

European Pain Forum general provisions

Rationale for a European Pain Forum

It is estimated that, in Europe, around 20% of the adult population suffer from pain that has lasted more than six months and is of severe intensity (Breivik et al., 2006)¹. In other words, we believe that today there are 150 million people experiencing pain they would like medical help for. That number is approximately equal to the populations of Germany and France combined. Of that 150 million, there are 15 million who experience their pain as severely distressing and too difficult to live with.

Pain is now considered as a biopsychosocial illness involving physical, behavioural, mental, occupational, and socioeconomic factors. Even if an initial injury in an anatomical structure can be identified, the pain experience and disability of an individual will be determined by an array of psychosocial factors, including previous pain experiences, beliefs and fears about pain, general and psychosocial health, job satisfaction, economic status, education, ongoing litigation, compensation claims, and social well-being.

We believe that a platform where we can work together with other healthcare professional and patients' organisations would enable a much-needed holistic approach, to tackle pain in all its complexity.

Our motto

Our motto is '**more power by broader basis**'.

Today, the European Pain Federation can speak for 20,000 healthcare professionals across Europe, which is already a diverse and inclusive group. However, more and more, when for example talking with decision makers about securing funds for research or promoting education and awareness of pain medicine, we face the challenge that many public health stakeholders face: scarcity of resources. Governments aim to ensure sustainability by streamlining and integrating demands. We believe that the best way to overcome these issues, and to make sure that pain receives the appropriate level of attention and support, is to come together and represent a coalition of the most important stakeholders in the field.

Our mission

The European Pain Forum (hereinafter referred to as "the Forum") seeks to encompass the views, goals, and vision of all relevant healthcare professional and patients' organisations with a significant interest in alleviating pain. We aim to speak with a single voice on matters related to pain education, research, advocacy and standards at European level. The Forum is independent of all commercial and corporate funding from industry.

¹ Breivik, Harald & Collett, Beverly & Ventafridda, Vittorio & Cohen, Rob & Gallacher, Derek. (2006). Survey of Chronic Pain in Europe: Prevalence, Impact on Daily Life, and Treatment. *European Journal of Pain* (London, England). 10. 287-333. 10.1016/j.ejpain.2005.06.009.

Vision

Alleviate the suffering of people living with pain through an interprofessional approach that takes into account the biological, psychological, and psychosocial aspects, as well as the patient perspective and occupational and socioeconomic factors.

Key objectives

- Align on a common understanding of pain
- Involve all relevant healthcare professionals' organisations with a significant interest in alleviating pain
- Involve patients' organisations focused on pain
- Participate in existing initiatives and create new projects that can advance the Forum mission
- Provide a forum for discussion, cross-promotion and cooperation on respective member projects and events on a voluntary basis

Possible partnerships and interactions

The Forum doesn't aim to exist in a void, nor to reinvent or replace existing platforms. It aims to ensure interaction and, where possible, partnerships with existing initiatives in its areas of interest (education, research and advocacy). For instance, the Societal Impact of Pain Platform, the Brain, Mind and Pain MEP interest group, existing research consortia funded through IMI, and other EU research and innovation programs.

Possible activities

- Jointly participate in research consortia
- Create working groups to produce guidelines and standards on pain
- Produce position papers on advocacy, education or research issues related to pain
- Advisory activities (e.g. providing multidisciplinary expert opinion on pain for political institutions and regulators)
- Host meetings to discuss issues of common interest
- Submission of advocacy, research and education activities to the Forum for advice, feedback, or endorsement
- Cross-promotion activities

Examples of ways to work together:

- If an organisation is proposing new guidelines or educational curricula on pain, they can bring them to the Forum for potential collaboration. If the European Pain Federation is doing the same, it will submit it to the Forum for potential collaboration
- If an organisation is looking to work collaboratively on its congress programme, it could send it to the Forum for proposals (e.g. propose Forum members put forward workshop proposals)
- If an expert opinion or position paper is being developed, it can be brought to the Forum for review and potential sign-off by other organisations



Communication

Once established, the Forum will carry forward its activities via in-person meetings at least once a year. The EFIC Executive Office will ensure continuity and follow up on each activity through the following means of communication between meetings:

- Monthly email from EFIC Executive Office providing updates and summarising opportunities for collaboration
- Quarterly and ad hoc virtual meetings
- Any proposals from members for further ways to connect

Member organisation requisites

- Acceptance of the biopsychosocial model (e.g. the [IASP definition of pain](#))
- Have an interest in pain science and the management of pain and its comorbidities
- Have an interest in education, research and advocacy on pain
- Be a legally registered non-profit organization
- Have an international or European scope
- Declare possible conflicts of interest

Limitations

Unless otherwise decided by the member organisations, the European Pain Forum doesn't aim to assimilate the participant organisations into one organisation but aims to be a forum for voluntary cooperation.

Voluntary cooperation on an 'opt-in' basis

The European Pain Forum is a forum to share ideas and propose opportunities for collaboration. Each organisation can decide whether to take part in the different activities and projects of the Forum on a case-by-case basis. All collaboration will be on an 'opt-in' basis, with no member forced to support a project that they have not actively opted in to.

Governance

In these early days of existence, the Forum will not focus on defining in detail its governance structure, but will rather focus on defining the objectives, vision and mission of the initiative. At this stage the Forum will exist as a voluntary space for cooperation. The European Pain Federation Executive Office will ensure management and coordination of the project and its Executive Board and Advocacy Committee will provide strategic and scientific guidance, along with the participating organisations' appointed representatives.



Sustainability and funding

The European Pain Federation decided to invest its own resources and time in the European Pain Forum project as we are deeply convinced of the validity and necessity of this project.

At this stage there will be no membership fees, but the transport and accommodation costs of any future meeting will be borne by participants. Equally at this stage we don't foresee corporate sponsorship. The future sustainability and funding mechanism of this project, in line with the level of ambition that we will set for our common activities, can be adjusted over time by agreement amongst the members.

ENDORISING ORGANISATIONS (in alphabetical order)

Council of Occupational Therapists for European Countries (COTEC)
European Academy of Neurology (EAN)
European Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care (ESAIC)
European Federation of Addiction Societies (EUFAS)
European Headache Federation (EHF)
European Pain Federation EFIC
European Federation of Psychologists Associations (EFPA)
European Psychiatric Association (EPA)
European Region - World Confederation of Physical Therapy (ERWCPT)
European Society of Anaesthesiology (ESA)
European Specialist Nurses Organisations (ESNO)
European Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ESPRM)
European Society of Regional Anaesthesia & Pain Therapy (ESRA)
Pain Alliance Europe (PAE)
United European Gastroenterology (UEG)



