

Press Release

**Ene, mene, mini: Give preterm infants your voice!**  
Online voting for better treatment and care of preterm infants

**17 November 2011 – Special care and better family support for our smallest babies: This call is the focus of the European-wide online voting starting on the occasion of the World Prematurity Day on 17 November 2011. Internet users voting for an improved care of preterm infants support a ‘Call to Action for Newborn Health’ which will be introduced to the European Parliament on 23 November 2011. Well-known signers will be Dr. Angelika Niebler and Dr. Peter Liese, both Members of the European Parliament. Voting will be performed online on the new website [www.ene-mene-mini.eu](http://www.ene-mene-mini.eu) launched by the European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) in cooperation with the Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ouders van Couveusekinderen (VVOC) and other national parents’ organisations across Europe.**

Parents who gave birth to a preterm baby or persons who shared the time before and after a preterm birth with the concerned family know quite well the feeling of helplessness: Even if Belgium and most European countries provide high-quality neonatal care, the special needs of preterm infants are often neglected. Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive public information and education on this topic: *“Still today many pregnant women are not aware of potential risk factors and how to prevent preterm birth. Concerned parents need better guidance how to care for their preterm baby during their stay in the hospital and after discharge as well as how to obtain support,”* says Silke Mader, Chairwoman of EFCNI’s Executive Board. According to a pan-European data collection about prevention, treatment and care of preterm infants (*EU Benchmarking Report 2009/2010 “Too Little, Too Late?”*), thousands of infant deaths, chronic diseases and other medical conditions related to preterm birth could be prevented through improved antenatal and neonatal care.

**Ten steps towards European-wide harmonized standards**

Dr. Angelika Niebler, who will introduce the ‘Call to Action for Newborn Health’ to the European Parliament on 23 November 2011 together with Dr. Peter Liese and other Members of the European Parliament, is hoping to set a milestone in implementing European-wide quality standards for the treatment and care of preterm infants: *“As patron of EFCNI it is of particular importance to me that equal and effective neonatal care and better prevention are provided. Every online vote helps to give our call extra weight. Children are the future of our society!”* Dr. Peter Liese summarizes the concern of the ten-point Call to Action to be launched on 23 November: *“The chain of conscientious education on preterm birth, improved quality of care and enhanced after-care programmes for the baby’s growing up needs to be brought up to consistent high standards”* Regarding most European countries the EFCNI report points out the need for political action. Until now there are no coordinated quality standards for the care and treatment of preterm infants in hospitals. There is also a lack in family support and proper educational support for former preterm babies.

**Online voice for preterm infants**

The new website [www.ene-mene-mini.eu](http://www.ene-mene-mini.eu) is an information platform all about preterm birth. In addition to interesting facts about preterm babies and possibilities for better prevention of preterm birth it offers information on treatment and care in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and after discharge. At the same time, it provides links to associations and personal stories of concerned parents or family members. The site was initiated by the “European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants” (EFCNI), VVOC and the other national parents’ organisations in Europe.

500,000 preterm infants are born every year in the EU—one in ten of all babies born. This makes preterm infants Europe’s largest child patient group. The rates of preterm birth in Europe vary from 6.3 to 11.4 %.

## About EFCNI

---

The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) is the first pan-European organisation to represent the interests of preterm and newborn infants and their families. It gathers together parents and medical professionals with the common goal of improving long-term health of newborn and preterm children by ensuring the best possible prevention, treatment, care and support. EFCNI receives funding from its partners Abbott, Nestlé Nutrition and other private companies and individual donors.

For more information please click here: [www.efcni.org](http://www.efcni.org)

### For more information:

Contact at EFCNI:
Silke Mader, Chairwoman
<a href="mailto:silke.mader@efcni.org">silke.mader@efcni.org</a>
+49-170-169 56 04