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EMSP Spring Conference: 5,000 reasons to improve understanding of multiple sclerosis in children

Oslo, Norway

The European Multiple Sclerosis Platform (EMSP) and the Norwegian MS Society (MS forbundet) welcome an audience of 150 healthcare specialists, patient advocates and pharmaceutical industry leaders at EMSP's annual Spring Conference, organised on 17 and 18 May in Oslo, Norway.

The event is titled 'Growing with MS' and focuses on a rare and elusive form of multiple sclerosis while also outlining solutions for treatment, costs and the wellbeing of all those affected.

There are currently around 5,000 children worldwide with a confirmed diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (paediatric MS), a disease which affects the ability of the central nervous system in the brain and spinal cord to coordinate the rest of the body, with potentially disabling effects.

Having paediatric MS means that disability can occur much earlier in life and progress over a larger period of time. The rarity of such MS cases - less than 1 in 400 diagnoses globally - only enhances the difficulty in ensuring tailored healthcare for what continues to be an incurable disease.

Against this backdrop, EMSP's Conference is providing highly relevant information such as genetic risk factors, diagnosis criteria and guidelines for parents of children with MS.

MS costs: 1,5 million euros per minute

For the 700,000 people - children and adults - affected by MS in Europe the financial costs of living with this condition are huge. Concretely: € 1,5 million every minute *. That adds up to a staggering € 15 billion every year. And *the MS population is growing***.

EMSP has been raising awareness of this reality for the past 27 years. We have been running projects aiming to improve quality of life as well as access to treatment, care and employment.

"People with MS need appropriate, specialised support no matter where they are based in Europe", said EMSP's Interim CEO Bettina Hausmann in the run-up to the Spring Conference.

What are the solutions?

As emphasised by the Conference agenda, EMSP and its guests will discuss concrete solutions to support broader MS communities in Europe and beyond. Among them:

- Improving education of MS nurses (e.g.: MS Nurse Pro programme);
- Providing scientifically backed evidence (e.g.: *Cost of Illness, Time Matters in MS studies*);
- Keeping people with MS employed (e.g.: *Employment Pact, Ready for Work* projects).

Who we are

We are an umbrella NGO relying on the experience and support of 40 national MS organisations in 35 European countries in our quest for a world without multiple sclerosis. Find out about our projects and initiatives on www.emsp.org.

* *European Brain Council, Cost of Brain Diseases in Europe, 2010;* ** *Multiple Sclerosis International Federation, Atlas of MS, 2013*