



**MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE**



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Boulevard Clovis 7, B-1000 Brussels

Tel + 32 2 280 04 68

Fax + 32 2 280 16 04

Email: info@mhe-sme.org

Web site: http://www.mhe-sme.org

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*The team of Mental Health Europe wishes you all  
a happy Christmas holiday and a joyful New Year 2009 !*

## I. NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

### Message from MHE President

Dear Members and Dear Friends,

We are ending another busy but positive year for MHE-SME.

When 2008 started we were already in a strong position having completed the project "Good Practices in Mental Health-From Exclusion to Inclusion". The development of the project and dissemination of its findings enabled us to continue to share inspiring examples of good practice and also established strong European networks and contacts with a range of organisations in many countries. This collaborative work clearly illustrates how important it is to actively promote the vision and values of positive Mental Health and Well-Being which is characterised by empowerment, diversity and inclusion. This vision has been further reinforced by the completion of the report "From Exclusion to Inclusion- the Way Forward to Promoting Social Inclusion of People with Mental Health Problems in Europe". Indeed, central to the philosophy and ethos of MHE-SME is a commitment to socially inclusive policies, practice and services which aim to relate clearly to the diverse social, cultural, educational, economic and political expressions of the Europe Union vision.

In June 2008 we participated in the High Level Conference on Mental Health – The European Pact for Mental Health and Well Being. It was an honour to speak at this event on your behalf where a particular focus was exploration of the socio-economic dimensions of Mental Health and Well-Being. The European Pact provides a wide-ranging framework which addresses the well-being of, for example, young people, adults of working age and the elderly together with the challenges presented by depression, suicide, stigma and discrimination.

We value the fact that our expertise was recognised in supporting the European Parliament and the Commission in addressing issues connected with the delivery of the Pact and this was clearly affirmed at our meeting with the Commissioner Vassiliou in the summer 2008. I am very proud, therefore, that MHE-SME continues to be acknowledged and respected as a leading European NGO and our vision, leadership and expertise in the field of Mental Health and Well-Being is highly valued.

There were many other memorable events in 2008 which important to mention. For example, in July Mary van Dievel, MHE Director, and I travelled together to represent MHE-SME at the Second Mental Health Advocacy Leadership Summit in Toronto where we met with other NGOs from Europe and America and shared our hopes, concerns and aspirations for the future of Mental Health and Well-Being from an international perspective.

The MHE Conference in August 2008 took place in Aalborg, Denmark, and explored the theme of "Diversity in Mental Health and Well-Being-An Opportunity for Intercultural Dialogue". This event was an inspiring and memorable example of how dialogue is at the heart of the work of MHE and the very wide-ranging workshops, talks, discussions and social and cultural events and sharing of experiences provided much to reflect upon. We are particularly grateful to SIND, the Danish Mental Health NGO for all their collaboration with MHE and all their hard work which clearly made the conference a great success. We are delighted that several new members joined MHE at the Aalborg conference and the feedback from workshops, discussions and the social programme was excellent. Such events provide us with a positive opportunity to creatively explore innovative ideas, projects, and initiatives and energise and inspire us to continue to work for the promotion of positive Mental Health and Well-Being with renewed enthusiasm and commitment. It was great to see you at the conference at which delegates included, for example, service users, family members, politicians, representatives of the media together with those who deliver services and support systems for better Mental Health and Well-Being throughout Europe.

We are currently exploring the establishment of Focal Points in Europe which will act as an invaluable resource to enable effective communication between the institutions of the European Union and your own countries. The role of MHE-SME is to act as a conduit in the communication process and to facilitate training and share information which is timely and relevant.

I believe that it is clear, therefore, that the European Community, united by the vision of positive Mental Health and Well-Being, continues to promote a vibrant and dynamic vision at the heart of which is the strengthening of civil society across Europe.

It was a great pleasure for me to address the event in September, organised by CHES (Coalition for Health, Ethics and Society) on the theme of Economics, Ethics and Mental Health and Well-Being. The event was well attended and the message of Mental Health and Well-Being and its relationship to civil society resonated well in the context of the wide-ranging challenges and opportunities which face both Europe and the wider international community.

The event in the European Parliament in December 2008 titled "Ensuring Mental Health in Youth in Modern European Societies–Turning the European Pact for Mental Health and Well Being into Reality" was another very important event and we very much valued the support from Mr. Poul Nyrup Ramussen MEP and Mr. Giovanni Berlinguer MEP in making this event happen.

In October of this year Mary van Dievel, MHE Board Member Claude Deutsch and I attended the Poverty Summit in Marseille where our position paper clearly illustrated the experience of poverty and its impact upon Mental Health and Well-Being. It is essential, therefore, that our commitment to the eradication of poverty as specified in the Lisbon Agenda must continue.

There were many other important events in 2008. We were sad to lose two dedicated members of staff who moved to other valuable jobs, namely Sogol Noorani and Fanny Muller. We wish them all the best for the future and we all value their input to Mental Health Europe.

I would like to thank all Members, the Board members and the Executive Committee members, including our Policy Advisers, for their hard and dedicated work. My special thanks go to Mary van Dievel, MHE Director, and all her team including Mari Fresu, Isabel Mendes, Astrid Mechel and Roselyne Bourgon who have managed the changes in the organisation so well and have shown great commitment and enthusiasm in addressing the many and varied issues that are presented to MHE–SME on a daily basis. Their skills in producing timely, transparent and well structured reports and an excellent MHE-SME Newsletter are just a few examples worth mentioning.

