



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I.NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE contributes to the European Commission consultation on the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market

The European Commission launched a public consultation on the active inclusion of people furthest from the labour market that was closed on 28 February. The concept of active inclusion combines income support at a level sufficient for people to have a dignified life with a link to the labour market through job opportunities or vocational training and through better access to enabling social services. MHE invited all its members to have their say and to comment on the consultation paper, and submitted based on the replies a common MHE position on active inclusion.

In its contribution MHE emphasised that in the field of employment people with mental health problems are among the largest group of unemployed in all EU Member States. The situation can be especially hard for young people experiencing mental illness who are at the beginning of their lives and careers. In all Member States there is a general lack of job opportunities for people with mental health problems; there is much stigma and discrimination, and myths about mental illness among employers are widespread. Most efforts directed at vulnerable groups are concentrated on people with disabilities, and employment services do not know how to deal with the specific needs of people with mental health problems.

In view of developing common active inclusion principles and recommendations for an active inclusion strategy, MHE highlighted the following points:

- It must be ensured that the principles of the Lisbon strategy, to promote growth and jobs **AND** to promote social progress and social cohesion by fighting poverty and social exclusion applies to people who experience a mental illness so that they remain socially included and can participate in economic, social and community life.
- MHE is concerned that any active inclusion measures must not only target the working age population, and disadvantage or neglect younger and retired people, but equal access to the range of health promotion, treatment and care as well as social services and support should be assured for the whole population.
- Steps towards a successful social and economic integration of people with mental health problems must include a guaranteed basic income for an adequate time span and, at the same time, a diverse range of options for the reintegration of people with mental health problems into the labour market. Social Firms offer but one possibility for giving people a chance of integration and resettlement in the labour market.
- Efforts need to be strengthened to promote the sustainability and continuity of health and social services and their coordination at local level. Job centres must build relationships with community mental health teams and also work with local employers. Fighting stigma, prejudice and discrimination of people with mental health problems at the same time as promoting active inclusion measures is crucial.
- The Open Method of Coordination can be made instrumental in promoting active inclusion through the involvement of people of people with mental health problems and NGOs (Non Governmental Organisations) in mutual learning and exchange of good practices on ways of ensuring a decent minimum income for people with mental health problems as well as a fair regulation of the compatibility between work and social benefits.
- The European Social Fund and other financial instruments must support the work of health and social service providers, many of them NGOs that are offering various initiatives for vocational training or professional rehabilitation programmes but in the face of huge financial constraints. The role of social partners is essential for the successful implementation of the active inclusion approach, especially in the design, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of initiatives.
- MHE believes that social inclusion and active inclusion must go beyond the principle of individual rights alone and more towards collective solidarity and action.

The full MHE contribution on active inclusion can soon be found on the MHE website. For inquiries please contact Sogol Noorani at the MHE Secretariat at sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org

New project: HELPS – European Network for Promoting the Health of Residents in Psychiatric and Social Care Institutions

Mental Health Europe is involved in a new European Network for Promoting the Health of Residents in Psychiatric and Social Care Institutions (HELPS). The HELPS project is funded by the European Commission and will officially start in March 2008. The overarching aim of this project is to improve the physical health status of residents with mental disorders, mental disability or dependency living in social and health care Institutions.

Residents in health and social care Institutions for people with mental health problems have a poor physical health status resulting in reduced life expectancy.

This is incompatible with the protection of human rights and dignity. There are no specific policies to improve the health status of residents in such care Institutions.

The project will bring together a multi-disciplinary consortium to:

- identify best practice across Europe for health promotion in mental health and social care Institutions across Europe;
- develop a health promoting tool that will empower residents and staff to identify the most relevant risk factors in their specific context and subsequently select the most appropriate action out of a range of defined health promoting interventions; and
- disseminate the information gathered in the project and the intervention tool.

For more information on HELPS, please visit the project website at <http://www.helps-net.eu/index.htm> or write to Mari Fresu, MHE Policy Officer, at mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org

REMINDER: MHE conference "Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing. An Opportunity for Intercultural Dialogue"

MHE members and other interested organisations and people are kindly invited to already now send in their proposals for the conference workshops at abstracts@mhe-aalborg.dk

For more information: the MHE Secretariat, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, or visit the Conference dedicated website, <http://www.proremus.dk/mhe/>

MHE representation at various meetings

On 6 February, Mari Fresu, Policy Officer, attended the EPHA (European Public Health Alliance) Policy Coordination meeting in Brussels.

On 7-8 February, Clara Gomez, trainee, participated in a Conference organised at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, on the theme "*The renewed Lisbon Strategy 2008-2010: How to deliver more and better. The role of organised civil society*".

On 21-22 February, Mari Fresu represented MHE at the ProMenPol PCC meeting in Dublin (Ireland).

On 25 February, Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Vice-president, and Sogol Noorani, Policy Officer, participated in a meeting of the Social Platform Social Policy Working Group in Brussels.

On 26 February, Fanny Muller attended a meeting of the Social Platform FRAND (Fundamental Rights and Non Discrimination) Working Group in Brussels.

On 27-28 February, Mary Van Dievel and Mari Fresu participated in a preparatory meeting of the high level Conference on Mental Health, scheduled for June 2008, in Luxembourg.

On 27-29 February, Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Advisor, and Olivia Merlet, trainee, represented MHE at the 3rd Advocacy France Forum on a citizen's mental health policy, "*Choisir sa vie: l'égalité des chances pour une vie indépendante*" ("*Choosing how to live your life: Equal opportunity for Independent Living*"), which was organised in Paris (France).

