

June 2017

3RD EDITION OF THE SOCIETAL IMPACT OF PAIN (SIP) NEWSLETTER

Dear Reader,

We have the pleasure to share with you the third edition of the SIP newsletter. The SIP Symposium 2016 just took place a few weeks ago, and we'd like to reflect with you on the main outcomes of the exiting and fruitful discussions.

Under the motto 'Time for Action', over 220 representatives of health care- and stakeholder- organisations from more than 28 countries met in the European Parliament and Concert Noble in Brussels to discuss the "Societal Impact of Pain" (SIP). The objectives of the symposium SIP 2016 were endorsed by over 160 organisations active in the field of pain.

This year's SIP symposium hosted four working groups while bringing together representatives of the European institutes, policy makers, pain specialists, scientific researchers, patient representatives and other stakeholders to discuss four key issues related to the societal impact of pain:

1. Pain as a quality indicator for health care
2. Chronic pain: a disease or symptom?
3. The relevance of pain in cancer care and rehabilitation
4. Pain, rehabilitation and reintegration of workers in the workforce

Under the scientific auspice of the European Pain Federation EFIC (EFIC®) and guided by SIP 2016 cooperation partners Pain Alliance Europe (PAE) and Active Citizenship Network (ACN), the faculty of each working group produced specific policy recommendations addressing the societal impact of pain.

The level of interest to SIP among Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and other European and national policy makers proved its success. Not only was the event being held under the high patronage of the Italian Ministry of Health, but also the [MEP Interest Group on Brain](#), Mind and Pain endorsed the objectives of the symposium, together with more than 20 cross-parties and cross-countries supportive Members of the European Parliament.



MEP Giovanni La Via. © SIP 2016
Photo Isabelle Pateer

Therefore we greatly thank all the Members of the European Parliament who supported and attended SIP 2016, in particular Clara Eugenia Aguilera Garcia (Spain), Heinz K. Becker (Austria), Soledad Cabezon Ruiz (Spain), Nicola Caputo (Italy), Therese Comodini Cachia (Malta), Miriam Dalli (Malta), José Inácio Faria (Portugal), Theresa Griffin (UK), Françoise Grossetête (France), Takis Hadjigeorgiou (Cyprus), Marian Harkin (Ireland), Agnes Jongerius (The Netherlands), Merja Kyllönen (Finland), Giovanni La Via (Italy), Jeroen Lenaers (The Netherlands), Roberta Metsola (Malta), Miroslav Mikolášik (Slovakia), Piernicola Pedicini (Italy), Sirpa Pietikainen (Finland), Alfred Sant (Malta), and Sabine Verheyen (Germany).

During SIP 2016, Giovanni La Via Member of the European Parliament and chairman of the Committee on health issues, announced the launch of a Written Declaration on chronic pain in the European Parliament calling for a reference network for centres of excellence in pain treatment. We will surely share with you any update

on this front in due time!

Meanwhile preparation has started for SIP 2017, which will take place in Malta during the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU, as announced at this year's SIP by the Maltese Member of the European Parliament Alfred Sant and the Maltese pain representatives of the No Pain Foundation and Malta Health Network.



The Maltese delegation at SIP 2016. From left to right: Matthew Camilleri (Malta Health Network), Mauro Mario (No Pain Foundation), Dr Marilyn Casha (Mater Dei Hospital, Malta), Prof Boaz Samolsky Dekel (No Pain Foundation), MEP Alfred Sant. ©2016 - Isabelle Pateer / Otherweyes

The motto of SIP 2016 is "Time for action", in preparation of SIP 2017 let's live up to the expectations! Send information on your activities on the national implementation of the SIP 2016 policy recommendations to sip-platform@grunenthal.com.

Sincerely,

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

Exclusive interviews to Chris Wells, Joop Van Griensven and Mariano Votta prior to SIP 2016

Shortly before SIP 2016, Dr Chris Wells, President of the European Pain Federation EFIC, Joop Van Griensven, President of the Pain Alliance Europe (PAE), and Mariano Votta, Director of Active Citizenship Network (ACN) spelled out what they expected SIP 2016 would bring for them:

[Dr Wells](#) clarified what needs to change at EU policy level. „We are concerned that there is very little mention of pain treatment as it relates to cancer care in Commission materials on the subject”, he said. „Effective pain policies can positively impact the productivity and longevity of Europe’s labour force and delay early retirement”, he proposed.