I very much look forward to the forthcoming year 2009 and together with all at MHE-SME I wish you all a very happy festive season and a very happy New Year 2009. My particular greetings go to all those who are faced with mental health challenges on a daily basis together with their families, friends and carers.

I can assure you that MHE-SME will continue with full commitment to respond positively and innovatively to the challenges and opportunities of the future so that we can all continue to grow in strength united by the vision of making positive Mental Health and Well-Being a reality for all the citizens of Europe.

On 2 December 2008, Peter Kinderman and Roselyne Bourgon attended the Social Platform Working Group on Fundamental Rights and Non-Discrimination.

On 2 December, Mari Fresu attended the meeting of the European Parliament Committee on Health and Environment, European Parliament, Brussels.

On 3 December, Malgorzata Kmita, Elisabeth Muschik, Colette Versporten, Pino Pini, Kristina Salonen, Claude Deutsch, Josée Van Remoortel, Brian Howard, Nace Kovac, Luigi Leonori, Mary Van Dievel and the whole MHE staff attended the lunch-debate on "Ensuring mental health in youth in modern European societies" at the European Parliament in Brussels.

On the same date, Board members Malgorzata Kmita, Elisabeth Muschik, Colette Versporten, Pino Pini, Kristina Salonen, Claude Deutsch, Josée Van Remoortel, Brian Howard, Nace Kovac, Luigi Leonori participated in the 23<sup>rd</sup> MHE Board meeting in Brussels.

On 3-4 December, John Henderson attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> International conference of the Portuguese Society for the Study of Mental Health at São Pedro do Sol, Portugal.

On 8 December, Astrid Mechel attended the Conference "Structural Funds 2007-2013, a real step forward for social Europe?", organised by EDF, EAPN and Cecodhas.

On 8 December, Mari Fresu attended the Management Committee meeting for the CAMHEE project (Child and Adolescent Mental Health in an Enlarged Europe).

On 8 December, Roselyne Bourgon attended the Public Hearing on the directive proposal on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, European Parliament

On 9 December, Mari Fresu attended the CAMHEE seminar organised in the European Parliament on "Modern approaches in child mental health".

On 9 December, Malgorzata Kmita will attend a WHO/Euro seminar on Users empowerment in Copenhagen.

On 9-10 December, Elisabeth Muschik, Mary Van Dievel and Astrid Mechel contributed to the Social Platform conference on "Civil Dialogue: how can we shape the Europe we want". They have co-lead with Solidar a workshop "What is the role of European NGO networks in bridging the gap between European and national levels". Mary presented the MHE work with the National Focal Points and Elisabeth talked about the concrete experience of the Austrian National Focal Point.

On 10 December Mari Fresu attended the meeting of the EU Health Policy Forum's members, Brussels.

On 10 December Mary Van Dievel participated in the ProMenPol management committee meeting.

On 10-12 December, Josée Van Remoortel attended the European conference on "Social Innovation and Transnational Cooperation" in Lisbon, Portugal.

On 11 December, Mari Fresu attended the EU Health Open Forum 2008, hosted by the European Commission in Brussels.

On 11 December Brian Howard and Mary Van Dievel attended the ProMenPol Policy Workshop in Brussels. On the same day, Astrid Mechel attend the event "Modernisation of Disability-related Health & Social Services – The Way Ahead", organised by the European Platform for Rehabilitation.

On 15 December, Mary Van Dievel and Mari Fresu attended the meeting of NGOs organised by DG Sanco (Health and Consumer Protection" where the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being and the contribution of the NGOs was discussed.

On 15 December, Mari Fresu attended the European Commission's meeting with NGOs on the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Brussels (Mari and Mary)

On 17 December, Mary Van Dievel and Astrid Mechel attended the seminar on "Active Inclusion: a tool for fighting family poverty" in Brussels.

#### "Etats-généraux" of Mental Health in Wallonia

The Institut Wallon pour la Santé Mentale (IWSM – Walloon Institute for Mental Health) organised a very successful meeting in Namur, Belgium, on 28 November 2008 on the theme : "Passenger in the network ?" ("Passager" du réseau?)

400 mental health workers (from community mental health services, psychiatric hospitals) and representatives from user groups listened in the plenary session to contributions on "Reflections on the principles and issues at stake in the mental health networks" (Isabelle Delière, researcher, IWSM), "Mental health networks and the shared secret: how to guarantee respect for mental health service users?" (Lucien Nouwynck, Advocate General Appeal Court

Brussels) and "Patients, users or beneficiaries of rights in mental health networks?" (Jean-Marc Van Gyseghem, lawyer, researcher, Research Centre ICT and Rights).

Psytoyens, the Walloon organisation of mental health service users, gave a speech on how to make participation of service users work.

Mireille Tremblay, Professor of Psychology and President of the "Observatoire québécois de la démocratie" spoke about "Taking the floor, citizenship and democratic dialogue in mental health".

In the afternoon 6 simultaneous workshops took place.

All contributions (only in French) will be posted on the Walloon Institute's website [www.iwsm.be/](http://www.iwsm.be/)

Mary Van Dievel attended this event on behalf of Mental Health Europe.

#### EDF Board meeting in Paris

Under the French Presidency, the EDF Board met in the prestigious town hall of Paris. After the opening by P. Gohet, the French interministerial delegate on disability issues, the Board discussed different important topics.

