



**MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE**



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**Key outcomes of the MHE capacity-building seminar and General Assembly, 12-13 June 2009**

The capacity-building seminar for Mental Health Europe members on Empowerment did finally take place on 12 June in Brussels and was very successful event. More than 55 members participated in the seminar and went back home with fresh ideas about how to “empower” mental health service users, mental health workers, policy and decision makers. The event’s report as well as the speakers’ presentations will be available on the MHE website shortly.

At the General Assembly of 13 June the new Board members were presented and elected. You will find their names further down in this Newsletter. The new Board met for its first time after the General Assembly and proceeded with the election of the new Executive Committee.

We are pleased to welcome Nace Kovac from Slovenian Association for Mental Health as new MHE President, Rita Donabauer from Pro Mente Austria as new Vice-President, and Pino Pini from the Italian Association for Mental Health as new MHE Secretary. Colette Versporten, Belgium, was re-elected as Treasurer and Brian Howard from Mental Health Ireland as Executive Committee member without portfolio.

We take this opportunity to express our warmest thank you to Malgorzata Kmita, Past President of MHE, for her excellent work done during her mandate. She has helped to raise the visibility of our organisation and to put mental health higher on the European agenda. Malgorzata already expressed her willingness to continue being actively involved in MHE’s activities as a Board member.

The outgoing Board members too deserve a big thank you - Claude Deutsch, Sandra Grant, Marianne Kastrup, Luigi Leonori, Petr Nawka and Kristina Salonen - but most of all our former Vice-President Elisabeth Muschik. She has been very active in the social policy field and will continue to represent us in many of the Social Platform of European NGOs’ activities.

## I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

### MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

#### **Report on the MHE Capacity-building seminar "Empowerment in the Mental Health field", 12 June, Brussels**

On 12 June 2009, Mental Health Europe (MHE) hosted a capacity-building seminar for its member organisations. The seminar, with the title "Empowerment in the Mental Health Field!" took place in Brussels as a key activity of the MHE work programme supported by PROGRESS, the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity.

Aim of the event was to build capacity among the MHE members around empowerment strategies as a core issue for achieving a real change in the mental health policies and practices in the EU. The meeting was well attended and provided the participants with the opportunity to discuss many issues relevant to their work at the national and local level.

A number of themes emerged during the day and they included the notion of power and the need for a balance of power, the different levels of empowerment, the clear link to human rights, the importance of partnership without paternalism, and the need to be able to measure it so we can identify what we are doing and how successful it is. Underpinning much of this was the recognition of the courage of people who took the risk to make empowerment work. These could be users putting their 'heads above the parapet' and exposing themselves to the stigma and discrimination that is so common or professionals who go beyond the ordinary professional role and find different ways to work with people. These actions and risks are what makes empowerment real and effective. An important issue was the need for 'user -only' space and the fact that somehow this has to be fought for and protected. Professionals get 'professional-only' space as part of their professional roles, at professional meetings and events, and this enables people to develop skills and confidence. This opportunity needs to be similarly built in for people who have used mental health services to ensure they have the chance to develop new skills and build up their confidence.

Power is something tangible that can be given or taken away. Rather people are required to take it or to acknowledge it in others. In some situations we talk about ascribed power where power is given to people because of what they are, while positional power is gained through professional roles or position in society. In this context we are talking about power that people have within the mental health system and wider society, positional power, and that people often feel they have lost when they have experience of mental health problems.

In a situation where access to resources (resources in terms of human social and economic capital-) is not equal, power can never be equally distributed. Two people participating in a meeting for example, will find it difficult to contribute equally and be equally valued when one is being paid a professional salary and the other is doing it voluntarily whilst living on a state pension or benefit.

So empowerment is a journey we need all to take together, working collaboratively and respecting each others different situations.

*For more information on the MHE Capacity-building Seminar please see <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/reports-from-mhe-seminars-and-other-mhe-events/mhe-capacity-building-seminar-brussels.html>*

## **MHE new Board and Executive Committee**

On 13 June, the new Board and Executive Committees have been elected on the occasion of the MHE General Assembly organized in Brussels. MHE is glad to welcome the following people:

