



SIP Portugal Newsletter 2025

Strategic Advances in Defending the Rights of People Living with Chronic Pain

Over the past year, SIP Portugal has significantly strengthened its role as a national advocacy platform, helping to elevate chronic pain to a higher level of public visibility and political priority. Through consistent, evidence-based action and clearly defined objectives, we have reinforced dialogue with political forces, decision-makers and Portuguese society, promoting a deeper understanding of the impact of pain and the urgent need for robust public policies.

As part of a coordinated effort, SIP Portugal met with several parliamentary political forces and key decision-making bodies, underscoring the importance of recognizing chronic pain as a disease and the need for the full implementation of ICD11. These meetings also made it possible to present relevant data on the social and employment-related impact of pain, highlighting its consequences for productivity, mental health, job retention and quality of life. This work demonstrated the urgency of developing integrated public policies that truly address the needs of the population.

Our political strategy was consolidated in a Memorandum, sent to all political parties. This document brought together national and international evidence and presented structured recommendations to guide the integration of chronic pain into the national health agenda. The impact was clear: for the first time, chronic pain appeared with greater visibility across several political platforms during the pre-election period, marking an important step forward in institutional recognition of this major public health issue.

In parallel, throughout the month of October, SIP Portugal led a broad National Awareness Campaign focused on pain literacy, equitable access to care and the socioeconomic impact of chronic pain. The campaign included policy briefs,



technical materials, media-oriented communication and a strong digital presence. The communication agency's report highlighted exceptionally wide reach and significant community engagement, demonstrating growing public attention to this topic.

Media engagement was equally strategic. Over the year, SIP Portugal appeared in several media outlets through opinion articles, specialist interviews and television participation in high-audience programs. These contributions helped bring essential issues into public debate, including inequalities in access to pain care, the substantial economic and social burden associated with chronic pain and the importance of fully adopting ICD-11. The partnership with the newspaper Observador played a key role by presenting real-life testimonies and analyses that brought society closer to the lived experience of chronic pain.

On the scientific front, SIP Portugal took part in several national events, reinforcing dialogue between evidence, clinical practice and public policy. On the National Day Against Pain, we presented data, reinforced key messages and contributed to deepening pain literacy among professionals and citizens, strengthening the connection between scientific knowledge and policy action.

One of the most significant milestones of the year was the launch of the National Chronic Pain & Employment Survey, which gathered 662 responses and revealed unprecedented information on the employment challenges faced by people living with pain. The findings demonstrated significant difficulties in job retention, high levels of presenteeism and absenteeism, experiences of discrimination and a direct impact on productivity. These results reinforce the need for inclusive labour policies, workplace adjustments and social strategies that take into account the realities of chronic pain.

SIP Portugal's digital presence grew substantially over the year. The digital strategy helped reinforce institutional visibility, mobilize citizens and promote pain literacy in a continuous and accessible way. The communication agency's report

highlighted a significant increase in interactions, shares and active participation among patients, carers and health professionals, consolidating SIP Portugal's position as a national reference in the public debate on pain.

SIP Portugal will continue to deepen its commitment to defending people living with chronic pain, ensuring that this condition remains a priority on both national and European policy agendas. In the coming months, we will closely monitor political developments, helping to translate the recommendations presented into concrete action.

Pain literacy will remain central to our mission, reinforcing the dissemination of rigorous and accessible information that supports social mobilization and improves the quality of life of people living with pain. We will also continue to strengthen collaboration with national and European partners, promoting strategic alignment and the integration of SIP Europe's priorities.

Through sustained and committed action, SIP Portugal remains dedicated to promoting inclusive and integrated policies that guarantee equity, quality and access to pain care, contributing to a more informed, fairer and more attentive society that recognizes the profound impact of chronic pain on people's lives.