- A statement in the financial crisis and its results on the situation of people with disabilities in the EU discussed at length and was sent after adoption by the Board to the European Commission, the European Parliament and to the French Presidency.

- The second important issue was the discussion on legal capacity: art. 12 of the UN convention on the rights of disabled persons. A working group of experts will revise the document.

- For the UN convention a strategy for ratification by the different countries was adopted.

- A campaign towards the European Parliamentary elections was also adopted. MHE asked more attention for the people with disabilities in institutions, who are invisible citizens with no voting rights.

Josée Van Remoortel Board Member attended the meeting.

#### Non discrimination legislation campaign:

A public hearing on the new Anti-discrimination directive was organised by the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties (EP LIBE) and was held at the European Parliament on 8 December 2008. The hearing was co-hosted by EP LIBE Rapporteur Mrs Buitenweg MEP and EP EMPL (Employment and Social Affairs Committee) Rapporteur Mrs Lynne MEP and consisted in three panels. The first panel was on the legal framework with participation of the legal and academic experts. The second panel was about the ground of sexual orientation with participation of ILGA-Europe and the Fundamental Rights Agency. The third panel was about age and disability with participation of EDF, AGE, the Irish Human Rights Commission and the Association of insurers of Europe.

The public hearing aimed to draw the parallel between the already existing Race Equality Directive and the proposed Directive on principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Some key messages for Mental Health Europe have been raised during the debates like the question of the protection of people against multiple discrimination as well as a clear definition of the concept of disability in the directive's proposal. This definition should be based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and include people who have a disability, or who are perceived as disabled or who have a chronic illness. The main concern regarding the adoption by the Council which was raised during the last FRAND meeting (2.12.2008) was the question of subsidiary and how Members States could argue against the new Directive on this ground.

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

*For more information, read the webpage of the LIBE Committee on European Parliament website:*

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/homeCom.do?language=EN&body=LIBE>

#### Mental Health Europe/ Solidar Workshop at Social Platform Annual Conference on 9-10 December 2008

Mental Health Europe, together with Solidar, organised a workshop during the Social Platform Annual Conference on 9-10 December 2008. The topic of the workshop was "What is the role

of European NGO networks in bridging the gap between European and national level" to discuss the role of European Networks as a capacity-builder, mediator and facilitator for the information flow between the national level and the European arena. Participants vividly exchanged views and experiences. A particular focus was set on Central and Eastern Europe. Mary Van Dievel, Director of Mental Health Europe (MHE), presented the MHE National Focal Points (NFP) system. Elisabeth Muschik, Board Member of MHE and of the MHE member pro mente austria, reported about her concrete experience as NFP for Austria. NFP activities in 2008 were the consultation process regarding the EU's Active Inclusion Recommendation, the lobbying activities in the preparation phase of the National Strategic Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010 and later on their analysis towards the taking into consideration of the mental health aspect in the reports, as well as general information dissemination activities.

Karel Schwarz from Solidar presented the situation of the civil dialogue in the Czech Republic. Like practically everywhere in Europe, NGOs in the Czech Republic face problems of funding. They expect an equal participation in decision-making processes in European NGOs and the support of the European networks in terms of visibility, capacity-building measures and representation towards EU institutions, as well as the participation in European-wide projects. During the workshop, good practices were discussed and exchanged. European networks are aware of their responsibility and their role in influencing the political agenda of Europe. They are representing the interests of their members and filter out the priorities according to the respective targets their network is engaged in and assume a role as facilitator and mediator. Capacity-building measures of national members in terms of European issues and related communication strategies are well developed in many networks, therewith giving ownership to the national level. The Mental Health Europe National Focal Points model is a good way to promote and structure information exchange on sector-specific issues/defined topics, supported by already existing national umbrella organisations.

The workshop provided a fruitful debate which certainly has to be continued in the future. We have succeeded to involve a great number of our participants; we had really engaged discussions, a lively reflection on the draft report and the participants of our workshop signalled widely satisfaction with the report at the final plenary session of the conference. The workshop concluded with a set of recommendations.

*The full report can be obtained via the following link: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/reports-from-mhe-seminars-and-other-mhe-events/mhe-solidar-workshop-social-platform-conference-december-2008.html>*

#### Health First Europe New Horizons Congress

On Thursday 12 November 2008, Health First Europe (HFE) held the New Horizons Congress, entitled: "Tackling the Healthcare Challenges of Today for a Healthier Tomorrow". HFE is a non-profit alliance of patients, doctors, nurses, academics, healthcare experts and the medical technology industry, calling for equal access for every EU citizen to modern, innovative and reliable medical technology and healthcare. The Congress was divided into three sessions, moderated by Elizabeth Lynne MEP, Hans Martens (Chief Executive at the European Policy Centre) and Marian Harkin MEP. The sessions focused on: the patient perspective on the future of healthcare; innovation in healthcare; and the issues that affect healthcare workers. A number of keynote speakers also participated in the Congress, including the EU Commissioner for Health Androulla Vassiliou, former EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Affairs (and HFE Patron) David Byrne, and Dr. Stanislava Panova from the Czech Ministry for Health (representing the upcoming EU Czech Presidency). Opening and closing remarks were made by the Honorary President of HFE, Mary Banotti, ex MEP for Ireland. Mary Van Dievel, MHE director, attended this event.

#### Report « Women's health in prison » WHO conference – Kiev, Ukraine, 13-14 November 2008

About a hundred participants, mainly from Eastern countries, participated in this meeting.

