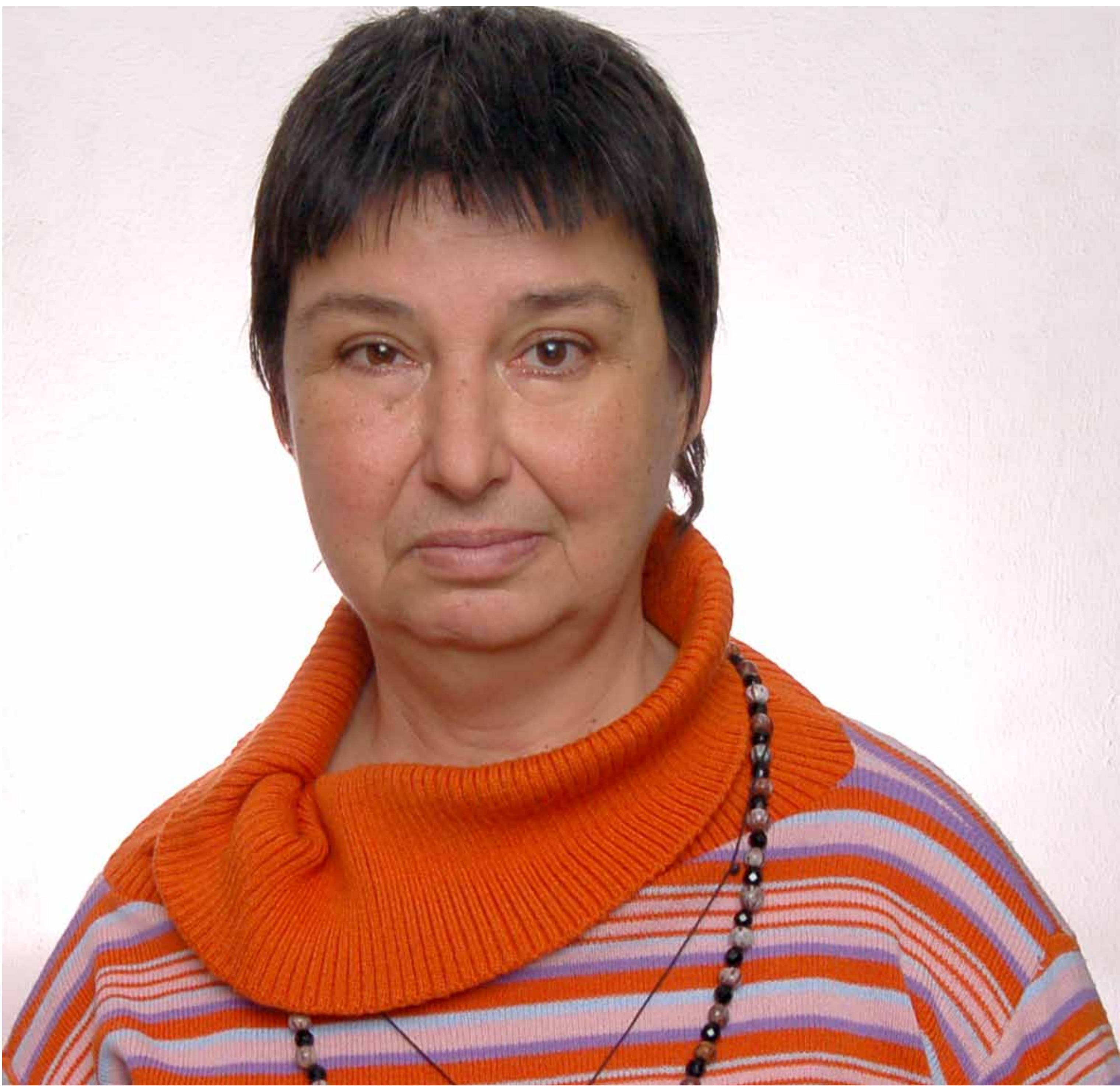


EUROPEAN EPILEPSY DAY 2014



VERGIADOU ADAMADIA GREECE

**They have "cut
off my wings
and I cannot fly"**

*Epilepsy
is more
than
seizures*

10 FEBRUARY 2014
eed
EUROPEAN EPILEPSY DAY

At 12 months, Vergiadou developed meningocephalitis, resulting in right spastic hemiplegia. In childhood she experienced focal seizures, with loss of consciousness and involuntary movements. She remembers little of that. However, Vergiadou remembers well a major seizure when she was 20 and the subsequent annual average of four major seizures, despite medication.

In school Vergiadou faced discrimination and isolation. She was not allowed to participate in activities and teachers were unwilling to take her on school excursions for fear of a seizure. She felt inferior to her classmates.

Four years ago, Vergiadou's medication was changed and there was a marked improvement, except for a major seizure at work last year. She has worked at the national telecommunications company for the past 31 years. She has faced discrimination, prejudice and stigma.

Vergiadou is overprotected by her mother and, aged 55, still lives at home. Until three years ago, her mother watched while she bathed, supervised limited activities and asked to know everything she did. Overprotection, limited freedom and low

self-esteem have deprived her of the right to live, to create, to lead a productive life. They have "cut off my wings and I cannot fly" she says. She has no friends; her mother judges all of them in a negative way.

Of course, she is working; she goes to English lessons; she attends a religious group; and, occasionally, goes to the gym. She has been a member of the Greek National Epilepsy Association for 15 years and sits on its Executive Board. Vergiadou has no dreams for the future; her only vision is darkness. Any dream is deceptive, every dream becomes an illusion.



**She has no
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 European Advocates for
epilepsy

Epilepsy
Advocacy
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European Epilepsy Day is organised by Epilepsy Advocacy Europe Task Force, European Advocates for Epilepsy MEP special interest group, and by national epilepsy associations across Europe