II. MENTAL HEALTH AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

The importance of ethnic monitoring in mental health provision

Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health care (DRE 2005), is an action plan for achieving equality and tackling discrimination in mental health services in England for all people of Black

and Minority Ethnic (BME) status, including those of Irish or Mediterranean origin and East European migrants.

The programme is based on three building blocks:

1. More appropriate and responsive services;
2. Community Engagement;
3. Better information from improved monitoring of ethnicity, better dissemination of information and social care.

What is ethnic monitoring and why is it important?

"Ethnic monitoring is a process you use to collect, store and analyse data about ethnic backgrounds. You use ethnic monitoring to:

- Highlight possible inequalities,
- Investigate their underlying causes,
- Remove any unfairness or disadvantage".

(Commission for racial equality: www.cre.gov.uk)

Why monitoring ethnicity?

Ensuring equal service access for all is an important part of provision and planning. The ability of South Tyneside Primary Care Trust (PCT) to understand the health needs of ethnically diverse communities and improved access to services is being undermined by a lack of data about how many people from BME background use mental health services.

Ways forward

There is a need for improved data collection and analysis so we can see, if needs are being met and inequality tackled. This will require action from the PCT:

- The PCT to produce protocol with general practitioners' surgeries, on ethnic monitoring to be apprehended to diversity and equality strategy;
- The PCT to launch a campaign to raise the profile and importance of ethnic monitoring;
- Diversity training including ethnic monitoring should be mandatory for all staff;
- The PCT will ensure that all policies and procedures include specific reference to monitoring and the needs of specific ethnic groups;
- To ensure that Human Resources and Information Management and Technology managers are aware of the guidance and training materials and support the introduction of new codes locally and ensure that staff are aware of the importance of ethnic information.

Many thanks to Ms. Espe Bialu Ngituka, Community Development Worker Mental Health at NHS South Tyneside and Member of the MHE Committee on Mental Health and Minority Ethnic Communities, for this contribution.

The information contained in this article does not necessarily reflect MHE's position or opinion.

EU report highlights the precarious working conditions for migrants

A study by a specialised unit of the European Agency for Safety and Work (EU-OSHA), unveils the risky working conditions faced by many migrants.

The report published by the European Agency for Safety and Work was researched and written by the European Risk Observatory (ERO) and analyses issues related to occupational safety and health of migrant workers.

The overview of migrant workers is complex. Migrants can be found concentrated in some high skill sectors such IT (Information Technology). However, the many migrants are employed in sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, construction, healthcare, transport and the food sector. This may be because of labour shortages as well as language and legal barriers or discrimination.

According to the report, a significant number of migrants are subject to uncertainty, poor working conditions, and low wages. Migrant workers are often over-qualified to be employed in low-skilled jobs frequently characterised by longer working hours, higher occupational instability, and physically demanding activities. They may have little knowledge of their employment rights, experience harassment, and high rates of stress burnout.

It is estimated that in the nine largest economies of the former EU15 between 4.4 and 5.5 million immigrants are working in the "informal economy", although precise data about undeclared employment is still not available. There are serious health concerns for undeclared workers as they often do not have access to occupational health care services and lack the

legal protection mechanisms for employees in dangerous occupations. The few studies carried out on safety and health of undeclared workers suggest that they are under-reported in statistics and that they are likely to endure very poor working conditions.

To read the report and for more information: EU-OSHA website,
http://osha.europa.eu/press_room/news_article.2008-01-09_MigrantWorkers/view?searchterm=migrant%20workers

Source: EPHA

Diversity Toolkit for television programmes

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has published a diversity toolkit for public service television which seeks to equip media professionals to promote the principles of cultural diversity across their services. It contains a wealth of information on how to promote principles of cultural diversity in broadcast organisations and television programmes and brings together practical elements and good practice advice that can be applied and learned from.

The toolkit is available for free from: media@fra.europa.eu

For more information: FRA website, www.fra.europa.eu

III. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

GERMANY - Dachverband Gemeindepsychiatrie new contact details

The Geschäftsstelle Dachverband Gemeindepsychiatrie e.V. moved office.

Their new address is:

Oppelner Strasse 130

D - 53119 Bonn

Tel +49 228 691759

Fax +49 228 658 063

Email dachverband@psychiatrie.de

IRELAND - MHI Seminar on Suicide, 6 October 2007, Athlone (Ireland)

The Seminar on Suicide, organised by Mental Health Ireland (MHI), was designed to give practical advice and guidance to volunteers when they are confronted by suicide in their community. A total of 130 volunteers attended from many parts of Ireland.

All delegates were asked to complete an evaluation form at the close of the seminar. The evaluation was extremely positive. People were particularly impressed with the content and structure of the seminar. Many found personal accounts of suicide insightful and very moving. Of interest also was the informative presentation on the stages leading to the creation of the Kildare Suicide Bereavement Support Group.

More details and presentations in full are available on the MHI website:

http://mentalhealthireland.ie/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=2

ITALY - Proceedings of the SMES-Europa 10th European Conference

Most of the presentations made during the plenary sessions and workshops of the SMES-Europa 10th European Conference, which took place in Rome (Italy) on 23-25 January 2008, are now available on the SMES-Europa website:

http://www.smes-europa.org/10ConfSMES_proceedings-actes.htm

The Conference's report and recommendations should be published very soon.

