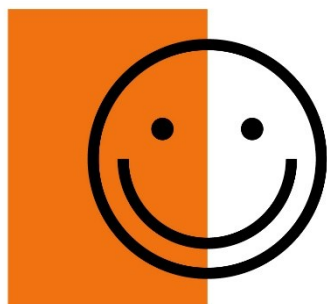


# EPNS Sustainability Report 2024



EUROPEAN  
PAEDIATRIC  
NEUROLOGY  
SOCIETY

An international and independent non-profit making Society for physicians, health professionals, scientists, and students with research and/or clinical interest in Paediatric Neurology.

## Introduction

We are pleased to present to you our inaugural EPNS Sustainability Report for 2024.

Sustainability has always been an important consideration for the EPNS however this first report represents a milestone critical step forward for our Society as we formalise our collective responsibility to create a healthier, more sustainable future in the field of paediatric neurology— for our patients, their carers, the physicians, health professionals, scientists, students we serve and the environment we inhabit.

In recent years, the need for sustainable practices in healthcare has become more pressing than ever. As paediatric neurology healthcare professionals we are uniquely positioned to not only address the physical and psychological health of our patients but also to advocate for the environmental and social conditions that impact well-being.

Our journey at the EPNS started with the Young EPNS (YEPNS) reflecting on how we are already integrating sustainability into the everyday operation of our Society, from the way we manage our activities to how we support education, research and advocate for policies that promote health equity and environmental justice.

This first EPNS Sustainability Report lays out a comprehensive overview of our society's sustainability initiatives and plans for the future. We will build upon the foundations we have laid in this report on our ongoing journey towards sustainability.

We look forward to the journey ahead and the impact we will make together.

Professor Kevin Rostasy, EPNS President

Professor Anna Jansen, Chair EPNS Advocacy & Collaboration Committee

Dr Thomas Foadelli, YEPNS Climate change & Sustainability Working Group Coordinator



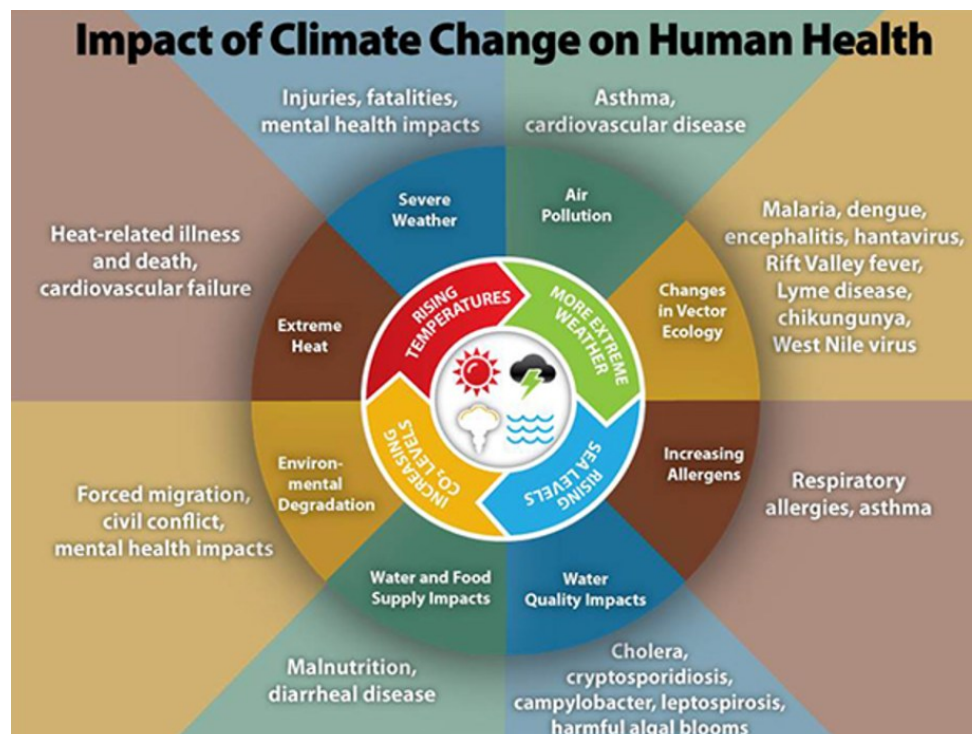
## EPNS Mission Statement

The EPNS as an international and independent non-profit making Society for physicians, health professionals, scientists, and students with research and/or clinical interest in Paediatric Neurology.

