

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 7th European Symposium on the “Societal Impact of Pain (SIP 2017): “Structured co-operation to tackle the Societal Impact of Pain”. In 2016, we made great strides forward in articulating a series of policy recommendations for EU leaders. When taken forward collectively, we believe these recommendations would transform the lives of pain patients and alleviate the impact of pain on society. We now look forward to an update on all that we achieved in 2016, and to see what more needs to be done to make the case to politicians and other stakeholders to highlight the importance of this issue.



Chris Wells
President
European Pain Federation EFIC®



Bart Morlion
EU-Liaison Officer and
President Elect
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Chronic pain affects almost 1 in 5 European citizens; around 100 million individuals and 50% of the older population. Chronic pain is one of the major reasons why people exit the labour market prematurely and causes 500 million days of illness per year, costing the European economy more than €34 billion. As the European economy continues its slow path to recovery and structural reform, factors that affect employment and growth, such as early retirement and absence through illness, will need to be addressed. It is our role to highlight the figures and to provide advice on what can be done. So far, we have received a warm reception from policy makers and we hope this continues.

At the European Pain Federation EFIC®, the multidisciplinary professional organisation in the field of pain research and medicine, we are making progress in our own field to promote a wider and deeper understanding of pain. In March this year we held the first examination for the European Diploma in Pain Medicine. Our educational activities will grow, and hopefully we will see more healthcare professionals with an understanding of the impact of pain, as well as its treatment. Coupling this with an approach to governments, to ensure an appropriate policy framework for pain care and pain patients is a noble ambition and we hope to see it succeed in the coming years.

This year, there are five strands to the agenda of the SIP Symposium:

We will once again focus on two central issues to pain policy; the use of pain as a quality indicator for health systems and the impact of pain on labour and employment.

We will also take the opportunity to look at how a platform to address the societal impact of pain could function, as well as different challenges, models and lighthouses in pain policy at national and European level.

Finally, we will look at evolving concepts in the definition of chronic pain, to define a consensus statement for policy purposes on the definition of chronic pain.

We look forward to joining you in Malta, and to seeing our ideas manifested in policy in the near future.



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