



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I.NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

Outcomes of the last meeting of the MHE Executive Committee

The MHE Executive Committee met on 29 September. Some of the decisions taken on this occasion include:

- an awareness raising event in the European Parliament, for Members of the European Parliament. The date for this event will be decided soon together with Poul Nyrup Rasmussen MEP, Denmark, who kindly accepted to host this meeting. The proposed theme for the event is: Multiple discrimination (tbc).
- the next training session for MHE's National Focal Points is scheduled to take place in Brussels on 13-14 March 2009. More information will be made available in due time but the national focal points are encouraged to already pencil these dates in their diaries!
- MHE's General Assembly will be held on 5-7 June 2009, most probably in Brussels. The General Assembly will be combined with a meeting of the directors/CEOs of the mental health associations and meetings of the MHE Committees.

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

MHE contributes to a joint NGO submission to EU Member States on the proposed anti-discrimination directive

On 2 July 2008, the European Commission adopted its proposal for a directive which provides for protection from discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion or belief beyond the workplace. This directive would ensure equal treatment in the areas of social protection, including social security and health care, education and access to and supply of goods and services which are commercially available to the public, including housing.

Just before the new anti-discrimination legislation was tabled by the Commission, Mental Health Europe sent a letter to President Barroso to call for the future legislative proposal to fully address the specificities of discrimination faced by persons with mental health problems, their families and carers.

Following up on this, MHE recently contributed to a joint social NGOs' submission to EU Member States on the proposed anti-discrimination directive. This contribution was sent to the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs before the next EPSCO (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council) meeting on 2 October.

The document brings together the preliminary assessment of the proposed directive of the following European networks: AGE (European Older People's Platform), EDF (European Disability Forum), ENAR (European Network Against Racism), EWL (European Women's Lobby), ILGA-Europe (European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association), YFJ (European Youth Forum), and Mental Health Europe.

While emphasizing the key strength of the proposed directive, the document presents improvements to be made, suggested by the various contributors.

In particular, MHE insists on the need for providing, in the proposed directive, a clear definition of disability

The disability definition of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which all but one EU Member States and the European Community are already signatories, could serve as a model definition. This definition is in accordance with the "paradigm shift" in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities are viewed as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society. They are not any longer "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection.

With such a definition, people with mental health problems and people with psychosocial disabilities would be included within the scope of the Directive, contrary to the current situation.

On healthcare, MHE reminds that it is important to protect the fundamental rights of people with disabilities or mental health problems by ensuring that national policies for health care provision, and, vitally, mental health and mental capacity legislation fall within the scope of the directive.

Finally, MHE agrees with the other networks that multiple discrimination should be included in the directive and that the directive would be strengthened if it explicitly acknowledged that people can be subject to multiple discrimination, with cumulative effects, and that some discrimination legislation and procedures of member states currently make seeking legal redress for multiple discrimination difficult.

For more information: contact Fanny Muller, Email fmuller@mhe-sme.org, Tel. +32 2 280 04 68

MHE responds to EU Fundamental Rights Agency consultation on 2009 Work Programme and 2008 Annual Report

MHE has responded to the EU Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) call for applications to join its new Fundamental Rights Platform. This Platform will be a network for cooperation and information exchange with civil society and intends to ensure close cooperation between the Agency and relevant stakeholders.

In preparation for the first meeting of this Platform that will take place on 7-8 October 2008 in Vienna (MHE will be participating in the meeting), FRA has launched a consultation on its draft work programme 2009 and its annual report of 2008.

In its response to this call, MHE underlined several direct threats to human rights for people with mental health problems and pleaded for the Agency to focus its attention on the human rights aspects of mental health.

To read the consultation document on FRA's work programme 2009:

http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Fundamental_Rights/FRA%20consultation%20on%20WP%202009.pdf

To read the consultation document for FRA's annual report 2008:

http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Fundamental_Rights/FRA%20consultation%20on%20Annual%20report%202008.pdf

To read the MHE response to the consultation:

<http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/MHE%20contribution%20to%20the%20Fundamental%20Rights%20Platform%20consul..pdf>

MHE joins in with Eurocare to mark International 'Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders' (FASD) Awareness Day

Drinking alcohol in pregnancy remains a significant public health issue in Europe. A substantial number of women across the EU, continue to drink during pregnancy.

Prenatal exposure to alcohol is a leading preventable cause of birth defects and developmental disorders, and the only one which is 100% preventable. Unfortunately, many women are not aware that, throughout the pregnancy, even at low levels of exposure, alcohol interferes with the normal development and can seriously damage the unborn child.

The umbrella term Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), describes the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These can include physical, mental, behavioural and or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications. Individuals born with FASD often fail in the education system, and come into difficulties with criminal justice system.

FASD is believed to affect about 1% of people in the EU 27, which amounts to nearly 5 million people.

International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day is marked every year on 9 September, symbolising nine months of pregnancy, when women should abstain from alcohol to protect their unborn child.

For more information: visit

http://www.eurocare.org/library/latest_news/eurocare_holds_successful_evening_reception_on_alcohol_and_pregnancy_in_european_parliament

MHE representation at various meetings

On 11 September, John Henderson, MHE Senior Policy Advisor, participated in a meeting of the ECCL (European Coalition for Community Living) Advisory Council in Oslo (Norway). He also took part in the ECCL Seminar "Living Independently and being Included".

