SIP Policy Forum MoU

Background:

In Europe there are approximately 740 million people, most of whom experience an episode of severe pain at some point in their life. For approximately 20 percent, that pain persists for longer than three months and these have chronic pain. Therefore, at present, 150 million people are experiencing chronic pain across Europe, this is approximately equal to the population of Germany and France combined.

Pain is the one of the most prevalent medical conditions in Europe and worldwide. It is the most common reason people seek health care and is the number one cause of disability and reduced quality of life. There is a strong socio-economic gradient in terms of prevalence and impact, particularly for work disability and sickness absence. Disability burden due to pain is escalating, threatening the sustainability of European healthcare and social systems. However, pain research is significantly underfunded compared to other areas of health research and this underinvestment is considered a key factor contributing to the burden. The European Commission has called many pain conditions high-burden and under-researched, requiring substantial attention.

Against this background, SIP established in 2021 the SIP Stakeholder Forum as a voluntary platform to bring together a wide range of stakeholders engaged in pain policy discussions.

Over the years, and in response to the evolving European policy landscape, the Forum has progressively refined its scope and focus. Greater emphasis has been placed on structured policy discussions, increasingly centred on the EU health policy agenda and on addressing the broader societal and economic implications of health-related challenges. This evolution has led to the repositioning of the SIP Stakeholder Forum into the SIP Policy Forum, reflecting a more focused and strategic approach while maintaining its voluntary and discussion-based nature.

Key Objectives and Possible Collaborations

The SIP Policy Forum aims to:

- **Bring together a broad range of stakeholders active in the health policy landscape**, including healthcare professional and scientific organisations, patient groups, civil society organisations and other relevant actors. The Forum aims to foster an inclusive and collaborative environment where diverse perspectives can be shared, ensuring that discussions are informed by a wide spectrum of expertise and experiences across the health ecosystem.
- **Provide a forum for in-depth discussion of the European health policy agenda**, bringing together a broad range of stakeholders to exchange views, analyse key developments and ensure alignment on overarching priorities. This exchange supports a shared understanding of emerging policy trends and enables participants to collectively identify and inform the strategic priorities that SIP will focus on in the

upcoming year. Provide a forum for discussion, cross-promotion, and cooperation on SIP's and respective members' projects and events, on a voluntary basis.
- **Offer an opportunity to exchange updates on ongoing activities and priorities**, allowing participants to present their work, share developments within their respective organisations, and remain informed of each other's initiatives, thereby fostering greater coordination and mutual awareness.
- **Facilitate expert input and peer exchange on policy positions**, enabling participants to contribute to and review SIP's policy work on a voluntary basis. The Forum also operates as a reciprocal platform, where participating organisations may seek feedback, input and peer review on their own policy positions, fostering mutual support and strengthening the overall quality and coherence of advocacy efforts.

How We Work Together

Participation in the SIP Policy Forum is voluntary and flexible. Members are invited to engage in activities that are most relevant to their priorities and expertise. In practice, engagement may include:

- Annual SIP Policy Forum Meeting (1-2.5 hours meeting virtual, in Q3-Q4 each year)
- Bi-lateral meetings (30-60 min, in Brussels/virtual in Q1-Q2 each year)
- Ad-hoc, voluntary review, input and/or endorsement of SIP resources (on average, two per year, and up to 10 pages)
- Promotion of members activities and resources through the SIP Quarterly Newsletter (going to more than 1.000 contacts)

Interaction with SIP National Platforms

SIP National Platforms remain an integral part of the SIP Policy Forum, ensuring alignment between European-level discussions and national perspectives.

The structure of the annual Forum meeting is as follows:

- European-level policy exchange

  The first part of the meeting will bring together European and scientific organisations to discuss the EU health policy agenda, ongoing activities, and upcoming priorities. SIP National Platforms are invited to attend this segment as listeners, with the opportunity to engage through a dedicated Q&A session at the end. This aims to facilitate knowledge transfer and allow National Platforms to benefit from the advocacy expertise and policy insights of European stakeholders.

- National exchange and alignment

  The second part of the meeting will be dedicated to SIP National Platforms. This session will provide space for a more in-depth exchange on national activities, challenges and priorities, allowing for a more focused and meaningful discussion. It will also serve as an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of the European-level discussion and contribute to the identification and alignment of SIP priorities for the upcoming year.

Prerequisites

SIP Policy Forum member organisations should:

- Have an interest in health policies
- Have an international or European scope
- Declare possible conflicts of interest

Governance

The SIP team (the European Pain Federation EFIC and Pain Alliance Europe PAE) will ensure the day-to-day management of the Forum. In accordance with the SIP governance model, the scientific framework of the Forum is under the responsibility of EFIC, and the strategic policy objectives of the Forum are defined by both EFIC and PAE. SIP reserves the right to any final editorial decisions when concerning the drafting of SIP position papers and resources. SIP Policy Forum members can endorse, feed and add their logos to SIP position papers and resources, on a case-by-case basis, if they wish.

Sustainability and Funding

The scientific framework of the SIP platform is under the responsibility of EFIC, and the strategic direction of the project is defined by both EFIC and PAE.

In accordance with the SIP governance model, and in full transparency, the pharmaceutical companies Grünenthal GmbH, Haleon and GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals SA, are the industry sponsors of the Societal Impact of Pain (SIP) platform. SIP is seeking divestment in sponsorship, with additional sponsors coming on board in the future. The sponsorship obtained for SIP is partially used to fund the day-to-day project management of SIP, and therefore, by definition, the day-to-day management of the SIP Policy Forum. It is important to stress that the activities of the Forum remain entirely under the direction of EFIC, PAE, and the SIP leadership.

Signing Members

- Cittadinanzattiva-Active Citizenship Network (ACN)
- Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries (COTEC)
- Europe Region World Physiotherapy (ER-WCPT)
- European Academy of Neurology (EAN)
- European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA)
- European Pain Federation EFIC
- European Psychiatric Association (EPA)
- Pain Alliance Europe (PAE)

SIP National Platforms

- SIP Belgium
- SIP Denmark
- SIP Finland
- SIP France
- SIP Germany
- SIP Ireland
- SIP Malta
- SIP Netherlands
- SIP Portugal
- SIP Spain
- SIP Sweden
- SIP Switzerland
- SIP UK (in progress)
- SIP Armenia (in progress)

Logos

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP NETWORK
CITTADINANZATTIVA

COTEC
Council of Occupational Therapists for the European Countries

World Physiotherapy
Europe region

ean
european academy of neurology

EFNA
EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF NEUROLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS

EFIC
EUROPEAN PAIN FEDERATION

EPA
EUROPEAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION

Pain Alliance Europe