



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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**NEWSLETTER N°11 /2009
NOVEMBER 2009**

This Newsletter is published with the support of PROGRESS, the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission. The Commission is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained in this Newsletter. Mental Health Europe is the EU Liaison Office for Mental Health Promotion.

TABLE OF CONTENT

I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE	2
II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES	9
III. EY FOR COMBATING POVERT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION.....	11
IV. NEWS FROM OTHER (E)NGOs	12
V. PUBLICATIONS	14
VI. CONFERENCES	15
VII. ANNEX.....	16

Mental Health Europe holds an event at the European Parliament

On 30 November, Mental Health Europe organised its annual awareness-raising event at the European Parliament, together with Mr. Milan Zver, Member of the European Parliament.

Topic of the lunch-debate was "Poverty and Mental Health in the EU: a human rights issue".

Members of the European Parliament and the European Commission participated together with other stakeholders, NGOs and representatives of MHE member organisations.

Milan Zver MEP and MHE President, Nace Kovac, gave an introduction to the debate's theme. Elizabeth Mottershaw gave a presentation on human rights as instrument to tackle poverty and Preben Brandt stressed the incidence of inequalities in the field of mental health and social services. A concrete example of good practice in Ireland was presented by Brian Howard and the activities of the European Commission, in collaboration with the "Ad hoc expert group on transition from institutional to community care", were highlighted by Jan Jarab, member of the Cabinet of EU Commissioner for Social Affaires Valdimir Spidla. Lynne Friedli moderated the final debate in which all the participants contributed very actively.

I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

The development and application of the monitoring mechanisms on government actions in the field of protecting the rights of the people with mental disabilities within healthcare and social institutions in Romania, Launch of the expert report, 22 October 2009

MHE was invited to participate to the launch of the monitoring report of the PHARE Project, led by the Center of Legal Resources (Centrul de Resurse Juridice) in Bucharest. The Conference aim was to present the report of experts on the situation of human rights in health care and social establishments of people with mental disabilities and people with mental health problems. Sixteen institutions were visited by some experts. A first lap of visits took place and the second monitoring visits round was focused on identifying the progress recorded by each institution during the few months elapsed between the visits. During the monitoring visits important issues such as the existence of mechanisms and procedures for complaints of people with disabilities as well as the implementation of regulations for non voluntary hospitalizations were checked. The issue of informed consent was also raised in the report as an important concern. During the Conference the experts were invited to testimony. The main issues raised by the experts were linked to the violations of human rights. The implementation of human rights legislation remains an important challenge. Some experts underlined the severe inhumane living conditions in some institutions.

The ratification of the "Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture" of the United Nations has been ratified by Romania and put an obligation to create independent monitoring bodies in order to watch if human rights are respected by authorities in closed institutions. The importance of the civil society and the responsibility of the local authorities in the field of protection of rights have been discussed as well as the involvement of people with mental disabilities and their empowerment. The issue of legal capacity was raised and background information was presented on cases brought at the level of the European Court for Human Rights of the Council of Europe in this field.

Mental Health Europe, represented by Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director and Roselyne Bourgon, Human Rights Officer, gave a presentation on the issue of mental health and discrimination. Background information on key challenges at European level in the field of mental health was also presented.

For more information on this conference, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer, at roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org

REMINDER - Mental Health Europe launched the Campaign "Mental Health and Social Inclusion: Making Steps!"

On the occasion of the World Mental Health Day (10 October), Mental Health Europe (MHE) launched its campaign "Mental Health and Social Inclusion – Making Steps", advocating for the integration of people with mental health problems in all aspects of life. Mental Health Europe believes everyone can do something to make their social inclusion a reality.

MHE would like to highlight the abilities of people with mental health problems rather than their non-abilities and calls to actively include them into society with access to employment, education, quality-care and housing.

A good number of MHE members has already joined the campaign and provided translations of the leaflet.

*Mental Health Europe invites you to visit our campaign website and to **SIGN OUR LIST OF SUPPORTERS** at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/making-steps.html>*

For any further information, please contact the MHE secretariat at info@mhe-sme.org

MHE Position paper on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25th November 2009

MHE has long-standing experience in the field of women and mental health through its activities with the aim of promoting mental health and well-being of women in Europe and to strengthen the voice of women with mental health problems in consideration of the diversity of women's experiences within the context of their own countries.

