

Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As patron of Alzheimerforeningen, the Danish Alzheimer's Association, it gives me great pleasure to officially open the 26th Alzheimer Europe Conference entitled "Excellence in dementia care and research" and to welcome over 650 delegates from across Europe to our beautiful city of Copenhagen.

The aim of these Annual Conferences is to bring together researchers and academics, health and social care professionals, staff and volunteers of Alzheimer associations, representatives from industry and policy makers, as well as the people directly affected by dementia and their carers. I would therefore like to extend a particularly warm welcome to the over 30 people with dementia from Denmark and abroad who will participate in this event. I am delighted that they will do so not just as spectators, but as speakers and experts who will share their very personal experiences of living with dementia, of receiving a diagnosis and support and of advocating on behalf of other people affected by the disease. Many thanks for this willingness to share your experiences and for your dedication and commitment!

I am particularly happy as well that Denmark recently announced the launch of a new dementia strategy and thereby joined the ever increasing number of countries who have recognised dementia as a public health and research priority. Later, you will hear in more detail about the activities of this plan from Sophie Løhde Jacobsen, our Danish Minister for Health, but I particularly welcome the focus on making our country, our cities and our society dementia-friendly.

Mahatma Gandhi once said: "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members". What better measure than to see how our society supports and looks after people with dementia and the people who care for them. I am sure we will hear and learn from the many interesting experiences, projects and activities which you came here to share.

I would like to congratulate Alzheimerforeningen and Alzheimer Europe for the very interesting and truly inspiring programme they have been able to put together and thank you all for sharing your work and research. Dementia is too big an issue for any country to solve on its own and it will only be through collaborative efforts such as this conference that we will be able to come closer to our goal of developing a dementia-friendly society,

of providing practical solutions for the care and support of people with dementia and of identifying better treatments for those affected in the future.

Apart from sharing your good practices and learning from one another, I hope that you will also find the time to explore our beautiful city and experience our Danish hospitality and warm welcome.

I wish you all a very successful conference and an interesting few days in Copenhagen.