Tamas BARNABAS, individual member, Hungary  
Preben BRANDT, Projekt Udenfor, Denmark  
Hristo DIMITROV, Public Health Association, Bulgaria  
Rita DONABAUER, Pro Mente Austria, Austria (Vice-President)  
Martine DUTOIT, Advocacy France, France  
Brian HOWARD, Mental Health Ireland, Ireland (Executive Committee member without portfolio)  
Vicente IBANEZ ROJO, Asociacion Española de Neuropsiquiatria (AEN), Spain  
Malgorzata KMITA, individual member, United Kingdom (Past President)  
Nace KOVAC, Slovenian Association for Mental Health (SENT), Slovenia (President)  
Pino PINI, Associazione Italiana per la Salute Mentale (AISMe), Italy (Secretary)  
Marita RUOHONEN, Finnish Association for Mental Health, Finland  
Dimitris TATARIDIS, Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health, Greece  
Jan VAN SPEYBROECK, Flemish Association for Mental Health (VVGG), Belgium  
Svetlana VARJUN, Estonian Mental Health Society, Estonia  
Colette VERSPORTEN, individual member, Belgium (Treasurer)

## **The new MHE Member Organisations**

On 13 June, the MHE Membership and Accreditation Committee met in Brussels on the occasion of the General Assembly and approved the applications for membership of the following organisations:

### *HABITATIONS PROTEGEES OURTHE-AMBLEVE, Belgium*

The general mission of "Habitations Protégées Ourthe-Amblève" is to accommodate and accompany adults with psychiatric problems.

Contact person: Bernard Jacob  
E-mail: [bernard.jacob@aigs.be](mailto:bernard.jacob@aigs.be)

### *MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS (M.H.I.C.A.), Greece*

The Mental Health Institute for Children and Adults is a non-profit organisation which has a mission to ensure that all people have accessible affordable quality mental health services in various parts of Greece, to provide specialised services within a continuum of care together with first-line partners, to destigmatise mental illness.

Contact person: Aleksandros Lountzis, Administrative Director  
E-mail: [lountzis@inpsy.gr](mailto:lountzis@inpsy.gr)

### *PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT GROUP, Gibraltar*

The Psychological Support Group is a 'multi-purpose' group, including self help, support and pressure groups. The Organisation offers group therapy sessions, individual counselling and social gatherings. It also endeavours to provide assistance to people living in the community, support for families, support for individuals, and awareness-raising activities.

Contact person: Emily Adamberry Olivero  
E-mail: [PSGCARE@yahoo.com](mailto:PSGCARE@yahoo.com)

*RESEAU PSY – PSYCHESCH HËLLEF DOBAUSSEN ASBL, Luxembourg*

The Réseau Psy aims at awaken the public opinion on mental health problems by providing psychological, medical and social assistance and collaborating with health professionals, associations, institutions and authorities in order to ensure an adequate medical-psycho-social support.

Contact person: Erik Ceusters, Director

E-mail: [ceusterserik@reseaupsy.lu](mailto:ceusterserik@reseaupsy.lu)

### **MHE policy work: Meeting of experts at the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2008, Vienna**

In its work programme 2009, the Fundamental Rights Agency of the EU (FRA) announced a project called "*Protecting, respecting and promoting the rights of disabled mentally ill persons in the European Union*". In April 2009, the FRA decided to meet with different stakeholders from international governmental organizations and from NGO sector to have a discussion about the scope of the study and to receive some feedbacks about what was done before in the field of mental disability/mental disorder. On 26 May, the meeting gathering representatives from the United Nations, from the Council of Europe, from European Union institutions, civil society organizations as well as academics, took place in Vienna, Austria. MHE was represented at this meeting and was asked to give some inputs in order to advise the project managers on how to mainstream sensitive issues in the field of mental health linked to human rights issues. The discussion focused mainly on the definition of the scope for the first year of the project (focus will be put on legal aspects) and on practical issues linked to the methodology for the sociological study which should take place in 2010. Collaborative process has been set up between the FRA and other stakeholders present at the meeting. The work of the FRA will also involve other participants in future meetings. MHE was represented by Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer.

*For more information about this project or about MHE's involvement in the work of the Fundamental Rights Agency, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer at [Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org](mailto:Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org)*

### **MHE policy work on social inclusion and mental health: Bi-annual meeting between Social Platform members and the European Commission, 9 June, Brussels**

On 9 June, the members of the Social Platform came together for an exchange with Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Commissioner Spidla outlined the progress made on the anti-discrimination agenda and the work of the EU Member States towards eradicating poverty and social exclusion. The participating NGOs pointed at still existing major shortcomings in the EU response to the current crisis and its insufficient approach for a post-Lisbon agenda. Mary Van Dievel drew the attention of the European Commission on the consequences of the crisis such as loss of jobs, job insecurity, etc. on the mental health of the population, on the consequences on the individual person's right to obtain the opportunity to live independently in the community and on the fact that vulnerable groups such as people with mental health problems do not have the flexibility (mentally and geographically) that is currently requested in the labour market.

