



Media release

## Inadequate HCP education causing patient pain and costing billions in lost productivity

Brussels, 7th November

Today, **hundreds of chronic pain advocates** presented a Joint Statement to European policy makers on how to improve **pain education in the EU**, at the Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) high-level symposium in Brussels.

“Until we tackle the knowledge gap around chronic pain among healthcare professionals and create more awareness about pain management, we will continue to leave millions of chronic pain sufferers behind,” says Prof Brona Fullen, President-elect of European Pain Federation EFIC®.

“All healthcare professionals require specific pain education as this is often neglected in basic training and undergraduate education. Importantly, this education should look at pain from an interprofessional perspective, taking account of all healthcare professionals and their role in pain management.”

Currently only **22% medical schools in the EU** offer a dedicated pain medicines module, though numbers vary between Member States<sup>1</sup>. This lack of education can have devastating effects on patient care, the healthcare system and the economy.

“More specialised pain education is urgently needed to ensure patients are getting the right care,” says Joop van Griensven, President of Pain Alliance Europe, the organisation representing chronic pain patients in the EU.

“Treating chronic pain requires understanding the patient experience – not just treating the disease but seeing the patient as a whole person who has family, a job, hobbies.”

Chronic pain accounts for almost 50% of all absences from work and 60% of permanent work incapacity<sup>2</sup>.

**One in five Europeans live with chronic pain.** The estimated direct and indirect healthcare costs for chronic pain disorders in European Member States vary between 2% and 3% of GDP across the EU<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Briggs, E. V., Battelli, D., Gordon, D., Kopf, A., Ribeiro, S., Puig, M. M., & Kress, H. G. (2015). Current pain education within undergraduate medical studies across Europe: Advancing the Provision of Pain Education and Learning (APPEAL) study. *BMJ open*, 5(8), e006984. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2014-006984

<sup>2</sup> Bevan, S. (2013). Reducing temporary work absence through early intervention: The case of MSDs in the EU. *The Work Foundation*, 2. Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/reducing-temporary-work-absence-through-early-intervention-the-case-of-msds-in-the-eu>

<sup>3</sup> Eccleston, C., Wells, C., & Morlion, B. (2017). *European Pain Management*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, ISBN: 9780198785750 Available at: <http://oxfordmedicine.com/view/10.1093/med/9780198785750.001.0001/med-9780198785750-chapter-1>



The scientific framework of the “Societal Impact of Pain” (SIP) platform is under the responsibility of the European Pain Federation, EFIC®. Cooperation partners for SIP 2019 are Pain Alliance Europe (PAE) and Active Citizenship Network (ACN). The pharmaceutical company Grünenthal GmbH is responsible for funding and non-financial support (e.g. logistical support). In the past the scientific aims of the SIP symposia have been endorsed by over 300 international and national pain advocacy groups, scientific organisations and authorities



“The SIP platform is coming to the table with clear recommendations to better mitigate the impacts of pain. This has been co-created with more than 300 patient organisations, medical associations and other civil society groups. We just need policy makers with the political will to enact them.” says Prof Fullen.

The SIP Symposium will address four priorities:

- Developing better healthcare quality indicators to measure the impact pain
- Improving pain education for healthcare professionals, patients and the general public
- Investing in pain research at EU and national level
- Improving employment conditions for people with chronic pain

**- Ends -**

For more information email Lawrence Muskitta at [lawrence.muskitta@bcw-global.com](mailto:lawrence.muskitta@bcw-global.com)

The following people are available for interview:

- Joop van Griensven, President of Pain Alliance Europe
- Prof Brona Fullen, President-elect of European Pain Federation EFIC®

### **About the SIP platform**

SIP is a multi-stakeholder group that is endorsed by more than 300 organisations. These include policymakers, patient organisations, medical associations and other civil society groups.

The objective of SIP is to raise awareness of the impact that pain has on our societies, health and economic systems, to exchange information and share best-practices on pain policies, and, based on this evidence, foster adequate policy actions taking into account the personal, economic and social burden of pain.

The Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) is a joint campaign with four key partners: the European Pain Federation (EFIC®) which is in charge of the scientific content; Pain Alliance Europe, which represents the perspective of the patient living with chronic pain; Active Citizenship Network, which unites the voice and rights of citizens in Europe; and Grünenthal GmbH which provides logistic and organisational support to the campaign.

For more information please visit: <https://www.sip-platform.eu>



The scientific framework of the “Societal Impact of Pain” (SIP) platform is under the responsibility of the European Pain Federation, EFIC®. Cooperation partners for SIP 2019 are Pain Alliance Europe (PAE) and Active Citizenship Network (ACN). The pharmaceutical company Grünenthal GmbH is responsible for funding and non-financial support (e.g. logistical support). In the past the scientific aims of the SIP symposia have been endorsed by over 300 international and national pain advocacy groups, scientific organisations and authorities