

## **EFCNI chairwoman Silke Mader joins worldwide network for social visionaries**

As a “founder for the good cause”, Silke Mader receives the most valuable promotion for Social Entrepreneurs – Nobel Peace Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi attends the award ceremony in Berlin.

**Berlin/Munich, 10 March 2015 – Silke Mader, co-founder and chairwoman of EFCNI’s Executive Board becomes an Ashoka Fellow. For more than 30 years, Ashoka supports in more than 80 countries pioneers of society who solve societal problems with innovative approaches. Kailash Satyarthi, the 2014 Nobel Prize laureate, himself a pioneer and since 1993 part of the Ashoka network, will be a guest during the award ceremony.**

It is now nearly 25 years that the Nobel Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi joined Ashoka’s global network for social entrepreneurs as an Ashoka fellow. Tonight, he will be the special guest, when EFCNI’s chairwoman Silke Mader, , will be awarded the prestigious fellowship together with four other founder personalities. “Ashoka Fellows’ innovations have already established citizen-owned green energy, business start-ups as an escape from unemployment and new professions for people with disabilities. At Ashoka, we bet on the potential of an idea – and provide support for the sometimes long way to its breakthrough” says Ashoka Director Europe Felix Oldenburg.

Europe needs new ideas and solutions particularly with respect to newborn health: Worldwide, one baby in ten is born preterm every year, about 500,000 children in Europe alone and their number continues to grow. Although it often does not lead to further long-term problems, more than 60% of all deaths in children under five are caused by preterm birth; many affected children and their families feel the consequences for their entire life.

The treatment and care of preterm and newborn children – and the standard for it - vary strongly between countries, regions and even hospitals. As a mother of preterm born twins, Silke Mader experienced this challenge first hand – and has since campaigned for the smallest members of our society. After having led self-help groups and patient organisations for many years, she realised that the challenges in prevention, treatment and care as well as follow-up of preterm children could only be solved by thinking big: internationally, across the disciplines, unified.

Together with, an affected father, and a neonatologist, she founded EFCNI in 2008. Since then she has been campaigning successfully for the professionalization of and networking among European parent organisations. This is an important prerequisite to enable parent organisations to work at eye level with professional societies, clinicians and politicians to shape the care and treatment for preterm and newborn infants.

Through the benchmarking report “Too little too late” and the EFCNI White Paper with a set of medical and political recommendations, EFCNI achieved that the topic was put on the European political health agenda. On a global level, EFCNI initiated World Prematurity Day on 17 November which directs the attention of millions of people to preterm birth.

With the support of the Ashoka Fellowship, Silke Mader and EFCNI will receive comprehensive pro bono consulting as well as international network with like-minded companies and partners. “I am very proud and grateful to join the worldwide network of Ashoka fellows today. This is a great opportunity not only for me but also for the common objective and vision of many: to enable each child in Europe to the best start in life”, says Silke Mader. “Preterm birth is not a marginal phenomenon; babies born too early are Europe’s largest child patient group. But still, these children and their parents receive too little political support and above all, they lack the backing in society. That is something we want to change”, she adds.

Together with Silke Mader, four other founders will join the Ashoka Fellowship this Tuesday: Mira Maier, mystipendium.de, Roman R. Rüdiger, buddY E.V. – Forum neue Lernkultur, Annette Habert Flechtwerk 2+1 and Jacob Radloff oekom verlag / oekom research.

### **Futher information**

*Press information Ashoka (German)*

[http://germany.ashoka.org/sites/germany.ashoka.org/files/Presseinfo\\_Wertvolle-Foerderung-fuer-Nachwuchsnobelpreistraeger.pdf](http://germany.ashoka.org/sites/germany.ashoka.org/files/Presseinfo_Wertvolle-Foerderung-fuer-Nachwuchsnobelpreistraeger.pdf)

*Background information new Ashoka fellows (German)*

[http://germany.ashoka.org/sites/germany.ashoka.org/files/Hintergrundinfo\\_Die-neuen-Ashoka-Fellows.pdf](http://germany.ashoka.org/sites/germany.ashoka.org/files/Hintergrundinfo_Die-neuen-Ashoka-Fellows.pdf)

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**About EFCNI:**

The European Foundation for the Care of Newborn Infants (EFCNI) is the first pan-European organisation to represent the interests of preterm and newborn infants and their families. It gathers together parents and healthcare experts from different disciplines with the common goal of improving long-term health of preterm and newborn children by ensuring the best possible prevention, treatment, care and support. EFCNI receives funding from its partners, AbbVie, Dräger, Nestlé Nutrition, Philips AVENT, Shire as well as from other private companies and individual donors.

For more information on EFCNI: [www.efcni.org](http://www.efcni.org)

**About Ashoka:**

The non-profit organisation Ashoka supports Social Entrepreneurs worldwide – entrepreneurial thinking founder personalities, who put their system changing ideas into practice. Living examples are the organisations of Ashoka fellows like the electricity plant Schöna, which with its citizen-owned electricity sketched the change in the energy system transformation already 20 years ago, or Wikipedia, who make knowledge accessible for everyone. In 2014, Ashoka Fellow Kailash Satyarthi became the Ashoka network's second Nobel Peace laureate after Muhammad Yunus.

Founded in 1980, Ashoka exists in Germany as a non-profit private limited company since 2003. In 2005, Andreas Heinecke, founder of „Dialogue in the Dark“, became the first Ashoka Fellow. Today, 56 Ashoka Fellows are part of the network in Germany.

For more information on Ashoka Germany: [germany.ashoka.org](http://germany.ashoka.org)