

6 August 2020

Dear colleagues,

It has come to our attention that European Pain Federation activities have been raised as potential conflicts of interest (COI) by members of the Global Year task force. We write to you today to clarify points that have been raised, to assure you that the Federation works independently of financial interests, and to reaffirm your trust in our organisation.

Medical societies, funding, and independence

Almost every European medical society works with pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers among other sponsors. The European Pain Federation is no different. In 2019 we took a first step in the direction of increased transparency with a section of our annual report setting out key aspects of our finances ([see pages 32 and 36](#)). In recent years we have also actively engaged in diversifying our sponsors, including non-pharmaceutical and medtech organisations. If sponsorship is linked specifically with a project, it is reported as such. The European Pain Federation is free to determine its agenda and its activities in all cases. We are confident that our leadership, staff and volunteers act with integrity and independence for the benefit of patients.

Societal Impact of Pain

The Societal Impact of Pain project is an advocacy campaign managed by the European Pain Federation and Pain Alliance European (PAE). The objectives of SIP are to:

- Raise awareness of the impact that pain has on our societies, health and economic systems
- Exchange information and share best practices across all member states of the European Union
- Develop and foster European-wide policy strategies & activities for an improved pain care in Europe

In the past, the campaign was a partnership between the Federation, Grunenthal and PAE. Campaign materials, such as the roadmap that was shared with the task force, were sometimes put together with the input of Grunenthal's policy-focused employees, hence the authors name. The European Pain Federation has always had oversight of these materials and Grunenthal has respected the independence of the European Pain Federation in defining the direction of this campaign. The SIP document is not a scientific document and was shared with the task force only to stimulate discussion.

Questions relating to the corporate history of Grunenthal are best addressed by the company themselves.

Conflict of interest policies

Experts in their field are solicited by different sides for advice: academia, governmental bodies, scientific organizations, and also by the commercial world. Potential conflicts of interest are difficult to avoid in the scientific community, though we are working to ensure that key projects of the European Pain Federation are beyond reproach. One such example is our upcoming recommendations on opioids for chronic non-cancer pain, where a specific COI reporting and management methodology was followed. This approach will be implemented on future projects. To date the Federation's COI approach has been limited to (published) scientific endeavours, rather than projects with more of an advocacy or awareness-raising approach. We will be happy to look at expanding our COI policy to a broader range of projects.

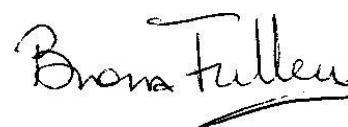
For the avoidance of doubt, our co-chair Dr Paul Cameron (chartered Physiotherapist) is representing the European Pain Federation in his capacity as a scientific and clinical expert and exercises independent judgement on this project, with no input from any sponsor of the Federation.

Our Executive Director, Sam Kynman, is available to speak to any task force members directly if there are any follow-up questions.

Kind regards



Prof. Bart Morlion
President
European Pain Federation EFIC®



Prof. Brona Fullen
President Elect
European Pain Federation EFIC®