



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I.NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

Mental Health Europe at the High Level Conference on Mental Health and Well-Being, Brussels, 13 June 2008

In follow-up to the Green Paper on Mental Health (2005), Mental Health Europe (MHE) has been actively involved in the Commission's preparatory work for the establishment of a "European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being".

The Pact was officially launched at the EU High-Level Conference "Together for Mental Health and Well-being", taking place on 13 June 2008 in Brussels. The conference was hosted by European Commission in collaboration with the Slovenian Presidency and the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe. It gathered together ministers, experts, researchers, European NGOs and other stakeholders to agree future joint actions to improve mental health in Europe.

The High Level conference was preceded by a pre-event on 12 June where the Pact's priorities were announced. Mental Health Europe took part in and contributed to both events. On 13 June Malgorzata Kmita, MHE President, gave a presentation on promoting social inclusion of people with mental health problems, that is a key cross-cutting priority addressed by the pact, together with other four thematic priorities: prevention of suicide and depression; mental health in youth and education; mental health in workplace settings; mental health in older people.

The pact indeed recognises the health, social and economic benefits of good mental health for all and the need to overcome the taboo and stigma still associated with mental illness. The pact is a call for partnership action and expresses the determination of Member States and stakeholders from sectors such as health, education, workplace, social affairs and civil society to engage in longer-term work of exchange and cooperation on mental health and wellbeing in the EU.

A series of consensus papers have been produced in cooperation with national ministries and experts from several sectors. Mental Health Europe has contributed in particular to the consensus papers on youth and education and on older people. The papers highlight the current data, policies and state of the art on the subject, and will support the implementation of the Pact.

The Pact will be put into practice through a series of thematic conferences on each of the priorities during 2009-2010.

Website on mental health conference and links to the Pact and Consensus Papers:

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

For more information, please write to Mari Fresu, Health Policy Officer, at mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org

REMINDER: MHE conference "Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing. An Opportunity for Intercultural Dialogue", 7-9 August 2008, Aalborg (Denmark)

The Conference's provisional programme is now available on the MHE website,

<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en.html>,

and Conference website, <http://www.mhe-aalborg.dk/index.php?mid=40&lng=en>

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.mhe-aalborg.dk/>

MHE Members Capacity-building Seminar, 6 August 2008, Aalborg (Denmark)

MHE is organising a capacity-building seminar for all MHE members, including people with mental health problems, which will take place on 6 August 2008, preceding the MHE Conference.

At this event, MHE members will be provided with information about the EU policies and processes around the review of the renewed EU Lisbon Strategy, in particular the EU Social Inclusion and Active Inclusion processes. The second part of the day will have a focus on empowerment of people with mental health problems.

*To register (**before 7 July**), send an Email to info@mhe-sem.org*

MHE General Assembly 2008

The MHE General Assembly will take place on 9 August (afternoon) in Aalborg, after the closing ceremony of the 2008 Annual Conference.

During this meeting the MHE Annual Report 2007 and MHE Work Programme for 2008-2010 will be presented. Other items on the agenda will include, amongst others, financial issues and information on 2010 - European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

For more information: contact the MHE secretariat, Email info@mhe-eme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68

REMINDER!! Get involved in the 2008-2011 round of national reporting on social inclusion policies and programmes

At the beginning of April MHE sent a message to all its members (cf. MHE Newsletter N°3/March 2008) to encourage all to get involved in the drafting of the National Strategic Reports for the period 2008-2011. The National Strategic Reports are important documents that set out national priorities areas and actions in the three areas of Social Inclusion, Pensions and Health and Long-term Care, through the National Action Plans (NAPs). These areas are of major importance to the field of mental health and well-being and to people with mental health problems as they can shape the initiatives and resources that are being invested in view of promoting social inclusion, health and long-term care at the national and local levels.

There is still time to feed into these reports and to draw attention to the challenges and needs in the field of mental health, and therefore MHE would urge all its members to try and get involved in this process!

MHE would especially recommend the **use of the MHE publication** "From Exclusion to Inclusion – The Way Forward to Promoting Social Inclusion of People with Mental Health Problems in Europe"

([http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/From%20Exclusion%20to%20Inclusion-Final%20version\(1\).pdf](http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/From%20Exclusion%20to%20Inclusion-Final%20version(1).pdf)) to which many MHE members have contributed by sending us very informative indicators as to what are the key challenges in your countries with regard to promoting social inclusion of people with mental health problems.

Moreover, MHE would like to inform about a **toolkit developed by the European Anti Poverty Network, EAPN**

(http://eapn.horus.be/module/module_page/images/pdf/pdf_publication/EAPN%20Publications/position/Tool%20Kit%20OMC%202008-11_en.pdf), which provides useful information and ideas to support national organisations engaging with the National Strategic Reports and particularly the NAPs in the field of social inclusion at national level, facilitating the exchange of practices and experience.

Last but not least, if any of the members have been able to establish contact with your national authorities or your Social Protection Committee member (http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/contacts_en.htm)

MHE would like to ask them to **please send us an email and let us know about your efforts and achievements**. MHE would be glad to share this information as examples of "good practice" or as inspiration of how to go about getting involved in this important process.

For further information please contact Sogol Noorani at the MHE Secretariat: Email sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, Fax +32 2 280 16 04

MHE sends letter to Commission President Barroso on the EU consultation on social realities and the future EU social policy agenda

On 04 June, Mental Health Europe (MHE) sent a letter to the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso to draw attention to the need to make the forthcoming EU social policy agenda attentive and instrumental to the needs of the poorest and most disadvantaged in society.

