

ONE HUNDRED MILLION EUROPEAN SUFFER FROM CHRONIC PAIN, HALF OF WHOM ARE OVER 65: A CHARTER FOR THEIR RIGHTS

- **A healthcare, social and economic emergency: treatment costs for chronic pain have risen to 271 billion euros per year in Europe, 88.16 billion of which for the elderly.**

Brussels, November 11, 2015: One in every five Europeans suffers chronic pain of a non-oncological origin, with one in every four suffering the most severe type. Those over age 65 hit the worst. One in every two elderly people suffers from this pain, which they live with for an average of seven years prior to dying. For them, the European Charter of the Rights of Citizens over 65 with Chronic Pain has been drawn up and it is presented [on November 11](#) at the European Parliament in Brussels. A initiative from Senior International Health Organization (SIHA), with the collaboration of Pain Alliance Europe and Senior Italia FederAnziani and the support from Giovanni La Via and Elisabetta Gardini, PPE, and Antonio Panzeri, S&D and the contribution of Medtronic.

“With this charter, we are setting a goal of helping to ensure access to and continuity of treatment as well as quality, safety, and equality between elderly patients suffering from chronic pain. We want to help also Member States to safeguard patients’ rights and increase awareness on chronic pain at the European level. Specific directives are drawn up to resolve problems connected with chronic pain and measures are enacted that protect citizens.” said Dr. Roberto Messina, SIHA CEO.

Back pain, cranial pain, neck pain, arthritic and muscular pains are the most common, associated with such symptoms as depression, loss of social relations and work abilities. Only 69% of those with chronic pain in the EU are assured of treatment, and only 41% of the latter in an adequate manner.

The impact of chronic pain treatment for those under age 65 on healthcare and economic systems of the 28 Member States translates into heavy losses in terms of workdays and high social-healthcare treatment costs for everyone. A patient with non-oncological chronic pain costs healthcare systems an average of 2.6 times more than a patient without this type of pain.

According to an estimate by Senior Italia FederAnziani, total direct and indirect healthcare costs for chronic pain pathologies in the 28 Member States varies from 2% to Ireland's 2.9%, with an EU average of 2.4% and an annual cost of 271 billion euros per year. Spending for the elderly is at almost 90 billion euros (excluding indirect costs such as days of work missed).

Eurostat indicates that there are currently 96.6 million people over age 65 in the EU, equal to 19% of its population. The figure is expected to rise to 125 million in 2030, 24.1%, and almost 150 million in 2050 (148 million, 28.2% of the total). These are figures that make and will make chronic pain one of the most urgent health-related problems in the entire continent.

About SIHA

SIHA – Senior International Health Association is the federation that brings together the associations involved at European and international level on matters concerning elderly people with the aim of coordinating their action on health.

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