QUEBEC - Zippy's Friends

"Zippy's Friends" is an innovative programme running in primary schools and kindergartens that helps young children - five, six and seven year olds - to develop coping and social skills. The programme, initiated by MHE member organisation Partnership for Children (UK), has been professionally evaluated in Lithuania and Denmark.

The programme is running in Europe in various languages (except French) since several years.

For more information on the implementation of the programme in Europe, visit the Partnership for Children website: www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk

Since 2004, Zippy's Friends is running in French in Quebec (Canada). The programme is coordinated by Professor Brian Mishara, Quebec University of Montreal. Professor Mishara and his team would like to disseminate information about the programme amongst French speaking people in Europe and collaborate with people or events in the field of education or public health in European.

If you are interested, contact Julie Denoncourt: denoncourt.julie@uqam.ca

For more information: visit the programme's website,

http://www.crise.ca/eng/pr_details.asp?section=projets&no_projet=25&usager=misharab

UK - Achievements and new challenges for the Mental Health Foundation

2007 has been a busy and successful year for the Mental Health Foundation. A number of influential campaigns, research projects and policy initiatives have been delivered. Some of the key highlights from the year include:

- Launching a brand new edition of "The Fundamental Facts", a digest of mental health information and statistics;
- Reaching millions of people via the Mental Health Action Week campaign on the importance of friendship for mental health, and through its websites and information materials;
- Publishing the findings of the 5 year Listen Up! project on the provision of mental health services for children and young people;
- Participation in the "We need to talk" campaign which led to a further £170m investment in talking therapies as part of the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review;
- Publishing new research and information materials about the links between smoking and mental health, and how spirituality can play a part in recovery from mental illness;
- Leading role in organising the first Mental Health Film and Arts festival in Glasgow in October 2007;
- The generous efforts of the 250 people who participated in various fundraising challenge events such as the London Marathon, treks to the Sahara and Peru, the Great North Run amongst others.

Looking ahead, 2008 looks set to be an equally dynamic year for the Foundation which will retain its focus on children and young people, later life, recovery and patient-led care, and will also be developing new work streams on the mental health impact of long-term physical health conditions. In March the Foundation will publish a major new report on anger and mental health as part of Mental Health Action Week 2008. The Foundation will also start work on plans for its Diamond Jubilee year in 2009 – looking at the future of mental health and mental healthcare for next 60 years.

For more information, visit the Mental Health Foundation website:

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

IV. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

EDF – European Disability Forum

EDF represented at the European conferences on the implementation of regulation 1107/2006 on disabled air passengers' rights, Brussels, 24-25 January 2008

On 24 January, the Airports Council International Europe (ACI) organised a conference directed to their members on the implementation of the regulation on the rights and obligations of persons with disabilities travelling by air.

EDF Policy Officer Maria Nyman was invited to this conference to make a presentation focusing on the need for cooperation with representative disability organisations when establishing the training programmes for their staff on disability awareness training. EDF was also reminding the airports on the need for entering into cooperation with the disability movement as soon as possible, as the regulation requires cooperation with Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) when the airports are elaborating the standards for the quality of the assistance to their disabled passengers and when designating the set down points of arrival at the airports.

On 25 January, the European Commission was organising a conference on "the correct implementation of regulation 1107/2006", attended by over 20 EDF members and a high

number of representatives from as well the airlines, the airports, the tour operators and the national enforcement bodies for the regulation. The conference allowed for very useful discussions on the current situation regarding the implementation throughout the EU and how to move ahead. It was also the opportunity for the different stakeholders to get to know each others in order to enter into collaboration at national and local level.

A new "persons with reduced mobility notification tool" has also been elaborated by airlines and airports, which will become a IATA (International Air Transport Association) recommended practice. This will allow for a more efficient communication chain ensuring that the assistance providers will be properly informed about the needs of disabled travellers.

On the suggestion of EDF, the European Commission promised by the end of the meeting to organise a "train the trainers" workshop within a couple of months, where key persons from the disability movement at national level would be invited to attend in order to be better prepared to train the disability activists at local and regional level to enter into effective cooperation with their respective airports.

For more information: contact person, Maria Nyman, maria.nyman@edf-fehp.org

Source: EDF

EPHA – European Public Health Alliance

EPHA works towards the enhancement of civil society's role at the European level

EPHA participates in the STACS (Science, Technology and Civil Society) project which brings scientists and NGOs closer to each other in order to perform research projects together and prove that NGOs can be full research partners. The project started in 1 March 2007 and will run for two years. NGO partners deal with different topics such as disability, health - including mental health - and human rights.

EPHA is particularly in charge of several work packages (management, dissemination) and is helping with the development of an interactive website to facilitate communication between civil society organisations and scientists on common research issues.

Recently EPHA has also carried out a campaign advocating for better involvement of civil society organisations in EU research funded projects.

For further information: visit the project's website,

http://www.peopleandscience.org/about_us/epha,

or the EPHA website, <http://www.epha.org/>

EPHA has a new Secretary General

Sine 1 February 2008, Monika Danuta Kosinska is EPHA new Secretary General.

To contact Monika: Email monika@epha.org

MDRI – Mental Disability Rights International

People with Intellectual Disabilities Vote for the First Time in Kosovo

In an effort to build upon the self-advocacy movement of persons with disabilities in Kosovo, Kosovo Mental Disability Rights Initiative (K-MDRI) recently assisted "Ne Per Ne" peer support group members in fully understanding and participating in Kosovo's historic winter elections to choose national and municipal assembly members and mayors. "Ne Per Ne," which means "We for Ourselves," is Eastern Europe's largest peer support group for persons with intellectual disabilities, started by MDRI.