*For more information about the Social Platform meeting please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)*

### **MHE policy work on social inclusion and mental health: Spring Alliance Meeting, 17 June, Brussels**

The Spring Alliance is a joint civil society initiative of the Social Platform, the European Trade Union Confederation, CONCORD and the European Environmental Bureau. MHE participated in its conference on 17 June to debate a common manifesto which aims to offer concrete steps and targets for the strategic orientations of European policies over the next decade to address the challenges in the fields of environmental sustainability, assuming global responsibility, establishment of inclusive societies, promoting green and quality jobs and improving democracy. MHE will be one of the signatory NGOs of the commonly prepared Manifesto, which will be finalized in the coming weeks and which is addressed to the incoming European Commission, the new European Parliament and the next Council Presidencies (Sweden and Spain).

*For more information on the work of the Spring Alliance, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)*

### **MHE policy work on disability: dissemination meeting of the conference "Crossing boundaries between disability and aging", 22 June, Brussels**

On 22 June, MHE participated in a meeting aimed at the dissemination of the outcomes of the conference "Bridging Knowledge in long-term care – Crossing boundaries between disability and aging" which was held in Barcelona on 5-7 March 2009 with key European organizations. 60 experts from 19 countries attended the conference and discussed measures for improving the quality and efficiency of long term care in Europe. It was pointed out that the improvement of long-term care systems requires special skills and the will from different stakeholders and knowledge-brokers, special methods of information analysis and dissemination, and a considerable contribution from other fields such as ethics and health economics. The links between policy and practice are an added challenge to the complexities faced by this new area.

*More information on the conference can be obtained via: <http://www.bridgingknowledge.net/>*

One of the achievements of the conference is a cooperation agreement with the International Journal of Integrated Care, integrated care being a concept that is covering the full spectrum of health services from medical/ hospital care to social support for users in homes and the community. The International Journal of Integrated Care (IJIC) is a free online, peer-reviewed scientific journal that publishes articles in the field of integrated care including integrated mental health care. They also accept articles from external experts or organisations who wish to publish related research or policy papers.

*For more information please visit: [www.ijic.org](http://www.ijic.org)*

### **MHE policy work on mental health promotion and disorder prevention: MHE statement of support for the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being**

The European Commission, DG Health and Consumers, has recently started to collate and publish online the statements of support for the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being. Governments, organisations, individuals and key stakeholders with an interest on mental health and wellbeing are invited to send their statement to the Commission.

*The first contributions, including the MHE Statement, are already available on the European Commission's website at:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/mental/support\\_statements\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/support_statements_en.htm)

Mental Health Europe (MHE) welcomes the Commission's initiative as it believes that it is fundamental to take the Pact forward and implement coordinated actions at all levels. In its statement of support, MHE expresses its commitment to contribute to the Pact's actual implementation. Since the early stages, MHE and its members have been engaged in key

activities and events to promote mental health and well-being and to raise awareness on the Pact's priorities: Youth, Education and Mental Health; Prevention of Depression and Suicide; Mental Health and Older People; Mental Health in Workplace Settings; and Combating Stigma and Social Exclusion.

MHE invites its member organisations and individuals, as well as third party organisations and key stakeholders in the mental health arena, to join this initiative by sending their support statement to the European Commission at [Sanco-mentalhealth@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Sanco-mentalhealth@ec.europa.eu).

To read the MHE statement of support, please visit the MHE website at [http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/MHE%20support%20statement%20for%20European%20Pact%20on%20MH%20and%20WB\\_June.pdf](http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/MHE%20support%20statement%20for%20European%20Pact%20on%20MH%20and%20WB_June.pdf)

For further information on the MHE work on the Pact, please write to Mari Fresu, Health Policy Officer, at [mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org](mailto:mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org)

### **"De-stigmatisation and Improving the Quality of Care in Psychiatry"**

An international seminar was held in Prague from 28-29 May 2009 entitled 'De-stigmatisation and Improving the Quality of Care in Psychiatry'. The seminar was organised under the auspices of the Czech Presidency of the European Union and was supported by the Czech Ministry of Health together with the European Commission's DG Health and Consumers..

