



**MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE**



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**NEWSLETTER N°7 - 8/2009**

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## I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

### MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

#### **MHE policy work on mental health promotion and disorder prevention: MHE workshop on youth's mental and physical well-being, Youth Camp, Brussels, 8 July 2009**

On 8 July 2009, Mental Health Europe (MHE) in collaboration with the House of Prevention of Gent, Belgium, led a workshop on mental health at the Youth Health Initiative's Youth Camp. This event was organized by the European Youth Forum (YFJ) in collaboration with the European Commission.

The aim of the Camp initiative was to better prepare the young participants on the key themes of the Youth Health of 9 – 10 July (*see related article below*). Many European social and health NGOs actively participated by giving expertise and facilitating health-related workshops.

The MHE workshop provided participants with some knowledge and practice on mental health and well-being as a key issue for everybody's health. In particular, the workshop allowed the young people to learn more about EU policies and activities in this field and offered a practical, interactive training on how our mental health affects our physical health.

The workshop was well attended and the young people particularly enjoyed the practical, interactive side of the training. Based on the "Rock and Water" programme developed in the Netherlands, the workshop offered participants a new way to interact through physical exercises that aid developing mental and social skills. The activities ranged from simple self-defense, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence.

*To know more about the Youth Health Initiative, see the dedicated website at [http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/youth/conference/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/youth/conference/index_en.htm)*

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

#### **MHE policy work on mental health promotion and disorder prevention: MHE at the European conference on the Health of Young People, Brussels, 9 – 10 July 2009**

Mental Health Europe was one of the key stakeholders present at the conference on Youth and Health "Be healthy – Be yourself", organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Youth Forum and other youth organizations. The event, which took place on 9 and 10 July in Brussels, was opened by Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou.

About 500 people attended the conference including 200 young participants from across the Europe. Among the key speakers was H.R.H. Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands, Robert Madelin, Director General of DG Health and Consumers, Tine Radinja, President of the European Youth Forum and Martin Hirsch, French High Commissioner for Youth.

The conference aimed primarily to listen to young people and to involve them in the decision making process about their health. It also aimed at generating commitment from stakeholders to improve the health of young people.

The conference explored many key themes related to how young people can be empowered to take responsibility for their health:

- Communicating health issues
- Creating healthy environments
- No limits - learning to deal with risk
- Healthier young people at work
- Education as a driver for a better health
- Promoting health through social/youth work and non-formal education

MHE actively participated in many thematic sessions and gave its contribution in order to raise the profile of mental health and well-being of children and young people. In particular, a policy paper on (mentally) healthy environments was produced for the conference and distributed at the event.

The paper is available on the MHE website at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Supportive%20environments%20for%20mental%20health%20and%20well-being.pdf> (see also related article at page 13 of this newsletter).

For more information on the Youth Health Initiative, the conference and background reports please go to the "Be Healthy, Be Yourself" website: <http://health.europa.eu/youth>

### **MHE policy work on health promotion: MHE members' active support in the implementation and dissemination of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being**

The European Pact on Mental Health and Well-Being is now entering its implementation phase, in which stakeholders and policy makers in each of the 5 priority areas are encouraged in action towards promoting mental health and well-being and preventing mental disorders. This process will continue through 2009 and 2010.

The Pact will be implemented through a series of Thematic Conferences in each of the five priority areas. These conferences will be hosted by Member States in partnership with EC bodies and other stakeholders. The outcomes of the conferences will be disseminated widely. The first thematic conference on Mental Health in Youth and Education will take place on 29 – 30 September in Stockholm, Sweden. MHE will be represented at the event and be one of the keynote speakers.