In preparation for Kosovo's November elections, the peer support groups invited and welcomed representatives of the major political parties to discuss the importance of the elections, the work of the parties, and the issues that would affect them. Participants were able to ask questions of the candidates such as "what are you going to do regarding jobs for people with disabilities?".

For the first time in their lives, approximately 90% of the peer support group members voted in Kosovo's elections.

For more information: MDRI website, <http://www.mdri.org/>

Social Platform

Social NGOs participate in the informal Employment and Social Council in Brdo pri Kranju (Slovenia), 31 January - 2 February 2008

Invited to participate in the Informal Council of Employment and Social Policy ministers, the Social Platform acknowledged the progress that was made during the Portuguese Presidency leading to the adoption of a more balanced set of flexicurity principles.

The Social Platform in its contribution also stressed that to have a coherent follow up of the flexicurity principles it is not enough to tackle the trends identified in the Slovenian Presidency paper (globalisation, technological progress and demographic change), but that policy-makers need also to incorporate in their analysis trends such as, rising inequalities, increasing diversity in the European societies, migration, increased life expectancy, changing family patterns and an increasing role for the third sector.

The Social Platform also pointed out that while progress may have been made in recent years in relation to jobs and growth, this has not resulted in greater social cohesion. Therefore the Social Platform called upon Employment ministers to insist that the Lisbon strategy addresses Growth, Jobs and Inclusion.

The Platform delegation included, amongst others, Barbara Purkart, from SENT - Slovenian Association for Mental Health, a MHE member organisation.

To download the full text of the Platform contribution to the Brdo Council:

<http://www.socialplatform.org/Page.asp?docid=16025&langue=EN>

Source: Social Platform Press Release

V. EUROPEAN UNION

Official Launch of the ELISAN Network

The European Local Inclusion and Social Action Network (ELISAN) was officially launched on 28 January 2008 in Brussels, under the patronage of the European Committee of the Regions. This network involves elected representatives from across Europe that work in the social field at local level. The goal is to raise awareness of social action at local level in Europe, and to ensure more account is taken of the extent to which locally elected representatives can participate in the implementation of an effective and coherent social policy at European level. The network promotes exchanges of information and experience in relation to local social policies, encourages European partnerships, to take part in debates on social policies at European level.

Working topics to be developed within the network are on family issues, the elderly and disabled, minorities, social inclusion, urban problems, health, and refugees and migrants.

For more information: visit the network's website, <http://www.elisan.eu/elisan/>

Civil Liberties Committee backs Morten Kjaerum for Director of the Fundamental Rights Agency

On 12 February, MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) in Civil Liberties Committee unanimously selected Morten Kjaerum, who has 23 years of human rights experience and currently directs the Danish Institute for Human Rights, as their first choice for Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), after a public hearing with the two candidates shortlisted by the European Commission. The other candidate was Dario Carminati, a senior UNCHR member with 27 years of experience, currently representative of the Angola delegation.

Parliament's Conference of Presidents now needs to approve this recommendation, with the final choice being made by the Agency's Management Board, taking the Council's and Parliament's opinions into account.

For more information: FRA website, <http://fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php>

Source: European Parliament

VI. PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Priorities of the Slovenian Presidency in the field of Employment and Social Affairs

On 22 January, the Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Marjeta Cotman, presented the priority assignments of the Slovenian Presidency in the field of employment and social affairs to the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

The motto of the Slovenian Presidency in the field of employment and social affairs is "*Europe which invests in people operates for the future*". The Minister emphasised among others the wish of the Presidency to contribute to the fight against poverty and social exclusion as well as to improve the employment and social integration opportunities for persons with disabilities, and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone.

In order to achieve these goals, the Minister said that Europe needed legal tools, legal working standards, effective systems of social protection, productive social dialogue, and dialogue with civil society.

In the field of employment and social affairs, the Slovenian Presidency will be based on four main objectives: the Lisbon Strategy – labour market and employment; the continuation of the European discussion on demographic challenges; the fight against poverty and social exclusion; and the provision of equal opportunity and prevention of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Within the latter objective, the Minister emphasised the special attention which will be devoted to timely ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol.

To read the full speech: the Slovenian Presidency website,

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Speeches_Interviews/January/0122_MDDSZ_Cotman_EP_speech.html

Source: Slovenian Presidency

VII. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

ECOFIN Council meeting on the Lisbon Strategy and Single Market Review

The ECOFIN (Economic and Financial Affairs) Council met on 22 January 2008 to hold a debate on the next three-year cycle of the Lisbon strategy (2008-2010) to be launched at the Spring European Council meeting in March. The Council agreed that reforms and recommendations need to be implemented in a number of areas, including education and skills, "flexicurity" (flexibility and security on labour markets) and social inclusion, visibility of the social dimension, as well as the sustainability and quality of public finances.

The Economic and Finance Ministers also adopted conclusions on the Single Market Review. The Council underlined that the Single Market is of crucial importance for Europe's competitiveness in the globalised economy, as a competitive single market is a key driver of economic growth, and should therefore be at the centre of measures decided or implemented within the Lisbon Strategy.