It is an established fact that women, due to the multiple roles they fulfill in society are at a greater risk of suffering mental health problem. According to the United Nation Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), up to 70 percent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime. It happens everywhere, at home and at work. Violence against women and girls has sweeping consequences; it harms families and communities, impedes human development, and undermines economic growth.

MHE DAPHNE project on the mental health impacts of violence against women in the workplace is underway and already the data collected so far has illustrated the urgent need for awareness of this situation and the harmful effects harassment at work has on the woman.

To read the MHE Position Paper "Poverty and Violence – The Mental health Impact", please see the following link <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>

For information on the DAPHNE project please contact Lucy Vallis, MHE Project Coordinator, at lucy.vallis@mhe-sme.org

MHE support to the European Parliament Written Declaration on the protection of social rights during the economic crisis

A Written Declaration on the protection of social rights when fighting against the economic crisis in the European Union was initiated in the European Parliament by the Greens, Socialist and Liberal Groups. The Written Declaration is open for signatures for the following three months, whereas the signatures of half of the MEPs are necessary for the adoption of the declaration. The bail-out plans of Central and Eastern European countries of the International Monetary Fund are linked to budgetary cuts as a condition for the granting of loans. The current crisis has a considerable impact on the mental health of the population and budgetary cuts already effected mental health service provision. Mental Health Europe therefore joined the Social Platform initiative and sent a letter to the Members of European Parliament to express its support for the Written Declaration and to urge the MEPs to sign.

To read MHE letter, please go to <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en.html>

For any further information, please or contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org

Building Partnerships in Mental Health - European Social Network Seminar

On 20 November, Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, participated in the seminar "Building Partnerships in Mental Health for Economic and Social Integration", organised by the European Social Network (ESN) in Madrid. During the seminar which brought together ca. 70 stakeholders from governments and NGOs, the aspects of coordination of the different actors in the field of mental health were discussed and good practices were outlined, such as the cooperation between mental health and social services in Spain (Castilla-La-Mancha) and Italy (Veneto Region). Mental Health Europe's member FEAFES (the Spanish Confederation of Groupings of Families and People with Mental Illness) presented the perspective of users and their families. Other aspects that were covered during the seminar were access to housing and labour market as well as the role of the European Union in the promotion of mental health and the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

For any further information, please or contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org

MHE support to the Declaration from the European Disability Forum – Against the forced sterilisation of girls and women with disabilities

Women with disabilities are frequently denied control of their sexuality and reproduction and experience many different types of abuses, both individual and systemic. These abuses including forced sterilization and frequently forced abortion effectively robbing the woman of her right to decide. Forced sterilisation is usually in the form of coercion, the pressure on women with a disability to go against the health care professionals is overwhelming, if the woman decides to become pregnant, she will frequently face hostility from health professionals.

Forced sterilisation is a form of violence against women and is recognised as a crime against humanity under the treaty of Rome. Forced sterilisation is certainly not a new phenomena; the most infamous sterilization program of the 20th century took place under the Third Reich. Under the law signed by Hitler, all doctors in the Reich were required to report patients who were mentally ill with schizophrenia and bi polar disorder as well as depression, and those with a physical disability for example, epileptic, blind, deaf, or having a congenital birth defect. In 1973 the former Czechoslovakia carried out a policy of sterilization of Roma women, this was denounced as a form of genocide but this practice continued up until 1989. A 2005 report by the Czech government's independent ombudsman identified dozens of cases of coercive sterilization between 1979 and 2001.

MHE would like to remind members that this practice is still carried out surreptitiously and public awareness is low. This practice effectively dehumanizes women with physical and mental disability and is a form of gender based violence and discrimination, and although the hysterectomy of teen-aged disabled girls has been justified by the argument that menstruation is difficult to manage, we believe it is a violation of a woman's fundamental rights.

MHE fully supports the EDF declaration.

For further information please follow the links

<http://untreaty.un.org/cod/icc/statute/romefra.htm>

<http://www.un.org/durbanreview2009/story24.shtml>

NEWS ON PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES IN WHICH MHE IS INVOLVED

Final conference of the ProMenPol project, Berlin, 8 - 9 October 2009

Around 80 practitioners and policy makers from 26 different countries participated in the final ProMenPol conference that took place in Berlin on 8 and 9 October 2009.

The main theme of this conference was to explore the interface between policy and practice in mental health promotion bringing together people from both perspectives to allow them to exchange practical views and realities. In addition, this year's conference was joined by members of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion, which launched a new project on mental health promotion in the workplace (*see related article at page 5-6 of this Newsletter*).