MHE members are encouraged to support the implementation of the Pact by taking part in the following initiatives:

#### **GUIDELINES FOR PACT DISSEMINATION:**

- Arrange for a professional translation of the Pact into your own language.
- Include information about the Pact and the implementation process in your own power point presentations to colleagues. To facilitate this please feel free to download and use our slides with useful information.
- Add a banner and link to the EC web page in your own web
- Distribute information about the Pact in your meetings and local events.
- Join the Newsletter distribution list (email to [EC-MentalHealthProcess@gencat.cat](mailto:EC-MentalHealthProcess@gencat.cat))
- Encourage your institution to prepare a statement of support to the Pact. This will be published on the website <http://www.ec-mental-health-process.net/memberstates.html> (MHE support statement is available there)

**VOLUNTEER TO BE A COUNTRY FOCAL POINT FOR THE PACT IMPLEMENTATION:** to gather national examples of good practice action in mental health for children and adolescents (in view of the first conference), and to assist the dissemination process at your regional/national level. For further information please contact the technical secretariat at: [ec-mentalhealthprocess@gencat.cat](mailto:ec-mentalhealthprocess@gencat.cat)

Some more information, including summary papers about the Pact, is available at the link <http://www.ec-mental-health-process.net/implementation.html>

To know more on the MHE work around the Pact, write to Mari Fresu, MHE Policy Officer, at [mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org](mailto:mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org)

### **MHE policy work in the field of human rights: MHE action against the new Lithuanian law on the Protection of Minors and Public Information, July 2009**

On 14 July 2009, Mental Health Europe (MHE) together with the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN) issued a press release in Lithuania to express their deep disappointment for the Lithuanian Parliament overturning the veto of the President of the Republic to the new law on minors and public information.

On 15 June 2009 the Lithuanian Parliament has passed a legislation that bans any positive information or "propaganda" as they call it, about homosexuals. The law is called "Law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effect of Public Information" and Article 4 includes "propaganda of homosexuality, bisexuality" as one of the "Detrimental Effectors". The passed amendment puts homosexuals into the same category with the display of a dead or cruelly mutilated body, information that causes fear or horror or encourages suicide. The Lithuanian President vetoed on this law on 26 June 2009 according to the Lithuanian Constitution. Unfortunately his veto was rejected by Seimas of Lithuanian Republic on 14 July, 2009. The law would become in force without any amendments from 1 March, 2010. The rejection of veto was supported by 87 Seimas members, 6 were against and 25 abstained. The Seimas Speaker Arunas Valinskas ignored warnings and requests of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, ILGA and other concerned organizations and groups as well as recommendations from Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

As stressed in the press release, it is highly unfortunate that the concern for the wellbeing of young people which is an important and noble cause is used as an excuse to violate the rights of many children, young people and their families. The law that has been approved in Lithuania will have a dramatic effect on the mental health of gay and lesbian youth as well as the biological children and families of gay, lesbians and bisexual people. How will they now be protected from bullying in schools and stigma and discrimination in life? Furthermore it might stigmatise any family that does not correspond to the traditional norm and undermine health promotion in relation to sexual and reproductive health.

MHE and IPPF EN strongly disagree with a law which assumes that the promotion of the rights of every person independently from the sexual orientation is detrimental for the mental health of young people. Homosexuality is not a mental disease and this is known and generally accepted for a long time.

Following the protest of MHE – IPPF EN and other international and European organisations, many health, social and human right professionals got actively involved in the debate. The European Commission took this issue into high consideration too.

MHE will follow up on the Lithuanian case and further advocate ensuring that similar laws are not adopted in other EU member states.

*For more information on the MHE work around this issue, write to Roselyne Bourgon, Human Rights Officer, at [roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org](mailto:roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org)*

### **MHE policy work on social inclusion and mental health: Good Practices Project at Social Activation Model Project Launch in Ipswich, 30 June 2009**

Mental Health Europe was asked by Community Service Volunteers (CSV) Media Clubhouse in Ipswich, England, to present its work in relation to the social inclusion of people with mental health problems. CSV, a multi-media centre working with music, arts and modern communication technologies are currently implementing a new project called Social Activation Model (SAM); the project, funded by the European Social Fund will run for a period of 3 years. SAM will provide volunteer mentor support to 240 mental health service users to assist their reintegration into the community and labour market. During the project launch on 30 June 2009, Mental Health Europe Policy Officer Astrid Mechel presented the outcomes of MHE's project "Good Practices in Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems". The event was attended by a number of stakeholders working in the field of mental health and

social inclusion and was an excellent opportunity for networking and exchanging best practices.