To read the Council conclusions of the ECOFIN Council meeting: the Council website,

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ecofin/98276.pdf

Source: AGE

VIII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG Employment and Social Affairs – DG EMPL

The Commission issues reasoned opinions to 11 Member States and letters of formal notice to 3 others for infringements to Employment Equality Directive

On 31 January, the Commission sent reasoned opinions to 11 Member States who, in its views, have not fully or adequately transposed the EU Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC) prohibiting discrimination in employment and occupation on the grounds of religion and belief, age, disability and sexual orientation. The countries concerned are the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Finland and Sweden. The main problem areas include limitations in national legislation in terms of the people and areas it covers, definitions of discrimination which diverge from those in the Directive, lack of proper implementation of the obligation on employers to provide reasonable accommodation for disabled workers, inconsistencies in the provisions designed to assist victims of discrimination such as the shift of the burden of proof, the rights of associations to

assist individuals with their cases, and protection against victimisation. The countries have two months to respond, and the Commission can decide then to take them to the European Court of Justice.

The Commission also sent a letter of formal notice to Germany. The Commission's concerns include the failure of German national legislation to cover redundancies, insufficient protection for workers with disabilities, and the tightness of the deadline of two months to file a complaint.

The Commission also sent two complementary letters of formal notice to Latvia and Lithuania about their transposition of the Directive concerning, in particular, a too restrictive definition of discrimination (Latvia) and a too large exemption of age discrimination (both Latvia and Lithuania).

The Commission is preparing a report on the transposition and implementation of the Employment Equality Directive in the EU which is due to be published in the first half of 2008.

For more information: the Commission website,

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/155&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&quiLanguag>

DG Health and Consumer Protection – DG SANCO

News reports confirm Androulla Vassiliou as new Health Commissioner

On 28 February, reports confirmed that Cypriot politician Androulla Vassiliou will replace Markos Kyprianou as the new Cypriot Commissioner for Health. Commissioner Kyprianou is said to have accepted the post of Foreign Minister and will be returning to Cyprus.

Mrs. Vassiliou, who was tipped as a Health Minister for Cyprus in 1999, has been reportedly very active in the environmental field and human rights. She is known for her outspoken support of womens' rights and their representation in politics and business. Mrs. Vassiliou studied Law in London and completed post-graduate studies in International Relations. She has been very active in the legal and political scene during her career.

MHE would like to thank Commissioner Kyprianou for his hard work under this Commission and offer its warm welcome and support to Androulla Vassiliou as she joins us in Brussels.

The Commission has not yet issued an official statement on this matter and some report suggest that a Commissioner reshuffle is a possibility as Kyprianou will be the second Commissioner to announce his departure in recent weeks.

Source: EPHA

Update – DG Sanco's webpage on mental health

The DG Sanco webpage dedicated to mental health has been recently updated. You will now find there some more information about the High level conference on mental health which should take place in Brussels on 13 June 2008.

To visit the webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/mental_health_en.htm

Information day 2008

The information day about the 2008 Call for Proposals in the framework of the new Health Programme will be held in Luxembourg on 12 March 2008.

To register for this event: the website of the Public Health Executive Agency (PHEA),

http://ec.europa.eu/phea/calls/call_for_proposals_en.htm

National Info days are organised by National Focal Points (NFP) with contribution from the Public Health Executive Agency in several Members States: Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Finland.

For more information: PHEA website, http://ec.europa.eu/phea/calls/infoday2008_en.htm

The Work Plan 2008 of the Health Programme 2008-2013 and the Calls for Proposals are to be published on 29 February 2008 on DG Sanco website and PHEA website together with the guidelines for the applicants, relevant legislation and the required application forms

Health Programme

DG Sanco webpage dedicated to the Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health 2008-2013 is now available in 11 languages.

To access the webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/health_programme_en.htm

Overview of Health Strategy

The DG Sanco dedicated webpage on the new EU Health Strategy has been recently updated. You will find there useful information on the Strategy, its adoption and objectives, as well as key documents.

To access the webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/strategy/health_strategy_en.htm

IX. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

MEPs call for better protection of workers from occupational diseases and workplace accidents

In a report on the Community strategy on health and safety at work 2007-2012, the European Parliament regrets that the Commission "*is silent on targets for the reduction of occupational diseases*". New and emerging risks had to be identified.

The European Parliament stresses that the rehabilitation and reintegration of workers after ill health or an accident at work is vital and considers that it is important for governments to ensure in their health and safety strategies the obligation of job retention (through training, reallocation of tasks, etc) for people who have experienced physical or mental illness during their working lives.

Parliament also recalls that threats to health and safety at work are not limited to manual labour. More attention should be dedicated to the causes underlying the development of mental illnesses and to mental health, addiction and psychological hazards at the workplace, such as stress, harassment and mobbing, as well as violence. Moreover, greater emphasis should be placed on employer policies for the promotion of good physical and mental health.

The report was adopted during the last Strasbourg plenary session (14-17 January 2008).

To read the full report: the European Parliament website,

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0009+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

European Parliament Written Declaration on ending street homelessness

A cross-party written declaration on ending street homelessness has been registered last December by MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) Mary Lou MacDonald (GUE/NGL, Ireland) Claude Moraes (PES, United Kingdom), Jacek Protasiewicz (EPP-ED, Poland), Gérard Onesta (Greens/EFA, France) and Jean-Marie Beaupuy (ALDE, France). It calls:

- on the Council to agree on an EU-wide commitment to end street homelessness by 2015;
- on the Commission to develop a European framework definition of homelessness, gather comparable and reliable statistical data, and provide annual updates on action taken and progress made in EU Member States towards ending homelessness;
- urges Member States to devise "winter emergency plans" as part of a wider homelessness strategy.

The deadline for MEP signature is 25 March 2008.

