



Media release

EU could double productivity by investing in chronic pain care

Brussels, 7th November

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

Chronic pain accounts for almost 50% of all absences from work and 60% of permanent work incapacity¹.

“The ability to contribute to society through work is important for many patients’ feelings of self-worth and identity,” says Joop van Griensven, President of Pain Alliance Europe, the organisation representing chronic pain patients in the EU.

“A combination of more flexible working environments and improved care for people with chronic pain, can unlock a world of potential for patients and the economy.”

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 ².

As many as 50% of people living with chronic pain are prevented from doing their work, according to Pain Alliance Europe’s annual survey 2018.

“We are urging EU policy makers to work with Member States to promote policies that understand the link between pain and employment, and promote better work re-integration approaches” says Prof Brona Fullen, President-elect of European Pain Federation EFIC®.

“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.

¹ 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>

² 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 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 –

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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>



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