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Fertility Europe calls to bring fertility to the forefront of Europe's mind amidst European Fertility Week

New #40reasons campaign highlights the impact of fertility on Europe

BRUSSELS, 6 Nov. 2017 – Today marks the launch of the #40reasons campaign and the start of the second annual European Fertility Week – one poised to bring fertility to the forefront of the European mind set. The #40reasons campaign ties into the 40th anniversary of the conception of the world's first IVF baby, which occurs on November 10. Even so, four decades after this breakthrough many European citizens still do not have the necessary access to – or even awareness of – the fertility options and resources available to them. Many Europeans have trouble speaking openly about fertility because of the immense stigma that surrounds the issue. As such, fertility is not as high on the political or national agenda as it should be. This year's European Fertility Week is set to bring Europeans everywhere the facts of fertility while calling for greater awareness and policy support in member states to address the unequal access to fertility treatments within Europe.

“Due to the nature of the diagnosis, men and women struggling with fertility are often reticent to talk about their struggles. Because fertility is really down to each individual, it is a complex challenge,” says Satu Rautakallio-Hokkanen, Chair of Fertility Europe. “Yet this doesn't mean it shouldn't be talked about. By speaking openly about medical options, personal struggles and the truth, Europe can take the necessary steps to combat any stigma surrounding fertility - because at the end of the day, fertility matters to everyone for the simple reason that they are a parent, sister, brother, or friend.”

European Fertility Week 2017 comes at a time when the fertility of Europe is suffering. Europe's target birth rate per woman should be 2.1; yet, according to recent studies it averages at about 1.58 and dips as low as 1.4 in countries like Italy and Greece. This means that by 2080, the working population in the EU is expected to decrease by about 40 million people. The consequences these numbers could have for Europe are alarming. A falling birth rate combined with an aging population means Europe is in danger of losing economic, cultural and overall international power over the next 50 years.

“The time to start talking about fertility is now,” says Dr Roy Farquharson, Chair of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology (www.eshre.eu). “We need to initiate this vital conversation so as to reduce the attached stigma and allow individuals, both women and men, to engage in communicating their feelings and attitudes. We need to work together as specialist fertility societies and patient organisations to help open the door and promote an honest dialogue about fertility and medically assisted reproduction.”

European Fertility Week, launched in 2016, was created to bring to light the rarely talked about fertility dilemma in Europe. Last year, Fertility Europe set their sights on breaking down the stigma and silence that surrounds fertility within Europe. This year, the organization aims to snap Europe to attention by furthering the conversation and rationale on why fertility matters by highlighting #40reasons that heighten the fertility conversation.

To highlight this, and the other social, economic, demographic, and health reasons why fertility matters, the #40reasons campaign will kick off with a video displaying the real reasons why European's care about fertility. Thereafter, Fertility Europe will release #40reasons to care about fertility based in science and numbers. Reasons will be released daily via [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), with online audiences encouraged to add their own reasons to the conversation as well. Each of Fertility Europe's #40reasons are relevant nuggets of truth pulled from all aspects of European life, from economics to mental health.

In addition to sharing their own reasons to talk fertility, audiences can add a "European Fertility Week 2017" banner to their social media profile to show their friends and loved ones that they truly care about fertility.

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ABOUT FERTILITY EUROPE

Fertility Europe is an association of European patient organisations and associations involved with fertility and infertility issues. In the EU infertility impacts more than 25 million people. By opening the door to honest and productive conversation, Fertility Europe aims to squash the stigma surrounding fertility and contribute to an open dialogue on the subject across Europe.

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