To read the full text of the declaration:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+WDECL+P6-DCL-2007-0111+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

MHE strongly supports FEANTSA's (European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless) call on all MEPs to sign the written declaration and commit themselves to ending an unacceptable though ongoing violation of fundamental rights in the European Union. It also encourages all relevant stakeholders to take action and help secure sufficient MEP support for the adoption of the written declaration.

Source: FEANTSA

X. COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

No-one should have to choose between caring for disabled relatives and their employment

A preliminary judgment by the EU's top court on 31 January 2008 could boost the rights of millions of employees taking care of disabled relatives and prevent them from indirect discrimination.

Poiares Maduro, the advocate general at the European Court of Justice, said that UK national Sharon Coleman, a legal secretary in London, was unlawfully forced out of her job for demanding flexible hours to look after her disabled son. He argued she had suffered from "discrimination by association" and suggested that EU laws that guarantee fair treatment at work for disabled people extended to those connected with them. "[It] protects people who, although not themselves disabled, suffer direct discrimination and/or harassment in the field of employment and occupation because they are associated with a disabled person," he said. "A robust conception of equality entails that these subtler forms of discrimination should also be caught by anti-discrimination legislation," the legal adviser added.

His opinion is likely to set the tone for a final decision due to be taken by a panel of European judges later this year. In most cases, the court tends to follow the initial legal advice.

To download the EU court preliminary judgment:

[http://curia.europa.eu/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=EN&Submit=Rechercher\\$docrequire=alldocs&numaff=C-303/06&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100](http://curia.europa.eu/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=EN&Submit=Rechercher$docrequire=alldocs&numaff=C-303/06&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100)

Source: Social Platform

XI. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU

As part of the enhancement of the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union, Dimitrij Rupel, the Slovenian Foreign Minister, presented the programme of the Slovenian presidency of the European Union in Strasbourg on 30 January. He notably spoke of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, European perspectives for the Western Balkans and dialogue between cultures, religions and traditions, stressing the importance of the White Paper on intercultural dialogue that the *To read the full speech: the Slovenian Presidency website,*

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Speeches_Interviews/January/0130MZZ_Rupel_Council_EU.html?

Source: The Robert Schuman Foundation

XII. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Atlas: global resources for persons with intellectual disabilities, 2007

The main aim of Atlas-ID is to improve evidence-based knowledge and awareness on the global and regional disparities through essential and needed information on resources and services for persons with ID at country level.

This global report includes information from 147 countries, representing 95% of the world population. The information is specifically related to terms and classification systems used for this population, policy and legislation, financing and benefits, prevention, health and social care services, human resources and training, research and information systems and roles of NGOs and international organisations. In addition, the Atlas-ID includes a complete glossary of terms with definitions of basic concepts related to the intellectual disabilities field and the questionnaire used to collect the quantitative and qualitative information.

You can download the Atlas from the WHO website:

http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/atlas_id_2007.pdf

XIII. UNITED NATIONS

Update- Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

As of 16 January 2008 there are 14 ratifications of the Convention and 8 ratifications of the Optional Protocol. The Convention must have 20 ratifications for it to enter into force. Currently, there are 123 signatories to the Convention and 69 signatories to the Optional Protocol.

For more information on the Convention: visit the dedicated website, www.un.org/disabilities

UN Effort to Promote, Protect and Ensure the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On 13-14 December 2007, the Inter-Agency Support Group (IASG) on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities conducted its first meeting. The IASG is a mechanism for international cooperation in support of the promotion and implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Membership of the IASG consists of United Nations systems, departments, agencies, funds and programmes whose work is relevant to the Convention. The meeting was organised by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This group is developing a three-step approach - a statement of commitment, a strategy, and an action plan - to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

For more information: the Convention dedicated website, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?navid=41&pid=323>

OHCHR Seminar on Freedom from Torture

On 11 December 2007 the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) hosted an expert seminar on "*Freedom from Torture and Persons with Disabilities*" in Geneva. A small group of experts met with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, and two representatives of the Committee against Torture to consider the extent to which certain treatment of persons with disabilities, including in institutional settings, constituted torture. The seminar also considered ways for the Special Rapporteur to focus more attention, particularly in his monitoring of country missions, on prevention of torture of persons with disabilities. The Special Rapporteur announced his intention to raise the issue in his next report to the General Assembly.

For more information: read the Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G08/102/37/PDF/G0810237.pdf?OpenElement>

XIV. VARIOUS

SPAIN - The Platform of Families for the Creation of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Specialty

The Platform of Families for the Creation of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Specialty is a Family Support Group created by parents whose children and youngsters suffer from different mental disabilities and disorders. All of them have something in common: a great need for good professional treatment for their children.

Whereas the child and adolescent psychiatry exist as an independent specialty in medical studies in some European countries or as a sub-specialty in other European countries, it does not exist in Spain yet. Spain and Romania are the only countries of the European Union which do not have the specialty of child and adolescent psychiatry, and this has serious consequences on the care praxis. Psychiatrists lacking the right knowledge and specific training are employed to cover jobs in care units which require experience and training in child and adolescent psychiatry.

It is well known that the best way to prevent serious pathologies in adulthood start with the provision of an adequate treatment during childhood and adolescence.

The aim of the Platform is to raise public awareness on the precarious mental health situation of children in Spain: wrongly diagnosed children and adolescents; children and adolescents with no adequate treatment; youngsters suffering from depression, anxiety, etc, due to the lack of a proper treatment or wrong diagnosis; social rejection, school failure; drug abuse; family crisis.

