



**MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE**



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**NEWSLETTER N°9 /2009  
SEPTEMBER 2009**

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

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## I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

### MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

#### **MHE policy work on social inclusion and mental health: MHE and the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless call on Members of European Parliament to enhance policies on homelessness and mental health**

Mental Health Europe (MHE), together with the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless (FEANTSA) prepared a joint policy statement putting forward key recommendations for the newly elected Members of European Parliament to address the issues of homelessness and mental health.

Evidence shows that there is clear link between mental health problems and homelessness. There is a consensus at EU level that homelessness needs to be tackled, as acknowledged by the European Parliament in a written declaration on homelessness in 2008, but more concrete action is required. The European Parliament also adopted earlier this year a Resolution on Mental Health, clearly supporting the importance of EU-wide cooperation on this issue, as promoted in the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being.

In their joint statement, MHE and FEANTSA point out that an effective implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being has to be ensured. The respect and safeguarding of human rights and the promotion of mental health and well-being for all should become key priorities in all policies. Everyone has a right to housing, to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and to quality healthcare and social services. Targeted policy measures aimed at fighting extreme poverty, social exclusion and homelessness are needed, as they have an unquestionable impact on people's state of health, including mental health. Cooperation amongst policy-makers working in different policy areas such as social policy, housing, public health, physical health and mental health in the sense of a holistic approach are needed.

The common MHE-FEANTSA statement can be downloaded at: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Common%20statement%20FEANTSA%20MHE%20.pdf>

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

#### **MHE policy work on social inclusion and mental health: NGO meeting with Robert Verrue, new Director General of DG Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities**

During a meeting organised by the Social Platform, European Social NGO's were given the opportunity for dialogue with Robert Verrue, the new Director General of DG Employment. MHE representative Astrid Mechel delivered a brief introduction on the work on MHE and highlighted the consequences of the unfortunate cuts in public spending for mental health and social services in times of financial and economic crisis, and the subsequent additional effects on the mental health of the population. Delegates were reminded of the commitment made at EU level such as in the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

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

## **MHE policy work on social inclusion and mental health: Participation in Social Platform networking visit with the upcoming Spanish EU Presidency**

On 7 and 8 September 2009, Mental Health Europe and some of its members participated in a networking visit with the upcoming Spanish Presidency in Madrid, organised by the Social Platform. The aim of the event was to connect social NGOs with the upcoming Spanish EU Presidency.

During the event, an exchange between more than 60 NGO's and the Directorate General for Social Policies, Families and Youth from the Spanish Ministry of Public Health and Social Policies, Juan Carlos Mato, took place. Fundación INTRAS and MHE prepared a statement about key issues at stake in Spain regarding mental health policies and how the recession affects the mental health sector in Spain. Key recommendations addressed to national and European policy-makers were also presented. The MHE delegation pointed out that mental health can be seen as an indicator of the current crisis and of its gravity. Redundancies and the closing of institutions represent a worrying aspect: depression increased within the population, affecting not only people made redundant in the crisis, but whole families. Current developments include the loss of social bonds and an increased number of suicides. Mental health is to be seen as a sensitive aspect of social policy. In the sense of a Social Pact, the exit out of the crisis needs to be managed in a coordinated way, encompassing social protection, employment and training. Further follow-up with the Spanish Presidency is being continued.

*The common statement of Fundación INTRAS and MHE can be downloaded here:*  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/INTRAS-MHE%20Statement%20addressed%20to%20Spanish%20Presidency.pdf>

*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)*

## **2<sup>nd</sup> European Conference on Schizophrenia Research, 21-23 September, Berlin**

MHE was very pleased to be invited to contribute to one of the symposia organized in the framework of this well attended conference, held by the Competence Network on Schizophrenia, the German Psychiatry and Psychotherapy Association and the European Psychiatric Association.

Mary Van Dievel, presented MHE "Good practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems" project on the Symposium "From stigma research to mental health policy". Other speakers were Janet Wallcraft representing the European Network of (ex-)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP), who highlighted the user involvement in mental health research; Claire Henderson, who spoke about the "Time to change - Anti-stigma programme in England", and Harald Zäske who highlighted the activities of the German Alliance for Mental Health. Other interesting symposia for MHE areas of work were "Working together: vocational recovery in early psychosis" and "Addressing stigma – A quality feature for best psychiatric care".