During the first conference day all participants were invited to share their ideas and experiences with respect to the concept of evidence as well as regarding relations between policy, science and practice by writing comments on pin boards which had been set up in the conference room. A great number of people made use of this option. At the end of the day the comments were integrated into a panel discussion in which those issues were lively discussed.

The second conference day addressed recent EU policy initiatives in the field of mental health, with the participation of the European Commission. The newly established European Mental Health Compass Database as well as the outcomes of the EC thematic conference on the Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Young People (Stockholm, 29-30 September) were presented. Afterwards participants were divided into groups according to their setting of

interest. Workshop leaders then presented the setting specific results from the ProMenPol field trials with respect to lessons learned for practice and policy. This was used as a starting point of discussion as a means of validating the field trial results. Participants very actively contributed to the discussion and shared personal experiences from their professional and cultural backgrounds.

The minutes of the workshops and all conference presentations can be downloaded from the ProMenPol-website at <http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/?i=promenpol.en.events.763>

Source: ProMenPol Newsletter, October 2009

The New Release of the ProMenPol Database and Toolkit

The final release of the ProMenPol toolkit and database has now been made on the project website.

The ProMenPol toolkit consists of 4 inter-related manuals on how to implement mental health promotion: a generic manual on implementing mental health promotion; a manual for implementing mental health promotion in schools; one for implementing mental health promotion in workplaces; and one for implementing mental health promotion in older people's residence.

The ProMenPol Database is a structured selection of Mental Health Promotion tools in three distinct settings: schools, workplace and older peoples' residence. Within these settings the associated Mental Health Promotion tools are structured according to a modification of the ICF Classification, ICD10 Classification and a categorisation based on Health Promotion models.

The ProMenPol partners will be very happy to receive feedback on the new online database and toolkit content. For this purpose, a specially designed online survey will be available and distributed soon.

For more information on the ProMenPol toolkit please go to <http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/?i=promenpol.en.promenpol-tool-kit>

The ProMenPol Database is available online at <http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/?i=promenpol.en.toolkittab>

ProMenPol e-forums: have your say on mental health promotion issues!

The ProMenPol project aims to support the practices and policies of mental health promotion over the 2006-2009 period in three settings: schools, workplaces and older people's residences. To do so, ProMenPol has produced the following services and outputs: tools database; field trials; policy workshops; practitioners conferences; ProMenPol toolkit and e-forums.

In particular, the e-forums are intended for use by all Members of the ProMenPol website and they offer you the opportunity to discuss mental health promotion issues with fellow ProMenPol Members and with the ProMenPol Project team. There are five forums in operation now:

- 1) Mental Health in the Workplace - Sharing Experiences and Challenges
- 2) Field Trials in the Older People's Residences
- 3) Field Trials in the Workplace Setting
- 4) Field Trials in the Educational Setting
- 5) What do you think of the European Mental Health Pact?

Mental Health Europe (MHE) is involved in the ProMenPol project as associated partner and is providing input and expertise to the discussion forum on the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being. MHE invites its members and anyone with an interest in mental health promotion policies and practices to join in to these discussions.

To leave your own comment, please go to the ProMenPol website at <http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/?i=promenpol.en.forums>

For further information on ProMenPol and MHE activities around the project, please write to info@mhe-sme.org

Work. in tune with life. move europe - Official Opening of the new European Network for Workplace Health Promotion Campaign by the European Commission

On the 8th October 2009, the new European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP) campaign was launched officially by the European Commission at the joint ProMenPol/ENWHP Conference in Berlin.

Under the slogan "work. in tune with life. move europe" the ENWHP campaign will address the growing problem of mental illness and continue the campaign by focussing on this issue. The objective of the 8th ENWHP initiative is to bring the attention of employers and employees to strategies and programmes that exist to promote mental health at the workplace and to help them recognise their own and colleagues' emotional problems at an early stage. As in the previous campaign, models of good practice in companies and administrations will be identified and guidelines will be produced for management and other stakeholders.

The campaign is now open for participation: companies will have the opportunity of finding out how mental health promotion can be part of their workplace health promotion programme. With their examples of good practice they can also become a "Move Europe Partner".

For more information about the 8th ENWHP Initiative, please visit the dedicated website at <http://www.enwhp.org/enwhp-initiatives/current-initiative-work-in-tune-with-life.html>

UPDATE ON NEW ITEMS ON MHE WEBSITE

NEW SECTION!!!