Our mission is to promote excellence in patient care, research, and education to improve the neurological outcome of children and young people in Europe and across the world.

The EPNS goals are outlined as follows:

- Advocate for easy and equitable access to the highest standard of patient care in neurology for children, young people, and support for their caregivers.
- Promote excellence in education and training, providing a comprehensive learning environment in paediatric neurology to students, trainees, and qualified professionals in all stages of their career.
- Foster, expand and support science and clinical research in paediatric neurology bringing together the best clinicians and scientists in the field.
- Engage with policy makers, patient groups, and the general public to promote best practice from fetal life to the young adult.
- Nurture multidisciplinary and international collaborations to address the diagnosis and treatment of children and young people with neurological disorders.
- Improve understanding, respect, inclusion, and support for all individuals affected by long term neurological sequelae providing appropriate management and rehabilitation.



## What does Sustainability mean to the EPNS?

With our EPNS Mission Statement at the forefront, sustainability for the EPNS means the long-term ability to provide high-quality, accessible care for our patients, while balancing the environmental, social, and economic impacts of the field.



Sustainability is important in paediatric neurology not only for the health of the planet but also for the well-being of future generations of patients, practitioners, and communities.

The goal is to create a system that benefits both the current and future needs of children and young people with neurological disorders, ensuring that they receive the best care possible in a sustainable, ethical, and equitable manner.

## Why is the EPNS formalising its sustainability journey?

The EPNS has always been committed to sustainability in its practices, however these efforts, while integral to our mission, have traditionally been carried out informally, driven by the values and dedication of our members.

In 2025, however the EPNS will work towards forming a dedicated committee of EPNS members to focus on sustainability. This marks the first time that we have formalised our sustainability strategy, recognising the need for a comprehensive, coordinated approach across all aspects of our operations.

By establishing clear goals and measurable objectives, we will ensure that sustainability is embedded in everything we do—from environmental practices to social responsibility and economic resilience—ultimately positioning the EPNS to make an even greater, long-lasting impact on both healthcare and the community.





## How is the EPNS already undertaking sustainable activities?

### Social Sustainability

#### Intersectoral Global Action Plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders (IGAP):

This 10-year World Health Organisation (WHO) plan has been adopted by 192 member states and aims to improve access to treatment and care and quality of life of people with neurological disorders, their carers and families as well as promote brain health across the life-course. It includes actions to be undertaken by all stakeholders to attain the global targets. The EPNS contributed to the drafting of the plan and now has a major focus on advocating at an international, European and national level for all children, regardless of socioeconomic background, geographic location, or race, to have access to specialised neurological care.



**Alba:** is a network of leading scientists, aiming to promote equity and diversity in the brain sciences. The EPNS is a proud signatory of the [#ALBADeclaration](http://alba.network/declaration) on Equity and Inclusion. The Declaration represents our commitment to make science more inclusive. <http://alba.network/declaration>

**Education and Training:** The EPNS provides ongoing education and professional development for paediatric neurologists, covering all areas of Europe, aiming to address disparities in opportunities. Furthermore, by offering bursaries and virtual events the EPNS supports diversity and inclusion within the field, ensuring that healthcare providers reflect the communities they serve. Scientific scoring systems, to avoid bias, are used to evaluate applications such as bursaries, fellowships and case presentations. During the EPNS Exam, there is no time limit, so those who did not speak English as their native language are not disadvantaged.



### Scientific and Research:

The EPNS actively promotes sustainability through its commitment to advancing scientific research and evidence-based practices. By fostering cutting-edge research in pediatric neurology, the EPNS ensures that the latest, most effective treatments are available to children with neurological conditions, ultimately improving outcomes and reducing long-term healthcare costs. This approach not only drives innovation but also contributes to a more sustainable healthcare system by improving care delivery, reducing unnecessary treatments, and optimising resource use in paediatric neurology. Scientific scoring systems, to avoid bias, are used to evaluate applications such as bursaries, locations for future EPNS congresses and abstract submissions. It is a requirement for EPNS congress venues to have a sustainability policy.



**EPNS Membership:** Non-elected EPNS Board members are co-opted from underrepresented countries to balance representation at board level. EPNS has adopted a code of conduct which attendees at all our courses and meetings must agree to. We have substantially reduced membership fees for members from low-resource countries plus all trainees, students, allied health workers and neuroscientists.