On the same day, Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy advisor, represented MHE in the WHO CC – WHO Europe Workshop, "*Users and carers organisations' involvement in mental health service reform in Europe – The role of empowerment and advocacy*", which was organised in Lille (France). (see below)

On 16 September, Josée Van Remoortel took part in the European High Level Conference on Health and Disability Policy, which was organised at the European Parliament in Brussels. (see p. 12-13)

On 22 September, Sogol Noorani, Social Policy Officer participated at the Social Policy Working Group at the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 23 September, Peter Kinderman, Chair MHE Committee on Human Rights, Fanny Muller, Information and Human Rights Officer, and Roselyne Bourgon, stagiaire, participated in a meeting of the Social Platform FRAND (Fundamental Rights and Non-Discrimination) Working Group in Brussels.

On 24 September, Mari Fresu, Health Policy Officer, and Roselyne Bourgon, attended a Policy Coordination meeting organised by EPHA (European Public Health Alliance) in Brussels.

On the same day, Sogol Noorani attended a Thematic Review seminar on "*The development of national flexicurity policies in response to labour market challenges*" organised by the European Commission, DG EMPL, which took place in Brussels.

On 29 September, a meeting of the MHE Executive Committee took place in Brussels.

On 29-30 September, Fanny Muller, represented MHE at the 2nd Equality Summit, which was organised in Paris (France) by the EU French Presidency. More information to follow in our next Newsletter.

On 30 September, Mary Van Dievel, Director, John Henderson and Malgorzata Kmita, MHE President, had a meeting with the assistant of Evangelia Tzampazi, MEP (Member of the European Parliament). The aim of the meeting was for MHE to present its views on the identification of measures and priority actions that should be promoted at the European and national levels in the frame of a European Mental Health Strategy.

On the same day, Mary Van Dievel attended the launch event of the "*Europe for Patients*" campaign. (see p.10-11)

II. REPORTS ON VARIOUS EVENTS

WHO CC – WHO Europe Workshop, "*Users and carers organisations' involvement in mental health service reform in Europe – The role of empowerment and advocacy*", Lille (France)

In February 2008, during the annual meeting of the European WHO Collaborating Centres, WHO Europe presented the mental health major challenges which must be addressed in the European area: The reform of the services; Empowerment and mental health advocacy; Prevention; Lack of information and data; Excess and violence in the institutions.

For each of these areas the WHO Collaborating Centres have to facilitate concrete actions and partnerships development. The users and carers associations have a key role to play in the creation of solutions in order to face these challenges.

It is in this context that the WHO CC (Lille, France) for research and training in mental health was entrusted with the mission of facilitating and supporting the investment of the associations of users, families and relatives in the reform of the mental health services on a European level according to the 2005 WHO Europe recommendations. A technical report and recommendations on the possibilities of the commitment of users and relatives in the reform of the services will be written.

The aim of this workshop was to reinforce the existing partnerships with the European associations of users, families and relatives. The meeting was an occasion to assess the situation and for planning future strategies.

After presentations from WHO Europe (Anja Baumann), WHO CC Lille (Dr Jean Luc Roelandt) and the European Commission – DG Sanco (Hana Horka), the participants introduced their organisations, debated on how effective empowerment could be achieved, and formulated three recommendations towards empowerment and advocacy.

Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy advisor, represented MHE at the workshop.

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

III. MENTAL HEALTH AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

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

Help for immigrants: New FAMH project

In September 2007, the Finnish Association for Mental Health (FAMH) began a four-year project aiming at developing civic action by immigrants (OVI). Within the project, FAMH and immigrant organisations in Helsinki help immigrants to adapt to Finnish society. The project strengthens the immigrant organisations in their skills and opportunities to support people who participate in their activities and, thus, to prevent mental health problems. The project aims to produce information on the views and experiences of immigrants related to mental health, the prevention of mental health problems and coping in everyday life. The project also develops the activities and operational conditions of immigrant organisations with the help of various materials and training events, and promotes networking from the organisations. Increasing understanding between cultures and creating co-operation practices are also goals of the project.

The project is based on the long experiences gained by FAMH on support person activities, peer groups, projects related to supporting employment and civic action by NGOs, and crisis work targeting immigrants. The partnership organisations are Irakin Työllistämisyhdistys - IRTY (an association promoting the employment of Iraqi people), Monika-Naiset Liitto (Multicultural Women's Association) and Berde (an association promoting the integration of Somalis in Finnish society).

The project is funded by Finland's Slot Machine Association RAY.

For more information: visit <http://www.mielenterveysseura.fi/>

Many thanks to the Finnish Association for Mental Health for this contribution.

IV. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

FINLAND - FAMH's SOS Crisis Centre

The Finnish Association for Mental Health (FAMH) SOS Crisis Centre has worked to prevent suicides for almost forty years. Many people have found help and many lives have been saved. The nationwide crisis helpline is often the first instance for help and, in addition, the SOS Crisis Centre offers crisis counseling and supervised peer support groups. Help is also available on the web.

Last year, FAMH's national crisis helpline received approximately 120,000 calls. It was possible to take nearly 51,000 of those calls and help people in need. The share of young, under 18 year-old, callers in particular increased. Young people were largely worried by the same things as older callers: financial problems, alcohol, family crises or parents' mental health problems. Jaana Paasu, Coordinator of the national crisis helpline, says that women call the helpline more often than men but the share of men is steadily increasing. Many of the callers live alone and are also lonely.

