



Media release

Research into chronic pain could save EU billions of euros a year, say advocates

Brussels, 7th November

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

“Currently, **funding for pain research is inconsistent** on EU and Member State levels.” says Joop van Griensven,” President of Pain Alliance Europe, the organisation representing chronic pain patients in the EU.

“Pain research funding levels do not reflect the enormous burden of those living with the disease. We need an increase in funding and a coherent pain research strategy, if we want to deliver for patients.”

The WHO International Classification of Diseases (ICD) recently classified ‘chronic primary pain’, not as a symptom of another condition, but as a disease in its own right.

One in five Europeans live with chronic pain. Chronic pain accounts for almost 50% of all absences from work and 60% of permanent work incapacity¹. 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.

“The ICD classification is a fantastic first step to measure the burden of disease in a systematic way, and will open up many new areas of research” says Prof Brona Fullen, President-elect of European Pain Federation EFIC®.

“What we need now is action from the European institutions and member states for proper investment in pain research to urgently address the gap in understanding around its societal impact.”

“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.

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 Joint Statement addresses 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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