

SIP's pledge to uphold and implement the European Pillar of Social Rights

SIP would like to thank the European Commission for the opportunity to offer our pledges to aid the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

SIP Background:

The '[Societal Impact of Pain](#)' (SIP) platform is a multi-stakeholder partnership led by the [European Pain Federation](#) (EFIC) and [Pain Alliance Europe](#) (PAE)*. SIP aims to raise awareness of pain and to change pain policies. The scientific framework of the SIP platform is under the responsibility of EFIC, and the strategic direction of the project is defined by both partners.

In Europe¹ there are approximately 740 million people², most of whom experience an episode of severe pain at some point in their life. For approximately 20 percent, that pain is chronic pain. In other words, 150 million people are experiencing pain across Europe, approximately equal to the population of France and Germany combined.

In 2018, SIP published its Joint Statement³ which includes recommendations for policy action highlighting opportunities for action and collaboration by the European Commission, Member States, and civil society to reduce the societal impact of pain. These recommendations are based on the findings of the SIP Framing Paper³. These recommendations form the overarching and guiding principles for SIP, and are divided into four categories: **health indicators, research, employment, and education.**

It is our view that the recommendations of this Framing Paper are directly relevant to the European Pillar of Social Rights. The SIP partners pledge to help uphold and implement the Pillar via its activities in these fields. We hope that these recommendations are also seen by policy makers as useful to the implementation of the Pillar via their own policy actions.

Mapping the European Pillar of Social Rights' 20 Principles to SIP's four priority areas:

SIP calls on EU institutions and national governments to pay special attention to implementing the following seven of the Social Pillar's 20 principles that link directly to SIP's four priorities.

KEY EU SOCIAL PILLAR PRINCIPLES MAPPED TO SIP LONG-TERM PRIORITIES				
	INDICATORS 	EDUCATION 	EMPLOYMENT 	RESEARCH 
1. Education, training and life-long learning		✓		
3. Equal opportunities		✓	✓	
5. Secure and adaptable employment		✓	✓	
10. Healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection			✓	
16. Health care	✓			✓
17. Inclusion of people with disabilities	✓		✓	
18. Long-term care	✓			

¹ Note: data taking from 37 countries, absent in Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, and the Vatican City.
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>
³ SIP Thematic Network – SIP Thematic Network 2018 – Joint Statement now available in several languages. Available at: <https://www.sip-platform.eu/resources/details/sip-thematic-network-2018-joint-statement-now-available-in-several-languages> Last accessed November 2020

SIP partners call upon the EU institutions and national governments to pursue the following to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights

Pain as an indicator (principles 16-18): Develop instruments to assess the societal impact of pain (pain as a quality indicator).

- Scientists, healthcare professionals, and patients in the pain field have identified various measurements and quality indicators which can help us better understand the societal impact of pain, including patient reported outcome measurements (PROMs). These tools should eventually become a standard part of health care systems organisation, and could help us better implement patient mobility and the digitalisation of healthcare systems through electronic health records (EHRs).
- The most crucial recent development on pain as an indicator relates to the classification of diseases under the World Health Organisation (WHO) 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). The new codification relating to pain, and especially chronic pain states, should be implemented throughout healthcare systems to improve analysis of performance, and provide the research community with data to facilitate further clinical research. It is only through a clear understanding of chronic pain and its management that the reintegration of people with disabling chronic pain conditions into the workplace can be achieved.

Pain education (principles 1, 3 & 5): Prioritise pain education for health care professionals, patients, policymakers, and the general public.

- The pain science community as well as patients' organisations play an important role in educating professionals, patients, and the general public. The European Pain Federation EFIC in particular is working to provide the gold standard in pain education for healthcare professionals, as well as providing clinical guidance for use by clinicians and health systems managers, and supporting a patient-led approach.
- National governments and the EU institutions should foster the uptake of best practices in education through their support for these initiatives, through their dissemination, and through guidance provided by national healthcare regulations and through medical schools.
- Healthcare provision in the field of pain requires further standardisation of competences, i.e. through the further development of common training frameworks and increased healthcare professional mobility.

Pain in employment (principles 3, 5, 10 & 17): Initiate policies addressing the impact of pain on employment and include pain in relevant existing initiatives.

- The pain science community and patients' organisations have, over the years, attempted to better define the impact of unmanaged pain on employment and economies. This has been a long-term focus of SIP, with numerous studies being highlighted^{4,5,6,7}.
- The works of the EU institutions in providing recommendations to Member States through the European Semester process, as well as through specific recommendations on health and safety at work should take into account best practices on chronic pain

⁴ 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>

⁵ 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>

⁶ SIP Thematic Network - Pain as a Factor in Employment. Available at: <https://www.sip-platform.eu/resources/details/sip-thematic-network-pain-as-a-factor-in-employment> Last Accessed November 2020

⁷ SIP Thematic Network - EU could double productivity by investing in chronic pain care. Available at: <https://www.sip-platform.eu/press-area/article/sip-2019-employment-press-release> Last Accessed November 2020

management in order to decrease the financial impact of unmanaged pain, and better reintegrate chronic pain patients into the work place.

Pain research (principle 16): Increase investment in research on the societal impact of pain.

- The pain science community, patients' organisations, universities, research institutes and industry have contributed to the advancement of knowledge on the societal impact of pain, including through schemes such as Horizon 2020 and the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI2).
- The SIP partners have proposed priorities for the future of EU-funded research through Horizon Europe, and continue to develop strategic plans for the future of pain research.
- Patient groups and healthcare professionals foster the dissemination of research outcomes to their community and support a patient-led approach to research.

For more details on SIP's commitment to implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights, please see our [Joint Statement](#).

SIP remains committed to implement principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and we look forward to engaging with the European Commission, Member States, and partner stakeholders in the development and implementation of the future Action Plan.

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