- MHE Campaign "Mental Health and Social Inclusion, Making Steps"
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/making-steps>
- "Support our campaign!" webpage
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/making-steps/support.html>
- MHE Campaign at the European Parliament: Pictures!
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/making-steps/pictures-mhe-campaign-ep-2009.html>

The MHE website has been updated with new information in the following sections:

- New contents in the Our Work webpage:
 - Mental Health Promotion and Prevention of Disorders - Social Inclusion and Mental Health - Human Rights and Mental Health
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/our-work.html>

- Publications/ MHE Position papers:

MHE position paper on gender based violence on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2009

<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>

- News and events/ MHE Press releases:

Press release on MHE Position Paper written on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women 2009

<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases.html>

MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS

On 4 November, Mari Fresu, MHE Health Policy Officer, participated in the Policy Coordination meeting of the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), held in Brussels.

On 4 November, Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, participated in the Social Policy Working Group meeting organized in Brussels by the Social Platform.

On 12 November, Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Senior Adviser, participated as speaker in the panel-discussion "Does the crisis make us sick?" organized at the Austrian Parliament in Vienna.

On 16-17 November, Rita Donabauer, MHE Vice President, participated in "The 3rd Equality Summit – Cooperation for Equality!" organized by the Swedish EU Presidency in Stockholm.

On 18 November, Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, attended the "Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care" organized by the Spidla Cabinet in Brussels.

On 19th of November, Roselyne Bourgon, MHR Human Rights Officer, participated in the meeting of the FRAND Working Group at the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 19-20 November, Astrid Mechel attended the Seminar "Building partnerships in Mental Health for Economic and Social Integration" in Madrid, organized by the European Social Network.

On 25th of November, Josée Van Remoortel and Roselyne Bourgon participated in the networking meeting of the Project on Fundamental Rights of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and Persons with Mental Health Problems at the Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna.

On 26-27 November, Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, participated in the EUFAMI conference "The forgotten children" in Vilnius and met with MHE's Lithuanian members.

On 26 November, Alessia Faravelli, MHE Information Officer, attended the Skills Sharing Session held by the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 30 November, the MHE Staff organized, together with MEP Milan Zver, a launch debate on "Poverty and Mental Health in the EU: a Human Rights issue" at the European Parliament in Brussels.

NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Czech Association for Mental Health

One of the fundamental problems associated with psychiatric care in the Czech Republic is the issue of allocation of finances to and within the mental health field. Only 4 percent of the health care budget go to this field, whereas the norm in the EU is 5 to 8 percent. The Psychiatric Association has been lobbying for budgetary increases and holding seminars and conferences. One of its successes was to attract finances to the hospital sector as there is no other venue where the VZP (General Health Insurance company) can allocate money. Community care, sanatoria, and crisis centres fall in a grey zone between two ministries of health and social affairs, therefore their financing has not been established and patients suffer from this split.

An example of a successful project are the seminars Coopera which have been imported from Belgium. The aim of these seminars was to create a link between the therapist and the users incorporating family members as active participants. These seminars were positively received. The Czech Association for Mental Health has also participated at an international seminar on destigmatization that was held in Prague in May. Several contacts have been developed from there.

The largest psychiatric hospital, Bohnice, has a special unit, Bona, which has been established to facilitate the return of clients back to normal life as much as possible while maintaining respectable living conditions. They offer social rehabilitation and protected housing.

Annually, Bohnice holds a music, theatre and art festival on its grounds in order to promote connections between the healthy population and those who are clients of this hospital or elsewhere. It has become a successful endeavour, drawing thousands of people inside "the fence".

The Czech Ombudsman issued a report last year about the state of the mental health care in Czech psychiatric hospitals. Unfortunately, this report has not been reflected upon by the ministries and hospitals in question to this day.

The Czech Association for Mental Health is participating in a working group to develop a new law on mental health that is so far non-existent in the Czech Republic. The working group is led by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities.

For more information please visit the website <http://www.capz.cz/> or send an e-mail to info@capz.cz

Belgian Institut Wallon pour la Santé Mentale - Reintegration Award 2009

On 27 November, the Institut Wallon pour la Santé Mentale held the Conference "Reintegration Award 2009", which took place in Namur (Belgium).