MHE together with its members at national and local levels contributed in 2007 to the consultation on social realities in Europe, both as MHE and as a member of the Social Platform. In its letter, MHE very much welcomed the Commission's decision to launch this consultation process and thus to give associations and individuals active in the field of mental health and well-being, in particular people with (a history of) mental health problems, the opportunity to share their views, experiences and thoughts on a vision for a social Europe.

However, looking at the Commission staff working paper on the public consultation on social realities and the Communication of last November on "Opportunities, access and solidarity: towards a new social vision for 21st century Europe", which was published three months before the end of the consultation, we find that both documents do not fully reflect the richness of the contributions made.

MHE expressed its hope that there is still time to shape a social agenda that MHE's input as well as that of many other European social NGOs will be taken into account in the Commission's analysis.

MHE re-emphasised that the social agenda must make use of and strengthen existing tools such as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the field of social inclusion. The active inclusion strategy must become an integral part of the overall social inclusion agenda that guarantees adequate minimum income and universal access to quality social and health services, thus giving people the opportunity to integrate in the labour market, but also creates a socially inclusive society with a high quality of life and well-being for all European citizens.

The letter concluded by MHE making a strong plea to restore social equality and life chances, i.e. opportunities that enable individuals to improve their quality of life. Measures of economic reform, within Europe and all over the world, should be targeted not towards the profit of a few but towards the prosperity of all. Unity, diversity and social cohesion can only exist under the condition that everyday life is satisfactory for all, that there are life chances for all and equality for all.

For further information: contact the MHE Secretariat, Email info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, Fax +32 2 280 16 04

Mental Health Europe called on President Barroso to include people with mental health problems in the scope of the new anti-discrimination legislation

Just before the Commission should table new anti-discrimination legislation, Mental Health Europe sent a letter to President Barroso to plead for the future legislative proposal that the European Commission will adopt on 2 July, to fully address the specificities of discrimination faced by persons with mental health problems, their families and carers.

In the letter, MHE pointed out that disability and mental illness are often confused. They are however very different. Mental illness is an illness and can be cured: in general, people with mental health problems have no intellectual or physical impairment and can live independently and take part in employment and social life when their mental health problem is controlled.

Nevertheless, people with mental health problems are suffering from discrimination in daily life, being denied access to goods and services or being treated unfairly. In fact, evidence suggests that in most European Member States people with mental health problems do not have the same rights as people who do not have mental illness, and moreover they do not even benefit from the same protection as people with disabilities.

MHE reminded that in 2006 the European Court of Justice ruled that "*nothing in (the anti-discrimination legislation) suggests that (people) are protected by the prohibition of discrimination on grounds of disability as soon as they develop any type of sickness*" (Sonia Chacón Navas v. Eurest Colectividades SA, 11 July 2006). As a consequence, people with mental health problems are currently excluded from the scope of any existing and future legislation dealing with discrimination on the ground of disability, be it inside or outside of employment.

MHE finally called on the European Commission to initiate the process towards the adoption of a legislative proposal of a disability specific directive to protect people with all disabilities, including people with long-term or chronic mental illness, against discrimination in all areas of life.

For more information contact the MHE Secretariat: Email info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, Fax +32 2 280 16 04

MHE staff to participate as expert in EDF expert groups

In April 2008 the EDF Board decided to revise the EDF Committees' structure and replace the EDF Committees with EDF Target Group Committees, Task Forces and Email expert groups. The purpose of the new structure is to work in a more flexible and proactive way in order to better answer the needs of EDF.

MHE staff members Josée Van Remoortel (Senior Policy Advisor) and Fanny Muller (MHE Information and Human Rights Officer) have been selected to be part of the following Email expert groups:

- Josée will coordinate the expert group on social services and community living, with the support of the EDF Secretariat. The social services and community living group will allow the development of EDF's expertise in this area in light of the upcoming communication on social services of general interest affecting health and social services.

Josée will also participate in the expert group on transport. The group will be coordinated by Valérie Lang, EDF Board member, with the support of Maria Nyman, EDF Policy Officer, who will manage the network within the EDF secretariat.

- Fanny will participate in the EDF email expert group on non-discrimination. The group will be coordinated by Jens Kaffenberger, EDF Board member, with the support of the EDF Secretariat.

The non-discrimination group will support EDF in reviewing the status of implementation of current non-discrimination rules, and in gathering complaints and information on national rulings. This email expert group will also input on amendments to the future EU non-discrimination legislation.

For more information: contact the MHE Secretariat, Email info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68

Farewell message for Olivia Merlet

Olivia Merlet, who joined the MHE Secretariat last autumn, finished her internship at the beginning of June.

Olivia worked on and helped with, amongst others, the MHE Membership Questionnaire, the MHE website and the MHE Women Committee.

MHE would like to thank Olivia for her work and collaboration. We wish her every success in her future career.

MHE representation at various meetings

On 5 June, Mary Van Dievel, Director, represented MHE at the Final Conference of the Complex Need Study on the theme *"Towards future actions for the improvement of living conditions of people with severe disabilities or complex needs"*. She presented the MHE view on this theme.

On 6 June, Mary Van Dievel and Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Vice-President, participated in a meeting of the Social Platform Steering Group in Brussels.

On 12 June, Mary Van Dievel, John Henderson, Senior Policy Advisor, and Mari Fresu, Health Policy Officer, attended the Technical Pre-Conference to the EU-High level Conference on Mental Health, which was organised in Brussels by the European Commission.

On the same day, Mari Fresu participated in a meeting of the European Parliament Interest Group on Carers. The meeting organised in Brussels, addressed the mental health of carers.

On 12-14 June, Sogol Noorani, Social Policy Officer, represented MHE at a Conference on Social Inclusion and the Transformation of Mental Health Services: Transatlantic Perspectives, which took place at the University of Pittsburgh (USA), European Union Center of Excellence.