The main topics discussed were:

- Women in justice and health systems
- Women's health and prisons in the 21st century
- Quality of healthcare in prisons for women
- Children, Women and prisons

Whereas the percentage of women in prison is not so representative when compared to the total amount of imprisoned population (4,9% in average, in Europe, with considerable variations from country to country), it has been noticed that the number of imprisoned women is increasing comparatively to the number of men.

Why? Women's emancipation? Drugs' use and abuse? It is currently under investigation.

As far as mental health and mental illness are concerned, a woman in prison is more vulnerable, more weakened than men. Crime due to drugs use is one of the major reasons for imprisonment (offences to get drugs, offences perpetrated under the effect of drugs).

Besides drug addiction, women in prisons also suffer from depression, anxiety, phobias, and neurosis. Self-mutilation and suicide reach worrying levels.

In England and Wales, for instance, 90% of the women in prisons suffer from a mental problem, a neurosis, or both; and 9 out of 20 women suffer from neurosis, psychosis, personality disorders, alcoholism and drugs abuse.

The biggest amount of non-treated traumatism and the underprivileged socio-economic situation that characterises a big amount of women in prisons predispose this population to mental illness and self-mutilation. Studies suggest that, often, female inmates' mental illness is at the same time at the origin of their imprisonment and a consequence of their imprisonment.

A short stay such as in police custody is harmful for the woman's mental health and her family. The situation worsens if the woman is put in a prison far away from her place of origin, if the prison is overcrowded, or in case of male prison warders and if they are subject to sexual dangers. The majority of the prisons do not have either a care scheme or a prevention scheme specific for women with mental ill-health.

What can be done to improve these situations? A document "The Kyiv Declaration on Women's Health in Prison" that was presented at the end of the conference insists, as far as mental health is concerned, that the promotion of mental health and resilience should be taken into account by the care scheme policy makers. The large proportion of mutilations and suicide should lead the prisons wardens to implement strategies and health policies to protect mental health and to support women "in danger." These needs in mental health should be part of a health programme in each prison.

Many women in prison experience physical or sexual abuse before their imprisonment. Mental health problems resulting from these situations require early and specialised action.

Personnel training and the possibility to direct women suffering from mental disorders to suitable services should exist in all imprisonment structures.

In order to promote health good practices in prisons, WHO/WHO HIPP initiated a contest. It is important that good practices in mental health make themselves known and share their experiences.

*For further info, please go to:*

[http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/hsdu/settings/who\\_prisons.htm](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/hsdu/settings/who_prisons.htm)

*Many thanks to Colette Versporten for her contribution.*

### **III. NEWS FROM MHE MEMBERS**

#### SIND

On October 1st 2008, Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, MEP and former Prime Minister of Denmark has accepted an appointment as Ambassador for the Danish Association for Mental Health (SIND).

The appointment was decided as a small token of appreciation of Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen's wholehearted and vigorous efforts in combatting stigmas and spreading information about mental illness. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen has been able to touch a great number of people with his very personal experience as a relative and as a father.

Already Mr. Poul Nyrup Rasmussen has had a great effect on the interest for mental illness in the press and in the public in general, and SIND is looking very much forward to the future cooperation."

*For more information: visit [http://www.sind.dk/nyrup\\_sind-ambassadr.6](http://www.sind.dk/nyrup_sind-ambassadr.6) (in Danish)*

*Many thanks to Palle Heilesen, from SIND, for this contribution.*

#### ESTUAR

Estuar Foundation just elected its new Executive Director. His name is Daniel Vieru, he is psychologist and therapist and he has a long experience in working with NGO and social programs. His email address is: [daniel.vieru@estuar.org](mailto:daniel.vieru@estuar.org)

#### **IV. WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY – 10 OCTOBER 2008**

##### mhGAP

More than 75% of people suffering from mental disorders in the developing world receive no treatment or care.

WHO calls on the governments, donors and mental health stakeholders to rapidly increase funding and basic mental health services to close this huge treatment gap. The programme, *Mental Health Gap Action Programme* (mhGAP): Scaling up for mental, neurological and substance use disorders asserts that with proper care, psychological assistance and medication, tens of millions could be treated for diseases such as depression, schizophrenia, and epilepsy and begin to lead healthy lives – even where resources are scarce.

The *mhGAP* focuses on the gap between what is needed to treat a range of priority disorders and what is actually available worldwide. In the majority of countries, less than 2% of health funds are spent on mental health. Worldwide, every 40 seconds, one person dies of suicide that is one of the leading causes of death among young adults. Suicide is a condition that is preventable.

The programme sets out a number of cost-effective strategies to tackle the treatment gap for mental, neurological and substance use disorders.

For more information; please visit [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/mhGAP/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/mental_health/mhGAP/en/index.html) or [http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/en/](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/en/)

##### World Mental Health Day in Spain by FEAFES

In order to remind the importance of mental health in everybody's life as well as to advocate for the rights of people with mental illness and their families, most of the 211 grouped in the Confederation FEAFES developed awareness activities, seminars, information desks, meetings with authorities, demonstrations... The Confederation of Groupings of Families and People with Mental Illness (FEAFES) undertook nationally a range of actions as the participation in the Art Biennial organised by the ONCE Foundation. FEAFES organised also the prize award "Toda Una Vida para Mejorar" (a whole life to improve) and participated in activities related to the celebration of the European Depression Day, where the press conference of the 7th October can be pointed out.