[Mr Van Griensven](#) urged all the actors involved to agree on a common plan. „If we don't get that agreement, we are never going to achieve anything – that's why this symposium is so important – it's where this will all happen.“

[Mr Votta](#) focused on the implementation of the cross-border healthcare directive with regards to chronic pain. „Cross border and cross institutional comparison of health care services in pain care require outcome criteria on patient-, consumer-, medical- and policy level“, he said.

The final SIP 2016 recommendations

SIP 2016 came to a close putting forward a series of policy recommendations to fundamentally change pain care and the effect of pain on society. They include 8 points for considerations to EU and national policy makers:

- ♥ Implement article 8.5 of the Cross-border Healthcare Directive
- ♥ Establish an EU platform on the societal impact of pain
- ♥ Integrate chronic pain within EU policies on chronic diseases
- ♥ Ensure that pain care is a part of policies and strategies on cancer
- ♥ Initiate policies addressing the impact of pain on employment
- ♥ Implement workplace adjustments for people with chronic pain
- ♥ Increase investment in pain research
- ♥ Prioritise pain within education for health care professionals, patients and the general public

Read the full policy recommendations [here](#).

The final SIP 2016 recommendations

Videos, presentations, images, press releases and more is available on www.sip-platform.eu!

- ♥ Consult all the presentations and statements on the [SIP 2016 programme](#) section
- ♥ Live again the key moments of the two days by watching the SIP trailer!
- ♥ Read more on SIP 2016 in the [press releases](#)
- ♥ The SIP pictures are already available in the [SIP 2016 impressions](#) area
- ♥ All the policy recommendations are available on the [SIP 2016 materials](#) section
- ♥ Learn more about speakers and endorsers in the SIP 2016 Abstract & Background booklet
- ♥ [Watch the EU Reporter's interview](#) during SIP 2016

Working Group 1: recommendations on pain as a quality indicator for health care

The EU Directive on Cross-border Healthcare (2011/24/EU) grants European citizens the right to access treatment in another EU member state, if required. Article 8.5 of this Directive foresees that an objective assessment of 'the degree of the patient's pain' must be used to assess the right to cross-border healthcare.

Quality indicators for the measurement of pain are needed to set criteria for granting access to cross-border healthcare, in member states.

Working Group 1 has therefore developed the specific recommendations to the European Commission and national governments to ensure full implementation of the Directive and that the rights of European patients are upheld.

Read the full recommendations of Working Group 1 [here](#).

Working Group 2: recommendations on chronic pain, a disease or a symptom?

Chronic pain represents a challenge for patients, health care providers and policy makers across Europe, partly because it is extremely common, it has a negative impact at the societal level, and the underlying complex disease mechanisms requires individualised management and holistic treatment. Chronic pain can be seen as a disease in its own right in carefully described circumstances. Whether considered a disease or a symptom, it demands to be taken seriously, both in terms of diagnosis and of disease management, and to attract prioritisation and resources commensurate with its impact.

Among the recommendations developed by Working Group 2, feature calls to the European Commission to include pain prevention in the chronic diseases initiative, promote research on diagnosis, prevention and management of chronic pain, facilitate the integration of basic and clinical sciences and the develop European quality criteria for pain institutions. The Working Group faculty also suggests national governments to develop multidisciplinary, patient centred strategies for chronic pain management, as well as appropriate policies, guidelines, recommendations and training programmes.

Read the full recommendations of Working Group 2 [here](#).

Working Group 3: recommendations on the relevance of pain in cancer care and rehabilitation

The European Union plays a complimentary role with national governments in the fight against non-communicable diseases such as cancer. Through various initiatives, the EU is gathering best practices and guidelines on cancer care and patient support, and has established an Expert Group on Cancer Control to advice the European Commission in formulating and implementing EU activities in the field of cancer. Adequate treatment of pain is highly relevant in cancer patients. Appropriate pain management can reduce the need for sickness absence and disability and can provide better quality of life. Pain treatment is also highly relevant to palliative care.