On 13 June, Malgorzata Kmita, MHE President, Mary Van Dievel, John Henderson, and Mari Fresu participated in the EU-high level conference *"Together for Mental Health and Well-being"*, which was organised by the European Commission in Brussels. Malgorzata was invited to make a presentation on stigma and social inclusion. (see p.2)

On 16-17 June, Elisabeth Muschik took part in the Social Platform Networking Visits in Prague (Czech Republic). She met with the Czech MHE members on 16 June 2008.

On 18 June, Mary Van Dievel attended the management group meeting for the EU ProMenPol project in which MHE is a partner. On 19-20 June, she attended the ProMenPol Conference in Berlin (Germany).

On 19 June, Roselyne Bourgon, stagiaire, took part in a meeting between the European Commission's DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and the Social Platform.

On 19-20 June, Mari Fresu participated in the EPHA (European Public Health Alliance) Annual General Assembly and Policy Coordination meeting in Brussels.

On the same days, Sogol Noorani represented MHE at the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Conference organised by the Association Interrégionale de Guidance et de Santé/Intersanté asble in Eben-Emael (Belgium).

On 24 June, Mary Van Dievel and Sogol Noorani participated in the Social Platform Bi-annual meeting with the European Parliament in Brussels.

On 25-26 June, Mari Fresu attended a meeting of the VALUE + Project, coordinated by the European Patients' Forum (EPF), in Brussels.

On the same days, Fanny Muller, Information and Human Rights Officer, and Roselyne Bourgon, represented MHE at the Summer Session of the Council of Europe INGOS (International Non Governmental Organisations with participatory status with the Council of Europe) in Strasbourg (France).

On 26 June, Sogol Noorani took part in a preparatory meeting for the European Year 2010 on Poverty and Social Exclusion, which took place in Brussels.

On 26-28 June, Mary Van Dievel participated in the CEFEC (Confederation of European social Firms, Employment Initiatives and Social Co-operatives) Conference in Lisbon (Portugal), where she presented the MHE report "From Exclusion to Inclusion". Mr. Guido Lissens made a presentation on Recovery on behalf of Mental Health Europe.

II. MENTAL HEALTH AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

In line with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, MHE has created a new section on "Mental Health and Ethnic Diversity" in order to promote increased awareness about the situation of all the people in Europe, in particular ethnic minorities, who often face difficulties in becoming a full part of the economic, political, cultural and social lives of their countries. MHE wants to work towards ensuring quality mental health care and social services, human rights and equal opportunities that are accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society. This will also be the focus of the MHE Conference 2008 "Diversity in Mental Health and Well-being – An Opportunity for Intercultural Dialogue", which will take place in Aalborg (Denmark) on 7-9 August 2008 (for more information: <http://www.mhe-aalborg.dk/>).

Call for contributions for MHE Newsletter's section on Mental health and ethnic diversity

Mental Health Europe's annual theme 2008 is "Mental health and ethnic diversity". During this year MHE aims to promote awareness of the increased diversity of European societies and the need to find new ways to ensuring that institutional and structural conditions offer adequate solutions to the new social challenges and can promote the life chances of the European population. A central aspect of this process consists in developing and strengthening the necessary mechanisms for the promotion of peoples' mental health and well-being through quality mental health and social services that are accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised groups, and that they are sensitive towards cultural diversity in Europe.

As you know, one of the highlights of the year will be MHE's conference on "Diversity in mental health and well-being – An opportunity for intercultural dialogue" to be held on 07-09 August 2008 in Aalborg, Denmark.

Another activity of MHE in 2008 has been to publish a series of articles related to the mental health and ethnic diversity as part of a new section in the MHE Newsletter. The MHE Newsletter is being widely disseminated among MHE members throughout Europe, but also to

the members of the European Commission and the European Parliament as well as other interested organisations/NGOs and individuals working at the European and national levels.

MHE is currently looking for relevant articles that can be published under the mental health and ethnic diversity section. The articles should focus on the challenges, needs and opportunities concerning mental health and well-being in relation to ethnic diversity and minority ethnic groups in Europe. If you would like present such information or to draw attention to your own or your organisation's work in this area please send us your contribution (approx. 500 words).

For questions or to send contributions please write to Sogol Noorani, Policy Officer and Coordinator of the MHE Committee on Mental Health and Minority Ethnic Groups: sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org

III. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

SLOVENIA – New Mental Health Law

Finally, after so many attempts during the past 14 years, Slovenia has a proposal for a Mental Health Law. This act creates a lot of new institutions, which will help people with mental health problems to live a better life in society. Indeed, the proposal covers all daily activities of people with mental health problems.

The proposal also covers an order given by the Constitutional Court to the Slovenian Government to legislate for involuntary hospitalisation. This has been done in the first part of the proposal, which brings a new institution, the deputy, who will protect the basic constitutional rights of the persons who are going to face such a situation.

An important contribution of the proposal is the possibility for patients with severe and/or chronic mental disorders to be treated at home – the so-called "extended hospital treatment". Psychiatric hospitals will set up teams of specialists to take care of the implementation of this programme.

Article 7 of the proposal brings the obligation for the Government to build a National Programme for the Protection of Mental Health. The programme should be shaped within one year after approval and adoption of the Mental Health Law by the Slovenian Parliament. The National Programme for the Protection of Mental Health will cover the most important issues that people with mental health problems face when going back to society after a period of hospitalisation in a psychiatric hospital. The programme should cover many fields, such as prevention, housing, employment, mobile psychiatrists, the role of NGOs, sustainable funding support for NGO activities, self-help groups, organisations of family and friends, etc.

