

**STATEMENT TO BE READ OUT ON BEHALF OF
COMMISSIONER ANDRIUKAITIS**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I very much regret being unable to join you today.

I hope this sheds no doubt on my commitment to working together with all the European organisations such as the European Multiple Sclerosis Platform.

The Platform is doing a fine job in finding long-term solutions in areas that determine the quality of life of people with multiple sclerosis, including “Employment and Participation” – the theme of this Conference.

Helping to reducing the burden of chronic diseases, including multiple sclerosis, is one of my personal priorities. It is a natural desire of the medical doctor I was before entering politics.

I believe that we can find better and smarter ways to deal with chronic diseases. We can also find better ways of working together to succeed in the face of common challenges.

With this aim in mind, the Commission is supporting a Joint Action on chronic diseases and healthy ageing across the life-cycle. We are shaping a support structure for cooperation among Member States on addressing chronic diseases, including early diagnosis, and evaluation and implementation of good practices.

In addition, EU research policy is making major funding resources available for research into brain disorders, with neurodegenerative disorders being one of the priorities.

In this context, the Commission dedicated over 107 million euro to support 53 research projects on multiple sclerosis under the Seventh Framework Programme for Research.

In addition, the new EU Research Programme Horizon 2020 has already set aside 8 million euro to study multiple sclerosis pathophysiology and to develop new therapies and a clinical decision support system.

Your input and views on everything we do is very important to me. I would therefore encourage you to actively contribute to discussions within our EU Health Policy Forum, the meeting point of the health community as a whole.

I wish you every success with this event.

I look forward to working together with you in a positive spirit towards improving the lives of those living with multiple sclerosis.

End
347 words