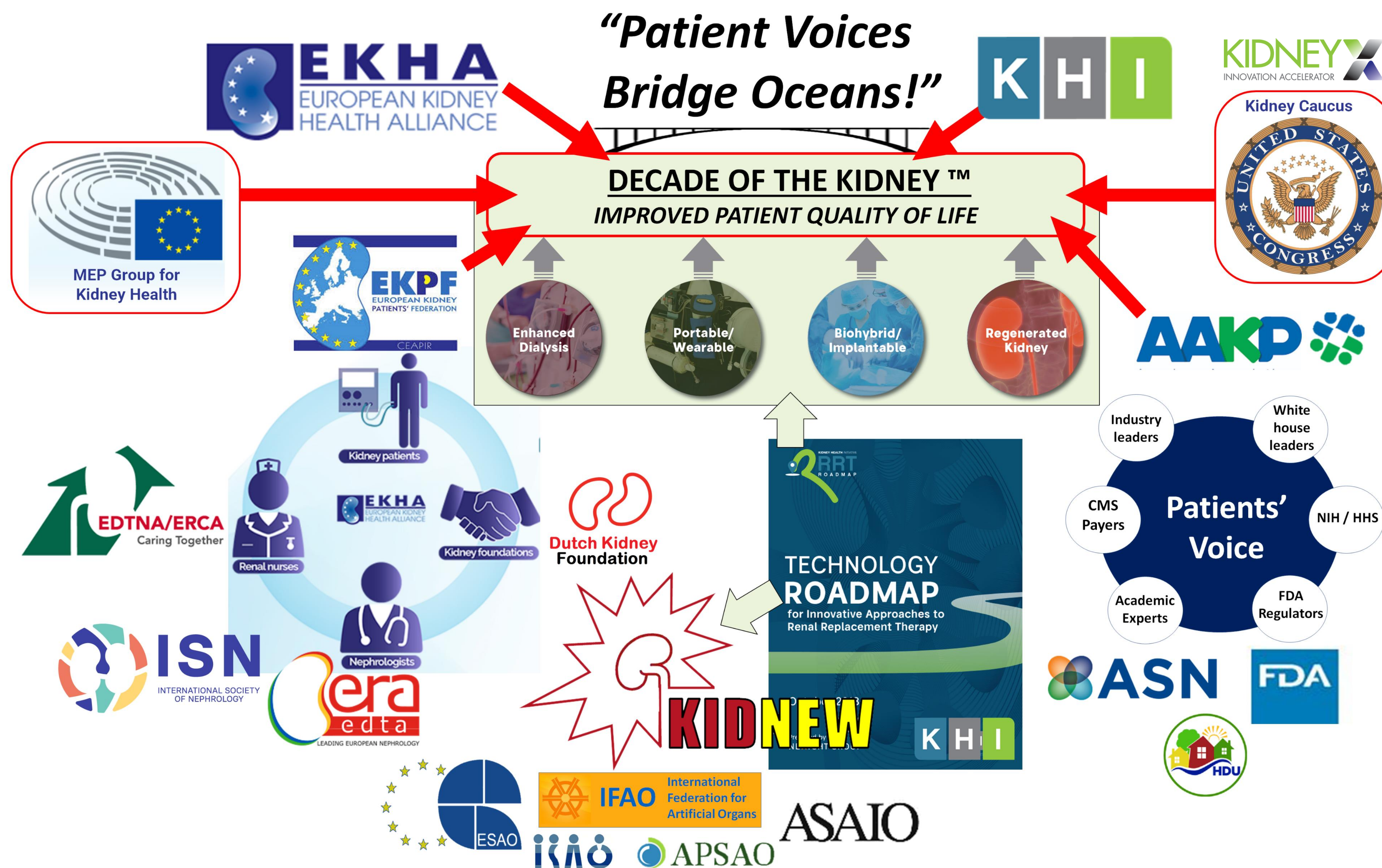
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Kidney disease has been neglected for too long and it is time, now more than ever, to reduce its burden and improve the quality of life of kidney patients

Introducing the Decade of the Kidney™

The American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP) has declared the next 10 years as the “Decade of the Kidney™”. To realize this promise, communities around kidney health must improve care choices, expand research, create innovative products and bolster education by 2030. A first step is recognizing the urgent need to translate innovation into reality for over 850 million people worldwide with kidney diseases, kidney failure, and those with a transplant kidney [1]. This first step is actively taken on both sides of the Atlantic: In America by the Kidney Health Initiative (KHI) and in Europe by the European Kidney Health Alliance (EKHA) [2, 3]. An innovation roadmap for kidney replacement therapies, released by KHI in 2018 is now being updated with input from a vast and expanding pool of international partners [4]. This international roadmap facilitates borders-crossing alignment between policy makers and boosts meaningful innovation!



The IDEAS conference as a pivoting event

International networks of nephrology organizations and artificial organs associations already existed separately, but now these jointly link with entrepreneurs and innovators from other disciplines, so that superdisciplinary R&D arises. With industry co-funding, this forms an opportunity-rich ecosystem [4, 5]. However, such an eco-system needs a “brokerage event” where patient consumers, clinicians, nurses, scientists, technologists, innovative entrepreneurs, investors and policy makers can meet to interact and “stir the silos” [5]. The IDEAS conference provides a dedicated kidney focused intersection for all these parties.

Patients, Professionals & educated Policy Makers can bridge the gap
Kidney disease affects people everywhere – it does not discriminate; it knows no political affiliation and it recognizes no border.

The Decade of the Kidney™ helps explain to the general public and policy makers worldwide that life-saving, cost-saving solutions are needed & achievable through innovation. For many politicians, the size and severity of kidney disease is still unknown. Patients and educated policy makers can jointly bridge the gap and help create new solutions to positively impact patient lives & economies, thereby improving societies!

If you combine Physicians with Technicians, you get Magicians!

Now, at the beginning of the decade of the kidney, we have the unique opportunity to align science, technology, innovative entrepreneurship, policy, and care as well as to transform lives and thereby amplify the success of the exceptional specialty called Nephrology! [1]

References

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3. Fighting the unbearable lightness of neglecting kidney health: The decade of the kidney. R Vanholder et al. *Clinical Kidney Journal* 14:1719-1730, 2021.
4. Technology Roadmap for Innovative Approaches to Renal Replacement Therapy. Kidney Health Initiative, October 2018.
5. The Kidney Health Initiative innovation roadmap for renal replacement therapies: Building the yellow brick road, while updating the map. FP Wieringa & M. Sheldon. *Artificial Organs*. (44)2:107-186, 2020.

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Currently existing organizational structures in nephrology-related fields, united by the Decade of the Kidney™

Nephrologists, dialysis/transplantation nurses, patient consumers/advocacy organizations, and kidney foundations from both Europe (left) and the United States of America (right) – both supported by their respective political representatives (EU Kidney Health MEP Group & US Congressional Kidney Caucus) – as well as the established worldwide structure of societies for Artificial Organs (bottom row) cooperate. Educated policy makers from both sides actively work on mutual funded breakthrough R&D. The yearly IDEAS conference brings all together, to stir “silos” and boost joint innovation.