

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Societal Impact of Pain 2011 calls for ‘Road Map for Action’: EU Institutions and Member States must tackle ‘Pain’ in Europe**

*"Each one of us has lived with pain at some point or another in our lives. This symposium, in fact, is showing the impact that pain has on us as individuals, on our working environment and on society at large. We should also realize that as the demographic profile of Europe changes and as the population becomes older, pain will become an increasingly important issue in the future. We must therefore understand it better and manage it correctly."*

**Commissioner John Dalli, European Commissioner, Health and Consumer Policy**

**Brussels, 4 May 2011.** On 3 and 4 May 2011, nearly 300 European health care stakeholders from more than 30 countries met in the European Parliament to discuss the “Societal Impact of Pain” (SIP 2011). The symposium is endorsed by 85 national and international organisations and institutions that support the need for an improved pain care in Europe. It provided a platform for health care professionals and specialists, as well as representatives of health authorities, pain advocacy groups, politicians, regulators and budget holders. The event, which is supported by all three European institutions, the EU parliament, the EU commission and the EU council, was successful in creating awareness on the need for an improved pain care in Europe and in presenting a concrete ‘Road Map for Action’.

The Road Map for Action is the outcome of one of the six parallel workshops that took place on the Symposium’s second day ‘Pain policy; Ensuring access to pain treatment’. It outlines the key issues on how the EU institutions and member states can effectively address the societal impact of pain at EU level. Specifically, the Road Map for Action calls on European governments and the EU Institutions to work on seven concrete policy dimensions of ‘pain’:

1. Acknowledgement of pain as an important factor limiting the quality of life;
2. Availability of information and access to pain diagnosis and management;
3. Increased awareness of the medical, financial and social impact that pain and its management have;
4. Increased awareness of the importance of prevention, diagnosis and management of pain;
5. Enforcement of pain research;
6. Establishment an EU platform for the exchange, comparison and benchmarking of best practices;
7. Trend monitoring in pain management by using the EU platform.

The detailed Road Map can be found online at [www.sip-meetings.org/press](http://www.sip-meetings.org/press).

“Pain’ affects us all, whether personally or through someone dear to us: it truly affects everyone across all EU member states. The Roadmap for Action highlights the key policy dimensions for all EU governments and member states and illustrates the urgency for Europe to act by putting the societal impact of pain on the healthcare policy agenda” comments Jim Higgins, Member of the European Parliament, who chaired the workshop session on the Road Map for Action. Furthermore, he added “The success of the Road Map is that it takes into account all angles that should be tackled, from access to pain diagnosis, to raising awareness up to sharing best practice and monitoring through an EU platform.”

According to a recent publication<sup>1</sup> on “The prevalence, correlates and treatment of pain in the European Union”, almost 9% of European citizens suffer from daily pain. The prevalence of pain negatively increases with age and has a tremendous impact on patient’s quality of life.

“Due to the high prevalence of pain and its alarming impact on patients and society, ‘pain’ should be recognized as a significant health care quality indicator”, said Dr. Alberto Grua, Executive Vice President, Grünenthal Europe & Australia. “We therefore support the symposium on the ‘Societal Impact of Pain’ to share best practice which would improve pain care in Europe.”

For more information on the programme of “Societal Impact of Pain” 2011, its outcomes, as well as videos and pictures please refer to: <http://www.sip-meetings.org/press>

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

##### **About The Societal Impact of Pain**

The scientific framework of SIP 2011 is designed under the responsibility of the European Federation of IASP® Chapters (EFIC®) and is endorsed by 85 international patient advocacy and scientific organisations of different backgrounds and interests that support the need for an improved pain care in Europe. It provided a platform for health care professionals and specialists, as well as representatives of health authorities, pain advocacy groups, politicians, regulators and budget holders. The pharmaceutical company Grünenthal GmbH is responsible for logistic support, preparation and organisation. The event will be kindly co-hosted at the European parliament by Dr Jirí Maštálka MEP and Dr Milan Cabrnoc MEP.

For more information, please visit [www.sip-meetings.org](http://www.sip-meetings.org).

##### **About EFIC**

The European Federation of IASP® chapters (EFIC®) is a multidisciplinary professional organisation in the field of pain science and medicine, made up of the 34 European Chapters of National Pain Societies of IASP (International Association for the Study of Pain). Established in 1993, EFIC's 34 constituent chapters represent Pain Societies from 34 countries and close to 20,000 scientists, physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and other healthcare professionals across Europe, who study pain and treat patients suffering from pain.

For more information, please visit [www.efic.org](http://www.efic.org).



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<sup>i</sup> "The prevalence, correlates and treatment of pain in the European Union"; Langley et al; Current Medical Research and Opinion Journal of Medical Economics Journal of Drug Assessment; 2011; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21194390> ).