The 9th October, the Spanish Minister for Health and Consumption, Mr Bernat Soria, as he had done previous years, proclaimed officially the World Mental Health Day in Spain together with FEAFES President, José María Sánchez Monge. The strong commitment of the Health Ministry with Mental Health, with the development of several initiatives as the implementation of the National Strategy for Mental health was made clear again. Sánchez Monge recognised the important milestones succeeded and highlighted that still many issues need to be addressed by the different stakeholders and presented some of the results of the national surveys "the reduction of stigmatisation to patients with a mental illness in health care" and the "users perceptions of mental health care" developed by FEAFES with the finacement of the Health Ministry.

During the event, Vicente Rubio presented his documentary *Integra2* and expressed his opinions as a person with a mental illness on the situation of the collective. Marife Bravo, as representative of the Spanish Association of Neuropsychiatry (AEN) also made a brilliant intervention on the difficulties for the application of the Law for the Autonomy and Attention to Dependency Needs to people with mental illness.

This years' impact in the media accounts in more than 200 interventions in TV, press and radio programs.

For more info please visit: [www.feafes.com](http://www.feafes.com) or contact: [internacional@feafes.com](mailto:internacional@feafes.com)

##### European Day of Disabled People 2008 - Act globally for a society for all

Since 1992, the United Nations have kept the 3rd December as the European Day of Disabled People and the European Commission organises each year a conference during the first week of December in close cooperation with the European Disability Forum. This year, the conference took place in Brussels on the 1st and 2nd December, in the Charlemagne's conference centre. Mental Health Europe participated together with other European NGOs, associations' federations, national services working in the disability field, that is to say about 300 people. The conference was opened by Yannis Vardakastanis, EDF president, and concerned putting rights given by the United Nations Convention close to where disabled people live. The ratification procedure of the convention on disabled peoples' rights is in progress. The Convention entered into force on the 3rd May 2008. However, in order to implement these rights, one must promote the integration of issues related to disability in all political arenas, and in all fields of life (Education, Employment, Leisure, Transports, Tourism, Habitat independent and private lives).

Presentations and debates were organised in 3 thematic sessions dealing with the 3 main questions: (1) integration of policies in the disability field, (2) the participation of stakeholders and (3) the active role to be played locally.

If it is accepted that disability is part of the wide Human Rights issue, that means that disabled people have the same right as any other citizen to access goods and services as well as to contribute to society and to economy. These rights and this recognition must be granted at the local level through practices involving disabled people, themselves, in order to create an inclusive society. A considerable amount of the practices and policies implemented locally, which were presented at the conference, dealt with the accessibility and reasonable accommodation issues, leading to action, actors coordinated by political will with the support of the structural funds from the European Commission. The representatives of the European Commission present at this conference stressed the commitment of the European bodies. The European Structural Funds, which play an important role in regional and local developments, are a good example to show in which way it is possible to reach the local level. Article 16 of the Structural Funds Regulation sets accessibility for disabled people as a prerequisite. Integration and accessibility were described as a holistic political procedure aiming at barriers elimination and social inclusion (Mainstreaming) which requires everybody's commitment, resources, disabled people's expertise tools. It was stressed and proved, whereby specific examples were given, that a reasonable and effective legislation is only possible when disabled people are involved in the making of all policies that affect them. Examples were given on the basis of Agenda 22, which is a strategy for drafting political plans in the disability field. Based on the United Nations rules, the strategy guarantees that quality criteria are respected, organisations for disabled people are involved in the procedure and that the plan is carried out. The rules having been adopted by United Nations Convention, they still are not legally binding and far-reaching, Agenda 22 remains an important methodical tool for the policy planning in the disability field.

The accessibility issue was raised by the participants: very often too limitative, where are the access to education, social protection, access to goods and services and how are different kinds of disability taken into consideration? Many questions raised namely the issues of mental and physical handicap. In fact, the expression "mental handicap" covers very different realities depending on the country. Physical handicap (designation used in France is most of the times linked to autism and most of the times associated with the intellectual difficulties. Many efforts still need to be made so that handicap linked to physical illness and to suffering in mental health.

As 2010 is coming closer and The EU Disability Action Plan 2003-2010 is also coming to an end, a consultation procedure on 2011 and onwards strategies was made possible in the corridors of the conference thanks to electronic machines provided (the same kind as the ones used for OBAMA's elections in the USA): the themes coming out of this consultation arose in the following order – Employment and Education, Accessibility, independent living, and participation, the main topic being family and disabled people.

To be followed.

*Many thanks to Martine Dutoit for her contribution.*

**What have you done for World Mental Health Day? Send us your contributions!**

## V. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

### AGE - The European Older People's

#### Commission proposals to improve solidarity between generations

Platform member AGE welcomes the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Demography Report and the five key policy directions proposed by Commissioner Špidla at the opening session of the Second European Demography Forum on November 24. AGE shares the view that the EU and Member States should take the opportunity of the present crisis to speed up the preparation to demographic change.

*Source: Social Platform*

### EDF – European Disability Forum

#### Press release on the European Day of People with Disabilities

The conference took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December and focused on The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This year topic of the conference is "Acting locally for a society for all". The conference started with the opening speeches of the European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Mr. Vladimir Spidla, the EDF President Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis and the State Secretary for Solidarity at the French Ministry of Labour, Social Relations, Family and Solidarity Mrs. Valerie Letard.

