

September 2016

4TH EDITION OF THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF PAIN (SIP) NEWSLETTER

Dear Reader,

We have the pleasure to share with you the fourth edition of the SIP newsletter.

With this edition we already want to get your interest on our next Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) symposium 2017, which will be held on 8 and 9 June 2017 in Malta.

We greatly thank the Maltese Presidency to the Council of the EU for their patronage and the Maltese Ministry of Health for expressing confidence that the outcome of SIP 2017 will be valuable to the Council reflection on "Structured co-operation between health care systems". SIP 2017 will be co-hosted by Maltese civic and patient organizations and preparations have already started.

On October 20th 2016 the SIP Steering Committee will meet in Brussels to share national activities related to the policy recommendations developed at SIP 2016, and to define the programme for SIP 2017 in Malta.

We encourage you to send information about your activities on the national implementation of the SIP 2016 policy recommendations to SIP-platform@grunenthal.com.

Further, you will find in this newsletter other relevant information about initiatives and projects related to the Societal Impact of Pain in Europe.

Sincerely,



Prof. Bart Morlion
Director of the Multidisciplinary Pain Centre of the University of Leuven, Belgium
President Elect of the European Pain Federation (EFIC)

The Societal Impact of Pain Symposium 2017 will take place on 8 and 9 June in Malta!



From left to right: Joop Van Griensven (Pain Alliance Europe, PAE), Gertrude A. Buttigieg (Malta Health Network), Chris Wells (European Pain Federation EFIC®), Antoinette Calleja (Health Ministry Malta), Norbert van Rooij (Grünenthal GmbH), Mauro Mario (No Pain Foundation)

Book your calendar for the 7th European Symposium on the "Societal Impact of Pain" (SIP 2017), which will take place on 8 and 9 June 2017 in Malta! Cooperation partners to the [European Pain Federation EFIC®](#) for SIP 2017 will be [Pain Alliance Europe \(PAE\)](#) and [Active Citizenship Network \(ACN\)](#). The Symposium will be co-hosted by the [Malta Health Network \(MHN\)](#) and the [No Pain Foundation \(NPF\)](#).

The choice of Malta does not come by chance. The first half of 2017 will mark the Maltese Presidency to the Council of the EU, and SIP 2017 will be included as part of the official Presidency calendar. The outcome of the Symposium will inform the Presidency-led discussion around the issue of "Structured co-operation between health care systems", as confirmed by Dr. Antoinette Calleja, Director International Affairs and Policy Development in the Ministry of Health, who met with the SIP partners earlier this year.

The Maltese pain community already expressed their support during SIP 2016. In that occasion, MEP Alfred Sant (S&D, MT) declared: "My country has decided to support the Societal Impact of Pain 2017 Symposium. Next year's SIP will be a good opportunity to give visibility to the very important issue of pain treatment. The event's presence on the Maltese Presidency official calendar is the perfect occasion to stress to national policy-makers the importance of addressing pain issues" (listen to MEP Sant's statements [here](#)).

Registrations to attend SIP 2017 will be opened soon. Stay tuned on www.sip-platform.eu.

Maltese Organizations are excited to co-host SIP 2017



SIP 2017 will be co-hosted by the Malta Health Network (MHN) and the No Pain Foundation (NPF). We have asked Gertrude A. Buttigieg (MHN) and Silvana Fanalista (NPF) about their expectations and how they are preparing for SIP 2017.

What role does pain play in Malta and in your organizations?

Silvana: "NPF is an international non-profit organisation with the purpose of carrying out social, educational as well as research activities in the field of pain management and pain therapies. Chronic pain and its socio-economic impact represent a priority area for action within European and national health policies, in which the Maltese NPF feels involved."

Gertrude: "MHN brings together health organisations in Malta; we currently count over 35 organisations representing various conditions and areas. In 2012, we were invited to participate in a project on chronic pain and since then we took up the matter of chronic pain seriously as we think that it is a cross cutting matter which nobody speaks about."