Another crucial contribution of the proposal is that opportunities of cooperation between psychiatrists and other specialists, as well as volunteers organised in NGOs working towards the same objective – helping people with mental health problems to live independently, without stigmatisation and exclusion from society – will be encouraged.

The proposal has been sent by the government to the Ministry of Health, which approved it and forward it to the Parliament. The first step of the parliamentary procedure was a success.

On 1st July the proposal will be examined by the Parliamentary Committee for Health. On 9 July it will be discussed and, hopefully, finally adopted by the plenary.

Although there is a wide support for its adoption – from the State Council, most of the NGOs, the Chamber of Social Workers, and even SENT – people are afraid of the final result as many amendments to the proposal have been submitted.

SENT hopes that policy makers will not repeat the previous mistakes and stop the developments that are needed in the mental health field in Slovenia.

For more information: contact person, Edo P. Belak, Email mimeo@amis.net

Many thanks to Edo P. Belak, SENT President, for this contribution.

IV. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

AGE – The European Older People's Platform

AGE applauds the EU Health Council decision to maintain a ban on advertisement for prescription-only medicines

AGE supports the decision of the Council of EU Health Ministers on Tuesday 10 June to maintain the ban on advertising on prescription-only medicines, to give patients clear and complete information, and to leave it to the professionals in the health sector and national health authorities to provide information to patients.

For more information and to read the AGE response to the Open Consultation on Patient Safety in the European Union: AGE website,

http://www.age-platform.org/EN/IMG/pdf/AGE_Response_to_Patient_Safety_Consultation_Final.pdf

COFACE-Handicap

COFACE-Handicap's European Charter for Family Carers

COFACE-Handicap (Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU) adopted in 2007 a European Charter for family carers which is based on the major International Conventions already drafted or in the process of being developed to deal directly with the quality of life, dignity, rights and full citizenship of persons with disabilities and their families. The Charter is designed as a reference tool to be proposed to various organisations representing persons with disabilities and complex dependency needs and their families within the European Union, as well as to the Union's Institutions. This Charter contributes to reconcile family life and working life by allowing a free and informed choice of carer, in accordance with the goals of the Lisbon strategy.

For more information: contact COFACE-Handicap, Email, secretariat@coface-eu.org, Tel +32 2 511 41 79

Source: EDF

ECCL – European Coalition for Community Living

ECCL has new leadership

The European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) was established in 2005 by a group of organisations involved in the first European study on the situation of people with disabilities in long-stay institutions, *'Included in Society'* - among them was Mental Health Europe. During the first two years, ECCL has been led by a committee composed of representatives of each organisation, who put together ECCL's strategy for the first three years (2006 – 2008) and agreed on the main activity areas of the Coalition – advocacy, monitoring, promotion and exchange of good practice. During this time, a number of organisations and some individual members also joined ECCL to support its activities in their own countries.

At the last meeting of ECCL's Management Committee in 2007, a decision was made that the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) should take over the leadership of ECCL from January 2008 onwards. The founding organisations felt that this would allow ECCL to better react to developments in Europe, improve its visibility and have a closer relationship with the disabled people's movement. ENIL has its Secretariat in Valencia but operates as a network throughout Europe with its Board members coming from many different European countries both East and West. It is currently funded by the European Commission as part of the PROGRESS Initiative 2008-2010.

In addition to ENIL's Board, which is responsible for ECCL as an initiative of ENIL, the Advisory Council helps ECCL maintain its cross-disability perspective by advising on its strategy, particular issues related to community living and various activities. The Council meets once per year, but also provides regular guidance to the Coordinator, based in London, and the ENIL Board. Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Advisor, is a member of the ECCL Advisory Council. John Henderson, MHE Senior Policy Advisor, is an alternate member of the Advisory Council.

Another innovation ECCL introduced from January this year is making the membership of the Coalition free of charge. This move was motivated by the wish to get as many organisations and individuals as possible on board, and increase the number of supporters in the old EU Member States.

For more information and to join ECCL and support their activities: visit ECCL website, www.community-living.info

Source: ECCL

EDF – European Disability Forum

European Disability Movement Leaders Discriminated by Slovenian Air Carrier

Three European disability movement leaders, among them the EDF Vice President, were denied to fly to Ljubljana, where the EDF Annual General Assembly was organised last May, due to discrimination on the ground of disability.

They have been refused by the Slovenian national carrier Adria Airlines to board unless providing a medical certificate and travelling accompanied under the pretext of safety implications. As a result one of them was prevented from attending both the Assembly and the Ministerial Conference "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – From Words to Reality?" organised by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU.

It is unacceptable that an EU Member State does not respect its obligations under the new EU legislation (EU Regulation concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when traveling by air, being into application since July 2007) and particularly since Slovenia is one of the only European country which signed and ratified the UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For more information: contact person, Irina Papancheva, E-mail irina.papancheva@edf-feph.org

Follow-up: EDF/CERMI Conference on Women and Disability, Madrid (Spain), November 2007

The conference declaration on girls and women with disabilities was adopted during the EDF Annual General Assembly in Ljubljana (Slovenia) last May.

MHE was represented at both events by Josée Van Remoortel, Senior Policy Advisor.

For more information on the Conference and to download the conference's publication: EDF website, http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13854&thebloc=17823

FEANTSA – European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless

FEANTSA welcomes breakthrough ruling by the Council of Europe on housing rights in France

The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR), the Council of Europe body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the European Social Charter, reached the unanimous decision that France is in violation of the Charter with regards to housing rights.

This ruling is taken thanks to a collective complaint lodged in 2006 by FEANTSA.

