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Mental Health Europe's Message for the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

Research has shown clear bidirectional links between mental health and poverty. People experiencing poverty are particularly vulnerable towards developing mental health problems. Conversely people with existing mental health problems are more likely to experience poverty. Uncertainties about the future dominate their daily lives. In the context of the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, Mental Health Europe therefore calls on policy-makers and other stakeholders to:

1. Implement the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing, which was launched in 2008, into all policy areas (health, social policies, housing, employment, training, justice, fundamental rights etc.).
2. Foster measures for mental health promotion and prevention of mental health problems through adequate social protection and inclusion policies.
3. Reduce stigma and discrimination against people with mental health problems, also with the support of the media.
4. Ensure a minimum level of income which allows all people to live a life in dignity.
5. Make labour markets truly inclusive, support flexible working schemes and ensure decent pay. Keeping people in their jobs is the best way to prevent poverty and social exclusion.
6. Ensure access to quality health care and social services.
7. Invest in human resources and skills development in order to apply an effective lifelong learning strategy.
8. Place the fight against mental health problems and homelessness high on the political agenda.
9. **Protect the most vulnerable members of society by promoting social justice as well as the mental health and wellbeing of the population – a decisive factor for social cohesion in Europe!**

About Mental Health Europe

Mental Health Europe (MHE) is an organisation committed to the promotion of positive mental health, the prevention of mental distress, the improvement of care, advocacy for social inclusion and the protection of human rights for people with mental health problems, their families and carers. MHE vision is of a Europe where mental health and well-being is given high priority in the political spectrum and on the European health and social agenda, where people with mental health problems live as full citizens with access to appropriate services and support when needed, and where meaningful participation is guaranteed at all levels of decision-making and administration. MHE's values are based on dignity and respect, equal opportunities, freedom of choice, anti-discrimination, social inclusion, democracy and participation.

www.mhe-sme.org