European disability movement leaders, representatives of local and regional authorities and of the EU institutions met to discuss the cooperation between all the stakeholders and the participation of disabled people in the decision making process at national and regional level in the light of this year's entering into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

*Contact person: Irina Papancheva at [irina.papancheva@edf-feph.org](mailto:irina.papancheva@edf-feph.org)*

### ECCL – European Coalition for Community Living

#### New resource on advocating for Community Living

On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day and the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) announced the publication of its advocacy manual for disability organisations and service providers entitled 'Creating Successful Campaigns for Community Living'.

The purpose of the manual is to assist individuals and organisations who want to achieve the changes that are needed to ensure that people with disabilities can participate in community life as equal citizens. It provides information and advice on how to conduct campaigns and other activities to attain the goal of community living for all people with disabilities.

Speaking about the manual, John Evans, one of the founders of the Independent Living movement in the UK and ECCL, said: "Every day, millions of disabled people in Europe living in institutions and receiving services they have no control over, are having their rights violated. It is our duty and responsibility to change this". He added that "This manual has the possibility of changing the lives for thousands of disabled people in Europe, especially Eastern and Central Europe."

According to Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, all persons with disabilities have the equal right to live in the community, with choices equal to others. However, across Europe, more than 1.2 million people with disabilities – including children and young people – still live in long-stay residential institutions, segregated from society. In order to make the UN Disability Convention a reality, Governments must put in place quality services in the community as alternatives to institutional care. No disabled person should be forced to live in an institution because of the lack of alternatives.

The new manual of the European Coalition for Community Living provides organisations with a range of ideas on how to encourage the development of quality community-based services and

accelerate the process of de-institutionalisation in their country by carrying out lobbying activities and campaigns, forming coalitions, working with the media etc. The manual gives examples of successful initiatives from across Europe, such as lobbying for direct payments in the UK, establishing self-advocacy groups in Croatia, using a pilot programme on personal assistance in Norway to influence legislation on social services and organisation of a lobbying week in Brussels with representatives of EU institutions.

The main part of the manual is accompanied by four annexes. In addition to the case studies, these contain explanations of all the terms relevant to advocacy for community living, an overview of the relevant European and international policies, and suggestions about how to use them in lobbying activities.

For downloading the manual, go to: <http://www.community-living.info/?page=292>

## **MDAC – Mental Disability Advocacy Centre**

### International Day of Persons with Disabilities

“Dignity and justice for all of us” was the theme of this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities which is today, 3 December. This year also marked the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Since its inception, the United Nations has recognized that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundations of freedom, justice and peace in the world. These principles, along with equality and non-discrimination, have guided the work of the United Nations for the past 60 years and are enshrined in various instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

MDAC is working to ensure that the Convention is ratified and implemented.

For more info, please visit: <http://www.mdac.info/en/take-action> or

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

Source: MDAC

## **VVGG - Vlaamse Vereniging voor Geestelijke Gezondheid**

### The Flemish Association for Mental Health has a new Director

Jan Van Speybroeck has been appointed by the Board as the new Director of the Flemish Association for Mental Health (VVGG). He is a clinical psychologist and worked in different settings in the mental health area, for instance in two psychiatric hospitals in the Gent region.

The last 7 years he was working as the director of a community mental health centre in Kortrijk, West-Flanders.

He will take up his new position on 1 February 2009.

## **VI. EUROPEAN UNION**

### Sweden becomes 23rd country to ratify Lisbon treaty

From 4 December, 25 Member States have approved the Treaty with 23 of them having concluded the ratification process. Sweden became the last one to approve the Lisbon Treaty after its parliament voted to adopt it on 21 November, and the ratification officially deposited in Rome this Wednesday as the final step required.

For further info: please visit [http://europa.eu/lisbon\\_treaty/countries/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/countries/index_en.htm)

## **VII. COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

### Ministers of education call for partnership between civil society and European decision makers

Ministers of education, youth and culture adopted a resolution on the health and well-being of young people, highlighting the need for partnership with NGOs in this area.

Ministers emphasized the strong links between health and well-being of young people and their social inclusion and level of education. They therefore agree that a comprehensive and

cross-sectoral approach to health of young people should be aimed for. They also call on specific attention to young people's mental health.

They invite Member States to promote a youth dimension in health-related initiatives and their implementation, involve young people and NGOs in the development and implementation of their initiatives and more specifically support the training of youth workers and NGOs in the area of prevention and well-being of young people, counselling, early intervention, diagnosis and signposting to other services.

The European Commission is to improve the knowledge and research into this topic and involve young people and NGOs at all levels of its actions in this area.

According to the resolution, Member States and the Commission must foster exchange of experience, use existing policy schemes, raise awareness of factors affecting young's people health and strengthen partnership with young people and their organisations.

*Source: Plateforme sociale*

#### EU-wide framework to combat racism and xenophobia

EU Council of Justice and Interior Ministers adopted on 28 November the so-called 'Framework Decision' on combating racism and xenophobia, seven years after it had first been presented by the European Commission.

The Framework Decision is considered as an important tool for sanctioning on the EU level racist and xenophobic crimes.

EU Member States will have two years to introduce severe and effective sanctions of at least between 1 and 3 years of imprisonment against those who intentionally publicly incite to violence or hatred by dissemination or distribution of tracts, pictures or other material, directed against persons defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin.

Similar sanctions will apply to those who publicly condone, deny or grossly trivialise crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined in the statute of the International Criminal Court and crimes defined by the Tribunal of Nüremberg.

