



Societal Impact of Pain 2016

8 policy recommendations: *Time for Action*

23-24 May 2016 - Under the motto 'Time for Action', over 220 representatives of health care- and stakeholder- organisations from more than 28 countries met in the European Parliament and Concert Noble in Brussels to discuss the "Societal Impact of Pain" (SIP 2016). The objectives of the symposium SIP 2016 were endorsed by over 160 organisations active in the field of pain.

The SIP 2016 symposium hosted four working groups while bringing together representatives of the European institutes, policy makers, pain specialists, scientific researchers, patient representatives and other stakeholders to discuss four key issues related to the societal impact of pain:

1. Pain as a quality indicator for health care
2. Chronic pain: a disease or symptom?
3. The relevance of pain in cancer care and rehabilitation
4. Pain, rehabilitation and reintegration of workers in the workforce

Under the scientific auspice of the European Pain Federation EFIC (EFIC®) and guided by SIP 2016 cooperation partners Pain Alliance Europe (PAE) and Active Citizenship Network (ACN), the faculty of each of the working groups produced specific policy recommendations addressing the societal impact of pain.

Based on these recommendations, the organizing partners of the SIP platform formulated the following key recommendations directed at the institutions of the European Union and national governments:

1 /8 Implementation of article 8.5 of the Cross-border Healthcare Directive

The institutions of the European Union and national governments should ensure the flawless implementation of article 8.5 of Directive 2011/24/EU in all member states, in order to prevent the refusal of prior authorization by national health authorities when the patient is entitled to healthcare which cannot be provided on its territory within a time limit which is medically justifiable, based on an objective medical assessment of the patient's medical condition, the history and probable course of the patient's illness, the **degree of the patient's pain and/or the nature of the patient's disability** at the time when the request for authorisation was made or renewed.



Societal Impact of Pain 2016

8 policy recommendations: *Time for Action*

2 /8 *Establish an EU platform on the societal impact of pain*

In order to empower pain patients, their family, relatives and care-givers through the availability of information and access to pain diagnosis and management, the institutions of the European Union and national governments should establish an European platform for the exchange, comparison and benchmarking of access, quality and best practices of health care services in pain management and its impact on society.

3 /8 *Integrate chronic pain within EU policies on chronic diseases*

The institutions of the European Union and national governments should acknowledge that pain is a common health state in many chronic diseases and chronic pain itself can be considered a chronic condition in respect to health care policy. Therefore the European Commission and member states should integrate pain care within Commission work and Joint Actions (e.g. JA CHRODIS) as well as the expected trio council conclusions on fighting non-communicable diseases.

4 /8 *Ensure that pain care is a part of policies and strategies on cancer*

Within the framework of the Joint Action on Cancer Control (JA CanCon) and national cancer strategies, the institutions of the European Union and national governments should dedicate adequate attention to the relevance of pain in cancer care, including but not limited to survivorship and rehabilitation.

5 /8 *Initiate policies addressing the impact of pain on employment*

Within the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy and European Semester framework of economic governance, the institutions of the European Union and national governments should promote policies that reflect the link between pain care and employment, and recognise the interconnection of health, employment and social protection policies and systems.



Societal Impact of Pain 2016

8 policy recommendations: *Time for Action*

6 /8 *Implement workplace adjustments for people with chronic pain*

The institutions of the European Union and national governments should enforce or implement legislation providing for reasonable, flexible workplace adjustments by employers that can help people with chronic pain to stay in work or reintegrate into the workforce.

7 /8 *Increase investment in pain research*

The institutions of the European Commission and national governments should increase investment in research (basic science, clinical, epidemiological) on the societal impact of pain as a priority in future EU framework programs, involving chronic pain patient associations in the development of research priorities, and undertake research on involuntary causes of early retirement and unemployment due to pain across Europe.

8 /8 *Prioritise pain within education for health care professionals, patients and the general public*

The institutions of the European Union and national governments should prioritise and stimulate the prevention of the impact of pain on society by education and providing information on diagnosis, and management of pain amongst all healthcare professionals, patients and the general public through education and training.