Various models of, and approaches to, psychiatric care were explored with a particular emphasis on affirming the primacy of human rights in inclusive mental health care. The seminar, endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO), considered the role that the WHO Mental Health Declaration (Helsinki, January 2005) and the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-Being can make as symbols of the political will required to make mental health and well-being the key issues in the planning and delivery of more inclusive and democratic mental health systems in contemporary Europe.

Malgorzata Kmita, MHE Past President, delivered a paper entitled 'Beyond Psychiatry – the Whole Person Approach to Mental Health and Well-Being as the Basis for De-Stigmatisation and Social Inclusion'. The paper and presentation were very well received and the holistic approach to Mental Health care within the context of fundamental human rights which the presentation advocated was supported by the audience.

All the contributions to this event were of a very high quality and provided significant opportunities for discussion of, and reflection upon, positive models of mental health care. The Czech Republic is now addressing the essential changes required in their provision of psychiatric and mental health systems.

For more information on this meeting please visit the European Commission website at: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/mental/docs/ev\\_20090528\\_ag\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/docs/ev_20090528_ag_en.pdf)

### **"Equality between men and women in a time of change"**

On 15-16 June, the European Commission held a conference on "Equality between men and women in a time of change" in Brussels.

The conference looked at the risks and opportunities for the equal economic independence for women and men in a time of change by addressing persisting gender gaps and barriers for women's employment. It also explored new challenges resulting from the economic crisis and its repercussions on the labour market and the European social model. This moved on to the policies in place and future developments for the eradication of violence against women.

For more information please visit <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=422&langId=en>

MHE was represented by Lucy Vallis, DAPHNE Project Coordinator.

## **Sustainability of health systems: the impact of the financial and economic crisis on health**

The current financial and economic crisis is expected to have a major impact on the sustainability of health care systems and on the health of the population. The 12th European Health Forum Gastein, which will take place in Austria from the 30<sup>th</sup> September to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, will dedicate a forum to "Financial crisis and health. A time for leadership". Elisabeth Muschik, Vice-President of MHE, will participate in the session as a speaker.

## **Round Table "Reducing the Psychosocial Impact of the Financial and Economic Crisis"**

The presentation of MHE Past President Malgorzata Kmita at the Round Table "Reducing the Psychosocial Impact of the Financial and Economic Crisis" (Brussels, 27 April 2009) is now also available online on the Commission's website.

*To read the full version of the presentation please visit the following link:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/mental/ev\\_20090427\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/ev_20090427_en.htm)

## **The report on "Nothing about us without us. How to make this a reality" is now available on line!**

The report on the Mental Health Service Users Empowerment Seminar "Nothing about us without us. How to make this a reality", organised by MHE in collaboration with the European Network of (ex)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP) on 13-14 March in Brussels, is now available on line.

*The report can be downloaded from the MHE and ENUSP websites at: [http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Empowerment%20Seminar%20report%20final\\_040609.pdf](http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Empowerment%20Seminar%20report%20final_040609.pdf) and at <http://www.enusp.org/>*

## **NEWS ON PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES IN WHICH MHE IS INVOLVED**

### **3rd Annual Conference of the ProMenPol project, Berlin, 8 – 9 October 2009**

The 3rd Annual ProMenPol project's conference will be held on 8 and 9 October 2009 in Berlin at the offices of the Federal Institute for Occupational Health and Safety. In cooperation with the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP), the kick-off of the new ENWHP Campaign "Promoting Good Practice for Mental Health at the Workplace" will take place.

ProMenPol is a European project focusing on mental health promotion in three key settings: education, workplace and older people's residences. The project is funded by the European Commission under the 6th Framework Programme and led by the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA). Project partners are from Germany, Austria, Ireland, Finland, Estonia and Greece. Mental Health Europe's role in the project is to provide strategic advice on EU policies and to assist with the dissemination activities.

The thematic focus of the conference is on lessons learned from practice and its perception in the sphere of policy, practice and research. The first conference day will start with keynotes from the EU, scientific and enterprises' point of view on Mental Health Promotion. In addition, ProMenPol partners will present the results from the conducted Mental Health Promotion Field Trials in general and in particular good-practice examples for each of the key ProMenPol settings. The presentations will form the basis for discussing advantageous and disadvantageous aspects of evidence-based and good-practice results on the second day of the conference.

To support policy through practice, the conference will address policy makers as well as practitioners in order to foster information exchange. Furthermore, participants will get an update on the latest developments of the ProMenPol classification system for mental health promotion tools as well as the new ProMenPol toolkit that will be launched by that time.

