

Engagement Programme 2016

Norway News: Nor-Switch study and patient activities

In early November 2016, PARE leaders Dieter Wiek, Chair of the EULAR Standing Committee of PARE, together with Marios Kouloumas, Vice President EULAR, representing PARE, and supported by Birte Glüsing, EULAR Secretariat, travelled to Norway to meet Prof. Tore K. Kvien, Head of the Department of Rheumatology at the Diakonhjemmet Hospital in Oslo. It was a great opportunity to learn first-hand about the results of the Nor-Switch Study.



Prof Tore Kvien

The final outcome of this study was awaited with great anticipation worldwide and is expected to have an immense impact on national health systems. Although the results show that the tested biosimilar was not inferior to the originator biologic, it is only the first study; many more will follow. “Studies need to be done for each medication separately – our results cannot suggest that switching patients to biosimilars in general can be approved. But in this specific case it does show that it is worthwhile to investigate further so that, in the long term, access to treatment can be

improved” commented Prof. Kvien. PARE is currently working on updating the EULAR PARE position paper on biosimilars and the discussions with Prof. Kvien and his team were extremely insightful and helpful.

The second highlight of the visit was meeting the team of the Norwegian Rheumatism Association (NRF) and their CEO Tone Granaas. “We are always very happy to liaise closer with EULAR. Over the last 4 years we have had to focus on the review and renewal of our internal set up and structures but now we feel excited and ready to engage at European level” said Tone.

The World Arthritis Day activities in Norway were a great starting point and BURG, the Norwegian organisation for young people with rheumatic or musculoskeletal diseases, plans to engage more closely with Young PARE. “We are very impressed by the variety of high level activities and projects organized by the Norwegian association. There is a lot of best practice here. It is a highly engaged team and we look forward to our future exchanges” said Marios Kouloumas.



The EULAR visitors warmly welcomed by the Norwegian team