



LAUNCH OF NEW MEP INTEREST GROUP ON BRAIN, MIND AND PAIN

Brussels, February 24th, 2015 – The European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) and Pain Alliance Europe (PAE) will today launch a new Member of the European Parliament [MEP] Interest Group on Brain, Mind and Pain

The two umbrella patient organisations will work together to push neurological and chronic pain conditions higher up the European agenda.

Across Europe, 1 in 3 European are affected by a brain disorder and 1 in 5 by chronic pain. However, two thirds of people with brain disorders receive no treatment and 40% of people with chronic pain report that it is not adequately controlled.

“These long-term conditions severely impact quality of life, often leading to considerable disability and sometimes to reduced life expectancy. EFNA and PAE felt more attention was long overdue. A new Parliament with many fresh faces was the ideal opportunity to launch the new group” said EFNA President Audrey Craven.

She continued: “The aim is to encourage research into and access to innovative treatments, promote prevention and self-management approaches, decrease stigma and work together to improve quality of life for people living with these disabling conditions.”

The new group will be co-chaired by MEPs Marian Harkin, Jeroen Lenaers and Daciana Sârbu, with more than 40 additional MEPs already signing a Register of Supporters.

The launch will take place from 18.00hrs at the Thon Hotel EU, and will include the presentation of a ‘Book of Evidence’ outlining the current challenges faced in the field of neurological and chronic pain, but also exploring possible solutions.

Presentations, from a multi-stakeholder perspective, will be followed by discussion and debate with the audience. Along with the Book of Evidence, this input will form the basis on the ongoing focus on the group. So, EFNA and PAE are encouraging all interested parties to attend.

Participants will also be invited to partake in the “My pain feels like...” ‘pain box’ demonstration. This is an opportunity to experience a realistic simulation of localised neuropathic pain.

“The MEP Interest Group on Brain, Mind and Pain will initially focus on the common issues faced by those affected by these disorders; one of the biggest being stigma. In many cases the invisible nature of brain, mind and pain disorders adds to this societal problem. Allowing people to experience what these patients live with everyday - in this case, neuropathic pain - is one way of raising awareness and decreasing the stigma faced by those living with these conditions.”

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The group – a joint initiative of the European Federation of Neurological Associations and Pain Alliance Europe – will be co-chaired by MEPs Marian Harkin, Jeroen Lenaers and Daciana Octavia Sârbu.

The aim is to encourage research into and access to innovative treatments, promote prevention and self-management approaches, decrease stigma and work together to improve quality of life for people living with these disabling conditions.

To achieve these goals we are calling on European policy-makers – via the Institutions and Members States – to:

- 1. Support patient-led campaigns to educate, eradicate stigma and raise awareness of neurological and chronic pain disorders*
- 2. Support research into the development of innovative prevention and treatment options within a regulatory framework which facilitates equitable access to affordable therapies*
- 3. Strengthen patient involvement in this research, and in policy-setting and decision-making*
- 4. Implement relevant European social legislation to ensure appropriate support for people living with neurological and chronic pain disorders*