

**Christoph Thalheim
Secretary General
European MS Platform (EMSP)**



Christoph Thalheim spent the first part of his professional life in the German Airforce, where he got his university degree in Pedagogics and left as Captain after 12 years of service. A complete new orientation towards the field of "Intercultural Learning" followed, caused by a sabbatical year, which saw him travelling once around the world.

Returning from his travels, Christoph set up and ran the EU-liaison office in Brussels, for a major international non-governmental organisation (NGO), focussing on intercultural learning and international youth exchange programmes for 10 years.

At the start of 2000, he took on the role of an EU Affairs Consultant, working mainly as Secretary General of the European Multiple Sclerosis-Platform (EMSP). The EMSP represents the interests of 34 national MS Societies and more than 500,000 people affected by MS.

From 2000-2009, the EMSP has emerged from an unknown "kitchen table business" starting with 21 member organisations, one sponsor, no major projects, very limited funds and one "multi-purpose" part time staff to one of the key players in European patient advocacy.

Today, the EMSP has excellent working relations with the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumer Affairs (DG SANCO), Directorate General for Enterprise (DG-Enterprise), (DG Enterprise), Directorate-General for Research (DG Research) and Directorate-General for Employment (DG Employment) as well as with Members and senior staff of the European Parliament.

The EMSP has a seat in several European Think-Tanks and Working Groups (including the Management Board of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and their Working Party with European Patient and Consumer Organisations) and supports its 34 national Member organisations by training, information and lobbying initiatives and tools, meant to improve continuously the quality of life of people with MS and their care givers and families.