Can you tell something on the activities of your organization to address the societal impact of pain?

Gertrude: "In Malta, people suffer from pain but don't talk about it. So over the past 3-4 years we have started raising awareness of the World Day Against Pain. We were surprised about the responses we got from patients, carers and professionals. Quite recently, we initiated a local Societal Impact of Pain platform in Malta (SIP Malta). We took the opportunity of bringing people together from all sectors - patients, support groups, professionals and service providers to see what are their needs and actions to be taken in Malta."

Silvana: "All our activities are aimed at improving quality of life of people suffering from chronic pain by raising doctors and citizens' awareness on this issue, for example by promoting awareness in Malta and in Italy, organising events and lectures at school and University, or by supporting research on chronic pain."

What does it mean for your organizations that SIP 2017 will take place in Malta?

Gertrude: "Working together with representatives of SIP and NPF will be an opportunity to bring local and foreign stakeholders together to push the importance of chronic pain on the national and European agendas."

Silvana: "There are a lot of goals to achieve in the chronic pain field which requires a cultural change. Such a change needs a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach and SIP 2017 in Malta will be a great opportunity to move forward."

What do you expect from Maltese politicians and health authorities?

Silvana: "NPF is addressing chronic pain by raising the Maltese Minister of Health awareness. We met several MEPs, trying to involve them actively helping us to give a better life to patients suffering from chronic pain."

Gertrude: "MHN gets open and positive responses from Maltese politicians and MEPs. With the political support we expect that SIP 2017 will contribute to give pain its rightful place within the priorities set for the health agenda, opening discussions for a National Pain Plan."

Summary of SIP 2016 outcomes to be released soon

The SIP 2016 Proceedings Booklet will be released soon on www.sip-platform.eu. The publication will include details on each working group and plenary sessions, as well as on the overall Symposium's results. It will be an invaluable resource for the ones who missed SIP 2016 and for those who appreciate a written reference to the proceedings.

MEP La Via promotes a Written Declaration on Chronic Pain

At SIP 2016, member of the European Parliament (MEP) Giovanni La Via (EPP, IT) declared: "I am personally promoting with colleagues a written declaration on chronic pain, because we believe access to treatment, continuing quality of care, innovation, and above all, fairness to elderly patients with chronic pain are still not guaranteed."

La Via, a center-right Italian politician chairing the Committee on health in the European Parliament, stood by his promise and released a written declaration on chronic non-cancer pain in people over 65 on 12 September. This act of the European Parliament gives the opportunity to MEPs to express their views on a specific matter falling within the competence of the European Union. To be adopted, it needs to be signed by the majority of MEPs, meaning at least 376 of them.

Take action and ask your MEP to sign the Written Declaration before 12 December! Read more [here](#).

#MakeWorkWork - rehabilitation and reintegration of workers

People with neurological and chronic pain conditions may find it difficult to get or keep a job. Unemployment and under-employment can worsen the situation for patients by impacting self-esteem, mental health and increasing isolation.

Anni, living with chronic pain, said *“Work has always been an important part of my life. I work in a men’s world and I am good at whatever I do. Due to pain I lost the possibility to work normally and therefore I have lost part of my earnings... my boss does not believe a woman can work in the field of transportation and I think that he also doesn’t understand my situation as a pain patient. He gives me less work and the money I bring home is almost nothing”*.

To help Anni and the millions in Europe living with a pain or brain disorder the [MEP Interest Group on Brain, Mind and Pain](#) is campaigning to improve access to employment for those affected and will launch a Written Declaration in the European Parliament on 25 October.

Can you get your MEPs to sign? You will find on www.brainmindpain.eu a list of MEPs by country and a template letter (we hope translations of some languages will be available soon) to help you. Contact Heather Clarke EFNA’s EU Policy advisor euaffairs@efna.net for further assistance.

Follow our campaign on Twitter and Facebook with the hashtag **#MakeWorkWork!**

MEP Mizzi raises the issue of chronic pain with the Commission

The Maltese centre-left MEP Marlene Mizzi tables a written question to the Commission on chronic pain in the EU.