Problems linked to relationships worried more than 10,000 callers. Issues related to work, studies or money, traumatic crises, suicide, violence, addictions and physical illnesses overshadowed the lives of many callers.

For more information: contact Tarja Heiskanen, Development Manager, at tarja.heiskanen@mielenterveysseura.fi, or Outi Ruishalme, Director SOS Crisis Centre, at outi.ruishalme@mielenterveysseura.fi

Many thanks to the Finnish Association for Mental Health for this contribution.

POLAND - Get involved in the "Lingua for Mental Health Project"!

MHE supports this initiative from our Polish member organisation "Association for Child and Family Mental Health" and strongly encourages you to get involved in their "Lingua for Mental Health" project.

The goal of the project is to develop social inclusion and empowerment of people with mental health problems by providing them lifelong learning of languages opportunities and developing a European network of mentally ill people, carers, and specialist in mental health to overcome socially exclusive phenomena, such as breakdown of learning and professional carrier, intolerance and rejection at school and workplace, negative stereotypes and stigma in general public.

The project is to be applied for grant to the EU Grundtvig Learning Partnership Programme.

If you are interested to take part in the project, and for more information: contact Andrzej Szelc, email aszelc@onet.eu

UK – The British government may repeal “discriminatory” law

A MIND (National association for mental health for England and Wales) survey of 94 MPs (Members of Parliament), 100 Lords and 151 parliamentary staff has found that 27% had experienced a mental health problem. One in 3 said stigma had stopped them being open about it.

Common Law originating from the 16th Century bans anyone who has been detained in a psychiatric hospital from standing for Parliament, even if they have made a recovery. An all party parliamentary group on mental health said the law, which also prevents “idiots” and “lunatics” from being MPs, is discriminatory.

The government will consider whether these old rules in Common law should be removed.

MPs and peers have been gagged by prejudice, ignorance and fear surrounding mental illness.

For more information: visit, <http://www.mind.org.uk/>

Source: Openmind

V. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

EDF – European Disability Forum

EDF participated in providing training on the regulation disabled air passenger rights

Airports Council International (ACI) organised a training for airport managers on the regulation 1107/2006 on the rights of disabled passengers on 7-9 July 2008 in Bucharest (Romania). This training was attended by approximately 40 persons from various European airports.

EDF was invited at this occasion to provide training on disability awareness and cooperation with the disability movement.

The training was very appreciated by the participants and ACI stated by the end of the session that similar trainings will be organised in a near future in other European cities.

The regulation on the rights of air passengers with disabilities entered into full application on the 27 July 2008.

For more information: contact Maria Nyman at maria.nyman@edf-feph.org

Source: EDF

EDF strategy to ensure a comprehensive disability non discrimination legislation

EDF Executive Committee met in Athens on 5-6 September to discuss EDF's position and strategy towards the European Commission proposal for non-discrimination legislation beyond employment.

Taking into consideration the choice of the European Commission to propose an equality and non-discrimination directive irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the members of the Executive Committee decided that EDF had to do its utmost to improve substantially the legislative text drawing the European Commission, European Parliament and Council's attention on the necessity and importance to align the EU disability related legislation on the UN Convention on the rights of disabled persons.

While ensuring the improvement of the directive proposal, EDF would also meet (and is currently meeting) the Permanent Representations of the 27 Member States in Brussels to present EDF position and to get feedback on the national positions.

On 2 October, the 27 ministers on Employment and Social Affairs will meet, based on the outcome of the meeting, EDF will decide on its input to the debate on the Directive.

EDF will issue its position paper on the European Commission legislative proposal for a non-discrimination directive. The EDF position will be sent by email to EDF members as soon as it is finalised. EDF members will be requested to use this document as the basis in their lobbying work at national level.

For more information: contact Janina Arsenjeva, Email Janina.arsenjeva@edf-feph.org, Tel. +32 2 282 46 02

Source: EDF

EUFAMI - European Federation of Associations of Families of Persons with Mental Illness

New President assumes position at EUFAMI

Since 1 September, Sigrid Steffen, the former Vice President from Austria, is the new President of EUFAMI. She took over the position from Inger Nilsson, who has held the position since 2004.

For more information: visit

http://www.eufami.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=45&Itemid=69

EWL – European Women's Lobby

Support the EWL campaign: "No Modern European Democracy without Gender Equality"

In 2009, Europeans will elect a new European Parliament and a new European Commission will be appointed. These elected and nominated persons are going to shape the future of European citizens in Europe, and the "50/50 Campaign for Democracy" aims to ensure that women and men are equally represented among them.

Women are currently still under-represented in all European institutions where decisions are made which affect the lives of European citizens. With the "50/50 Campaign for Democracy", the European Women's Lobby wants to push for concrete action to increase women's presence in politics.

The Campaign is endorsed personally by Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission and the ministerial chair of the Council of Women World Leaders, along with many other distinguished political figures from different political parties across Europe.

The campaign was launched on 16 September 2008 in Brussels.

For more information and to sign: <http://www.5050democracy.eu/>

FEANTSA - European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless

Summer 2008 edition of FEANTSA's magazine - Homelessness in the New Member States

The summer 2008 edition of *Homeless in Europe* focuses on the issue of homelessness in Europe's New Member States, those twelve countries that most recently joined the EU. What the majority of these new members have in common is that they were under Soviet domination for fifty years. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, they have experienced significant socio-economic and political changes, transitioning from planned economies to free-market models. The far-reaching reforms and political liberalisation that have taken place have radically transformed institutional structures, including social services, and new solutions have had to be found to old and new problems.