The Council of Europe considers that the full enjoyment of rights is *the* measure for evaluating public policies and defines their quality standards. This decision provides for case-law which is useful in courts on a local, national and international level and is a step towards a more social Europe.

FEANTSA considers the ruling of the ECSR to be important in that it addresses and clarifies a number of essential elements concerning State obligations in the promotion and implementation of the right to housing. It will certainly contribute to the building of international standards.

For more information: FEANTSA website, <http://feantsa.horus.be/code/EN/pg.asp?Page=927>

Source: FEANTSA

Inclusion Europe

Users Demand a Say in Quality Social Services in Europe

Quality social services are one of the three pillars of active inclusion. Thus, the European Commission has set out to establish guiding principles in this area. For the civil rights movement of people with intellectual disabilities and their families one of the most important characteristics of service quality is the involvement of users in the design and management of social services, heeding the principle 'Nothing about us, without us!'

The members of Inclusion Europe see representative User Councils as an appropriate means to organise user involvement. In a new Position Paper on User Councils in Special Services for People with Intellectual Disabilities, they have adopted principles on how the quality of

services can be improved. The main thrust of the paper concerns the democratic representation of users in the management of those services which support them.

To download the position paper (in English, French or German): Inclusion Europe website, http://www.inclusion-europe.org/einclude/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=181&Itemid=35

Source: Inclusion Europe

MDAC – Mental Disability Advocacy Center

UN demands increased focus on rights of children with disabilities in Bulgaria

The Mental Disability Advocacy Centre (MDAC) and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (BHC) welcome the findings by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in its examination of Bulgaria's compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In concurring with the submissions of the two NGOs, the CRC expressed concern that persistent discrimination against children with mental disabilities living in institutions obstructs their access to basic rights such as education. The CRC's findings are clear and resolute: all children - regardless of disability or other irrelevant factors such as ethnicity - have the right to education.

To read the CRC findings: MDAC website,

http://www.mdac.info/images/page_image/CRC%20Bulgaria%206%20June%202008.pdf

For more information: visit MDAC website, <http://www.mdac.info/en/node/153>

Source: MDAC

Social Platform

Social Platform unsatisfied with the public consultation on the Social Agenda

In a letter addressed to the Commission's President Barroso, the Social Platform raised serious concerns as regards the consultation process on the social reality stocktaking. The Platform underlines that social NGOs have not been given the chance to contribute to the Commission's social vision set up in a communication in November and that their contributions on social realities cannot be used to justify the seven priorities the Commission had identified in the communication. As stated in the letter, "we owe to the people we represent and to the idea we have of European democracy to make sure that our contributions are treated with respect."

To read the letter: the Social Platform website,

http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Social_Agenda_2008/08-05-15%20FINAL%20consultation%20process%20social%20agenda.pdf

Source: Social Platform

V. EUROPEAN UNION

New Italian EU commissioner nominated

Italy's empty seat at the European Commission table has now been officially taken by Antonio Tajani. Mr. Tajani, a 55-year old law graduate and former journalist, is to replace Franco Frattini, the commission Vice-President in charge of Justice and Home Affairs. Mr. Frattini formally stepped down on Thursday 8 May, following his appointment as Italy's new foreign minister.

The EU's executive body has confirmed that the team of 27 commissioners will see a shift in portfolios between France and Italy. Mr. Tajani is taking over the transport portfolio. The prominent Justice and Home Affairs position has been given to French commissioner Jacques Barrot.

Source: EPHA

New FRA Publications

1) FRA (EU Fundamental Rights Agency) has commissioned a series of thematic discussion papers in areas related to its Multiannual Framework. The aim of these papers is to support, encourage and contribute to the debate on issues of relevance to the EU institutions, the Member States and other stakeholders. The first paper focuses on the benefits of positive action for the fight against discrimination.

To read the paper: FRA website,

http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/discussion/FRA_thematicpaper_positiveaction_ICMPD_en.pdf

2) The Work Programme of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights for 2008 has been adopted by the FRA Management Board.

It can now be downloaded from the FRA website:

http://fra.europa.eu/fra/material/pub/WP/wp08_en.pdf

European companies have realised the meaning of active living in the workplace

Active living is beneficial to health – mentally, physically and socially. This applies to all ages and especially to adults who often sit or stand and sometimes perform monotonous or repetitive movements at work everyday. Fitness programmes enable them to take more exercise, improve their weight, posture and muscle weaknesses and help to combat stress, chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and their associated health problems and they can also encourage employees to adopt an overall healthier lifestyle.

Companies should be recognised as social systems which can influence health and can play a role in creating healthy working and living conditions for its employees. By providing exercise programmes at the workplace they can keep their employees healthy, productive and motivated.

"MoveEurope", a Campaign for the Improvement of Lifestyle-Related Workplace Health Promotion in Europe, is designed as a campaign which sets quality standards for Good Practice in WHP (Workplace Health Promotion), identifies complying models and disseminates these results throughout Europe.

For more information: visit the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP) website,

<http://www.enwhp.org/index.php?id=576#872>

VI. PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Conference on the human rights of persons with disabilities, 22-23 May 2008, Kranjska Gora (Slovenia)

The Conference was organised in the framework of the Slovenian EU Presidency, on the theme "*Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – From Words to Reality?*". The core theme of the conference was the political implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, focusing on the progress made by European policy in its implementation. The conference also addressed the questions of accessibility, mainstreaming, employment and living in the community.

Marjeta Cotman, Slovenian Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, opened the Conference and welcomed the participants. She was pleased to announce that Slovenia was the 3rd EU country, after Spain and Hungary, to ratify the UN Convention.