The main theme of the Conference was the psycho-social rehabilitation, seen as a useful therapeutic tool that, associated to a therapy, could help people suffering of mental health problems in optimising their resources and enjoying a full social life. On this occasion, examples of projects and good practice were presented. Practical workshops were organised during the afternoon.

For more information about the Conference, please see www.iwsm.be

UK Mental Health Foundation - Right Here Pilot sites announced

Right Here is an innovative project by the Mental Health Foundation and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The aim of this project is to give young people support to help them look after their mental health when, where and how they would like it. To kick the project off, four local sites that have the potential to make a lasting difference to how young people are supported have been selected.

These pilot sites will be officially launched in April 2010. To know more about the project, please see www.right-here.org.uk

UK Government's social care Green Paper overlooks mental health

On the day that the consultation period for the Government's Green Paper on adult social care closes, mental health charity Mind has expressed its concerns that the Paper does not address the needs of adults with mental health problems, instead skewing the debate towards older people.

Actually, since the Government first started the debate on future funding for social care in 2008, Mind has consulted people with mental distress about their experiences of care and support, and how this should be funded in the future.

To know more about the context of the Green Paper and Mind's consultation with users of care services, please see

http://www.mind.org.uk/news/2416_governments_social_care_green_paper_overlooks_mental_health

II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES

Public Health Programme 2008-2013: calls for proposals 2010 already in 2009

The European Commission has just announced that it plans to publish the Work Plan for 2010, which sets the annual priorities for the implementation of the EU Health Programme already in 2009.

The calls for proposals for projects, operating grants, conferences and joint actions will be launched immediately after the Work Plan is published. Tentative deadline for submitting proposals is early March 2010.

For more information and for news about funding opportunities, please check the website of the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) at www.ec.europa.eu/each

UN Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights hosts expert meeting to debate the implementing and monitoring mechanisms of the UN Convention

On Monday 26 October, an expert panel meeting was organised by the Office of High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva. The discussion was on article 33 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) related to the national implementing and monitoring bodies. The expert panel meeting was part of the process that leads to a thematic study to be presented by the OHCHR to the Human Rights Council at its March session. The meeting was attended by about 50 participants, from States, national human rights institutions and disabled people organisations. The presentations underlined the challenges related to article 33. Article 33 includes 3 paragraphs among which paragraph 1 - focal point and coordination mechanism - refers to bodies within the Government, while paragraph 2 deals with monitoring structures which are independent from Government. In this regard, some interesting examples were given about the different ways States approached the paragraph 2 of article 33, like the examples of Germany and Spain. The Chair of the CRPD Committee informed participants that the CRPD Committee has agreed on the reporting guidelines, which will be available by mid November. These guidelines should include a section requesting information on the implementation of article 33.

For more information about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, please visit <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

Source: Enable November Newsletter/ EDF Weekly Update 19

Stronger protection for the rights of people with disabilities in the EU!

On 26 November, the EU Council of Ministers approved a decision for the EU to accede to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is the first time a regional organisation has acceded to a UN human rights convention. The Convention will provide a clear framework for improving protection and realising the rights of people with disabilities in the EU. The decision of the EU Council is an important step forward for EU human rights policy and a sign of the importance the EU assigns to the rights of people with disabilities.

The Convention was signed by the EU in March 2007 and is the first UN human rights convention that allows the possibility for regional organisations to accede. The Council decision means that the EU will present its formal accession instrument as soon as agreement has been reached in the EU on the institutional arrangements.

To know more, please see

<http://www.se2009.eu/en/2.543/2.578/2.737/2.763/1.25100>

Source: Press release of the Swedish Presidency of the EU

European Disability Forum on the seminar for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On 28 October 2009, the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the European Consortium of Foundations on Human Rights and Disability (EFC) organised a seminar in Brussels on the National Implementing and Monitoring Bodies described in Article 33 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRDP). It aimed at exploring the obligations coming from the CRDP regarding the functions and the shaping of these bodies, as well as analysing how EU member States and EU Institutions are foreseeing the fulfilling of their obligations. The symposium brought together a wide range of experts from the United Nations and independent mechanisms in Germany, Spain and UK, European Commission officials, representatives of the European Parliament and a strong representation of national and European disability organizations. The discussions focused mainly on the issue of independence of the bodies as well as the participation for people with disabilities. The importance of the implication of civil society in the implementing body has been raised and considered as a major challenge in the creation of these bodies.

MHE was represented at this event by Roselyne Bourgon, Human Rights Officer.

