



PRESS RELEASE

Societal Impact of Pain 2011 (SIP): 65 European organisations endorse symposium on the “Societal Impact of Pain” in the European Parliament

23 March, 2011 – On 3-4 May 2011, almost 300 European health care stakeholders from more than 30 EU member states will come together in the European Parliament in Brussels to discuss the “Societal Impact of Pain” (SIP 2011). The scientific framework of the symposium is hereby being endorsed by 65 national and international organisations of different backgrounds, which support the need for an improved pain care in Europe (<http://www.sip-meetings.org/links>). The symposium offers a platform for health care professionals and specialists, as well as representatives of health authorities, pain advocacy groups, politicians, regulators and budget holders. Its aim is to create awareness for the unmet need of pain care in Europe, to discuss key challenges, goals and policy instruments for future pain treatment and to share best practices and create alliances for future collaborations.

The scientific framework of the symposium SIP 2011 is designed under the responsibility of the European Federation of IASP® Chapters (EFIC®). After the first symposium of the “Societal Impact of Pain” in Brussels in May 2010, the EFIC® has called on the EU and its member state governments to start taking action to address the problem of underdiagnosed and insufficient pain treatment in Europe.

“Pain – in particular chronic pain conditions – is a significant health problem that affects millions of people in the European Union”, Professor Giustino Varrassi, President of the EFIC® explained. “I firmly believe it must be addressed not only in terms of direct costs to national health care systems but also in terms of the wider societal costs, costs on welfare systems and the negative impact on the economy. The symposium ‘Societal Impact of Pain’ therefore offers a unique opportunity for discussion and decision-making processes to really make change happen”.

This year’s SIP event will take place in the European Parliament and will be co-hosted by Dr Jiří Maštálka MEP and Dr Milan Cabrnock MEP. Speaking in advance of the event, Maštálka said: “The impact of pain on our society is an issue that affects

everyone across all EU member states. Pain must be acknowledged and tackled across the board. It not only limits people's quality of life, but it also creates an enormous burden of economic costs. For all these reasons, national healthcare systems should put Pain on top of their priority lists."

Moreover, endorsed by a number of patient advocacy groups and scientific health care organisations, the international significance of the topic of pain care for all European member states becomes apparent. As MEP Milan Cabrnoch commented: "This symposium is unique. It gives an opportunity to all those affected by issues relating to pain – no less than 65 organizations – to discuss the societal impact of pain and to put their concerns at the top of EU policymakers' agendas.'

According to a recent publication of 2011 on "The prevalence, correlates and treatment of pain in the European Union", almost 9% of the European Union suffers from daily pain. The prevalence of pain thereby negatively increases with age and has a tremendous impact on patient's quality of life.¹

Another publication based on the European Study of the Epidemiology of Mental Disorders (ESEMeD), amongst others funded by the European Commission, reports the following: 68.8% of respondents have problems in one or more EQ-5D dimensions, most frequently pain/discomfort (55.2%), followed by mobility (50.0%), usual activities (36.6%), self-care (18.1%) and anxiety/depression (11.6%) while in European elderly ≥ 75 years of age, over 50% suffer from moderate to extreme pain.²

For an overview of all endorsing organisations of the symposium "Societal Impact of Pain" 2011, please refer to: <http://www.sip-meetings.org/links>

For more information on the background and programme of the symposium "Societal Impact of Pain" 2011, please refer to: http://www.sip-meetings.org/SIP_2011_Background

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Notes to Editors:

About The Societal Impact of Pain

The scientific framework of SIP 2011 is designed under the responsibility of the European Federation of IASP® Chapters (EFIC®) and is endorsed by 65 patient advocacy and scientific organisations. The pharmaceutical company Grünenthal GmbH is responsible for logistic support, preparation and organisation. The event will be kindly co-hosted at the European parliament by Dr Jiří Maštálka MEP and Dr Milan Cabrnoch MEP.

¹ "The prevalence, correlates and treatment of pain in the European Union"; Langley et al; Current Medical Research and Opinion Journal of Medical Economics Journal of Drug Assessment; 2011; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21194390>).

² "Health status of the advanced elderly in six European countries: results from a representative survey using EQ-5D and SF-12"; König et al; <http://www.hqlo.com/content/8/1/143>.

The objectives of the symposium are to discuss the key challenges, goals and policy instruments with budget holders, strategic decision makers and representatives of stakeholder organisations to improve pain care in Europe.

For managers and administrators involved in strategic decision-making on pain related issues from the perspective of national healthcare systems the symposium will be a good opportunity to network and share best practice with healthcare authorities, insurance companies and budget holders from all over Europe. For healthcare professionals, patient and consumer representatives the symposium will create a platform to interact and present their work to improve pain care.

For more information, please visit www.sip-meetings.org.

About EFIC

The European Federation of IASP® chapters (EFIC®) is a multidisciplinary professional organisation in the field of pain science and medicine, made up of the 34 European Chapters of National Pain Societies of IASP (International Association for the Study of Pain). Established in 1993, EFIC's 34 constituent chapters represent Pain Societies from 34 countries and close to 20,000 scientists, physicians, nurses, physiotherapists, psychologists and other healthcare professionals across Europe, who study pain and treat patients suffering from pain.

For more information, please visit www.efic.org.

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