To download the publication:

http://www.feantsa.org/files/Month%20Publications/EN/Magazine_Homeless_in_Europe_EN/Summer_2008_Homelessness_new_member_states_EN_FINAL.pdf

MDAC – Mental Disability Advocacy Centre

Hungarian NGOs urge Government to establish a Disability Ombudsman

On 1 October 2008, in Budapest, a coalition of thirteen non governmental organisations sent a letter to the Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány urging his government to comply with obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by establishing a Disability Ombudsman to monitor the Convention's implementation in Hungary or at least to make the necessary legislative changes to allow the general Ombudsman to be entrusted with this task. In June 2007 Hungary became the first European country to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Another Convention requirement is for governments to give civil society the opportunity to participate in public policy-making regarding disability issues. The coalition of NGOs asks the government to ensure the effective involvement of civil society organisations - and disabled people's organisations in particular - in all aspects of the Convention's implementation. The coalition of NGOs encourages the government to announce its plans before 3 November 2008, the day of the first Conference of States Parties (an official meeting of all countries which have ratified the Convention) in New York.

For more information: contact Jan Fiala (MDAC, Budapest), Tel. +36 1 413 27 30, Email mdac@mdac.info

MDRI - Mental Disability Rights International

Following MDRI report, UN Committee calls on Serbia to end "torture or ill-treatment"

As a result of the public exposure triggered by Mental Disability Rights International's widely-publicised report, *"Torment not Treatment: Serbia's Segregation and Abuse of Children and Adults with Disabilities,"* the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) issued a recommendation to the Serbian government to end practices of "torture or ill-treatment" and to provide "full compensation and rehabilitation" for victims of such abuse. The CRC expressed concern about children subject to "severe long-term restraint and seclusion" and agreed with MDRI's report that such practices "could amount to ill-treatment or even torture."

The CRC expressed concern about large numbers of children with disabilities who remain in Serbia's institutions. The Committee, which monitors the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, reviewed MDRI's report and video footage, and asked for MDRI's assessment of Serbia's progress in implementing human rights protections outlined under the Convention.

As "a result of the dialogue" created by MDRI's report, according to UNICEF, the Serbian Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare signed an agreement to a "radical downsizing or closure of some residential institutions [and] development of multifaceted support to families of children with severe disabilities."

To download the CRC report:

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC.C.SRB.CO.1.pdf>

For more information: visit <http://www.mdri.org/>

Source: MDRI

Social Platform

Annual Conference of the Social Platform on Civil Dialogue

The Annual Conference of the Social Platform will take place on 9-10 December 2008 in Brussels. This event will be organised around the annual theme for 2008 *"Shaping an effective civil dialogue at national and European level - Policies for people with people"*. The aim is to help the social NGO sector obtain a clear understanding of what we mean by civil dialogue, participatory democracy, active citizenship, etc. As a final outcome, a European scoreboard of the social sector, civil dialogue and participatory democracy at European level should be developed in 2009.

MHE is planning to co-organise a workshop, together with SOLIDAR, on how to most effectively organise civil dialogue at European and national level and what could be done to

build up and improve capacities of national member organisations to get involved in European debates. MHE's contribution will focus in particular on the role of the MHE National Focal Points that act as intermediaries between the MHE Secretariat and the MHE members in every country.

For more information or if you would like to participate: contact the MHE Secretariat, Email info@mhe-sme.org, Tel. +32 2 280 04 68

European Social NGOs to evaluate the French EU presidency with six tests

The alliance of European social NGOs has produced six tests to assess the French presidency of the European Union, which started in the beginning of July. The Social Platform also made specific proposals to France for a pact to make social issues central to EU strategy.

France has taken over the rotating six-month Presidency at a crucial time for Europe, weakened by Ireland's rejection of the Lisbon Treaty – which was meant to streamline how the EU works – and racked by widening inequality and rising food and energy costs.

The Social Platform will evaluate the French presidency, on the basis of the tests, at the end of its mandate in December 2008.

For more information: visit www.socialplatform.org

Source: Social Platform Press release

VI. EUROPEAN UNION

2012 European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity

A letter of President Barroso to AGE (the European Older People's Platform), the European Youth Forum, AIM and AEIP, confirmed the Commission's commitment to announce 2012 as the European Year of Active Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity, as part of the forthcoming Communication on adapting to the needs of an ageing society, which is planned to be adopted ahead of the next demography forum on 24 and 25 November 2008.

Source: AGE

Join the SINAPSE Network!

The SINAPSE e-network aims to make better use of expertise in policy making. In line with the efforts undertaken to develop new forms of governance, SINAPSE should facilitate the involvement of actors that cannot, at present, easily be consulted or share their knowledge/viewpoint. As a tool facilitating exchange of information within the scientific community and other actors concerned by science, SINAPSE will also help in developing the European Research Area. SINAPSE intends to become a depository of organisations and individuals who play or could play a useful role in scientific advice processes. The objective is to increase the dissemination and use of scientific advice by developing an electronic library of available scientific opinions and advice issued in Europe and elsewhere.