For more information on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer, at Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org or visit <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

Meeting of the "Ad hoc expert group on transition from Institutional to Community care", 18 November, Brussels

On 18 November, the Cabinet of the EU Commissioner Spidla held the last follow-up meeting of the "Ad hoc expert group on transition from institutional to community care". The representatives of the European Commission gave an overview of the report's dissemination process. The Report will be translated in all the EU languages and will be presented in various conferences during the next month. An official communication is on preparation in order to disseminate the results. During the meeting, it was also stressed that the Report should be endorsed by all the different ENGOs partners of the "Expert Group". The dissemination plan, together with the suggestions raised in the debate, will be rediscussed in a "final" meeting that will have place on the 16 December in Brussels. On this occasion, the possibility of maintaining the "Expert Group's" activities will also be considered.

Josée Van Remoortel represented MHE in the "Experts Group" and in its meeting.

European Court of Human Rights hears first social care institution case

On 10 November, the first case heard by the European Court of Human Rights deals with the segregation of hundreds of thousands of people labelled with intellectual disabilities, mental health problems and other types of disabilities. The two cases were argued before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg - Mitev v. Bulgaria and Stanev v. Bulgaria - and were both brought jointly by the nongovernmental organisations Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and the Mental Disability Advocacy Center. Mr Mitev died in a social care institution last year and his case was continued by his sister. My Stanev attended the Court hearing in person, becoming the first person from a social care institution to bring his case before European Court for Human Rights. In both cases, the applicants were deprived of legal capacity and placed under guardianship against their will. In their applications to the European Court of Human Rights, both applicants alleged, e.g. that the deprivation of legal capacity was done in such a way as to violate their right to a fair trial (in violation of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights) and that the deprivation of legal capacity affected the enjoyment of their private and family life (Article 8).

The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee and the Mental Disability Advocacy Center called upon the Bulgarian government to issue an immediate moratorium to new admissions to social care institutions.

For further information, please contact Victoria Lee, MDAC Legal Officer, at mdac@mdac.info
Source: MDAC

III. EY FOR COMBATING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The Year 2010 will be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The key objectives are to raise public awareness about these issues and renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion. The EY 2010 aims to challenge stereotypes and collective perceptions of poverty to ensure everyone can play a full and active role in society.

MHE has created a new section in order to increase awareness about the link between mental health and poverty.

Research has shown clear links between mental health and poverty. People experiencing poverty are particularly vulnerable towards getting mental health problems, since due to financial hardship or not having a job frequently their social contacts are suffering and uncertainty about the future dominate their daily lives.

European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion – EY 2010 website now online!

The official website of the European Year 2010 is now online. It contains all news and events related to the EY 2010 as well as information about activities on the national level, links to the national websites and the contact details of the National Implementing Body where you can obtain the information about published Calls for Proposals in your country.

You can visit the EY 2010's website at www.2010againstopoverty.eu

Eurobarometer Survey on Poverty and Social Exclusion 2009

On the occasion of the upcoming European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, a Eurobarometer Survey had been launched. The survey questions included the perceived extent of poverty and perceived reasons for poverty in the EU member states. Poor health, long-term illness or disability was named by 18 % of the survey participants as one of the two most probable reasons for poverty, whereas 5 % mentioned mental health problems as a reason. People suffering from mental health problems were considered by 13 % as the group of population that is most at risk of poverty.

To read the full Eurobarometer Survey, please click on
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4059&langId=en>

Flash Eurobarometer on "Monitoring the social impact of the crisis"

A Flash Eurobarometer on "Monitoring the social impact of the crisis: public perceptions in the European Union" has been carried out in July 2009 and published in October 2009. The aims of this Eurobarometer were to investigate perception about the existence of poverty and homelessness, to gain knowledge about the degree of financial difficulty of households (in the 12 months leading up to the survey) and the perceived job security and employment situation.

Other objective of the study were to measure the challenges in healthcare and social-care affordability in the past six months and to understand how people feel about their future pension entitlements and worries regarding income in old age.

To read the full Flash Eurobarometer, please see
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_276_en.pdf

IV. NEWS FROM OTHER (E)NGOs

EuRADE Policy Statement

The EuRADE project has now come to an end. Funded under the 7th European Framework Programme for Research Technological Development (FP7), it aimed at increasing and enhancing the full participation of Disabled Persons Organisations as equal and active partners in future research initiatives that will contribute to improving the lives of people with disabilities in Europe.