*Source: EAPN*

## **VIII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

### **DG Employment and Social Affairs – DG EMPL**

#### Annual Employment Report

The Commission will present its annual Employment in Europe report, with a particular focus this year on mobility. The Employment in Europe report 2008, as in previous years, addresses topics that are high on the European Union's employment policy agenda. It will give a comprehensive overview of the employment situation in the EU, as well as an analysis of key labour market issues, including immigration, post-enlargement intra-EU labour mobility, quality of work and the link between education and employment.

*For further info: visit <http://ec.europa.eu/social/home.jsp?langId=en>*

## **IX. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

#### MEPs response to fresh efforts to combat Alzheimer's disease

MEPs have been lambasted for their "very, very disappointing" response to fresh efforts to combat Alzheimer's disease.

The criticism comes after it was revealed that only 192 deputies have so far signed a parliamentary written declaration calling for a pan-European action plan to tackle the problem.

The declaration, put forward by five MEPs, including UK Tory John Bowis and French EPP-ED member Françoise Grossetête, was introduced back in October and runs until 22 January.

The declaration is also supported by Luxembourg member Astrid Lulling, the oldest MEP in parliament, who said, "We urgently need to raise awareness of the written declaration and I just hope more MEPs will sign it before it lapses. It will be a tragedy if that does not happen."

For more info, please visit: <http://www.theparliament.com/latestnews/news-article/newsarticle/meps-slanted-for-lack-of-interest-in-alzheimers-declaration/>  
Source: [theparliament.com](http://www.theparliament.com)

#### Social NGOs call on the Parliament to stay close to fundamental social rights

On December 2, the European Parliament LIBE Committee (Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs) adopted the Parliament's report on the situation of Fundamental Rights in the EU 2004-2007. The Social Platform called on the Committee members to maintain fundamental social rights in the report like the availability of childcare, the ratification of the revised Social Charter, the access for all to decent levels of income and high quality general interest services, the access to health care as well as extending the scope of directive 2000/43/EC to all forms of discrimination of article 21 of the Fundamental Rights Charter. The inclusion of all Fundamental Rights in the Parliament's report should be considered as crucial because at pending times of social crisis and growing skepticism on the ability of the EU to promote fundamental social rights, the report represents a possibility for the European institutions and European Parliament particularly to make its commitment it took by supporting the Charter a reality. Deleting parts regarding social rights sets a dangerous precedent in claiming that social rights are actually not fundamental rights. The Social Platform called the European Parliament not to fail to duly include social and economic rights in its Report on the Situation on Human Rights 2004-2007.

Source: *Social Platform Weekly Update, 5 December 2008*

### **X. COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

#### Bulgarian government denies children with intellectual disabilities the right to education

The decision in the case of Mental Disability Advocacy Center v. Bulgaria criticises the Bulgarian government for actively depriving children with intellectual disabilities of education. The European Committee of Social Rights responded to a 'collective complaint' under the European Social Charter which was lodged against Bulgaria by the Mental Disability Advocacy Center in February 2007. The Committee found evidence that the Bulgarian government failed to provide education for up to 3,000 children with intellectual disabilities living in so-called 'homes for mentally disabled children' across Bulgaria.

A child placed in one of Bulgaria's 'homes for mentally disabled children' is needlessly segregated, denied any hope and assistance of entering and contributing to society, and will routinely suffer violations of basic human rights recognised under international law.

Source: *MDAC*

### **XI. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

#### Health in Prisons Project (WHO HIP) Best Practice Awards Scheme

The Awards are given biennially. Prisons may only access the Award forms through the national Counterpart. The Counterpart is responsible for organising local selection procedures. The Award will recognise best practice within a particular prison, or best practice that illustrates co-operation between a particular prison and the wider community, and is awarded to the prison, not individuals. The Scheme is not prescriptive: best practice can be recognised in a very specific aspect of prison health, or recognised as a comprehensive or 'whole prison approach' to tackling an issue in the prison setting. The scheme should be open to any suitable prison to apply for, with the support of both the Governor or Director and national Counterpart. Initiatives may involve not just health care staff, but any staff significantly contributing to prisoners' health, or indeed individuals from the wider community significantly contributing to prison health.

For more info: please visit [http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/hsdu/settings/who\\_hipp.htm](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/health/hsdu/settings/who_hipp.htm)

## XII. UNITED NATIONS

Committee Against Torture calls for end to abuses against children with disabilities in Serbia  
Geneva, Switzerland – The United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT) – the oversight body for the Convention Against Torture – recently made recommendations to the Serbian government regarding torture in the country, with a special section addressing “Torture and Disability.” Following MDRI’s November 2007 report, *Torment not Treatment: Serbia’s Segregation and Abuse of Children and Adults with Disabilities*, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture requested MDRI to present its finding to him and CAT at their headquarters in Geneva. *For further information: please visit <http://www.mdri.org/>*

The 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: From the UDHR to UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

On 10th December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in the Palais de Chaillot in Paris by States Parties of the United Nations. The 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has to be celebrated for many reasons, including the celebration of a text which, for the first time, in human rights history, codified the basic human rights every person can enjoy as a human being. The theme for 2008, “Dignity and justice for all of us,” reinforces the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) as a commitment to universal dignity and justice. The UDHR and its core values, inherent human dignity, non-discrimination, equality, fairness and universality, apply to everyone, everywhere and always. Since its adoption in 1948, the Declaration has been and continues to be a source of inspiration for national and international efforts to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