For more information, visit <http://europa.eu/sinapse/sinapse/index.cfm>

Open Days 2008 European Regions and Cities

The full online programme of the Open Days 2008 European Regions and Cities includes useful information about the seminars that will take place in Brussels between 6 and 9 October 2008. For this year's event, organised by the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's Regional Policy Directorate-General, 216 regions and cities from 32 countries have signed up, establishing a record. The seminars and debates focus on four themes: 'Innovating regions: Promoting research, technological development and innovation', 'Sustainable development: Regional responses to climate change', 'Cooperation and networking: Exchange of best practice in regional development', and 'Looking forward: A European cohesion policy for tomorrow'. The participation is free of charge.

For more information: visit

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/od2008/doc/pdf/programme_07072008.pdf

VII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG Employment and Social Affairs – DG EMPL

The 2008-2010 "National Strategic Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion" are out!

The National Strategic Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NSR) can now be found on the European Commission website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/strategy_reports_en.htm.

These are national reports on progress made towards meeting the EU common objectives on Social Inclusion, Pensions, and Health and Long-Term Care. Currently, only 14 countries handed in their reports: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the UK. The reports from the other countries are expected soon.

People with mental health problems are facing stigma, discrimination and social exclusion. Actions to tackle these challenges should therefore be covered in the NSRs. MHE is closely monitoring the reporting process as the NSRs are important to the EU social inclusion objectives to ensure access to resources, rights and services for all in view of preventing and addressing exclusion and fighting all forms of discrimination.

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

European Commission releases report on equality of access to healthcare services – HealthQUEST

The European Commission has published the final report of the "Study Quality and Equality of Access to Healthcare Services: HealthQUEST".

The objectives of the project were to identify and analyse barriers of access to health care services which are faced by vulnerable groups in society, and especially those most exposed to social exclusion; to review the various policy initiatives taken by the Member States to reach the objective of access for all, including the analysis of good practice examples; to highlight and describe the most effective policy measures to ensure access to health care to the most disadvantaged, in particular migrants, older people with functional limitations and people with mental health problems (studied as a special case project in the study); to help determine the extent to which increased access to and quality of health care services can make to combating poverty and social exclusion and increasing social inclusion.

Led by the European Health Management Association (EHMA) with the European Centre Vienna, the project published a report and analysed the situation in eight European countries: Finland, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Romania, and United Kingdom.

For more information and to download the HealthQUEST report:

<http://www.ehma.org/projects/default.asp?NCID=138>

Source: European Public Health Alliance

DG Health and Consumer Protection – DG SANCO

Better healthcare for all in Europe - Commissioner Vassiliou launches Europe for Patients campaign

On 30 September 2008, Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou launched the 'Europe for Patients' campaign in Brussels. The campaign highlights the different health policy initiatives the Commission intends to adopt in the coming 6-9 months. All these initiatives are bound by a common goal – better healthcare for all in Europe. The initiatives address patient safety, rare diseases, organ donation and transplantation, cancer screening, health workforce, flu and childhood vaccination and antibiotic use. The proposed Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross border health care is the first initiative under the campaign and was adopted by the Commission in July 2008.

The launch unveiled a Europe for Patients logo and a webpage on the EU Health Portal in 22 languages which will become an information centre where documents, articles and events will be posted in relation to the Europe for Patients initiatives. This will provide a simple entry point to the often complex world of EU healthcare policies and actions. It will better explain

what is being done at European level and how it can benefit citizens in the field of health. The website also provides an opportunity to post national and regional news and events.

Speakers at the launch included Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Health, Mr. Vincent Richez, representing the French EU Presidency, Mrs. Marian Harkin, Member of the European Parliament (who underlined the importance of mental health promotion) and Mr. Anders Olauson, President of the European Patients Forum.

The launch was chaired by Mr. Robert Madelin, Director General of Consumers and Health Directorate General of the European Commission. Participants at the launch included; patients associations, health professionals, national and regional representatives, European parliamentarians, industry, insurers and many other health organisations.

Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, attended the event on behalf of MHE.

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

To read the Commissioner's speech: visit

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/08/475&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>

European Commission invites scientists to submit their application for the EC Scientific Committees, Pool of Advisers and Database of Experts.

The European Commission (DG Sanco) pre-announced their plan to invite scientists to join their Scientific Risk Assessment Advisory Structure of Scientific Committees, Pool of Advisers and Database of Experts. The deadline to apply is 31 October 2008.

The Scientific Risk Assessment Advisory Structure will provide the Commission with high quality and independent scientific advice on matters related to consumer safety, public health and the environment. Applicants must have a university degree in a relevant scientific area, at least 10 years of professional experience and good knowledge of the English language. Preferences will be given to certain candidates, i.e. who possess professional experience in the fields of competence of the Scientific Committees or experienced multi-disciplinary accomplishments.

Depending on their interests and availability for work, scientists may apply for membership in one or more of the following: Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS), Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental Risks (SCHER) and Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR) among other working groups. The SCCS, the SCHER and the SCENIHR will each consist of a maximum of 17 members. The Commission will appoint the members of the Committees on the basis of their expertise.

More information about the current Scientific Committees is available at

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/risk_en.htm

For application and more information, contact Sanco-call-experts-2008@ec.europa.eu

Source: European Public Health Alliance

Interim evaluation of the implementation of the Public Health Programme (2003-2008)

The European Commission has recently adopted a Communication on the Interim evaluation of the implementation of the Public Health Programme (2003-2008).