EuRADE activities have demonstrated that it is possible for disabled people to fully enjoy their life and to give their contribution to the society.

The Policy Statement is based on the results of the project, and seeks to express the European Disability Forum (EDF) views on the ways Disability Equality Research should be brought forward and managed at a European Level.

To read the Policy Statement, please see
[http://www.eurade.eu/admin/wysiwyg/assets/Word/EuRADE %20policy_statement FINAL.doc](http://www.eurade.eu/admin/wysiwyg/assets/Word/EuRADE_%20policy_statement_FINAL.doc)

A Disability Pact for Europe

The European Disability Forum (EDF) met in the Swedish capital to adopt the proposal for the European Disability Pact.

Sweden is a European leader in the promotion of human rights: the government ratified the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in December 2008, and the Swedish Presidency of the European Union is about to reach an agreement on the conclusion of the Convention by the European Community by the end of the year.

It is the first time in its history that the European Community will accede to an international human rights treaty. This ratification is a strong signal sent to the Member States both to implement the UNCRPD at a national level and to recognize disability as a cross cutting issue.

Such a political context implies a real need for coordinated actions. It is crucial for the European Commission to synchronize its disability strategy with Member States: the European Disability Pact is therefore the essential tool. Through the Pact, the Lisbon strategy will give new impetus to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, recognizing disability as a cross cutting issue. The Pact will cover employment, social protection, education, growth and competitiveness, e-inclusion policies and research.

To know more about this proposal, please contact Aurélien Daydé at aurelien.dayde@edf-feph.org

Prospect – the European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness Training Programme

Prospect, the European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness (EUFAMI) Training Initiative, is now being used in over 14 countries across Europe. Prospect is a very unique peer to peer programme and was developed by EUFAMI members from different countries.

For further information, please contact Rita Geerts at project.admin.office@eufami.org.

The European Network for Independent Living is looking for good-practice examples

The European Network for Independent Living (ENIL) is currently looking for examples of good practice concerning some of its main topics of interest like independent living, non-discrimination, accessibility and implementation of the UN Convention. The aim is to collect examples of good practice from different countries about the empowerment of people with disabilities and the protection of their rights.

To download the questionnaire about your good-practice, please see http://www.enil.eu/enil/index3.php?option=com_jake&jrun=%2Fdocfiles%2Fview%2F358%2F

For any further information, please send an email to secretariat@enil.eu

Institutions remain dumping grounds for forgotten people

In Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia institutions housing the most vulnerable citizens still remain dumping grounds for forgotten people.

To know more about the situation of people living in institutions in Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania, please visit www.dumpinggroundsforpeople.wordpress.com.

National Declaration for People with a mental health crisis launched in the UK

In a first for the UK, mental health patient groups, National Health Services, service providers and staff groups have come together today to launch the first national declaration for people with a mental health crisis.

The declaration sets out that people who are acutely ill should receive safe high quality care in a comfortable environment. The organisations will work together to achieve this by focusing on integrating people back into their everyday lives while also setting out the need to promote a more positive image of mental illness.

For more information, please see <http://www.nmhd.org.uk/news/new-declaration-enshrines-acute-care-quality-care-for-all/>

Mental Health Institute Inaugurated As WHO Collaborating Centre (Serbia)

The Serbian Institute for Mental Health has been inaugurated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Mental Health Training. The Institute has become a regional centre and one of the 35 centres in the world where the programme for providing timely, accessible and suitable mental health care to the people will be implemented.

The Institute's programmes are concerned with the reduction of the rate of suicides and suicidal behaviour among young people, the prevention of violence and alcoholism and a systemic approach to the families of mentally disturbed individuals through social welfare establishments.

For further information, please see <http://www.srbija.gov.rs/vesti/vest.php?id=60993>

V. PUBLICATIONS

Report of the conference "Promotion of Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Young People– Making it happen" available online

The European Commission has just published the report of the conference "Promotion of Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Young People– Making it happen" which took place in Stockholm the 29-30 September 2009.

Organised by the European Commission and the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs under the auspices of the Swedish Presidency, the conference was the first of a series of thematic events in the frame of the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being.

The conference report outlines the presentations and discussions including the conclusions and outcomes from the conference, based on the conference participants' priorities for implementation expressed through the system of voting on essential actions.

Actively involved in the conference's preparation work since the early stages, MHE contributed to the conference being represented at the event by Gregor Henderson, Advisor, who gave a keynote speech, and by Mari Fresu, Health Policy Officer, who acted as a rapporteur for the media and new technologies session.