*Invitations will be sent out in the first part of July. If you wish to take part or find out more about the ProMenPol conference, please contact Rena Hohenstein from BAuA at: [hohenstein.rena@baua.bund.de](mailto:hohenstein.rena@baua.bund.de).*

*For more information on ProMenPol please visit the project website at [www.mentalhealthpromotion.net](http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net)*

## **UPDATE ON NEW ITEMS ON MHE WEBSITE**

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

- About us / Our structure (English and French version):  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/about-mental-health-europe/our-structure.html>
- Publications:  
  
Reports from MHE seminars and other MHE events: Capacity building seminar 13 June 2009 (English/ French) <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/reports-from-mhe-seminars-and-other-mhe-events.html>

## **MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS**

On 4 June, Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer, attended the meeting "Symposium on the legal capacity of persons with disabilities in light of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels.

On 4-5 June, Malgorzata Kmita, Past President of MHE, attended the second meeting of the "WHO – EC Partnership Project on User Empowerment in Mental health" in London.

On 9 June, Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, and Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, participated in the Meeting of the Social Platform members with Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, organised by the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 11 June, Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Vice-President, attended the Social Platform Steering Group meeting in Brussels.

On 12 June, the MHE secretariat' staff participated in the MHE capacity-building seminar on "Empowerment in the Mental Health Field!" in Brussels. The event is one key activity of the MHE work programme 2009 and is supported by PROGRESS, the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity.

On 16 June, Roselyne Bourgon attended a dissemination seminar organised in Brussels by the European Disability Forum in the frame of the EuRADE project focusing on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the field of research.

On 15-16 June, Lucy Vallis participated in the conference on "Equality between men and women in a time of change" held in Brussels by the European Commission.

On 16 June, Alessia Faravelli, MHE Information Officer, attended the Skills Sharing Session organised in Brussels by the Social Platform.

On 17 June, Mary Van Dievel took part in the "Colloquium on running an international association in Belgium", held in Brussels.

On 17 June, Astrid Mechel participated in the Spring Alliance Meeting, organised by the Social Platform, the European Trade Union Confederation, CONCORD and the European Environmental Bureau in Brussels.

On 20 and 21 June, Mari Fresu, Health Policy Officer, participated in the European Youth Forum (YFJ) training on Mental Health in Stockholm. On that occasion, she presented MHE, the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being as well as the MHE advocacy strategy. At the same event, Ms Ingeborg Veia, from the Norwegian MHE member Adults for Children, gave a presentation on key projects in the field of mental health.

On 22 June, Mary Van Dievel and Astrid Mechel participated in the dissemination meeting of the conference "Bridging Knowledge in long-term care—Crossing boundaries between disability and aging", held in Brussels by PSICOST Spain and the Delegation of Catalonia to the EU.

On 22 June, Josée Van Remortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, took part in the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) Advisory Council meeting in London.

On 22-24 June, Roselyne Bourgon attended the meetings of various Committees in the frame of the Council of Europe INGO Conference in Strasbourg.

On 26 June, Mari Fresu and Alessia Faravelli took part in the preparatory meeting of the Youth Health Campus initiatives organised by the European Youth Forum on 8 July 2009, ahead of the European Commission's Youth Health conference of 9-10 July.

On 29 June, Astrid Mechel participated in the preparatory meeting for the European Year 2010 Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, held by the European Anti-Poverty Network in Brussels.

On 30 June, Josée Van Remortel took part in the Ad hoc Expert Group on Institutional Care Reform at the Špidla Cabinet, organized by the European Commission in Brussels.

## **NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

### **Support the Slovenian Association for Mental Health!**

ŠENT, the Slovenian Association for Mental Health, has been a tenant on the estate Razori since 1999. The estate Razori was completely derelict but over the past 10 years it has been renovated and changed into an ecological farm with the supplementary activities of seminar tourism. In addition to agricultural, it provides complementary activities for psychosocial rehabilitation of persons with mental health problems and these activities are closely connected to the estate itself. Without the employment rehabilitation programmes, the successful rehabilitation of people with mental health problems would be significantly diminished. So far, more than 200 persons have benefited from this programme. It has proved to be practical and efficient way of integration regarding employment. ŠENT latest success is an Employment Centre; 6 persons with mental health problems currently work there and the aim is to expand the activities in the future. Recently, the Slovenian Ministry of Health terminated the lease in order to give it back to the Psychiatric Clinic of Ljubljana who made a claim for it.