Working Group 3 has therefore developed specific recommendations to the European Commission and national governments looking at education and training in pain assessment, management and palliative care, at pain research and appropriate allocation of resources.

Read the full recommendations of Working Group 3 [here](#).

Working Group 4: recommendations on pain, rehabilitation and reintegration of workers in the workforce

Deteriorating health, together with chronic disease and co-morbidities associated with pain, negatively affects labour supply. Pain and chronic pain can limit movement and cause sleep disturbance, depression, anxiety disorder, concentration disturbance and loss of self-efficacy and autonomy. Chronic pain results in more than 500 million sick days per year in Europe, costing the European economy more than €4 billion. Chronic pain also leads to substantial expenditure in workers compensation and disability benefits. Early and appropriate clinical interventions including rehabilitation aimed at and organized to support staying at work or return to work, can be both cost-effective and have a significant impact on workforce productivity and quality of life.

Working Group 4 has therefore developed specific recommendations to the European Union and national governments to address this problem, especially around the promotion of policies interconnecting healthcare, work and social protection systems to prevent involuntary early retirement. The Working Group also called on national governments to prioritise chronic pain as a national public health priority.

Read the full recommendations of Working Group 4 [here](#).

#SIP2016Action: SIP on social media

Europe: Announcement of Cluster Headache Day

Thank you to all the ones who helped making SIP 2016 resonate on social media! During the SIP days, #SIP2016Action was mentioned about 800 times, SIP 2016 graphics widely used by the pain advocate community, but also by MEPs and relevant organisations. The SIP message reached a potential audience of 7 million people! This is a fantastic way to ensure policy makers learn about the societal impact of pain!



Tell Active Citizenship Network about your way of working with chronic pain and win!



Active Citizenship Network has launched the first “EU Civic Prize on Chronic Pain - Collecting good practices” to collect evidence of existing good practices in European countries in terms of struggle against pain. The winners will be given an expenses-paid visit to another winner and a publication in English in a suitable journal. Here is more information, the project leaflet, the guide and the link to fill the form by the 31st of August. Share the contest with your contacts!

Furthering Balanced Pain Management: Lessons from EU Advocates

SIP 2016 did not go unnoticed in the US. The Alliance for Patient Access, a US network of physicians focusing on patients’ access, takes stock of the outcomes of SIP 2016 and states that US pain advocates „could learn from European counterparts when considering how to advance balanced pain management.”

The article points to similarities and differences in the EU and US pain communities: “As in the United States, chronic pain in EU is a prevalent condition that is costly to both the individual and society at large. (...) But we also differ in some ways. One striking difference was apparent in the discussion of opioids. Given the level of opioid misuse, diversion, addiction and overdose in the United States, domestic pain management discussions often focus solely on opioid policy and regulation. As an American at the SIP meeting, however, I was struck to hear presenters cite the lack of access to opioids as not only a clinical concern, but also a human rights issue.”

The SIP formula was appreciated: “Advocates of balanced pain management can learn much from SIP, particularly in one area: the ability to collaboratively define and pursue specific goals. (...) The level of policymaker attention given to last week’s symposium was a testament to the initiative’s success.”

Read the full article on SIP [here](#).

Contact us!

Please contact sophia@ecmeetings.com (MP +356 (9933) 9937) for any question related to the organisation of SIP 2017. Questions with regards to the content and presentation at SIP 2017 should be sent to sip-platform@grunenthal.com.

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, European Pain Federation 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 Thomas Russell (Website Editor): sip-platform@grunenthal.com.

Find us on social media:



Imprint

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European Pain Federation EFIC®

Grensstraat 7, mailbox 3
1831 Diegem, Belgium
Tel : +32 2 251 55 10
Fax : +32 2 251 48 10

e-mail: secretary@efic.org
www.efic.org

EFIC EU Transparency Register ID Number: 35010244568-04

Grünenthal GmbH

Governmental Affairs & Patient Centricity
SBU Europe

Zieglerstraße 6
52078 Aachen
Deutschland
e-mail: sip-platform@grunenthal.com
www.grunenthal.com

Grünenthal EU Transparency Register ID Number: 67826544528-01
Regulatory agency: Bezirksregierung in 50606 Köln
Commercial register entry: Aachen HRB 3546
VAT identification number: DE121737755

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