To read more about MHE project, please see <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/our-projects/past-projects/good-practices.html>

For any further information, please or 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 Manifesto**

The Spring Alliance is a joint civil society initiative by the Social Platform, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Confédération Européenne des ONGs d'Urgence et de Développement (CONCORD - European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) and the European Environmental Bureau. MHE has been involved in the preparations of a common Manifesto that will encompass environmental sustainability, assuming global responsibility, establishment of inclusive societies, promoting green and quality jobs and improving democracy. The Manifesto is addressed to the incoming European Commission, the newly elected European Parliament and the Swedish and Spanish Council Presidencies. In addition to numerous demands for improvements to social inclusion policies and the eradication of poverty, the Manifesto also insists on the swift implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing at European and National level.

Mental Health Europe would like to ask its members for the support of the Spring Alliance and to sign the Manifesto via the following website: <http://www.springalliance.eu/manifesto>

For any further information, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)

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

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

- About us/ Our members: Portugal, Malta, Croatia, Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, Sweden <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/about-mental-health-europe/our-members.html>
- Publications/ MHE Position papers:  
"Promote Healthy Environments to protect our Children Mental Well-Being!"  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>
- Publications/ Reports from MHE seminars and other MHE events:  
MHE National Focal Points trainings: report and presentations  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/reports-from-mhe-seminars-and-other-mhe-events/mhe-national-focal-points-trainings.html>
- News and Events/ Forthcoming events:  
2nd European Conference on Schizophrenia Research (ECSR)  
21-23 September 2009, Berlin, Germany  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/forthcoming-events.html>
- News and events/ MHE Press releases:
  - "Swedish EU Presidency Work programme: which priorities for Mental Health and Well-Being?"  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases.html>

- MHE-IPPF Joint Press release on new Lithuanian law on the Protection of Minors and Public Information  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases.html>
- MHE projects:  
HELPS Flyer (French and English versions)  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/our-projects/current-projects/helps.html>

## **MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS**

On 8 July Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer, participated in the EPHA working group on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Brussels.

On 8 July, Mari Fresu, MHE Health Policy Officer, and Alessia Faravelli, MHE Information Officer, attended the Youth Campus initiative in Brussels. On that occasion Mari Fresu gave a presentation.

On 9 July, Alessia Faravelli participated in the International Round Table "Life after institutional care. Equal opportunities and social inclusion for young people: identification and promotion of best practices" held in Brussels.

On 9-10 July, Mari Fresu and Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, participated in the Youth Health conference in Brussels.

On 15 July, Mari Fresu attended the EPHA policy coordination meeting in Brussels.

On 16 July, Alessia Faravelli participated in the meeting on Commission's communication strategy held by the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 29 July, Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, and Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, participated in a meeting in London with two representatives of the European Network of (ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP).

On 31 August, Roselyne Bourgon attended the meeting of the Subcommittee on Human Rights (XP DROI) at the European Parliament.

## **NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

### **Which revision for the Italian Law on Mental Health?**

The Italian Mental Health Law (Law 180) is a frame law which indicates the principles to be followed by the twenty Italian Regions, by the Health Trusts and by the Local Authorities. On the 31 of December 1978, this law was included, with minor modifications, within the General Health Law no. 833. The Italian Mental Health Law prescribes not only the closure of the psychiatric hospitals but also the organization of care services within the territorial communities. The transformation of the psychiatric hospital based care system into the local community based care system gives to the local authorities the power to organize suitable solutions for people with mental health problems. Law 180 is particularly precise in giving rules for the compulsory treatments, which have to be:

- ordered by the Mayor of the community under the proposal of two doctors and communicated to the judge of the local tribunal;
- provided in beds of the local general hospital;
- seven days long, otherwise the whole bureaucratic process has to be repeated.