*Abstract of all the presentations can be downloaded form the Conference website at <http://www.schizophrenianet.eu/home.html>*

## **Mental Health and the Issues Facing Society: Rehabilitation, Social Involvement and Professional Integration, 29 September, Luxembourg**

More than 250 people attended the Conference "Mental Health and the Issues Facing Society: Rehabilitation, Social Involvement and Professional Integration" held in Mersch (Luxembourg) and organised by the Association d'Aide par le Travail Thérapeutique pour Personnes Psycotiques (ATP).

MHE was invited to speak about the European context. Mary Van Dievel presented MHE and its activities, gave an overview of the European Institutions and their respective roles and talked about the EU Pact on Mental health and Well-Being and MHE activities in the field of social inclusion (Pogress Programme).

Other speakers came from France, Québec, Ireland, Switzerland, USA, UK and Luxembourg. Mental health service users gave evidence about their re-employment process, be it in supported or regular employment schemes. Some of the speakers from abroad encouraged the staff from sheltered employment / sheltered workshop to social firms / social employment.

*For more information about the Conference presentations please contact Sandrine Bem at [Sandrine.bem@atp.lu](mailto:Sandrine.bem@atp.lu)*

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

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

- Publications/ MHE Position papers:  
Feantsa-MHE Joint Statement on Homelessness and Mental Health addressed to the newly elected Members of European Parliament  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>
- Publications/ Reports from MHE seminars and other MHE events/MHE National Focal Points Training sessions 2009  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/reports-from-mhe-seminars-and-other-mhe-events/mhe-national-focal-points-trainings.html>
- Publications/ Articles about MHE  
"Improving Mental Health Policies in the EU- MHE Manifesto"  
The European Parliament Magazine, Special issue, August 2009  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/articles-about-mhe.html>
- News and events/ Forthcoming events:  
"The Forgotten Children" - Vilnius, Lithuania, 26-27 November 2009  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/forthcoming-events.html>
- News and events/ MHE Press releases:  
MHE and FEANTSA call on Members of European Parliament to enhance policies on homelessness and mental health  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases.html>

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

- Publications/ Notes d'information de SME:
  - Conférence sur la Santé des Jeunes : Soyez Sain, Soyez vous-même 9 -10 juillet 2009 Promouvoir des environnements sains pour protéger le bien-être mental de nos enfants!
  - Déclaration de soutien de Santé Mentale Europe au Pacte européen pour la santé mentale et le bien-être
  - Recommandations de SME concernant l'impact psychosocial de la crise économique et financière
  - Position de SME autour du Plan d'Action du Conseil de l'Europe visant à promouvoir les droits et la pleine participation des personnes handicapées dans la société: Améliorer la qualité de vie des personnes handicapées en Europe 2006-2015. Inclusion de la santé mentale  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/fr/publications/notes-d-information-de-sme.html>

- Publications/ Comptes rendus des séminaires et autres événements organisés par SME  
Rapport final sur le séminaire de renforcement des capacités organisé par SME, juin 2009, Bruxelles  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/fr/publications/comptes-rendus-seminaires-evenements-organises-par-sme/seminaire-renforcement-capacites-sme-juin-2009.html>
- Notre travail/ Droits de l'Homme et santé mentale:  
Contribution de SME à l'élaboration du programme de travail de l'Agence des Droits Fondamentaux pour 2010  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/fr/notre-travail/droits-de-lhomme-et-sante-mentale.html>

## **MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS**

On 2-4 September, Malgorzata Kmita, MHE Board Member, attended the 2009 World Mental Health Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health in Athens.

On 2-3 September, Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, attended the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee meeting in Brussels.

On 6-11 September, Lucy Vallis, MHE Project Coordinator, represented MHE in the training "Bullying and harassment in the workplace" organized by NIVA at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in Helsinki.

On 7-8 September, Astrid Mechel participated in the Networking Conference with the upcoming Spanish EU Presidency in Madrid, organised by the Social Platform.