For more information: the Platform website, www.plataformafamilias.org

Child abuse survivors show high suicide risk

Survivors of institutional child sexual abuse show high levels of suicidal behaviour and mental health problems, research in Ireland has found. In the first Irish study of its kind, experts

interviewed former residents of the state's industrial school system and reformatories and found that abuse of alcohol and drugs, along with social isolation, were also common. They also found evidence that sons and daughters of former residents suffer from mental health or emotional problems, such as difficulties bonding with their children. Other mental health problems included inadequate coping skills, impulsive behaviour, post-traumatic stress disorder, and a feeling of anti-climax following attendance at the redress board. Two experts spent several months interviewing 90 former residents of institutions.

For more information: read the Irish Examiner online, www.irishexaminer.com

Source: Eurochild Bulletin

New course on Leadership in Mental Health

In September 2007 the Lancet Series on Global Mental Health, a major new series of articles documenting key issues in global mental health, identified the lack of mental health leadership in many countries as a major barrier to scaling up. The series recommended the implementation of courses to build capacity in mental health leadership. This new course responds to this need and involves several key persons involved with the Lancet Series, and is led by one of its editors.

The course's objective is to equip participants in the methods to develop and scale up programs and interventions for mental disorders in communities, based on a population model (i.e. to achieve maximum coverage in an administrative unit such as a district).

The course is structured in two parts, and participants will expect to learn the following:

1. Why scale up coverage of effective and affordable care for mental disorders?
2. How to scale up coverage for mental disorders?

The course will be taught through a number of teaching methods including a set of resource materials; class-room lectures; practicals; and guided group work spread through the two weeks aimed at developing a district mental health program.

The course will be held in Goa (India) from 10 to 21 November 2008 (tbc).

For more information: contact person, Vikram Patel, Email Vikram.patel@lshtm.ac.uk

For registration: contact person, Melba Pinto, Email melba@sangath.com

XV. WEBSITES/ONLINE INFORMATION

Breaking Through Barriers website

The "Breaking Through Barriers website" is at the center of a multi-stage campaign designed to improve worldwide standards of care in depression and minimise the associated stigma. Endorsed by international experts and advocates, the international campaign is led by the World Federation for Mental Health and co-sponsored by Eli Lilly & Company and Boehringer Ingelheim.

The project's primary aim is to provide free, accurate, helpful information and to address popular misconceptions, such as the notion that depression only presents with psychological - rather than physical - symptoms.

Breaking Through Barriers was developed to help people suffering from depression as well as their families and friends learn about depression's possible causes, symptoms, effects and treatment options - and to empower them to work with a healthcare provider to break through the barriers to recovery.

To visit the website: www.breaking-through-barriers.com

XVI. PUBLICATIONS

New Journal on Advances in School Mental Health Promotion

The Clifford Beers Foundation and the Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland have launched a new journal, *Advances in School Mental Health Promotion (ASMHP)*. Michael Murray, Chief Executive of the Clifford Beers Foundation, and Professor Mark Weist of the Center for School Mental Health are co-editing the journal.

The major goal is to promote knowledge development and collaboration toward the advancement of training, practice, research and policy in school mental health. The Journal will reflect the full continuum of school mental health promotion, including efforts to assess

and improve school environments; school-wide social and emotional learning, mental health promotion, and youth development; prevention; early identification and intervention; and intervention for youth in general and special education.

For more information on the conference: visit the Center for School Mental Health website, <http://csmh.umaryland.edu>

The Journal's inaugural issue is available to anyone for free by downloading it from the website:

www.schoolmentalhealth.co.uk

Handbook for Parliamentarians on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

This Handbook aims to assist parliamentarians and others in efforts to realise the Convention so that persons with disabilities can achieve the transition from exclusion to equality. The Handbook seeks to raise awareness of the Convention and its provisions, promote an appreciation of disability concerns, and assist parliaments in understanding the mechanisms and frameworks needed to translate the Convention into practice. By providing examples and insights, it is hoped that the Handbook will serve as a useful tool for parliamentarians to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities all over the world.

The Handbook is in the process of being translated into French, Arabic, Russian and Serbian.

The Handbook can be downloaded from the Convention dedicated website:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=212>

EUPRIS final report

The EUPRIS study (Treatment of mentally ill or disordered persons in European prison systems - Service provision and outcomes), which started in 2005 and finished in 2007, aimed at describing and analysing the frequency of mentally ill or disordered persons being incarcerated in the prison system across Europe as well as evaluating the service provision for mentally ill or disordered prison inmates and its outcome (e.g. in terms of suicide rates, suicidal behaviour, drug abuse, alcoholism etc.). It explored the availability of information on the issue on an official national level (health reporting or juridical data). The study was carried out in 31 countries (EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey).

The final report of the EUPRIS is now available on DG Sanco website:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_projects/2004/action1/docs/action1_2004_frep_17_en.pdf

For more information: the EUPRIS study dedicated webpage,

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_projects/2004/action1/action1_2004_17_en.htm#1

XVII. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

25-27 March 2008

2nd International Conference on "Understanding Youth Suicide: A Meeting of Differing Perspectives", Judean Hills (Israel)

For more information: the conference dedicated website, <http://www.isas.co.il/suicide2008/>

NEW!! 3-4 April 2008

15th International Symposium about Current Issues and Controversies in psychiatry: "Beyond the Kraepelinian Nosology", Barcelona (Spain)

The Symposium will be divided in four Round Table Sessions in which the most prestigious national and international experts will participate.