MEP Mizzi acknowledges „chronic pain affects around 20% of the adult population in Europe, but it remains poorly managed and under-treated, affecting not only the patients, but also society as a whole“. She therefore asks the Commission whether chronic pain is treated as a priority in the EU, the kind of actions it is taking to increase public awareness of chronic pain, and which Member States have recognised chronic pain as an illness.

Read more [here](#).

Mediterranean Alliance Against Pain

After the successful edition of SIP 2016, Active Citizenship Network promoted last June at the EU Parliament the conference [“Pain therapy and the degree of patient’s pain in the age of cross-border healthcare”](#) in order to further discuss one of the topic debated at SIP. The event focused on the degree of patient’s pain in the Mediterranean area, and the idea of a Mediterranean Alliance Against Pain was launched. This initiative aims to better implement the 8 policy recommendations resulted from SIP in that geographic area, involving local and national stakeholders dealing with chronic pain.

No Pain Foundation recommendations

In preparation to the meeting with the Maltese Minister for Health Hon. Christopher Fearne, the No Pain Foundation releases its recommendations for collaboration between NGOs and health services.

Read the article [here](#).

3.4 Mio patients with severe chronic pain in Germany - increase by 21 percent

The German Professional Association of Physicians and psychological psychotherapist in pain and palliative care (BVSD) reports about new findings on severe chronic pain patients in Germany.

Read the article [here](#) (in German only).

Airing Pain programme on Pain in Europe

Airing Pain, the radio programme by Pain Concern, investigates the impact of chronic pain in Europe in the aftermath of the Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) Symposium held on 23 and 24 May 2016 in Brussels.

Read the article [here](#).

How the UK can achieve the WHO “25 by 25” goals

The UK Richmond Group of Charities have compiled a report on how the UK needs to improve efforts to achieve the 25 by 25 targets set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Read the article [here](#).

New Report on Chronic Pain in Scotland

At SIP 2016 Professor Blair H. Smith, National Lead Clinician for Chronic Pain, presented an up to date summary of the evidence on the societal impact of pain in Scotland, highlighting the need for chronic pain services.

Read the article [here](#).

The Münster Charter, implementation of high-quality pain therapy

The German Pain Society, the Austrian Pain Society, the German Society for Palliative Medicine and the German national Nursing Association agreed upon the “Münster Pain Charter”. The Charter arose from the care research project „Coalition pain free City” (Aktionsbündnis Schmerzfreie Stadt) and aims to demonstrate the necessity for a professional cross-functional systematic pain care.

You find the full article (in German) [here](#).

Against pain, an „Hippocratic Oath“ for doctors of all specialties

Italian doctors have released a set of ten commitments to treat their patient’s pain, the “Commitment against pain, manifesto of the Italian doctors”.

Read the article [here](#).

Upcoming events

October 14-15 Menorca Island (Spain): V Meeting of EMNIPRE

The annual event for experts in the field on chronic pain is organized by the European Multidisciplinary Network in Pain Research and Education (EMNIPRE). [Download the programme](#).

October 28-29 Prizren (Kosovo): “6th International Conference for Pain Treatment”

The conference will cover different topics about pain management, while main topic will be “Joint Pain Treatment”. The event will be held in the Complex “Sharri” in Prevalle of Prizren and the Director of Active Citizenship Network will participate as panelist. [Read more](#).

Contact us!

Questions? Need support? Wish to endorse or to publish on SIP Platform?

In case you should have any question regarding the newsletter's contents, please contact Prof. Bart Morlion, EFIC President Elect: bart.morlion@uzleuven.be.

In case you would like to endorse the SIP Platform or to publish news on the SIP Website, please contact Norbert van Rooij (Grünenthal GmbH, Head of Governmental Affairs & Patient Centricity): sip-platform@grunenthal.com.

In case you should have any technical questions or need assistance, please contact Gudula Petersen (Website Editor): sip-platform@grunenthal.com.

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For further information please click [here](#).