The law hasn't been changed over the past 30 years, but, currently, there is a proposal prepared by members of the right wing of the Italian Parliament, very near to the government, which aims at prolonging the time of compulsory treatment up to 6 months. Moreover, it foresees the possibility of allowing compulsory treatment even in private hospitals. The main concern of mental health organizations is the motivation of decision-makers to prolong the time of compulsory treatment, a characteristic that could have been inspired by the old prejudice on mental health issues (i.e. the prevalence of dangerousness of people with mental health problems if compared with "normal" people). The current period of compulsory treatment (that can be repeated) represents an important step in order to avoid the institutionalization and the development of chronic conditions. Hospitalizations remain as brief as possible and are organized in close connection with local community services.

Some improvements on the Law 180 certainly could be done by giving more guidelines and prescribing more actions for the creation of basic territorial services and quality/quantity standards as the coordination of the twenty Italian Regions have proposed. The defense of people's dignity should be the main address as well as the opportunity to give adequate support. The hope is that any new proposal creates a debate on mental health issues in order to develop better conditions for people with mental health problems and to develop a better culture on mental health at general level.

*For more information about mental health law in Italy, please see the following link: [www.triestesalutementale.it/english/doc/psy\\_reform\\_act.doc](http://www.triestesalutementale.it/english/doc/psy_reform_act.doc) or contact Pino Pini, MHE Board member, at [pipini@dada.it](mailto:pipini@dada.it)*

#### **Solidarity Campaign of Advocacy France: "Je suis fou, et vous?"**

The aim of the solidarity campaign "Je suis fou, et vous?" ("I am a fool and you?") is to create events to encourage citizens to express their views on issues related to mental health disorders or mental health problems which could lead to psychosocial disability. These debates aim to promote citizens participation in order to influence mental health policies.

*For more information, please see the following link in French [http://www.uspsy.fr/IMG/pdf/Campagne\\_de\\_solidarite\\_en\\_sante\\_mentale\\_oct-nov-dec\\_2009.pdf](http://www.uspsy.fr/IMG/pdf/Campagne_de_solidarite_en_sante_mentale_oct-nov-dec_2009.pdf) or contact MHE member Advocacy France at [secretariat@advocacy.fr](mailto:secretariat@advocacy.fr)*

#### **MHE member receives an award**

In the Queen's 2009 Birthday Honours List, Mrs Emily Adamberry Olivero, from the Psychological Support Group, has been honoured with the award of "Member of the British Empire (M.B.E.)" for services to the community in the field of mental health. MHE congratulates Mrs Olivero.

## **II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES**

#### **The European Commission launches new FP7 calls for proposals**

The European Commission has published several calls for proposals in various thematic areas of the 7<sup>th</sup> European Research Framework Programme (FP7). The thematic areas under Cooperation Specific Programme include three calls in the field of health.

*For further information, please visit <http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/calls/>*

Before contacting the European Commission, proposers are strongly advised to consult the original call text.

## **Report of the European Commission Communication on Health Inequalities**

On 23 July, the European Commission (EC) published a report in the frame of the "EU action to reduce health inequalities". This document reports all the responses received to the written consultation carried out by the EC in order to collect views on how the European Union could contribute to reducing health inequalities both within and between Member States. The results will also be included in the impact assessment document which will be published alongside the Communication once it is adopted. Among other organizations, MHE was asked to give input to contribute to the development of the communication. Mental Health Europe has consulted with its members and drafted a joint position.

*To read the full report, please visit*

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/socio\\_economics/documents/cons\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/socio_economics/documents/cons_report_en.pdf)

*To read the MHE contribution, please see*

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

## **Council of Europe: The recommendation on disability and ageing, Strasbourg, 10 July 2009**

On 10 July, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a recommendation on "ageing and disability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: sustainable frameworks to enable greater quality of life in an inclusive society". The Recommendation, invites all 47 Member States of the Council of Europe to take specific actions in order to promote autonomy and an independent and active life, enhancing quality and access to services, including social services and legal protection. Ageing people with disabilities and older people who develop disabilities will require support services to enable them to live as independently as possible. The Recommendation calls upon governments to ensure that high quality services are provided. This aims at giving Member States additional insight into the specific measures in order to improve the quality of life of ageing people with disabilities in line with the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015.

