

**European ME Alliance Statement
WHO Regional Committee Meeting for Europe
28-30 October 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark**

Agenda Item 8: A healthy start for a healthy life: a strategy for child and adolescent health and well-being in the WHO European Region 2026–2030

Honourable Chair, Esteemed Delegates,

It is heartbreaking but true: children with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME, sometimes referred to as ME/CFS) face relentless fatigue, severe pain, brain fog, and the main symptom of 'post-exertional malaise' that means even minimal physical, mental or emotional exertion can make their bodies and energy levels 'crash' and their ability to function unpredictable.

They miss years of education, friends, and critical moments in their development. Families are left struggling, giving up jobs to care for sick children, causing financial hardship and creating generational poverty.

Because the illness is misunderstood, some parents are wrongly accused of child neglect or abuse. Children have been removed from their homes and placed in foster care or psychiatric units, and coerced to use harmful therapies, causing them enormous trauma and irreparable harm to their health. This exposes a critical gap in child and adolescent health systems — one the WHO strategy must urgently fix.

We call on WHO and its Member States to ensure early recognition, home-based care, tailored education, family-centred support, and legal protection for children and adolescents with ME.

By addressing ME early, WHO Europe would not just protect children today — it would reduce the burden of lifelong disability tomorrow, and truly deliver on the promise of healthy ageing and well-being for all at all ages.

Thank you.

- European ME Alliance: <https://www.europeanmealliance.org/index.shtml>
- World Patient Safety Day: <https://www.europeanmealliance.org/news-Q32025-006wpsd.shtml>
- The Netherlands: Parents clash with authorities over harmful therapies: <https://www.europeanmealliance.org/news-Q22025-003-NL-news.shtml>
- NICE Guidelines on ME/CFS includes diagnosis and management of children and adolescents: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng206>