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## Press Release

### Call to Action: Support Employment Pact for People with Multiple Sclerosis

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The **European Multiple Sclerosis Platform (EMSP)** is asking fellow patient organisations, national and European decision-makers and European employers to support a recently launched Employment Pact for people with multiple sclerosis (MS) and other neurodegenerative diseases.

The **Call to Action** came in the form of an event organised on 26 May in the European Parliament (EP) in Brussels and chaired by MEP **Adam Kosa**, Co-President of the EP Disability Intergroup.

*“I know what it is like to be a person with a disability trying to find work. I see the need to address this issue and I know we must find real solutions”,* said Mr Kosa, who is Europe’s first deaf MEP.

At European level, there is a 23 percent difference in employment levels between people with a disability and those unaffected, according to an EU survey on income conditions.

As signalled by EMSP’s Chief Executive **Maggie Alexander**, the Employment Pact provides all those interested in improving this situation the chance to act with urgency:

*“We are asking you - our member societies, partner NGOs and members of the European Parliament - to endorse this Pact. To spread the word and demonstrate good practice.”*

Ms Alexander also sent a message to employers:

*“If you’re a good employer of somebody with MS, you’re a good employer per se because you will have the right kind of work policies, conditions and awareness within your organisation.”*

EMSP’s Ambassador for the Call to Action event was MS advocate **Lori Schneider**, the first person with MS ever to scale Mount Everest and the Seven Summits.

Having lived with multiple sclerosis for almost 20 years, Ms Schneider urges employers to give people with similar conditions a chance:

*President Anne Winslow (IE) | Vice-President Antonella Moretti (IT)  
Treasurer Torben Damsgaard (DK) | Past President John Golding (NO)  
Dr Olivier Heinzlef (FR) | Ed Holloway (UK) | Christoph Lotter (CH)  
Maija Pontaga (LV) | Magdalena Fac (PL) | Klaus Knops (BE) | Pedro Carrascal (ES) |  
Constantinos Michalakis (GR) |  
Young People Representative Shana Pezaro (UK)*

*Chief Executive  
Maggie Alexander  
Deputy CEO and  
Director of External Affairs  
Christoph Thalheim*



*“We all have our own disabilities. But don't think that it is impossible for a person with a neurological disease to hold down a job, because it is not. Most people like me go months or years without even having symptoms. It is a matter of a few adaptations.”*

More information is available on [www.emsp.org](http://www.emsp.org).

### **Did you know?**

People are most commonly diagnosed with MS in their prime, between 20 and 40 years of age. This has a significant impact on their employment prospects.

While Europeans spend €15 billion every year on managing MS, 80 percent of people with MS have to leave work prematurely, between 35 and 55 years.

There are at least 9 million people living with neurodegenerative diseases in Europe. From this total, multiple sclerosis (MS) affects more than 700,000 people.

### **Paving the Path to Participation**

The European Employment Pact has been developed within the framework of the Paving the Path to Participation project, which has received co-funding from the European Commission under the DG Justice PROGRESS programme.

It reflects only the authors' view and the Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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