Source: Council of Europe Directorate of Communication

*To read the Full text of the Recommendation Rec/CM(2009)6, please click on*

<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1470069&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>

*To know more about the MHE work on the Council of Europe activities, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, Human Rights Officer, at [roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org](mailto:roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org)*

## **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Denmark and Belgium ratification**

This summer, Belgium and Denmark became respectively the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> EU countries to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In July 2009, 139 countries have signed the Convention, 82 countries have signed the Optional Protocol, 59 have ratified the Convention and 37 have ratified the Optional Protocol.

The United States of America signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This is an historical step taken by President Obama in order to promote the human rights of people with disabilities in the USA; this could influence other countries to sign and ratify the UN Convention. For all the countries that ratified the text the provisions now need to be transformed into policies, programmes and practices; this will have a real impact on the lives of persons with disabilities.

Source: European Disability Forum

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

## **Calls for Proposals for the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion are being published**

In Europe, 78 million people live below the poverty line; this equates to 16% of the European population, hence the Year 2010 will be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. In this framework, issues such as eradicating child poverty, access to good housing, unemployment, and fighting discrimination will be addressed. The EY 2010 has a budget of 26 million Euros of which 17 million Euros are provided by the EU. Civil society organizations are invited to contribute to activities via calls for proposals that will be issued by the National Implementing Bodies in each EU country. Among the numerous funded activities, there will be awareness-raising campaigns, solidarity campaigns, conferences and other pioneering initiatives. Up to date, calls for proposals have been published in Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the UK.

*To know more about the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, please see the webpage <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=637>*

*To receive the above Calls as well as the contact details of all National Implementing Bodies, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)*

## **Peer Review on Alzheimer's and other related diseases- France 5-6 May 2009**

The results of the peer review on "Alzheimer's and other related diseases: coping with behavioral disorders in the patient's home" have been published. The participating experts from Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom discussed best practices related to the assessment of behavioral disorders, the types of home care provisions provided by professional carers, and training and information programmes.

*Further information about peer reviews in the field of social inclusion can be found at <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews>*

*Further information can be obtained via the following link <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer%20reviews/2009/alzheimers-and-related-diseases>*

## **Mental Health, Resilience and Inequalities**

The report "Mental Health, resilience and inequalities", published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, explores the wealth of evidence that mental health influences a very wide range of outcomes for individuals and communities. These include healthier lifestyles; better physical health; improved recovery from illness; fewer limitations in daily living; higher educational attainment; greater productivity, employment and earnings; better relationships with adults and with children; more social cohesion and engagement and improved quality of life. These outcomes are not just or necessarily a consequence of the absence of mental illness, but are associated with the presence of positive mental health, sometimes referred to as 'wellbeing'. Improving mental health is a worthwhile goal in itself: most people value a sense of emotional and social wellbeing; in addition, good mental health has many other far reaching benefits.

*To download the full report, please see <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e92227.pdf>*

## **26.9% of EU's Gross Domestic Product<sup>2</sup> went on social protection in 2006**

According to data published by Eurostat on 2 June, spending on social protection accounted for 26.9% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the EU in 2006. The rate also nudged 27% in 2005, 2004 and 2003. This steady average, however, masked wide variations between Member States. In 2006, the share of social protection spending as a percentage of GDP topped 30% in France (31.1%), Sweden (30.7%) and Belgium (30.1%) but was below 15% in

Lithuania (13.2%), Estonia (12.4%) and Latvia (12.2%). These gaps reflect differences in living standards, but also in national social protection systems, demographic trends, and other economic, social and institutional factors specific to each country. Old-age and survivors' benefits accounted for 46% of total social protection spending in the EU in 2006, sickness benefits and health care 29%, disability and family benefits 8% each, unemployment benefits 6%, and benefits related to housing and social exclusion 4%.

