



Grünenthal's CEO demands intensive cooperation with all stakeholders to improve health care

- Gabriel Baertschi addresses the improvement of pain policies in speech at Societal Impact of Pain symposium

Valletta, June 13, 2017 – During his speech at the Societal Impact of Pain symposium in Valletta, Malta, Gabriel Baertschi, CEO of Grünenthal and board member of the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) emphasized the increased necessity of addressing the impact of pain on society. Not only is pain a major burden for those affected and one of the most common reasons for a doctor's visit, but the societal burden of pain is also a major challenge for social systems in Europe. In the light of an aging society and an increasing number of chronic health conditions, a stronger focus on the societal impact of pain is necessary to secure excellent health care in Europe, in a long-term and sustainable manner.

As a strong voice at the EU level, 1,900 European pharmaceutical companies have joined together as part of EFPIA, the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations. EFPIA wants to improve the lives of patients and provide broad access to adequate (pain) therapy by promoting research and innovation within this field. According to Baertschi overall investments in research and development by the pharmaceutical industry amounted to € 31.5 billion in 2015. Grünenthal itself invested 19 percent of its revenues in research and development.

In addition, it is important to collaborate across sectors and borders in order to drive innovation and breakthroughs in pain indications. Intensive cooperation with all stakeholders is of utmost importance. This is the only way to tackle the societal impact of pain and to identify sustainable indicators that show the value of successful pain therapy.

Baertschi further recommended that working with the European Pain Federation EFIC® as a strong and professional partner is suitable in order to promote the understanding of pain. As a successful example of such cooperation he named the EFIC-Grünenthal Grant (E-G-G), which funds upcoming scientists in the field of pain research. Their experimental ideas are to be translated into funded pain research projects. A further initiative, the patient-centered BMP (Brain, Mind and Pain) grant, which Grünenthal introduced with Pain Alliance Europe, will promote patient-centered research projects.

According to Baertschi, a very inspiring example of how policy can be utilized to benefit pain patients is "The Innovative Medicines Initiative" (IMI). Aiming at improving health, IMI accelerates the development of innovative medicines in areas of high unmet needs. The European Commission matches in-kind contributions with funds from the research framework program. Within the current IMI program (IMI 2) pain has been defined as a dedicated indication. Following the objectives of the IMI program the Pain Group, with Grünenthal as one of the co-leads, European pharmaceutical companies, academia, patient and further stakeholder organizations unite dedicated to better understand, treat and manage pain. Projects range from identifying novel pain targets to identification and definition of patient reported outcomes in clinical settings. A first collaborative project has already started and a second one is currently in preparation.

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Press Release



“This year’s conference has clearly shown that SIP and its goals are gaining momentum. With the World Health Organization’s proposal of a new definition of ‘chronic pain’ we will see care for pain patients improve significantly. For the future it is indispensable that all participants, as here at the SIP symposium, are intensively in dialogue to overcome hurdles in the fight against pain. We must establish a result-driven approach to counteract pain adequately and successfully. Therefore, I much appreciate the integration of the social impact of pain into the European Commission’s EU Health Policy Platform together with the creation of a dedicated expert group. Grünenthal and the EFPIA are ready to play their role and support these initiatives,” Gabriel Baertschi emphasized.

About Grünenthal

The Grünenthal Group is an entrepreneurial, science-based pharmaceutical company specialized in pain, gout and inflammation. Our ambition is to deliver four to five new products to patients in diseases with high unmet medical need by 2022 and become a € 2 billion company. We are a fully integrated research & development company with a long track record of bringing innovative pain treatments and state-of-the-art technologies to patients. By sustainably investing in our R&D above the industrial average, we are strongly committed to innovation.

Grünenthal is an independent, family-owned company headquartered in Aachen, Germany. We are present in 32 countries with affiliates in Europe, Latin America and the US. Our products are sold in more than 155 countries and approx. 5,500 employees are working for the Grünenthal Group worldwide. In 2016, Grünenthal achieved revenues of approx. € 1.4 bn.

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