That is why it is important to underline the future of the Declaration as a source of inspiration as for example for the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities, which included a definition of the concept of disability. This text marks a clear reaffirmation that persons with disabilities have the right to full and equal enjoyment of their human rights. It also marks a clear reaffirmation of the principles of ‘dignity and justice for all of us’. The UN Convention entered into force in May 2008 and is a valuable and useful legal instrument for people with disabilities to enjoy their rights. However, the UN Convention should be legally binding in every country. Therefore, Mental Health Europe calls for a real implementation of the UN Convention at every possible level including the EU level. The European Communities should ratify the Convention and its optional protocol and at national level EU Members States should ratify the Convention and optional protocol and implement legislations accordingly to the key principles contained in the Convention. MHE will encourage its members to monitor and lobby at national level for a good implementation of these legal instruments to reach a high level of protection of fundamental rights for people suffering from mental health problems.

*For more information on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, please visit: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=109>*

## XIII. VARIOUS

Social inclusion of people with Mental Health problems

An excellent method to integrate clients of Mental Health services in normal employment was developed in the Netherlands: IPS method (Individual Placement and Support)

Those principles are:

- Clients go ASAP into employment without long trainings
- The wishes of the client
- The client and the employer receive support from the Mental Health consultant as long as necessary
- If problems, the client and the Mental Health consultant look for another job
- Each Mental Health consultant has a caseload of only 20 clients
- For community of care the consultant is member of the multidisciplinary sector team

In the USA, this method is very successful for the clients – 50% find a paid job in the “normal circuit.”

In the Netherlands, it is still in discussion.

For more inf, please contact: [m.baehler@ggz-hhn.nl](mailto:m.baehler@ggz-hhn.nl)

## XIV. PUBLICATIONS

### Key Elements of a System for Supported Decision-making

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities demands in its Article 12 equal recognition before the law for all persons with disabilities. This Position Paper explores which key elements are necessary to implement this principle in the legal systems of all European countries. Starting from the discussion of some basic notions regarding legal capacity, the Position Paper identifies eight elements that should be considered in the implementation of this article to make the UN Convention a tool that promotes the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities.

For further information: please visit <http://www.inclusion-europe.org/documents/PositionPaperSupportedDecisionMakingEN.pdf>

Source: Inclusion-Europe

### Lexicon: International Media Guide for Mental Health

This Lexicon is designed to be a useful and helpful resource for editors, journalists, and other people in the media who want to address the important challenges and opportunities in reporting mental health issues.

For visiting the website: go to <http://forum4mentalhealth.com/?itemId=3089344>

### Eurocarers : Family care in Europe With Europe ageing rapidly

Pan-European expertise, knowledge and background information about the support, relief and expertise of family carers recognising the variety of the different social-, health- and welfare systems in a future Europe *have been achieved*

For further info, please visit: <http://www.eurocarers.org/page7.htm>

## XV. WEBSITES/ONLINE INFORMATION

### Revamped „Peer Review in Social Protection and Social Inclusion and Assessment in Social Inclusion“

The aim is not only to give the website a fresh look but also to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate to help one finding useful information. The website continues to be available in English, French and German.

For visiting the website: go to <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu>

## XVI. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### **21-23 January 2009**

#### **4<sup>th</sup> International Stigma Conference, "Together Against Stigma & Discrimination. Evidence for Action", London (UK)**

For more information: visit the Conference website, <http://stigma.iop.kcl.ac.uk>

### **24-28 January 2009**

#### **17th European Congress of Psychiatry - AEP 2009, Lisbon (Portugal)**

For more information: visit the Congress website,

<http://www2.kenes.com/epa/Pages/home.aspx>

**4-7 March 2009**

**XVII World IFTA Congress, "Reconciling Differences: Can Family Therapy Help Heal the World?", Portorož (Slovenia)**

For more information: visit [www.paragon-conventions.com/ifta2009](http://www.paragon-conventions.com/ifta2009)

**27-29 March 2009**

**9th Workshop on Costs and Assessment in Psychiatry, "Quality and outcomes in mental health policy and economics", Venice (Italy)**

For more information: visit <http://www.icmpe.org/test1/events/events.htm>

**16-19 April 2009**

**12<sup>th</sup> 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/>

**27-28 April 2009**

**6<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Promoting Workplace Health, "HEALTHY WORK - HEALTHY LIFESTYLE – HEALTHY BUSINESS", Perugia (Italy)**

For more information: contact the Conference Secretariat, Tel +39 0755 857 365, Email [lorisegr@unipg.it](mailto:lorisegr@unipg.it)

**NEW!! 06-08 May 2009**

**Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services (HPH) Viol, Crete (Greece)**

For more information: visit <http://www.univie.ac.at/hph/creta2009/>

**27-29 May 2009**

**9th Conference of the European Union of Supported Employment, Prague (Czech Republic)**

For more information: contact the Conference Secretariat, Tel +420 224 942 696, or visit <http://www.euseconference2009.org>

**NEW!! 22-24 October 2009**

**6th European Congress Violence Clinical Psychiatry, Stockholm (Sweden)**

For more information: visit <http://www.oudconsultancy.nl/stockholm/ecvcp/Invitation.html>

**27-31 October 2009**

**XXV World Congress on Suicide Prevention, Montevideo (Uruguay)**

For more information: visit <http://www.iasp.info/>, or send an email to [info@iasp2009.org](mailto:info@iasp2009.org)

**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](mailto:info@mhe-sme.org)**