To read the full report, please see <http://tinyurl.com/mj4mjo>

### **Seclusion**

In The Netherlands the Psychiatric Hospital "Spaarnepoort" in Hoofddorp has received an award for reducing seclusion and restraints. They started a project on "Kindly welcome and treatment" and were able to reduce the number of seclusions to 32% and the time spent in seclusions to 40%. The Inspectorate of the Ministry of Health has rewarded them and the hospital was recognised as an example.

The final report in which more examples of good practice are mentioned is called "The first 5 minutes: half of the work".

MHE is interested in good practices in other countries. Please inform us of good practices in your country at [info@mhe-sme.org](mailto:info@mhe-sme.org).

SOURCE: GGZ Nederland

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

### **EuRADE publishes the new guidelines on the FP7 funding opportunities**

EuRADE is an EU funded project led by the European Disability Forum (EDF) in partnership with Leeds and Maastricht Universities. The core goals of EuRADE are to integrate disability issues as well as to increase and enhance the full participation of disabled people's organisations as equal and active partners in research initiatives that will contribute to improving the lives of people with disabilities in Europe.

In the framework of the EuRADE project a guide on EU funding opportunities under the 7<sup>th</sup> European Research Framework Programme (FP7) has been published. The guide offers information related to the funding opportunities for research in the field of disability and provides a step by step methodology on how to apply for funding.

The guidelines are available on the EuRADE website at <http://www.eurade.eu/>

### **Swedish position paper "Mental health, children and young people"**

In November 2008 the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) adopted a position paper on the mental health of children and young people. The paper primarily expresses the views of the Association on how the local authorities and county councils should act in this field, but also on the responsibilities of the States.

The position paper is available online at [www.skl.se/psykiskhalsa](http://www.skl.se/psykiskhalsa) and can also be ordered on [www.skl.se/publikationer](http://www.skl.se/publikationer).

### **Scotland publishes the violence against women strategy**

The Scottish government has become the first national government in the UK to publish the violence against women strategy "Safer Lives: Changed Lives – A Shared Approach to Tackling Violence against Women in Scotland". Scotland has led the way for several years on broadening its domestic abuse strategy to cover sexual violence and other forms of violence against women. The strategy is explicitly rooted in obligations under the Gender Equality Duty.

The UK government has recently consulted in England on the violence against women strategy and is expected to publish a draft document in autumn.

*To read the full document, please see*

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/273938/0081867.pdf>

### **University of Vienna offers 12 paid Human Rights PhD posts**

The University of Vienna – Interdisciplinary Platform “Human Rights in the European Context”, in collaboration with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights offers 12 paid (part-time) posts in the interdisciplinary doctoral college “Empowerment through Human Rights”.

Duration of positions: 3 years

Deadlines for applications: 30 September 2009

*For further information, please consult the Vienna University website at <http://human-rights.univie.ac.at/>*

### **Mental health of students in higher education, Greece**

The Laboratory of Psychological Counselling for Students of the National Kapodistrian University of Athens has been developing various activities for 20 years and has gained a rich experience in the improvement of students’ mental health. It also took part in many programs funded by the European Union. Via the MHE Newsletter, the Laboratory of Psychological Counselling for Students of the National Kapodistrian University of Athens invites the specialists and the professionals involved in the field of mental health to come into contact with them in order to plan a common action for the mental health of the European students.

*For further information please visit [www.uoa.gr/skf](http://www.uoa.gr/skf)*

## **IV. PUBLICATIONS**

### **Eurofound publication “Demographic change and social services”**

The European Foundation for the Improvement of living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) issued a new publication entitled “Demographic change and social services”. The latest issue in Eurofound’s series looks at examples of initiatives that assist with childcare in disadvantaged communities and seek to ensure more integrated and better quality housing for migrants and attract potential employees to work in the care sector.

*To read the full issue, please see*

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2008/106/en/1/EF08106EN.pdf>

### **European Commission publishes the “Comparative International Perspectives on Positive Actions Measures”**

The study ‘International perspectives on positive action measures’ examines the role that positive action measures can play in preventing or remedying discrimination. Examples from both public and private sector are included in this study.