MHE was involved in the evaluation as project leader of DG Sanco funded projects.

To download the Communication:

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

DG Energy and Transport – DG TREN

Commission video on the rights of air passengers with reduced mobility

The European regulation on the rights of air passengers with disabilities entered into application on 27 July. This regulation includes a number of rights for disabled persons when travelling by air, such as the right to non-discrimination, assistance and compensation in case of damaged mobility equipment.

The European Commission has worked together with the European Disability Forum and other stakeholders in producing an information video, targeted at persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility, containing information about the relevant provisions of the regulation. This video is available in all official EU languages.

To download the video:

VIII. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

European Parliament resolution on equality between women and men – 2008

On 3 September, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on equality between women and men – 2008. The resolution addresses gender gaps in employment, women participation in decision-making, reconciliation of professional, family and private life. It emphasises the necessity to pay special attention to the needs of vulnerable groups of women, such as disabled women, women with dependants, elderly women, minority and immigrant women. The resolution stresses that violence against women is a major obstacle to equality between women and men and calls for a concerted action to combat violence.

To read the resolution:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0399+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Disability Intergroup debated on employment of disabled persons by EU institutions

The EP Disability Intergroup met in Brussels on 4 September and discussed the recruitment and employment of persons with disabilities by the EU Institutions.

People with disabilities are currently under employed by the Institutions – this is visible even without statistical evidence. The problem is complex: the institutions may not be entirely accessible to some people with disabilities, the information about competitions and vacancies does not always reach people with disabilities, recruitment procedures are inaccessible and indirectly discriminatory.

Barry Wilson from DG Personnel of the European Parliament presented an overview of the initiatives taken by the European Parliament to integrate persons with disabilities in its working environment.

The Parliament was the first institution to have introduced the pilot project for traineeships for disabled candidates, which has been running since 2007.

Mr. Guy Van Biesen from the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) informed the participants that EPSO notices of competition contain a "non-discrimination" clause, which applies to all, including candidates with disabilities. Candidates who declare a disability are contacted by EPSO in order to provide them with best accommodation of their needs during the examination. Up to now, 8 persons with disabilities have been selected and put on the reserve list, from which they can be recruited according to the needs of the Institutions.

In autumn 2008, a special-needs officer will be appointed at EPSO to coordinate the work on accessibility of examinations to candidates with disabilities. Moreover, a new website is in preparation which should be easier to use.

The full report from the meeting, containing the overview of the discussion held, is available on www.disabilityintergroup.eu (section Meetings)

Source: European Disability forum

European High Level Conference on Health and Disability Policy

This Conference was organised at the European Parliament on 16 September, and was hosted by Mr. Mauro, Vice-President of the European Parliament.

The objective was to present the policy recommendations of the MHADIE project: "*Measuring Health and Disability in Europe: supporting policy development*". The project is led by the IRCCS Foundation of Milan (Italy). Experts from Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Romania, Switzerland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the World health organization (WHO) and the European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) are taking part in this project.

The project developed with the support of the European Commission - DG Research's 6th Framework Program.

It is designed as a tool for providing appropriate data collection, analysis and assessments of existing possibilities in the different fields of disability. MHADIE also provides policy recommendations and guidelines on health and disability for the European Union.

The core issue developed in the workshops was how to move from theory to practical implementation in the different countries. Examples were given by Ireland, Romania and Portugal.

DG Research finally drew attention to the need to "translate" research to policy measures and practical implementations.

Mental health issues were taken into consideration by a large number of presenters.

Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, represented MHE at the meeting.

For more information: visit www.mhadie.it

John Bowis appointed Rapporteur on new EU Directive on cross-border healthcare

Long-time campaigner for EU patient mobility, John Bowis MEP, has been appointed the European Parliament's Rapporteur on a Directive that sets a clearer framework for cross-border patient rights.

For too long, the issue of a patient's right to access healthcare elsewhere in the European Union has been decided by the courts, rather than by politicians, and Mr. Bowis has repeatedly called for the European Commission to take action.

In the UK, Yvonne Watts brought a case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) after the National Health Service refused to refund her hip operation in France. The ECJ ruled that patients facing an 'undue delay' had the right to receive treatment in another EU Member State and be reimbursed by their national health provider.

Mr. Bowis said: *"Patients already have a right to access healthcare abroad if they are let down by their national health service, however, our rights and responsibilities have never been clearly defined. The lack of clarity and legal certainty surrounding cross-border health in the EU has caused many patients confusion and uncertainty at a vulnerable time in their lives. This Directive will enable patients to seek treatment across the European Union with a greater sense of confidence and security. It is good news for patients but it will only work if everyone - patients, family doctors, specialists and budget holders - understand how the system shall be implemented."*

For more information: visit

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/co_operation/mobility/patient_mobility_en.htm

Source: EPP-ED Group, European Parliament

IX. EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

Discrimination by association on the ground of disability is violation of the Employment Directive

On 17 July 2008, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) confirmed the opinion of Advocate General Poiares Maduro, that it is discrimination to discriminate against persons who are, although non-disabled themselves, associated with a disabled person.

UK citizen Sharon Coleman, a legal secretary in London, was harassed in the workplace and subsequently forced out of her job for demanding flexible working hours to look after her disabled son.

The UK tribunal referred the case to the ECJ asking whether the Council Directive 2000/78/EC (Employment Directive) protects people who, although not themselves disabled, experience direct discrimination and/or harassment in the field of employment and occupation because they are associated with a disabled person.