## Environmental Sustainability

In paediatric neurology, environmental sustainability involves minimising the field's ecological impact, which can be achieved through several approaches.

The EPNS has the following **Environmental Pledge** published on its website:

The Society aims to be an environmentally conscious organisation contributing towards a safe and healthy environment.

### Objectives

1. To integrate the consideration of environmental concerns and impacts into all our decision making and activities.
2. To assess on a continuous basis the environmental impact of all EPNS activities.
3. To encourage third parties involved with the EPNS to work towards establishing similar standards.

### Method

1. To improve the environmental performance of the EPNS, the EPNS environmental pledge will become a regular item on the EPNS Board meeting agenda in order to monitor progress.
2. Generate the support and involvement of EPNS Board members, EPNS membership and 3rd party partners by working together to tackle environmental issues.

## The YEPNS Climate Change and Sustainability Working Group

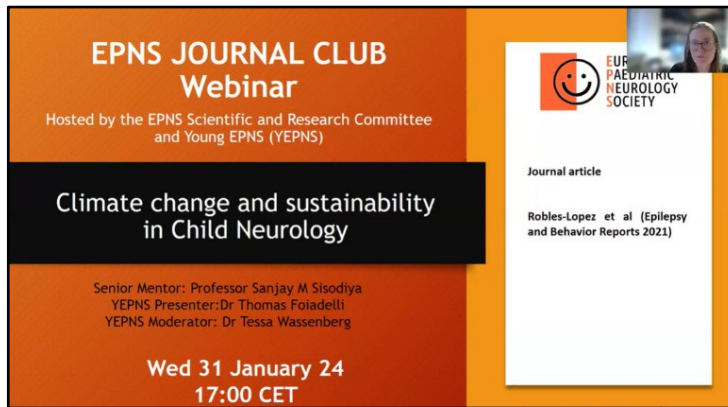
The Young EPNS working group on Climate Change and Sustainability was founded in 2023 with a specific aim: *bringing Environmental and Sustainability issues within the EPNS priorities*. Specifically, the goals of the WG are the following:

- Raise scientific awareness and **engage** the EPNS board and members on climate change and available solutions to
- Prompt **research** on the impact of climate change on children with neurological diseases
- Estimate and reduce (and possibly compensate) the carbon **footprint** of the Society and all events organised by the EPNS
- Advocate for a more sustainable EPNS **Congress**
- Support the application of the 5 “R’s” (Refuse, Reduce, Re-use, re-purpose, recycle) to our everyday **work** as pediatric neurologist
- Promote not only environmental but also social **sustainability** including accessibility, financial sustainability, gender equality, inclusion and mental health promotion within the Society





## During the last two years, the following initiatives were promoted:



**Journal Club** on the impact of extreme weather events and epilepsy



**EPNS Congresses:** Influencing decision-makers for EPNS Congress on Climate and Accessibility issues



## Networking with other Societies

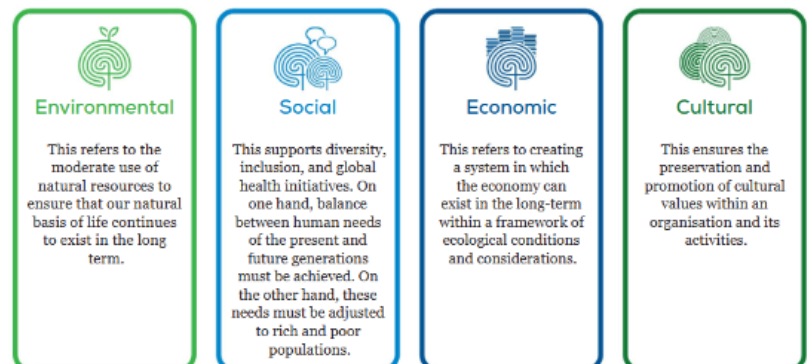
**Joint YEPNS-YES** session on Climate Change in Epilepsy at the 2024 European Epilepsy congress (ILAE)

**EAN joint task force** on Environmental Influences in Neurology (*position paper currently under review*)

## The main topics of interest include, but are not limited to

- Climate-Induced Neurological Disorders
- Advocacy and Policy Development
- Promoting Sustainable Practices in Neurology
- Education and Awareness
- Research and Innovation
- Global Collaborations