Vladimir Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social affairs and Equal opportunities, reminded the audience that the UN Convention entered into force on 3 May 2008 and urged all governments to ratify it and adapt their legislation accordingly to ensure the full enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities. He also added that disability policies have to be integrated in all EU programmes by 2010.

Gilles de Robien, representative of the French government, promised to continue the work carried out by the Slovenian Presidency on the implementation of the rights of people with disabilities.

The President of the Republic of Slovenia, Dr Danilo Türk, could not attend but addressed the conference through a video message. He said that he was determined to implement the principle of equal opportunities and equal human rights in all areas of life.

Josée van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Officer, represented MHE at the Conference.

For more information: visit the Slovenian Presidency website,

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Press_Releases/May/0522MDDSZ_Cotman.html

VII. COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mental Health on the agenda of the EPSCO Council meeting

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) meeting took place on 9-10 June 2008 in Luxembourg. It was chaired by the Slovenian Minister for Health. The Council adopted conclusions and debated on issues such as reducing the burden of cancer, cooperation mechanisms between the Council and the Commission for the implementation of the EU Health Strategy, information to patients on medicinal products. The Council also took note of the information provided by the Commission concerning Mental Health for Europe and the EU High level Conference "Together for Mental Health and Wellbeing".

To read the note from the Commission on Mental Health for Europe: the Council website,
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st09/st09770.en08.pdf>

For more information about the meeting: the Council website,
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/lsa/101031.pdf

VIII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG Employment and Social Affairs – DG EMPL

Commission U-turn on anti-discrimination law

Members of Parliament (MEPs) and trade unions' persistent lobbying in favour of comprehensive EU anti-discrimination legislation has eventually born fruit as the Commission informally announced on 16 June that it would put forward a proposal aimed at outlawing all forms of discrimination beyond the workplace.

Speaking at a hearing in the Parliament's civil liberties committee, the designated Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs Jacques Barrot said Employment Commissioner Vladimir Špidla will present a cross-cutting directive to outlaw discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age or sexual orientation on 2 July.

The new commitment to covering discrimination beyond the workplace represents a U-turn for the Commission, as in April it signaled its intention to backtrack on its initial ambition to present a complex 'horizontal directive' due to resistance from conservative Member States. It had instead proposed to offer protection against discrimination only on disability grounds, sparking strong opposition from MEPs.

In an open letter sent to the President of the European Commission on 17 June, the European Disability Forum (EDF), while welcoming this decision, expressed serious concerns that the decision to protect discriminated groups through a single directive may not respond to the needs of a group as diverse as persons with disabilities. People with disabilities face not only attitudinal, but also structural discrimination, and it is only by addressing barriers in the society that such discrimination can be removed. EDF fears that these specificities of disability-based discrimination may be diluted by the broad scope of the proposed legislation. Likewise, MHE is concerned that the specificities of the discrimination faced by people with mental health problems may not be addressed by the new legislation.

To become law throughout the EU, the directive would first require approval by the Council.

For more information: the EurActiv website,

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/socialeurope/commission-turn-anti-discrimination-law/article-173487>

To read the EDF Open Letter: the EDF website,

http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=17958

NEW!! Call for tender VT/2008/007: Establishment of a Network of socio-economic experts in the anti-discrimination field (Deadline: 30.07.2008)

The purpose of this contract is to establish and maintain a network of socio-economic experts in the field of discrimination on the grounds of race and ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, disability, sexual orientation as well as on multiple grounds. The network shall provide the Commission with independent expertise and advice.

For more information: visit the Commission website,

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/tenders/tenders_en.cfm?id=3186

European Commission study reveals increased risk of financial social exclusion for millions of Europeans

Last May, the European Commission presented a new study on financial exclusion, stating that millions of Europeans face an increased risk of social exclusion through lack of access to basic financial services. The results of the study were discussed at a high level conference in Brussels, bringing together the financial sector, consumer groups, public authorities and NGOs.

For more information about the event and the study: DG Employment webpage,
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/events_en.htm#financial_exclusion

Source: EAPN

2007 Social Situation Report is out!

The 2007 Social Situation Report presents some key findings from the EU's new tool for monitoring the social situation and, in the future, social trends, namely the EU-SILC (Statistics on Income and Living Conditions). It looks at income inequality and how this is related to economic performance and at how people on low incomes are distributed across the EU as a whole.

Two sections in this report look at the transmission of social disadvantages from one generation to the next and at poverty risks among children from a migration background and ethnic minorities.

To download the report:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/docs/social_situation/ssr2007_en.pdf

European day of People with Disabilities 2007: documents, presentations and final report are out!

On the 5-6 December 2007, the European Commission held the conference, entitled "*People with disabilities: Active players in the Internal Market*", in Brussels.

The conference considered on one hand, how people with disabilities can contribute to the EU Internal Market while enjoying its four freedoms as active citizens and on the other hand how people with disabilities can interact with other stakeholders to strengthen the Internal Market.

All documents, presentations, pictures, as well as the Conference's final report can now be downloaded from the Commission's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/events/event_en.cfm?id=1005

DG Enterprise and Industry – DG ENTR

Outcome of the public consultation on the key elements of a legal proposal on information to patients

Between 5 February and 7 April 2008 DG ENTR conducted a public consultation on the key ideas of a legal proposal aiming at ensuring that all EU citizens have access to good-quality, objective, reliable and non-promotional information on prescription-only medicinal products.

For more information: visit DG ENTR webpage,

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/pharmaceuticals/patients/patients_key.htm#

DG Health and Consumer Protection – DG SANCO

DG Sanco's Unit Management Plan

The Unit Management Plan (UMP) of DG Sanco is a planning instrument to ensure greater transparency on the internal management and functioning of DG Sanco.