*To read the study, please see the following link*

<http://www.univie.ac.at/bim/php/bim/get.php?id=1229>

### **IWSM publication "Passenger in the network?"**

The Institut Wallon pour la Santé Mentale (IWSM) published the acts of its "etats généraux" entitled "Passenger in the network?" ("Passager du réseaux ?" - available only in French). The publication collects the inputs given by the meeting organised on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2008 in Namur (Belgium) and addresses the theme of users' participation in the mental health networks.

For further information, please visit the website <http://www.iwsm.be/institut-wallon-sante-mentale.php?id=1>

## **V. CONFERENCES**

**21-23 September 2009**

**2<sup>nd</sup> European Conference on "Schizophrenia Research", Berlin**

For further information please visit [www.schizophrenianet.eu](http://www.schizophrenianet.eu) or send an e-mail at [schizophrenia@cpo-hanser.de](mailto:schizophrenia@cpo-hanser.de)

**30 September – 3 October 2009**

**12<sup>th</sup> European Health Forum Gastein "Financial Crisis and Health Policy", Bad Hofgastein, Austria**

For more information, please visit [www.ehfg.org](http://www.ehfg.org)

**1-2 October 2009**

**International Conference "Mental Health and Citizenship", Lyngby, Denmark**

For further information please visit [www.imhcn.org](http://www.imhcn.org)

**14-15 October 2009**

**European Seminar "At work, but poor and without a voice?", St Julians, Malta**

For further information please visit [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

**27-30 October 2009**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Eastern Europe Psychiatric Congress "Collaborating for mental health", Moscow**

Detailed information on the Congress is available at

<http://en.paeeb2009moscow.ru/invitation/>

Registration forms are available at <http://en.paeeb2009moscow.ru/registration/>

**30 November – 2 December 2009**

**Global Conference on Child Rights and Research "Children's Rights at a Cross-Roads", Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

For further information, please visit the webpage

<http://www.childwatch.uio.no/projects/global-conferences/un-child-rights-convention-anniversary-conference-2009/>

**16-19 June 2010**

**15<sup>th</sup> EPA Symposium for "Section Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry", Bergen, Norway**

For further information, please see [www.epidemiology2010gerben.org](http://www.epidemiology2010gerben.org)

### **ERRATUM**

Please note that the contact for the International Congress "Adolescence and Metamorphosis", taking place on 10-11 December 2009 in Brussels, is [emessens@skynet.be](mailto:emessens@skynet.be)

## **SPECIAL FOCUS OF THE SUMMER MHE NEWSLETTER:**

### **"Promote healthy environments to protect our children mental well-being!"**

Prepared on the occasion of the European Conference on the Health of Young People on 9 – 10 July 2009 in Brussels (*see related article at page 2 of this Newsletter*), this new MHE policy paper focuses on how the built environment can direct and indirect affect everybody's mental health. Special attention is given to the effects on the child mental well-being.

Children are more vulnerable to changes in their physical, emotional and social environments because of their rapid physical and mental health growth and smaller body size. The health and well-being of children depends on the safety and quality of their physical / natural environments, built environments and social environments – at home, school and in the community. Children also need to be in environments which protect them from violence, abuse, exploitation, injuries and neglect.

In the paper, MHE invites policy and decision makers have to take action to promote supportive environments and to prevent environmental exposures to toxic substances that can contribute to raise mental health problems.

Some key recommendations to be put into practice include:

- Identifying and removing the risk factors may improve the mental well-being of all and the quality of life for the affected individuals and their families
- Systematic assessment of the mental health impact of a rapidly changing environment - particularly in the areas of employment and urbanization
- Reducing physical, architectural and infrastructural barriers. More accessible, safer and securer transport should be provided, including the social dimension
- Integrating mental health considerations into city urban planning, by introducing basic education on (mental) health determinants in the curricula of urban planners, architects and other relevant professionals
- Creating sustainable partnerships between urban, social and health planners, as well as young people in order to create and improve the infrastructures for young people.

*The full text of the policy paper is available on the MHE website at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Supportive%20environments%20for%20mental%20health%20and%20well-being.pdf>.*

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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)*