To read the full report, please visit the European Commission website at http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/ev_20090929_en.htm?r

To know more on the MHE activities around the Pact, please write to info@mhe-sme.org

Report on "Growth, Jobs and Social Progress in the EU - A contribution to the evaluation of the social dimension of the Lisbon Strategy"

The new report from the Social Protection Committee – which brings together experts from each EU country – outlines that the social protection systems have helped shield Europeans from the worst effects of the financial crisis. However, the conclusions of the report highlights that social protection alone is not enough to prevent poverty and exclusion, and stress the importance of goals such as fighting child poverty and promoting active inclusion. Indeed, further modernisation of social protection needs to be fully articulated with growth and jobs strategies.

To read the full report, please see <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=596>

UN Convention - Handbook on the rights of persons with disabilities

The manual "Understanding the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD): A handbook on the rights of persons with disabilities" explains the content of the CRPD and provides detailed information on the negotiation and drafting process.

The publication gives a comprehensive overview of the CRPD, and the positions taken by the different stakeholders involved (government delegates, UN agencies, human rights institutions and other representatives from civil society, most importantly disabled people's organizations).

Information on interpreting the text of the CRPD and its implementation at the local, national, regional and international levels is also given.

This manual by Marianne Schulz was produced with the support of Handicap International.

To download this publication, please visit <http://www.makingitwork-crpd.org/resource-library/crpd>

Source: Enable November Newsletter

WHO: Monitoring Human Rights and Quality in Mental Health Facilities

The draft "World Health Organisation (WHO) Tool for Monitoring Human Rights in Mental Health Facilities" is currently being piloted in a number of countries.

The Tool uses the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a framework to provide countries with information and guidance on human rights standards that need to be respected, promoted and protected in mental health facilities and social care homes.

For more information send an e-mail to Natalie Drew at drewn@who.int or visit the [WHO website](#).

Source: [UN Enable Newsletter](#)

VI. CONFERENCES

24-26 February 2010

European SMES Seminar "Invisible Wounds – Migrants, Dignity and Vulnerability", Athens

For further information, please send an e-mail to smeseu@smes-europa.org or visit [http://www.smes-europa.org/INVISIBLE WOUNDS Athenseminar 2010.htm](http://www.smes-europa.org/INVISIBLE_WOUNDS_Athenseminar_2010.htm)

VI. ANNEX

Advocacy Group for Mentally Ill – Cyprus

On the occasion of the World Mental Health day 2009, the Advocacy Group for Mentally Ill (A.G.M.I.), together with the Choir "Angelikes Fones" and the Gymnasium of Vergina Aradippou, organised a dance performance at the Municipal Theatre of Larnaca.

The show was dedicated to the issue of "Mental Health in Primary Care: Enhancing treatment and promoting mental health". The event intended to stress the need to guarantee access to mental health services, minimizing stigma and discrimination.

The performance was announced by a flyer that was disseminated before the event and which was marked by the A.G.M.I. logo, testifying its 10 years of establishment and involvement in the field of mental health.

For further information, please send an e-mail to Elise Torossian at agftmi@cytanet.com.cy

A.I.S.M.e - Italy

The initiative "Joint Experiences" was part of the calendar of events for the Florence Municipality Mental Health Month which has been established for several years as a prolongation of the World Mental Health Day. On the 16-17 October, the collaboration between Italy and Scotland was officially launched.

Representatives of the Florence Municipality and the North Lanarkshire Social Services announced their support to the project in order to promote the integration of the health and social sectors and the active involvement of users and carers in the mental health projects. During this time an official declaration of commitment to implement the project was signed and a timetable was proposed.

The background of the project was presented and some basic concepts and practical elements were highlighted such as the "Joint Experiences" as an example of innovative practices.

The auspices are that this work will develop in a positive way and that the project may be expanded to include other places and experiences both in Italy, in UK and other countries.

For more information, please send an e-mail to pipini@dada.it

Makshivim Net – Israel

On the occasion of the World Mental Health Day 2009, Makshivim Net, in collaboration with Israeli Ministry of Health, organised a convention in order to contribute to raise awareness of people about mental health problems. A CD with the content and the lectures abstracts of the conference is now under preparation.

To know more about the initiative, please send an e-mail to eitan@makshivim.com

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

Please send your contributions to info@mhe-sme.org