

PORTUGUESE EU PRESIDENCY EMHA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EU SOCIAL SUMMIT 2021

The **EU Social Summit** of 7 May 2021 that will set the European social agenda for the next decade is of high importance to the migraine community. The many challenges people with migraine have to overcome daily at school or on the workplace due to the disease are still widely overlooked. This compromises their participation in society.

The participants at the EU Social Summit are invited to respond to the specific needs of people with neurological diseases like migraine in their discussions and plans to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights. People with neurological diseases must not be left behind.

Migraine is not just a bad headache. It is a common and invisible life-span neurological disease that affects 41 million European people. It often begins at puberty and mostly affects people aged between 35 and 45 years, during their most productive years. It is three times more common in women. Migraine is a disabling disease characterised by a number of attacks that can generate temporary incapacity during the attacks. The disease presents a huge clinical and economic burden for both individuals and society. It costs the European economies as much as € 50 billion a year. The indirect costs associated with reduced productivity represent a substantial proportion of the migraine costs.

Migraine and school

Migraine is common in children: about 10% of school-age children and up to 28% of adolescents between 15-19 years have migraine. Half of all people affected by migraine have their first attack before the age of 12. Children who have migraine are absent from school twice as often as those who do not. Migraines during childhood can have a negative effect on school performance. It also prevents children from participating in after-school and weekend activities.

Children with migraine must benefit fully from the education system regardless of their disease. This will give them equal chances to fulfil their life as a child and, later, as an adult in their professional and social life.

- Implement adapted educative support during migraine attacks to avoid curriculum disruptions
- Improve migraine diagnosis and treatment at an early stage to help children do better at school
- Adapt the school environment and engage the education teams to avoid migraine triggers

Migraine and the work-place

The episodes of migraine attacks impact the individual in terms of career advancement and earnings. People with migraine may not be hired due to the disease, change jobs or lose their jobs. Being a stigmatising disease, people with migraine may hide migraine from their employers, making life more difficult.

To reach the Pillar's Action Plan employment rate of at least 78% in the European Union, it is imperative to give people with neurological disorders like migraine the opportunity to be fully included in the labour market by setting-up 'Migraine-Friendly Work-Places'.

- Raise awareness about migraine in the work-place to get employers' and colleagues' support
- Implement migraine-friendly places by removing well-known migraine environment and work-related triggers
- Provide support to employees who need to be away from work during migraine attacks
- Award 'Migraine-Friendly Work-Places' labels to businesses who improve the quality of life of their employees affected by migraine.

Migraine and gender

Migraine is three times more common in women. They often have to juggle between work, childcare and household chores. Migraine can condition women's family choices: they may choose to avoid pregnancy because of their disease. All this adds to the EU demographic challenge and low female employment rates.

In the context of a shrinking workforce and skills shortage, increasing women with migraine's participation in the labour market will have a positive impact on society and empower them to shape their own lives and be economically independent.

The European Pillar of Social Rights target to reduce the number of people at risk of social exclusion or poverty can lead to solutions for women and children with migraine. To comply with the EU Gender Equality Strategy that looks at closing gender gaps in the labour market and achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy, women with migraine must be given equal opportunities to thrive and be economically independent.

- Provide support to women to enter the labour market despite their disease
- Provide childcare solutions during migraine attacks
- Implement the Work-Life Balance Directive
- Go beyond the Directive's minimum standards.

The way forward

People with neurological diseases are facing huge societal challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The European Union has a role in promoting and supporting their full inclusion in society. Time to act is now!

The migraine community calls upon all participants in the EU Social Summit in Porto to include them in their discussions. People with migraine are looking forward to concrete proposals that will benefit them, their family and society. People with migraine, national associations, EMHA, professionals, brain and neurological associations are key partners to involve to implement the proposals and shape the future.

This paper is supported by the International Headache Society

About EMHA

The European Migraine & Headache Alliance (EMHA) is a non-profit umbrella organization, that includes over 30 patient associations for migraine, cluster headache, trigeminal neuralgia and other headache diseases, across Europe.

The Alliance was launched in 2006. It speaks on behalf of 41 million Europeans 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 works closely with organizations such as the European Headache Federation [EHF], European Brain Council [EBC].



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<https://www.emhalliance.org/>

The Missing Lesson on Instagram :

<https://www.instagram.com/themissinglesson/>

The Migraine Movement

<https://themigrainemovement.com/>

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