For more information: the Symposium dedicated website,

http://www.grupogeyseco.com/controversias08/Controversias_Ing.htm

5-9 April 2008

AEP 16th European Congress of Psychiatry, Nice (France)

For more information: send an e-mail to aep@kenes.com, or visit the Congress dedicated website, <http://www.kenes.com/aep/>

14-15 April 2008

Conference "From Innovation to Practice: The Promise and Challenge of Achieving Recovery for All", Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA)

For more information: visit the conference website, <http://www.bu.edu/cpr/conference/>

10-14 May 2008

Grundtvig training course 2008, "Committed Parents - Training course to work with migrant parents in family education", Wuppertal (Germany)

For more information: contact person, Nina Stücker, nina.stuecke@paritaet-nrw.org, Tel +49 202 28 22 338, or consult the Paritätische Akademie website, www.paritaetische-akademie.de

14-16 May 2008

16th International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals, "Hospitals and health services in the health society: Quo vadis, HPH?", Berlin (Germany)

For more information: the conference dedicated website, www.univie.ac.at/hph/berlin2008

23-25 May 2008

ENMESH (European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation) Conference 2008, "Good Practice, Good Outcome?", Krakow (Poland)

Further information about this conference, including registration forms, are available on the conference dedicated website: www.enmesh2008.pl

4-6 June 2008

2nd International Conference on Community Psychology, "Building Participative, Empowering and Diverse Communities - Visioning Community Psychology in a worldwide perspective", Lisbon (Portugal)

For more information: the conference dedicated website, <http://www.2iccp.com/>

NEW!! 11-12 June 2008

Employment Week 2008, 15th Annual Conference and Exhibition, Brussels (Belgium)

Under the theme "Adapting to change - making Europe a prosperous labour market" Employment Week will cover the key questions on the European employment agenda including: Flexicurity, Active Ageing, and Youth and employment. Other topics will include: mobility and migration, life-long learning and employability, enterprise and job creation, managing change and diversity.

For more information: the Week dedicated website, <http://www.employmentweek.com/>

19-21 June 2008

World Psychiatric Association Thematic Conference, "Depression and relevant psychiatric conditions in primary care", Granada (Spain)

For more information on the conference: contact person, Dr. Francisco Torres- González, E-mail ftorres@ugr.es, or visit the conference dedicated website, <http://www.wpa2008granada.org>

NEW!! 26-28 June 2008

21st CEFEC Conference, "Employment and Quality of Life in Europe: Common Strategies for Social Inclusion", Lisbon (Portugal)

The main proposed topics are: Employment as a strategy for Social Inclusion; Free work transit in Europe; Social Firms and Quality of Life; Significance of employment in the recovery of people with mental health problems and other disabilities.

For more information: CEFEC (Confederation of European social Firms, Employment initiatives and social Co-operatives) website, <http://www.cefec.org/>

NEW!! 2-4 July 2008

16th European Social Services Conference, "Shaping the future of local services in Europe", Paris (France)

This conference recognises the key role of local services in the rapidly changing, often problematic and sometimes divided communities in which they work and it will explore the experiences of a number of European countries in this regard. The conference will look at a

range of developments in service partnerships with other stakeholders, including users and local citizens, and will ask how local services can best respond to the social challenges of the 21st century.

For more information and registration: the conference dedicated website, <http://esn-eu.org/paris/eng/>

9-11 July 2008

ICCHP 2008 – 11th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs, "eQuality: A Global Challenge - Equal Access to the Information Society as a Global Challenge", Linz (Austria)

For more information: the Conference website, www.icchp.org

7-9 August 2008

MHE Conference 2008, Aalborg (Denmark)

For further information and to sign up for the MHE2008 Newsletter, please visit: www.mhe-aalborg.dk, or contact the MHE Secretariat, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org

27-30 August 2008

12th European Symposium on Suicide and suicidal Behaviour, "Working Together to Prevent Suicide: Research, Policy and Practice", Glasgow (Scotland)

For more information: contact the Conference organizer, E-mail organising@esssb12.org

10-12 September 2008

"From Margins to Mainstream", 5th World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioural Disorders, Melbourne (Australia)

For more information: the conference office, Email info@margins2mainstream.com, Tel +61 3 9370 1265

NEW!! 22-24 September 2008

Ifdm 2008, 4th International Forum on Disability Management, "Breaking down barriers together", Berlin (Germany)

The first day will start with an overview of disability management as a worldwide political movement. Ministers and other political players will present disability management in their countries on five continents. The second day will be dedicated to companies of various sizes and their needs; working groups will be organised to exchange experiences and good practical solutions. The third day will highlight the requisite consensus among all those involved in disability management; working groups will discuss incentives for joint return to work strategies among the major stakeholders: doctors, rehabilitation services, people with disabilities and their organisations, and insurance companies as competing service providers.

For more information: the Forum dedicated website, <http://www.disability-manager.de/e/ifdm2008/index.html>

26-28 September 2008

2nd Congress of Transcultural Psychiatry in the German speaking Countries, "Refugees – Women and Children – Everybody is a stranger all over the world", Vienna (Austria)

For more information: visit the website www.transkulurrellepsychiatrie.de, or contact alexander.friedmann@meduniwien.ac.at and solmaz.golsabahi@marienhospital-hamm.de

Do you wish to share information, announce something or make a contribution to the MHE Newsletter?

Please send it to info@mhe-sme.org