You can help ŠENT by signing a letter of support and sending it to the Ministry of Health!  
*Please find the letter at <http://www.sent.si>*

## Young Mental Health Ireland

Mental Health Ireland (MHI) has made Young Mental Health Ireland one of its main priorities in its strategic plan for 2008-2012. In fact, the active involvement of its young people within the organisation is fundamental for the development of a volunteer network.

As part of MHI mental health promotion and education programme in secondary schools, their public speaking project has given young people the opportunity to become acquainted with mental health issues. The students who took part on the MHI public speaking project have been asked to take the lead in the organisation and delivery of the inaugural national conference on youth mental health issues "Mental Health Matters". The conference will be held on 10 October in Dublin, Ireland.

MHI will be hosting an open forum during the conference, young people will be asked to make recommendations to MHI on the development of an active policy, thus ensuring the involvement of young people on policy development on mental health issues as well as MHI board membership.

MHI is committing itself to Youth Policy development as this will be one of its core issues within the strategic plan over the next 5 years.

For more information about the MHI initiatives please visit <http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/>

## II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES

### MHE comments on the Swedish EU Presidency's work programme, July – December 2009

Sweden will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the second half of 2009. The coming six months will be characterised by both change and renewal. The newly elected European Parliament will begin its work and a new Commission will be appointed. The conditions for cooperation will change if the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force. The most important challenges are the economy, employment and climate – issues that affect each and every citizen of the EU.

As far as mental health is concerned, the Swedish EU Presidency will take initiative in many areas that impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the population.

- In the field of Employment and Social Policy:

In the field of employment and social policy, the Swedish Presidency aims to reduce the negative effects of the **ongoing crisis**; to find measures to reintegrate the **unemployed** into the labour market and to promote the **active participation** of people with a reduced work capacity because of ill-health. The Presidency aims to contribute to the work on the EU's new strategy for growth and jobs which will replace the Lisbon Strategy.

MHE will pursue the work of the Swedish Presidency and continue to bring forward the inclusion of people with mental health problems into the labour market. MHE's position is that everyone should be entitled to a minimum income in order to be able to follow a dignified life and to access quality health services. In this frame, MHE advocates for a swift implementation of the European Commission's Active Inclusion Strategy (adopted in 2008) that covers the areas of adequate income support, inclusive labour markets and access to quality services. MHE will also contribute to the discussion of the new EU strategy for growth and jobs in order to strengthen its social dimension.

- In the field of Human Rights and Disability:

In the field of human rights and disability, the Presidency foresees that work to counter all forms of discrimination is a priority. The Presidency will work to ensure that decisions can be taken on the directive on the **equal treatment** of persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. The work of the Presidency will continue on regulating passenger rights and the Presidency will aim for agreements on regulations on both bus and ship passengers.

Despite the issue of discrimination is addressed, MHE regrets the weak commitment of the Presidency re the directive proposed by the European Commission in July 2008 and which is still under discussion within the EU institutions. In particular, MHE is disappointed by the fact that the Presidency did not set clear priorities in this field, and by the lack of attention for the ratification process of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. MHE will follow the work of the Swedish Presidency in the field of disability and human rights for people with mental health problems with particular attention to the actions towards non-discrimination policies.

MHE will continue its work together with European Disability Forum to make the Swedish Presidency include people with disabilities in the policy work regarding transports as well as to collaborate with them for disability friendly policies. Access to transports for disabled persons is an issue included also in the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities (Article 9).

- In the field of Mental Health Promotion and Prevention of Disorders:

Among other health issues, the Swedish Presidency's work programme aims to increase the opportunities for **healthy and dignified ageing** for older people in the EU as well as to improve cooperation to promote good living conditions for **young people** in the EU.

MHE will follow actively the policy developments and take actions in the field of healthy ageing as it considers this as a central issue for mental health and wellbeing. This is also acknowledged in the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing, which recognises older people as one of the five thematic priorities for coordinated actions in the mental health field at the EU level.

MHE is also pleased with the Presidency's commitment to improve the living conditions of the youth as it believes that the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is fundamental to the future social and economic growth of the European region. In particular, much more can be done to promote mental health and well-being and prevent mental disorders in the early years of life and amongst children and young people. This requires targeted support and actions particularly where there is increased evidence of risk factors for poor mental health and mental illness.

