

# *Migraine in Europe: Time to Act Now!*

## European Parliament Migraine Alliance

*An Alliance of Members of the European Parliament  
advocating to make migraine a European priority  
and improve the lives of people living with migraine  
across the European Union*

### What is migraine ?

Migraine is not just a bad headache. It is a serious, distinct and complex neurological disease. There are different kinds of migraine. Their common feature is that they affect people from a young age to adulthood.

Migraine is a life-span disease: it often begins at puberty and mostly affects people aged between 35 and 45 years, during their most active and productive years. It is common in children (about 10% of school-age children and up to 28% of adolescents between 15-19 years).

Migraine has a gender bias: the global age standardised prevalence is 14.4% overall: 18.9% for women and 9.8% for men.

Migraine impacts the individual's quality of life: depression and anxiety often coexist with migraine.

Migraine can be a risk factor for dementia in women, is associated with chronic pain, and chronic pain substantially impacts the risk of memory decline and dementia.

### Migraine is a neglected European challenge

Migraine is a neglected neurological disease that affects over 41 million people in the European Union (EU). It is labelled as the second leading cause of disability in the world and the third in people below 50.

The scope of the challenge is wide: migraine is under-diagnosed and under-treated. Being a life-span disease makes it a costly disease for the individual and society as a whole (indirect and direct costs such as reduced productivity and lost working hours, education).

Migraine research must be increased: despite its prevalence, migraine is often overlooked by key decision makers in terms of funding and research. It is not exactly known what causes migraine. Research must continue into genetics, environmental factors, lifestyle, brain chemical imbalances, family history and gender.

### The EU added value in tackling migraine

Despite the number of people affected and the heavy toll of migraine on society, no specific attention has been paid to this disease at EU level. It is time to redress the situation.

Evidence shows that coordinated and sustained EU actions on diseases has brought significant improvement to the lives of EU citizens.

The EU has a clear added value in spearheading initiatives that will benefit patients and their families in each EU Member States.

Migraine is a major challenge today. All EU institutions have the power to address these challenges in a coordinated and ambitious way.

**Despite its prevalence and serious human, social and economic impact at European level, migraine is still widely overlooked by healthcare systems and policy makers.**

**Migraine remains under-estimated, under-diagnosed and under-treated across Europe.**

**If left unchecked, migraine presents a devastating public health crisis that robs people of their right to work, participate in society and live their lives to the full.**

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### **Why a Migraine Alliance in the European Parliament?**

The European Parliament (EP) and its members have a pivotal role to play in tackling the migraine challenges.

The Migraine Alliance in the EP is a non-exclusive, multi-national and cross-party group.

The Alliance will rally all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who agree to help steer policies and initiatives that will improve the quality of life of EU citizens, contribute to the sustainability of healthcare services and promote the inclusion of people with migraine at all levels (education, work, family life..).

Joining forces with the European Migraine and Headache Alliance and its 34 members at national level, the MEPs will help tackle these challenges by raising awareness and fostering cross-border EU collaboration.

The Alliance will foster strong EU and local action, shape political input for current and future legislation and integrate migraine into all relevant policies at all levels.

**The members of the Migraine Alliance in the EP will have a prominent and visible role in addressing the challenges posed by migraine across the EU.**

They will be invited to:

- Help raise awareness about migraine by facilitating a multi-stakeholder dialogue
- Trigger EU action on migraine (through the organisation of EP hearings, a EP Resolution on Migraine, written or oral questions to the Commission, regular events in the EP around specific themes)
- Support and contribute to the EU policy agenda and initiatives that will make a significant difference for people living with migraine
- Help exchange of best practices between Member States
- Connect with the national migraine associations to raise awareness and influence policy at national level

### **The Alliance's mission**

- Make migraine a European health, social and research priority
- Raise awareness about the challenges of migraine at EU level
- Spread the political message that concerted action is needed in the field of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of migraine, research and social policies
- Promote actions that will make migraine a priority at European and national level
- Influence the EU health, social and research agenda
- Rally strong and broad EU and national support through targeted initiatives
- Be migraine Ambassadors at national level

### **Alliance modus vivendi**

EMHA will hold the Alliance Secretariat. This will involve providing the Alliance members will all necessary information to support their commitment and actions.

EMHA will :

- Organise regular meetings with the Alliance members to decide on a yearly work plan
- Offer the Alliance members opportunities to learn directly from migraine medical and research experts and patients (public events or individual meetings)
- Be in charge of the organisations and follow-ups of meetings in the EP with the support of the Alliance members' office
- Provide all necessary information for the Alliance members to ease their engagement with the Alliance
- Give visibility to the Alliance members' engagement through interviews in the organisation's and members' newsletters, social media
- Provide substance for all Alliance members' activities at national or EU level (TV or radio interviews, articles...)

## About EMHA

EMHA is a non-profit umbrella organization with 34 patient associations for Migraine, Cluster Headache, Trigeminal Neuralgia and other headache diseases, across Europe.

The Alliance was launched in 2006. Its aim is to speak on behalf of and to advocate for the rights and needs of the 138 million people in Europe living with headache disorders.

EMHA is an active member of the European Federation of Neurological Alliances [EFNA], the International Association of Patient Organizations [IAPO], the European Patients Forum [EPF] and also works closely with organizations such as the European Headache Federation [EHF], European Brain Council [EBC] and others.

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#EUMigraineAlliance  
#Migraine  
@EMHAlliance

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