The UMP provides information in relation to important key aspects such as work areas, expected achievements and priorities, deadlines, and resource allocation in each unit. The purpose of this tool is to keep the plans continuously updated to allow stakeholders and the general public to easily access DG Sanco's ongoing and planned work.

For more information: le site web de la DG Sanco,

http://ec.europa.eu/dqs/health_consumer/ump/index_en.htm

Source: EPHA

Health-EU portal celebrates its 2nd anniversary

The Health-EU portal is an initiative of the European Commission and brings together health information grouped around 47 health themes. The information is compiled from a wide range of sources including: EU institutions, EU Member States, NGOs and International Organisations. A specific section for mental health and links to relevant organisations working in this area, including MHE, are also available.

By the end of this year, 2 new languages will be added: Romanian and Bulgarian.

For more information: visit <http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/>

IX. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

European Parliament publishes study on health care financing

Following a request by the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, the Economic and Scientific Policy Department of the European Parliament (EP) has issued a study on Health care financing in the context of social security.

The study reviews issues such as sustainability, the way health care is financed in the European Union and health care financing reforms. The final section of the study gives examples of reforms, which are most likely to enhance sustainability, as well as policy recommendations.

To download the study: the EP website,

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/200805/20080513ATT28813/20080513ATT28813EN.pdf>

Source: FEANTSA

Members of European Parliament discuss how to promote social inclusion

Last month a public hearing was held by the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee on a coordinated EU approach to the fight against poverty.

In her opening remarks, rapporteur Gabriele Zimmer (GUE-NGL) stated that "a sufficient income support and active participation in the labour market" should be principles common to all EU national strategies to reduce poverty.

Representatives of social NGO's were invited to make comments. Freek Spinnewijn, representing FEANTSA, asked the members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to consider the concept of 'active social inclusion' and question what it means for those who will never be in employment, for example. Furthermore he highlighted the issue of extreme poverty, and the real need for the most excluded in society to be part of exclusion policies.

The vote is on the committee agenda for 10 September and in plenary in October.

To download the draft report on promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, including child poverty, in the EU: EP website,

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML%20COMPARL%20PE-402.880%2001%20DOC%20PDF%20V0//EN&language=EN>

Source: FEANTSA

X. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Council of Europe publishes first annual report on the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

The 274 page report is an attempt to address the increasing demands, from within the Council of Europe but also from national authorities and civil society, for transparency regarding the impact and efficiency of the Council of Europe mechanism set up to supervise execution of court decisions. The report gives an overview of the issues and statistical information in the execution of the main cases before the Committee of Ministers in 2007. It contains a thematic overview of issues examined in 2007 and a statistical analysis. It lists the final Resolutions, the interim Resolutions as well as Memoranda and other relevant public documents.

To download the report:

<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=258625&SecMode=1&DocId=1231546&Usage=2>

XI. UNITED NATIONS

Disability Rights Funds created to implement and monitor the Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons

A coalition composed of the Open Society Institute, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, and an anonymous donor created the 'Disability Rights Fund'.

Launched on the first anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD), the Disability Rights Fund will provide financial support for human rights advocacy in the developing world and Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union. The broad objective of the Fund will be to empower disabled persons organisations around the world to effectively implement and monitor the CPRD.

The CPRD recognizes that self-representation is essential to the enjoyment of human rights. It underscores the importance of including people with disabilities in the development of disability law, policies and programs. Through its unique governance structure, the Disability Rights Fund incorporates this principle.

A global advisory panel, made up of 12 individuals, most of whom are persons with disabilities, will provide recommendations on grant making strategies for the Fund; four of the Panel members will also serve on the Fund's grant making decision body. The members of the panel come from five continents and reflect a broad cross-section of the disability community. The majority were nominated by international and regional disabled person's organisations.

EDF Board member, Gunta Anca, President of the Latvian National Disability Council (SUSTENTO), had been nominated by EDF and was appointed as one of the 12 members of the advisory panel.

Grants disbursed by the Disability Rights Fund will be centred on three major areas: increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in their communities through trainings and networking opportunities; developing awareness of the CPRD among stakeholders; and supporting advocacy projects that promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities. The Fund expects to make its first grants in late spring/early summer 2008.

*For more information: the Disability Rights Fund website, <http://www.disabilityrightsfund.org/>
Source: DRF*

XII. VARIOUS

France – HALDE annual report and disability

On 22 May 2008, the HALDE (Haute autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité, the French Equality body) published its third annual report. The report shows a high increase in the total number of complaints, more than 50% in one year (nearly 6000 complaints). In particular, the complaints relating to disability represent today more than 20% of the total of complaints,.

To read the annual report: the HALDE website (in French), <http://www.halde.fr/-Rapports-annuels-.htm/>

SWEDEN - New plans for mentally ill offenders

As reported by the English language daily, The Local, the Swedish government would like to discard the ban on prison sentences for those with serious psychological problems.

Swedish mental ill offenders are currently sent to mental health facilities. But according to the Swedish government's proposal, courts would have the option of prison sentences in certain cases. Indeed, courts would have to consider a number of factors when deciding whether or not to sentence a mentally ill offender to prison: for example, the severity of the crime, whether the suspect requires long-term hospitalization, whether the offender was under the influence of drugs when the crime was committed, etc. Under the new guidelines, a prison sentence would be possible in the case of a very serious crime committed while the suspect was in a temporary state of psychosis.

The proposal was submitted for examination to the Council on Legislation (Lagrådet). The changes should be hopefully implemented by 1 July 2008.

For more information: The Local website, <http://www.thelocal.se/10020/20080218/>
Source: Euro Health

UK - News from Partnership for Children

The Parents Guide to Zippy's Friends has now been translated into 18 languages. The latest is German.