## Four Pillars of Sustainability





**Brain Innovation Days** – EBC (Poster presentation in 2023, round table in 2024 over Climate change and Brain Health)



### Climate change and Environmental awareness

#### A European working group to study the environmental impact and promote sustainability in Child Neurology

Thomas Foiadelli<sup>1,2</sup>, Maria T. Papadopoulou<sup>1,3</sup>, Roberto Previtali<sup>1,4</sup>,  
Tessa Wassenberg<sup>1,5\*</sup>, Anna Jansen<sup>6,9</sup>, Kevin Rostasy<sup>7,9</sup>, Sameer Zuberi<sup>8,9</sup>

#### Challenge

- Climate change is linked directly and indirectly to several health issues
- Low-income countries, people with low socio-economic status, and people with chronic and disabling conditions including neurological disorders are more vulnerable for this
- Climate change will continue to have a severe impact on future generations if no action is taken



WHERE THE  
MAGIC HAPPENS

#### Perspective

#### CLIMATE CHANGE IS HERE

The interaction with other Societies, patient or industry representatives that are interested in environmental awareness and in collaborating to promote innovative climate change projects to protect Brain health is in the center of our action plan.

Climate change is everyone's problem and game changing solutions need the effort of many

TAKE ACTION WITH US

#### Method

- The Young European Paediatric Neurology Society (Young EPNS), strongly supported by the EPNS board, have created the "Climate change and Sustainability Working Group" in 2022
- In our working group, we **educate** on climate change-related health issues and **promote positive actions** for the reduction of carbon emissions, damage mitigation, and adaptation plans within the field of Pediatric Neurology

#### Objective

- As **scientist**, we need to spread awareness to the general public and persuade stakeholders to take action
- As **clinicians**, we need to promote our healthcare system resilience and prevent climate-change related morbidity and mortality
- As **informed citizens**, we need to take action ourselves and follow the 4 Rs: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Remove**

#### Solutions

- Networking**
  - Collaboration with International League Against Epilepsy and European Academy of Neurology commissions for climate change, and worldwide pediatric neurology stakeholder groups
- Increase awareness**
  - Free online YEPNS webinar/ journal club on climate change in pediatric neurology in January 2024
- Promote a 'greener' EPNS**
  - Estimate and reduce the Society's carbon footprinting
  - Fostering sustainable alternatives for the biannual EPNS congress

1. Young European Paediatric Neurology Society (Young EPNS) working group on climate change and environmental awareness  
2. University of Pavia, Pediatric Clinic, Fondazione IRCCS Policlinico San Matteo, Italy  
3. University Hospital of Lyon, Woman-Mother-Child Hospital, Department of Paediatric Epileptology, Sleep Disorders and Functional Neurology (SEEPNF), Member of EPRN, France  
4. University of Milan, Vittore Buzzi Children's Hospital, Department of Paediatric Epileptology, Member of EPRN, Italy  
5. Vrije Universiteit Brussel, UZ Brussel, Department of Paediatric Epileptology, Member of EPRN, Belgium  
6. Vrije Universiteit Brussel, UZ Brussel, Department of Paediatric Epileptology, Member of EPRN, Belgium  
7. Antwerp University Hospital, University of Antwerp, Department of Paediatrics, Pediatric Neurology Unit, Belgium  
8. Wilhelms Herioldene University, Children's Hospital Datteln, Pediatric Neurology Unit, Germany  
9. Royal Hospital for Children and University of Glasgow, Pediatric Neurology Unit, United Kingdom  
\*Presenting author: Tessa Wassenberg@ulbbrussel.be; info@epns.info; www.epns.info; www.epns.info/young-epns-vepns  
president 2019-2022 (SC)

