

Press information

United for premature life

First European Parents' Meeting of the European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) in Rome

Munich/ Rome, 19.11.2008 – (ps) They are called „Preemies“, „Tummeliten“ or „Frühchen“: Every year about one million children are born premature in Europe. Despite this high number consistent pan-European legal regulations do not exist on the treatment and after care of the biggest children patient group in Europe. On the occasion of the first international congress of the Union of European Neonatal and Perinatal Societies (UENPS) the European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) invited representatives of European parents' associations to Rome for the first European Parents' Meeting on premature birth in order to discuss common standards and joint demands on European health politics.

25 representatives from 18 nations

From Sweden to Italy, from Portugal to Turkey, the representatives discussed a joint declaration. There was great unity among the participants at Rome on a number of issues ranging from a European-wide introduction of a prolonged maternity leave for parents of premature babies to the psychological and social care of parents at the neonatal ward and social-medical aftercare for families with preterm infants and newborn infants with illnesses. Abbott, a global, broad-based health care company, has supported the first European Parents' Meeting of the European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI).

Special Guest: Star pianist Robert Wells

On the occasion of the presentation of the results of the 1st European Parents' Meeting a press conference took place at the International Congress of the Union of European Neonatal and

Perinatal Societies (UENPS) in Rome. As special guest the renowned Swedish pianist Robert Wells, himself father of a preterm baby, gave a very moving concert. He is the founder of the Swedish parents' association „Tummeliten“ (English: Tom Thumb). Robert Wells experience reflects those of many families with preterm babies:

"In 1999 when our second son Teodor ("Teddy") was born 10 weeks too early, this came as a shock to me and my partner. Our life was in turmoil and changed completely. Without any indication my partner experienced bleedings and we rushed with a thousand thoughts on our mind to the hospital. Teddy weighed 1,900 grams and spent his first days in the incubator. Back then we experienced how little resources were available to the premature babies. I noticed other fates, saw how staff and parents had to interrupt and change again and again visiting hours, work schedules, medication and routines due to a lack of space and material. I noticed, too, that this were not the mistakes made by the hospital but the lack of a sincere amount of financial means."

EFCNI is a network for those involved in the care of preterm or sick newborn infants as well as a forum for scientists. It was set up to effect long-term improvements in the care of such infants, and to give the largest group of child patients in Europe the attention and support it deserves.

For further information please turn to: www.efcni.org.

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