

1. Main aims & activities:

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) is a preventable disease, which has rapidly become a growing public health problem in Europe and other parts of the world. So far no causal treatment is known, but a very efficient and well-tolerated vaccination is available for protection against the disease.

The **International Patient Information Board on Tick-Borne Encephalitis** = TBE (or FSME in German, standing for Frühsommer-Meningoenzephalitis) was founded in April 2006 in a combined effort by the members of the International Scientific Working Group on TBE (www.isw-tbe.info), building on the success of the Austrian TBE patient advocacy group (www.zecken.or.at).

The association was established in order to carry along the Austrian success story fighting TBE/FSME into all the other European countries similarly affected. This ensues primarily through active, targeted educational work, so as to both prevent as many new cases of TBE/FSME as possible in Europe over the years to come, and to inform those afflicted about opportunities for the therapy and rehabilitation for physical, cognitive and mood-related deficits.

Drawn up as a challenge to public institutions and to those responsible for policy in the individual countries has been a pan-European 10-point-action-plan (=catalogue of demand), which is first being introduced in the course of the official launch of this patients' platform during a press conference in Vienna on April 25th, 2006, and which is intended to raise awareness of TBE/FSME as still being one of the great health policy challenges of the 21st Century.

To summarize the main **aims of the patient platform** are:

- Education and information about FSME/TBE
- Providing support and services for patients and/or sufferers who have contracted FSME/TBE
- Publicly representing the interests of those having the disease
- Creating networks and platforms for people afflicted, those close to them and interested parties within Europe
- Intensified awareness-raising about TBE/FSME and its consequences, among the general population
- Continuing instruction and training
- Medical and sociological research
- Supporting local/trans-regional FSME/TBE projects that address not only the treatment of sufferers, but also the enlightenment of healthy people

The international patient information platform for TBE/FSME "tick victims" is supposed to be set up as a non-profit association that depends on charitable contributions in order to promote local and trans-regional TBE/FSME projects to the benefit of those afflicted and people close to them, as well in favor of FSME/TBE prevention across all of Europe.

Non-profit association "Tick Victims" : Association in the process of foundation

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