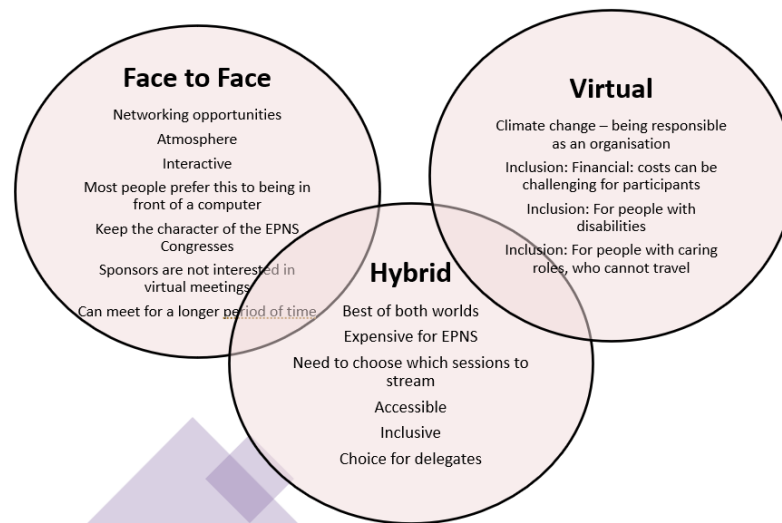
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**“Green Manifesto”** from the international collaboration Young Representatives of Paediatric Neurology Societies (*in progress*)



**EPNS Congresses** are held biennially: and following a vote by the EPNS Board members, from EPNS Congress 2027 will transition to «hybrid» (in person & on-line) mode, to promote inclusivity and accessibility, while possibly reducing transport-related pollution.



## Some key-achievements which have been accomplished:

Creation of a specific "Climate change/sustainability" topic for abstract submission at EPNS Congress 2025

The abstracts have been allocated in the following scientific tracks:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epilepsy: Diagnosis and Investigation</li> <li>• Epilepsy: Medical and Surgical treatment</li> <li>• Infectious and Inflammatory Diseases/Neuroimmunology</li> <li>• Fetal and Neonatal Neurology</li> <li>• Neuromuscular Disorders</li> <li>• Cerebrovascular Disorders</li> <li>• Neurogenetics</li> <li>• Movement Disorders/Cerebral Palsy</li> <li>• Neurometabolic Disorders</li> <li>• Neurodevelopmental Disorders/Developmental Neuroscience</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neuropsychiatric Disorders/Functional Neurological Disorders</li> <li>• Basic Science</li> <li>• Neurorehabilitation</li> <li>• Headache/Migraine</li> <li>• Neuro-Oncology</li> <li>• Miscellaneous</li> <li>• Traumatic Brain Injury</li> <li>• Palliative Care</li> <li>• Neurological Emergencies</li> <li>• Climate Change</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Early-morning session on Climate Change and Pediatric Neurology at the EPNS Congress 2025

**YEPNS -Climate change - Relevance for neuropaediatric diseases**

Early Morning Teaching Session

Systematic review of the Literature on the impact of Climate change on Paediatric Neurology (*in progress*)

In 2024, the Young EPNS working group on Climate Change and Sustainability was affiliated to the EPNS Advocacy & Collaboration Committee, as we plan to create a specific Board Committee in the next months.

## What next for the EPNS

For the EPNS, sustainability means creating a healthcare environment that supports both the present and future needs of children and young people with neurological conditions. By addressing environmental and social sustainability, the EPNS can ensure that high-quality care is accessible to all paediatric patients, regardless of their background, while supporting the well-being of healthcare providers and contributing to a healthier planet.





During 2025, the EPNS Board in collaboration with the Young EPNS (YEPNS) will further develop a strategy for the EPNS sustainable development.

This will include:

- Expanding the EPNS national and international collaboration for a Climate pledge friendly paediatric neurology
- Calculating the carbon footprint of the EPNS Congress to be monitored in the future for strategic interventions
- Promoting train travels and public transportation during EPNS events
- Promote continue EPNS accessibility and representation to minorities
- Prompt research over the impact of Climate change and Environmental issues in Paediatric Neurology
- Advocate with Policy makers for sustainability in Paediatric neurology
- Redact an annual Sustainability report
- Create a specific board Committee
- Include Climate Change and Environmental neurology in future training courses/masterclasses
- Secure sessions on Climate Change and/or sustainability in child neurology during the EPNS Congress
- Systematically consider Environmental and Sustainability issues with the Congress Organization Committee (e.g. «Veggie-day», re-usable materials, support train-transfer and public transportation, etc)
- Promote bursaries for gender inequalities (i.e. breastfeeding mothers to attend EPNS congress)
- Prompt research on the topic (interdisciplinary, intersocietal, and within the EPNS)
- Promote and advocate over climate-change and sustainability issues through social media
- Encourage sustainability initiatives at national levels