The ECJ pronounced that the purpose of the Employment Directive is to combat all forms of discrimination on grounds of disability, and the principle of equal treatment applies not to a particular category of person but by reference to the grounds protected by the Directive. The ECJ stated that the objective and effectiveness of the Employment Directive would be undermined if an employee who is for a disabled person cannot rely on the prohibition of direct discrimination or harassment. Based on these considerations, the Court decided that discrimination by association with a disabled person is covered by the Employment Directive and is therefore prohibited.

This landmark judgment is especially important in light of the proposal for a Directive combating discrimination outside the labour market. The current draft does not explicitly include 'discrimination by association' in the definition of discrimination. It can now be hoped that the draft is amended to respect the ECJ decision.

For more information: <http://curia.europa.eu/en/actu/communiqués/cp08/aff/cp080053en.pdf>
Source: EDF

X. WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) convened an International Forum on Mental Health and Psychosocial support (MHPSS) in Emergency Settings on 28-29 August 2008 at the King's college in London (UK).

On the basis of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) "*Guidelines on Mental Health and psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings*", the Forum widened the debate on how best MHPSS can be coordinated and delivered.

For more information: visit www.wfmh.org

XI. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Drafting of the World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation

In May and June 2008, regional consultations on the preliminary draft of the World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation were held in Costa Rica, Tanzania, Italy, and the Philippines. Each consultation brought together a diverse group of experts with complementary knowledge and experience, including persons with disabilities, from one or two of WHO's regions. Their general feedback, regional and cultural perspectives on the draft report, and the sources of regional information they identified will be key to ensuring that the final document is relevant in diverse contexts globally. The World Report will be launched in 2009.

For more information on the World Report on Disability and Rehabilitation: contact person, Alana Officer, Email officera@who.int.

Source: ENABLE

XII. UNITED NATIONS

The Human Rights Council Resolution on Disability

On 27 March 2008, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on "*The Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities*," which requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to prepare a thematic study to enhance awareness and understanding of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, focusing on legal measures key for the ratification and effective implementation of the Convention, such as those relating to equality and non-discrimination. In June 2008, OHCHR started an open consultation with States, civil society organisations, intergovernmental organisations and national human rights institutions on the study.

For more information: contact person, Simon Walker, Email swalker@ohchr.org, or Adriana Zarraluqui, Email azarraluqui@ohchr.org

Source: ENABLE

Navanethem Pillay confirmed as new High Commissioner for Human Rights

At a special meeting in New York on 28 July 2008, the United Nations General Assembly has confirmed the appointment of Navanethem (Navi) Pillay, of South Africa, to succeed Louise Arbour as High Commissioner for Human Rights -- the leading UN human rights official. Ms. Pillay's four-year term started on 1 September 2008.

Judge Pillay will be the fifth UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to be appointed since the office was founded 15 years ago.

For more information: visit <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/NewHC.aspx>

Source: United Nations

XIII. VARIOUS

GIP Strategy Paper: Prioritizing mental Health – Improving psychosocial and mental health care in transitional and developing countries

This strategic paper reflects the results of a series of discussions about GIP's (Global Initiative on Psychiatry) approach, niche and future held among GIP's staff, core collaborators and board members on various occasions beginning in 2007. The process leading to the preparation of the paper also permitted a renewed discussion on the organisation's core values. It likewise draws upon the expertise and advice of many others, who graciously offered on the role of GIP and help shape GIP's plans for the future. The paper should be viewed as a snapshot of where GIP is today and the horizon ahead.

Global Initiative on Psychiatry (GIP) is an international not-for-profit organisation for the promotion of humane, ethical and effective mental health care worldwide.

To download the document: <http://www.gip-global.org/images/24/209.pdf>

For more information: visit <http://www.gip-global.org/>

FRANCE – Assessment of mental disorders in older people

In France, a new outpatient and intersectoral structure has been set up to manage the "gerontopsychiatric situations where different levels of mental distress, behavioural changes and memory problems are mixed together".

The Centre for the assessment of mental diseases linked to ageing (CETPV – Centre d'Evaluation des Troubles Psychiques et du Vieillissement) builds on a partnership between practitioners, psychiatrists and gerontopsychiatrists. It aims to define, with the patient and his assistant, the more suitable therapeutic treatment. The centre also offers personalised support for the families.

In the Centre's new approach to psychiatry and geriatrics older people are considered as subjects.

For more information:

http://www.ch-sainte-anne.fr/site/centrHosp/presse/doc/livret_cetpv8.pdf

Source: Institut Wallon pour la Santé Mentale

XIV. PUBLICATIONS

New issue of the PROMENPOL Newsletter is out!

Issue n°5 of the PROMENPOL Newsletter is out. It focuses on the High Level Conference on Mental Health and Well-Being which took place in Brussels on 13 June 2008 and the 2nd ProMenPol Conference which was held in Berlin on 19-20 June 2008.

The PROMENPOL (Promoting and Protecting Mental Health – Supporting Policy through Integration of Research, Current Approaches and Practices) project sets out to identify useful and practical approaches to the promotion and protection of mental health, to form the basis for a systematic multidimensional approach to promoting personal mental health and managing the risk factors that predispose distress and pathology. MHE is one of the project's partners.