- In the field of Gender:

The Presidency work programme will also focus on **gender equality**. Important issues include initiatives to counter men's violence against women, to create better opportunities to both reconcile work and family life and provide increased health and safety protection in the workplace.

In line with this, MHE states that in order to ensure growth and development, the EU must make better use of the potential of both women and men. In particular, MHE believes that the EU policies should better protect the mental health of the population by adopting a gender-sensitive approach.

*For more information about the Swedish EU Presidency's work programme please visit:*  
[http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly\\_fs/1.6248!menu/standard/file/Work%20Programme%20for%20the%20Swedish%20Presidency%201%20July%20-%2031%20Dec%202009.pdf](http://www.se2009.eu/polopoly_fs/1.6248!menu/standard/file/Work%20Programme%20for%20the%20Swedish%20Presidency%201%20July%20-%2031%20Dec%202009.pdf)

### **Call for proposals for transnational actions on social experimentation**

The European Commission has issued a call for proposals (VP/2009/005) to support innovative social projects in the areas of social inclusion and social protection.

The present call is part of the PROGRESS funding programme and focuses on the methodological aspects of the different phases of innovation and policy reform. Particular attention should be given to the issues of governance, evaluation and dissemination. This approach is consistent with the continual assessment of policies by the European Union and the principle that the impact and adequacy of social reforms be tested before they are generalised.

The deadline for the submission of applications is 1 September 2009.

*The details of the call are available at:*

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=630&langId=en&callId=217&furtherCalls=yes>

### **European Commission Communication on "Shared Commitment for Employment"**

The European Commission has issued a Communication entitled "Shared Commitment for Employment" which addresses three key priorities: maintaining employment, creating jobs and promoting mobility; upgrading skills and matching labour market needs and increasing access to employment. They should be seen as complementary to other actions being taken by the Commission to face the crisis, such as measures related to the financial supervision and the European Globalisation Fund, and be consistent with the EU's longer term strategies to reform labour markets and the Lisbon Strategy.

*The Communication can be obtained via the following link:*

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=514&furtherNews=yes>

### **World Mental Health Day 2009**

The 2009 World Mental Health Day global awareness campaign will focus on "Mental Health in Primary Care: Enhancing Treatment and Promoting Mental Health." This campaign theme addresses one of the increasingly important trends in the way that mental illnesses are being treated worldwide. The campaign is intended to bring worldwide attention to the growing body of information and knowledge focusing on the integration of mental health in primary healthcare, and to provide this information to grassroots patient/consumer, family member/caregiver, and advocacy and educational mental health associations around the world.

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) established World Mental Health Day in 1992; it is the only annual global awareness campaign to focus attention on specific aspects of mental health and mental disorders, and is now commemorated in over 100 countries on 10 October through local, regional and national World Mental Health Day commemorative events and programs.

### **Update on UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities**

The UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities entered into force in May 2008. The Convention provisions are related to the promotion of participation of people with disabilities in the society. As of 11 June 2009, there were 9 ratifications of the Convention by EU Member States, and 8 ratifications of the Optional Protocol. On 15 May 2009, Italy ratified both the Convention and its Optional Protocol. On 8 June, the United Kingdom ratified the Convention with four reservations and an interpretative declaration on the status of special schools.

*Read more information about the Convention on the [UN website](#)*

## **News from the latest Employment, Social Policy and Consumer Affairs Council**

On June 8, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO) adopted the conclusions on "social services as a tool for active inclusion, strengthening social cohesion and an area for job opportunities" as well as on "flexicurity in time of crisis".

The conclusions on social services invite the EU member states:

- to ensure that measures combating social exclusion and promoting the active inclusion of those furthest from the labour market and society through a better access to social services, are high on the political agenda;
- to ensure that social protection and active inclusion policies facilitate the integration into sustainable, quality employment of those who can work and provide resources, which are sufficient to live in dignity, for those who cannot;
- to recognise the role of social services, in particular during the present economic crisis, in the national recovery plans, where appropriate, so as to reinforce the recovery of our economies and strengthen their potential in terms of growth and job opportunities as well as economic and social cohesion;
- to recognize the role of social services in terms of growth and job opportunities as well as economic and social cohesion.

*The full text of the EPSCO Council's conclusions is available at:*

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108371.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108371.pdf)

The conclusions on flexicurity mainly target the need for modern and active social protection components. This includes clear work incentives that contribute to reducing social exclusion and the risk of poverty by opening the labour market to all citizens, and to vulnerable groups in particular. At the same time a high level of employment and jobs should be maintained.

