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Breaking down the barriers.
Access to employment and the economics of brain health

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Speech summary:

My main goal for this meeting is to listen, get more awareness for myself about the inequalities for people with MS when trying to access the workplace

The EP has a fundamental role to play, we are the representatives of the 500 million people living in the EU. 700,000 of them suffer from MS and we have a duty to make sure that their interests are also represented at the policy area as well.

Everybody has the right to work and there should not be any kind of discrimination based on prejudices or stigmas.

Unemployment and youth unemployment is a serious problem in the EU. We have a few initiatives already which have been deployed, such as the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative. Today is important to see how within these initiatives there is specific attention paid to young people with MS in the workplace.

I think there are a lot of things we don't know about MS. I was surprised to learn that MS is a disease the hits mostly during the prime working years. At the same time, I was surprised by how simple the workplace adaptations that could improve the employability of people with MS are.

With all the unemployment at the moment, I feel that in the long term we need all the employable people we have in order to make sure our economy stays viable.

And we need to take the necessary measures now.

I think the lack of awareness is broad also among the employers, so they lack the experience to deal with these types of situations. We need to invite social partners and employers to see what we can all do to improve the situation. We all need to join forces!