To download the issue:

<http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/?i=promenpol.en.newsletter.541>

Would you like to be kept informed on the ProMenPol news and events? Register to the ProMenPol Newsletter at

<http://www.mentalhealthpromotion.net/?i=promenpol.en.newsletter#ni541>

CHANGE – A Journey to Inclusion

This brochure, produced by Inclusion Europe and Lebenshilfe Vienna in 2007, presents a pictorial journey from Bulgarian institutions that violate human rights to innovative and inclusive services for community-living in Bulgaria. The topics describe people's experiences in learning, living, eating, personal care, working, play and leisure, activity and being with others. Each example shows changes from unacceptable conditions to more inclusive lifestyles.

By highlighting the work which has been done in Bulgaria, this book presents examples of actions which can be undertaken to ensure full rights and citizenship of all Europeans with disabilities.

The brochure's text is in English, German, Russian and Bulgarian.

To order a copy (EUR 2.50 per publication), contact the Inclusion Europe Secretariat:

Email secretariat@inclusion-europe.org, Tel. +32 2 502 28 15

The Relationship between Physical and Mental Health

The Highland Users Group (HUG) has produced a short guide to the subject of maintaining good physical health while living with a mental health problem. Entitled "*Mental and Physical Health: the Views of HUG on the Relationship Between Physical and Mental Health and What Can Keep Us Healthy*", the guide stems from a concern among HUG members that doctors are more likely to be dismissive of a person's physical problems if that person has a mental health problem. The guide looks at why HUG members think that people with a mental health problem are more likely to be physically unhealthy and at reasons why many people with a mental health problem seem to avoid using gyms and leisure centres. The guide sets out some of the techniques employed by HUG members to gain the motivation required to become physically healthier.

For more information: visit <http://www.hug.uk.net>

The fight against discrimination and the promotion of equality: how to measure progress done

This report aims at developing a conceptual framework for evaluating progress in equality and anti-discrimination efforts. It examines the statistical data available at the international, European and national levels that might contribute to an evaluation of the progress made in equality and anti-discrimination issue.

To read the full report:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/pubst/stud/measprog08_en.pdf

To read a summary:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/pubst/stud/meaprosum08_en.pdf

Training manuals for diversity management

This training manual for diversity management has been prepared for the European Commission in the framework of the "Anti-Discrimination and Diversity Training VT 2006/009" project, set up and funded by the European Commission. Between autumn 2007 and spring 2008 more than 1000 companies across Europe attended the diversity training seminars organised for the European Commission. The training manual provides concepts and practical tools which can help companies to try out or deepen their understanding about diversity management.

The training manual is available in several EU languages:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/public/pubst_en.htm (see at the bottom of the page)

To directly access the English version:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/train/traisem_en.pdf

XV. WEBSITES/ONLINE INFORMATION

Newsletter of the European Network of Homeless Health Workers (ENHW) - Summer 2008

The sixth issue of the ENHW Newsletter – Summer 2008, is now available online at:

<http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=760>

In this summer edition you will find an article on "*Housing First as a Model for Serving Mentally Ill Homeless Adults in the United States*".

The newsletter is published in the framework of the European Network of Homeless Health Workers, which brings together health professionals working with people who are homeless across the EU. It is a multi-disciplinary initiative, aimed at all persons working with homeless people in a health capacity, across all areas of mental and physical health.

New website for social issues on EU level

The website portal of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has been restyled. The new users-friendly website contains concise information on employment, pensions, discrimination, poverty, safe and healthy workplaces, mobility, equal opportunities for all, healthcare, social services or EU funding.

To visit the new website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/>

New website for health promotion videos

Following an initiative of DG Health and Consumers, this new web site aims to share ideas and best practice and to show what has been done in public health campaigns in European countries.

To assess the website: http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/videos/index_en.htm

XVI. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

16-17 October 2008

LOGOS European Days, « Enfermements et mises au secret. Crises et chuchotements dans les cuisines de l'institution...», Perpignan (France)

For more information: send an email to contact@logos66.com, or visit www.logos66.com

NEW!! 16-17 October 2008

IMAGES MENTALES (MENTAL IMAGES): films, round tables and workshops on images and mental health, Brussels (Belgium)

For more information: write an email to emessens@skynet.be, or call +32 02 511 55 43

19-22 October 2008

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

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

NEW!! 20-21 October 2008

EIPA-CEFASS Seminar, "The Internal Market in Healthcare - Free Choice and Freedom of Movement for Patients. The proposal of a Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare", Milan (Italy)

For more information: send an email to segreteria.cefass@eipa-it.com

22-24 October 2008

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

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

NEW!! 29-30 October 2008

European Conference "Protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in Europe: towards full participation, inclusion and empowerment", Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France)

For more information: contact disability@coe.int

5-7 November 2008

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

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

5-9 November 2008

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

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

13-14 November 2008

FEANTSA European Conference "People who are homeless can be housed: An insight into successful practices from across Europe", Cardiff (UK)

For more information: contact Christine Lambert, Email Christine.lambert@feantsa.org, or visit the FEANTSA website, www.feantsa.org

24 November 2008

Course on recent developments and innovations in the Dutch health services, Utrecht (Netherlands)

For more information: contact person, Clarine Sies, Email C.P.Sies@umcutrecht.nl, Tel +31 88 756 88 82

New!! 21-23 January 2009

4th 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>

NEW!! 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>

16-19 April 2009

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

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

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

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