*Form more information please visit:*

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108369.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108369.pdf)

*For further information on the MHE work on social issues, please write to Astrid Mechel, Social Policy Officer, at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)*

## **The Scottish Government published the new Action Plan on Mental Health 2009-2011**

The Scottish Government published the new action Plan on Mental Health 2009-2011. The main objectives are to promote good mental wellbeing, reduce the occurrence of mental illness and improve the quality of life of those experiencing mental illness.

*The full version of the Action Plan is available at the following link:*

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/mental/ms\\_overview\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/ms_overview_en.htm)

## **2011 to be the European Year of Volunteering**

The Commission has decided to propose that 2011 be designated as the "European Year of Volunteering". The Council and the European Parliament are expected to endorse this proposal by the beginning of next year.

The Commission proposes to allocate a budget of 6 million EUR for the European Year, and an additional amount of 2 million EUR for the preparatory actions starting in 2010. A coalition of 22 European civil society networks, including Social Platform, welcomed the Commission's proposal for the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

*For further information please visit the European Volunteer Centre <http://www.cev.be/112-towards-a-european-year-of-volunteering-2011-EN.html>*

### **Discrimination and Poverty: Special Journalist Award**

The Journalist Award is a key activity of the "For Diversity. Against Discrimination" information campaign run by the European Commission, Dg Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year, the Award honours online or print journalist in the EU who, through their work, contribute to a better public understanding of the benefits of diversity and the fight against discrimination. In anticipation of the 2010 European year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, this year's competition includes a special award for articles on how discrimination based on the grounds mentioned above can lead to poverty.

For more information please visit <http://www.stop-discrimination.info/99.0.html>

## **III. NEWS FROM OTHER (E)NGOs**

### **European Disability Forum and European Foundation Centre joint Seminar**

European Disability Forum (EDF) and the European Consortium of Foundations (EFC) on Human Rights and Disability jointly organised a symposium on the legal capacity of persons with disabilities in light of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The symposium "When can people with disabilities make their own decisions? European legal specialists debate the issue of legal capacity", held at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Brussels on 4 June 2009, was attended by more than 100 specialists, including for the first time legal experts, representatives from the EU institutions, as well as from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working to defend the human rights of persons with disabilities. Under Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the signatory parties are obliged to ensure equal recognition before the law of persons with disabilities. This article marks a positive shift towards the full participation and equality of persons with disabilities, as governments will be obliged to create favourable legal frameworks and enabling supportive policies to guarantee equal recognition before the law. Renowned experts in the fields of human rights legislation, legal experts and policy-making succeeded in identifying potential obstacles to the implementation of Article 12 at both European and national levels. The panel discussion was followed by a roundtable on how to overcome the legal obstacles identified and to sketch solutions and future perspectives for a fully inclusive legal capacity.

Source: EDF-EFC Press Release

*MHE was represented at this event by Roselyne Bourgon, Human Rights Officer. For more information, please contact her at MHE secretariat [Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org](mailto:Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org)*

### **The European Anti Poverty Network Campaign on Minimum Income**

The European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) launched a campaign for "Adequate Minimum Income for All" with the aim to raise the awareness of European Institutions on the importance of adequate income schemes as a key instrument to fight exclusion and poverty and to ensure a decent standard of living for everyone. With this campaign EAPN intends to remind the EU institutions of their commitments made in the Recommendation on Active Inclusion of October 2008 to recognize "the individual's basic right to resources and social assistance sufficient to live a life that is compatible with human dignity".

*MHE supports EAPN's campaign and invites its members to sign the appeal on the campaign website: [www.adequateincome.eu](http://www.adequateincome.eu)*

## V. CONFERENCES

**6 July 2009**

**"Promoting Mental Health in the Context of Global Mental Health", Geneva**

*For more details please send an e-mail at [jun@ibrea.org](mailto:jun@ibrea.org)*

**11-16 July 2009**

**International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease, Vienna**

*For more information please visit [www.alz.org/icad](http://www.alz.org/icad)*

**9-10 December 2009**

**EPF VALUE+ Conference, Gothenburg, Sweden**

*For more information and to read the full programme please visit [www.eu-patient.eu](http://www.eu-patient.eu)*

**9-11 December 2009**

**International Congress "Adolescence and metamorphosis", Brussels**

*For more information please send an e-mail at [emessen@skynet.be](mailto:emessen@skynet.be)*

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)*