You read and download them at <http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/resources/zippy-s-friends-2/parents-guide.html>

The European Institute for Stress Management and Prevention

The IEMAPS (European Institute for Stress Management and Prevention) aims to help businesses, organisations, managers and other key players to tackle stress related issues.

The Institute works in two directions:

- with the individuals, to help them to take up tools and new perceptions which will enable them to enhance their resistance to stress;
- with the management team of businesses and organisations, to ensure that human values are the driving force, a source of performance and well-being.

All individuals concerned by the question of stress at work can contact the IEMAPS: scientists, organisations, businesses, managers, women and men.

The IEMAPS can serve as a platform for expression, debate and involvement.

For more information: send an email to ap@iemaps.eu, or visit the Institute's website (in French), <http://www.iemaps.eu/>

XIII. PUBLICATIONS

The right of children in psychiatric services

Last March, UNICEF Belgium launched a report on the right of children in psychiatric services in Belgium. This report follows a large-scale survey, "Draw me the hospital. The hospital through the eyes of children", as well as debates with young people hosted in these services and health professionals. Following these meetings, the young people and UNICEF developed a number of recommendations.

To download the report (in French):

http://www.liguedh.be/medias/1108_Enfants_services_psy.pdf

For more information: visit the UNICEF Belgium website, www.unicef.be

Source: Eurochild

Comprehensive European study of transgender people's rights and experiences of healthcare

ILGA-Europe and TransGender Europe published the first comprehensive report on the experiences of health care by transgender people in European Union. This report is a result of the largest and most comprehensive data collection on transgender people's lived experienced to date.

To download the full report: ILGA-Europe website,

[http://www.ilga-](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_foc)

[europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_foc](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_foc)
[us_on_the_transgender_experience_of_health_case_april_2008](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/transgender_eurostudy_legal_survey_and_foc)

XIV. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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

18-24 August 2008

6th TiSSA Plenum & PreConference, "Politics - Power - Practice: Advancing Social Work Agenda in Times of Uncertainty", Riga (Latvia)

For more information: visit the Conference website, <http://www.tissa.net/>

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

NEW!! 8-10 September 2008

1st World Forum Against Drugs (WFAD), "One Hundred Years of Drug Prevention", Stockholm (Sweden)

For more information: visit the forum dedicated website, <http://www.wfad08.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!! 11 September 2008

ECCL Workshop, "The Right to Live Independently and Be Included: Strengthening local and national campaigns for community living", Oslo (Norway)

For more information: write to Ines Bulic at coordinator@community-living.info

12–13 September 2008

ECCL Seminar 2008, "Living Independently and Being Included: Understanding the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", Oslo (Norway)

For more information: the ECCL website, www.community-living.info

19 September 2008

FEANTSA European Research Conference, "Good governance: the key to effective homelessness policies", The Hague (Netherlands)

For more information and to send abstracts (until 30 June): send an email to w.m.edgar@dundee.ac.uk

20-25 September 2008

XIVth World Congress of Psychiatry, "Science and Humanism: For a Person-Centered Psychiatry", Prague (Czech Republic)

For more information: the conference dedicated website, www.wpa-prague2008.cz

21-27 September 2008

Summer School on Korczak's ideas and contemporary children and youths problems, Warsaw (Poland)

For more information: visit the dedicated website, www.aps.edu.pl, or send an email to UNESCO-chair@aps.edu.pl

22-24 September 2008

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

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

23-25 September 2008

10th EURO-PSY Rehabilitation festival, "La ronde des cultures", Ankarana (Slovenia)

For more information: the festival dedicated website, <http://euro-psy2008.sent.si>

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.transkulurellepsychiatrie.de,

or contact alexander.friedmann@meduniwien.ac.at and solmaz.golsabahi@marienhospital-hamm.de

29 September - 1 October 2008

IFCW (International Forum for Child Welfare) World Forum 2008, "Early Intervention and Prevention", Cardiff (Wales, United Kingdom)

For more information: the conference dedicated website, www.worldforum2008.org

NEW!! 1-4 October 2008

11th European Health Forum Gastein, "Values in Health: From Visions to Reality", Salzburg (Austria)

For more information: the Forum dedicated website, <http://www.ehfg.org/>

NEW!! 7 October 2008

Second Annual Recovery Conference, "From Here to Recovery – Transforming the Journey", Newmarket (UK)

For more information: contact person, Alison Wigginton, Email a.wigginton@herts.ac.uk, Tel +44 1707 284951

19-22 October 2008

ISQua 25th International Conference on Quality in Health Care, Copenhagen (Denmark)

For more information: visit the ISQua website, <http://www.isqua.org/isquaPages/copenhagen08.html>

NEW!! 22-24 October 2008

1st International Conference on Workplace Violence in the Health Sector, 'Together, Creating a safe Work Environment', Amsterdam (Netherlands)

For more information: the Conference's website, <http://www.oudconsultancy.nl/WorkplaceViolence/index.html>

NEW!! 5-7 November 2008

Eurochild Annual Conference, 'Including children: a child rights approach to child well-being', Budapest (Hungary)

For more information: visit the Eurochild website, <http://www.eurochild.org/>

NEW!! 5-9 November 2008

Horatio European Festival of Psychiatric Nursing, 'The age of dialogue', Malta

For more information: Horatio website, <http://www.horatio-web.eu/>

16-19 April 2009

12th International Congress of IFPE, "Well being and mental disorder: epidemiological tools in the global village", Vienna (Austria)

For further information: visit the Congress dedicated website, <http://www.ifpe2009.at/>

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

Please send it to info@mhe-sme.org