

“Pain Euro-Mediterranean Coalition”, the new platform addressing the societal impact of pain

The eight policy recommendations coming from the SIP 2016 stood for an important starting point in the development of a better European policy addressing chronic pain management, and Active Citizenship Network appreciates the decision made by the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) on December 2016 to add pain to its agenda .

However, it is crucial not only to identify priorities and recommendations, or get the commitment of the Institutions, but also to promote concrete activities involving all the stakeholders to transfer achievements in the European agenda into the European culture, including extra EU countries too. With the same aim, and - in general - to contribute to make chronic pain visible, Sine Dolore and Active Citizenship Network have promoted the “Pain Euro-Mediterranean Coalition”.

The idea of this Coalition came out on June 2016 during the event realised at the EU Parliament “Pain therapy and the degree of patient’s pain in the age of cross-border healthcare” , which was supported by the MEPs Interest Group “European Patients’ Rights and Cross-border Healthcare” . However, the Coalition will be officially presented in May 2017 in Minorca (Spain), in the framework of the “Sine Dolore World Park” .

In response to the slogan of SIP 2016 “Time for Action” , there is the willing of Active Citizenship Network and Sine Dolore to cooperate for the development of concrete efforts against unnecessary pain.

This Coalition aims to be:

- The agora of operators of good practices on pain, encouraging the exchange of experiences among health professionals, healthcare providers, Institutions, civic associations and Patient Advocacy Groups (PAGs);
- An open multi-stakeholder platform mainly addressed to the constituency dealing with pain relief at local and national level across Europe rather than to EU umbrella organisations;
- The fusion of experiences coming from pain and patients’ rights constituencies;
- The missing piece necessary to integrate the scientific research on pain with the “civic information” approach on the topic;
- A bridge on pain built in the Mediterranean area but intended to overcome EU borders and reach non-EU countries as well;
- Facilitator for advocacy and policy actions on chronic pain at local, national and European level.

The Coalition has the scientific support of the European Multidisciplinary Network in Pain, Research and Education/Efhre International University.

The first enthusiastic actors who have decided to join the Coalition (but applications for membership are still open) are: Acción Psoriasis, Federación Española de Diabetes, Foro Español de Pacientes, Asociación Española de Trasplantados, Alianza General de Pacientes, Sociedad Balear del Dolor, AEPAC-Asociación Española de Pacientes con Cefalea, Plataforma de Organizaciones de Pacientes (Spain); Association Francophone pour Vaincre les Douleurs (France); Croatian Association for the Promotion of Patients’ Rights (Croatia); Patients’ Rights Association in Kosova and Professional Health Association (Kosovo); Together for Life (Albania); Headache Association of Ticino (Switzerland); National Patients’ Organisation (Malta), Azorian Association of Chronic Pain Patients (Portugal), Anaste-Associazione Nazionale Strutture per la terza età (Italy).

In particular, evidence shared by the Albanian partner seems extremely relevant: «Last year, in Albania, “Together for Life” dealt with patients with cancer, stage IV, who did not receive palliative care and as such, they lived in terrible pain. “Together for Life” has discussed with doctors and learned that many of them did not know that palliative care existed in Albania and so they did not tell the patients about it. We have raised this issue publicly in different activities, and in our own health media to change the situation, but we are conscious that more has to be done, especially on chronic pain. So we really do appreciate what Active Citizenship Network is doing with “Sine Dolore” and the Coalition, and of course we would like to be part of it».

The diversity of members within the Coalition will strengthen collaborations among all the relevant stakeholders. At the same time, the different perspectives shared will enrich European and national experiences, expertise, data and benchmarking on chronic pain.



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