

ACCESS TO CARE EVENTS

During 2021 **the EMHA conducted a groundbreaking survey** which allowed to learn about the access to care barriers that different European countries have when dealing with migraine. **More than 11 countries participated**, extracting then powerful insights that helped to address their national policy makers and other stakeholders during 2022 through the Access to Care events.

These events helped the countries hosting them to reach politicians and even **achieve significant changes in their local policies** addressing migraine treatments and patient's rights.

Italy

In Italy, **significant progress has been made in the recognition and management of chronic headaches and migraines**, thanks to collaboration between various institutions and key stakeholders. A pivotal event was organized by the EMHA in collaboration with the **CIRNA Group Foundation**, hosted by Member of European Parliament (MEP) Aldo Patricciello. This event brought together policymakers, including Senator Paola Boldrini, Honorable Celeste D'Arrando, and Honorable Nicola Provenza, who quickly mobilized to provide concrete solutions for the needs of chronic patients.

During the event, **Lara Merighi**, a migraine patient and representative of the **Allianza Cefalalgici-CIRNA Foundation**, delivered a compelling speech that led to two major outcomes. First, the Italian Congress approved the creation of a Scientific Advisory Board within the Italian Health Cluster. Second, migraines were officially recognized as a social disease under Italian law. This recognition was supported by the publication of an expert consensus document on criteria for assessing disability and invalidity in chronic primary headaches, developed by the Allianza Cefalalgici-CIRNA Foundation in collaboration with EMHA.

In March 2023, the implementing decree of Law 81/2020 was issued, officially recognizing chronic headaches and migraines as social diseases. This milestone encouraged Italian regions to develop innovative projects tailored to patients' specific needs, addressing shared priorities such as establishing diagnostic and treatment networks, improving access to innovative therapies, training general practitioners and pharmacists, and promoting public awareness campaigns. Efforts are also underway to include chronic migraine in the list of officially recognized disabling diseases, which would establish uniform national criteria for assessing disability and providing benefits.

The Allianza Cefalalgici Foundation has played a crucial role in advising regions on their project development and participating in the review of initiatives. At the national level, a technical working group was established, producing a policy brief outlining common tools and strategies to guide the implementation of innovative care pathways for chronic primary headache patients. However, the need for sustainable funding beyond the 2023-2024 biennium has been highlighted to ensure the long-term success of these initiatives.

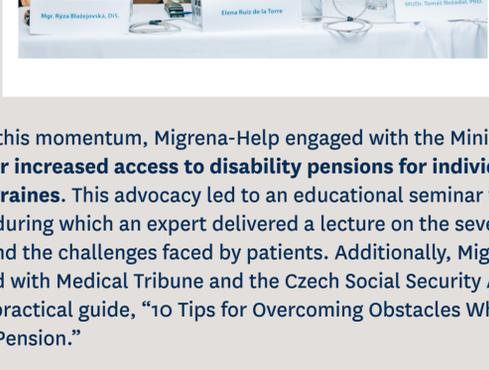
These advancements mark a significant shift in the care landscape for migraines and chronic headaches in Italy, **improving access to comprehensive care and enhancing the quality of life for patients.**



Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, significant steps have been taken to improve the care and social support available to migraine patients, driven by the efforts of **Migrena-Help** and key collaborators.

An Access to Care event, co-hosted by Migrena-Help, brought together representatives from the state administration, health insurance companies, patient organizations, and medical professionals. Held under the patronage of MUDr. Roman Kraus, MBA, Chairman of the Senate Health Committee, the event emphasized the need for early diagnosis and access to effective migraine treatments while fostering ongoing cooperation with policymakers.



Building on this momentum, Migrena-Help engaged with the Ministry of Labor to **advocate for increased access to disability pensions for individuals with chronic migraines**. This advocacy led to an educational seminar for medical examiners, during which an expert delivered a lecture on the severity of migraines and the challenges faced by patients. Additionally, Migrena-Help collaborated with Medical Tribune and the Czech Social Security Administration to create a practical guide, "10 Tips for Overcoming Obstacles When Applying for a Disability Pension."

Further educational efforts included a lecture delivered to over 80 examining doctors at a conference organized by the Health Assessment Institute. The presentation shared insights from surveys and emphasized the importance of improving social support for migraine patients.

On June 11, Migrena-Help and Medical Tribune will host a roundtable discussion in the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic. This event will showcase the journey of a migraine patient through the Czech healthcare system, highlighting obstacles encountered from general practitioners to specialized Headache Centers. A comprehensive document summarizing this journey will be provided to participants, further enriching the discussion.

These initiatives underline Migrena-Help's **commitment to raising awareness, improving treatment access, and advocating for the social rights of migraine patients in the Czech Republic.**



Spain

In Spain, the treatment of migraine is typically handled by primary care professionals who may not be knowledgeable about the correct treatment for the condition. Only the most severe cases are referred to neurologists, and not all of these cases are directed to headache units. This situation suggests that there is room for improvement in the treatment of migraine.

Experts have highlighted the inadequate use of triptans and the limited availability of preventative treatments, which are currently only provided to less than 15% of eligible patients.



To address these issues, **the EMHA organized together with the Spanish patient organization, AEMICE, an event in the Spanish Parliament in October 2022**. The goal of this strategy would be to address all relevant healthcare and social needs, minimize regional disparities, and ensure the highest possible quality of care for patients. Following the Access to Care event celebrated in the Spanish Parliament in 2022 government ministers and political party delegates agreed to meet with AEMICE to promote the development of a National Migraine Plan. These political party delegates implored parliamentary questions to the rest but with little success.



As a novelty, during the 12th September and following AEMICE's strategy, involved Health Minister Mr. Jose Manuel Miñones in boosting from his ministry a **National Plan for migraine** recognizing publicly the need of work in a new strategy involving AEMICE and Spanish Scientific Societies.



Portugal

On September 12, 2022, EMHA joined MiGRA Portugal, the Portuguese Headaches Society, and the Portuguese Neurology Society to launch an awareness campaign focused on improving access to care for migraine and headaches patients.

The campaign culminated in the Access to Care in Migraine and Headaches Conference, which brought together diverse stakeholders from society to discuss this essential issue in Portugal.

During the conference, the results of a study conducted in 2021, aimed at identifying challenges in healthcare access for people with migraine and other headaches, were presented. Following the event, a significant step was taken in advocating for change. On March 15, 2023, a meeting with a group of MPs from the Health Commission of the Portuguese Parliament took place. The purpose was to share the study findings and **raise awareness among political decision-makers about the social, economic, and personal impact of migraine and headaches.**



Currently, **Migra Portugal is in the process of writing a scientific article to publish the study results**. Additionally, efforts are being made to establish meetings with the National Health Executive and the Government Secretary responsible for Health Promotion, in the pursuit of driving positive change in migraine and headache care.

ACHIEVING CHANGE IS POSSIBLE WHEN WE ALL WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF ALL PATIENTS WHO SUFFER FROM MIGRAINE.