On 10 September, Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, and Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer, took part in the Ad hoc Expert Group on Institutional Care Reform at the Špidla Cabinet, organized by the European Commission in Brussels.

On 10-12 September, Rita Donabauer, MHE Board Member, gave a presentation at the Social Firms Europe – CEFEC Conference in Prague.

On 17 September, Alessia Faravelli, MHE Information Officer, participated in the preparatory meeting for the 2010 EU Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, organised by the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) in Brussels.

On 17 September, Roselyne Bourgon attended the meeting of the Fundamental Rights and Non Discrimination Working Group of the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 21 September, Astrid Mechel represented MHE in the Meeting of Social NGO's with the new Director General of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, organised by the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 21-22 September, Pino Pini, MHE Board Member, gave a presentation at the European Health Property Network conference in Durham, UK.

On 21-23 September, Mary Van Dievel gave a presentation at the European Conference on Schizophrenia Research in Berlin.

On 22 September, Astrid Mechel represented MHE in the Social Policy Working Group, held by the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 23 September, Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, participated in the Ad hoc Expert Group on Institutional Care Reform at the Špidla Cabinet, organized by the European Commission in Brussels.

On 28 September, Astrid Mechel participated in the High-Level conference "Putting people and planet first: EU leadership for a social and green strategy post-2010", organised by the Spring Alliance in Brussels.

On 28-29 September, Mary Van Dievel gave a presentation at the Santé Mentale et Enjeux Sociétaux Conference in Luxembourg.

On 29-30 September, Roselyne Bourgon participated in the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGO) of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

On 29 and 30 September, Gregor Henderson, MHE External Adviser, gave a presentation at the first European Pact's thematic conference "Promotion of Mental Health and Well-being of Children and Young People- Making it happen" in Stockholm. On the same occasion, Mari Fresu, MHE Health Policy Officer, participated as rapporteur in the Plenary Session.

## **NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

### **Mental Health Services need to transform their workforce to implement recovery**

A paper recently published by Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health states that mental health trusts should actively recruit people with personal experience of using services. "Implementing Recovery", by Dr Jed Boardman and Prof Geoff Shepherd, sets out the ten major challenges for mental health services to put recovery at the heart of their everyday practice.

*To read more about the paper, please see*

[http://www.scmh.org.uk/news/2009\\_implementing\\_recovery.aspx](http://www.scmh.org.uk/news/2009_implementing_recovery.aspx)

### **Prisoners with mental health problems should not be excluded from help to find work, says Sainsbury Centre**

Prisoners with mental health problems are not getting the support they need to gain employment when they are released, according to a policy paper published at the beginning of September by Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, MHE member. The report states that many prison-based work preparation schemes exclude prisoners with mental health problems because they are not thought to be ready for work. Most employment schemes for offenders place too much emphasis on learning skills and not enough on what actually helps people to get and keep jobs. Ineffective employment support inside and outside prison is leaving many thousands of people out of the labour market and at high risk of offending again. This report states that many of the most successful schemes feature the core principles of Individual Placement and Support, the most effective approach to assisting people with mental health problems to get into work. They include direct links with local employers, support 'through the gate' that is sustained once a person gets a job, and help not just with employment but also health, housing and other needs. Offenders with mental health problems should be given an equal chance to participate in employment schemes, and get help for their health at the same time. The report from Sainsbury Centre calls on the British Government to shift the emphasis of its employment programmes for offenders from training and job preparation to helping people into paid employment.

*To read the paper published by Sainsbury Centre, please see the following link*

[http://www.scmh.org.uk/pdfs/securing\\_employment\\_for\\_offenders.pdf](http://www.scmh.org.uk/pdfs/securing_employment_for_offenders.pdf)

## **Campaign 1 in 4**

GGZ Nederland, the Dutch Organisation for Mental Health, representing the mental health services and addiction care in the Netherlands, started a campaign called "[www.1opde4.nl](http://www.1opde4.nl)" in order to show that mental health problems occur very often and that they can be treated well.

"Nothing to be ashamed of!": With big posters on "Prince Day" in two popular newspapers GGZ Nederland draws the attention to the work done in the mental health services and addiction care.

Shame: One in four adults in the Netherlands has mental health problems. Despite these problems occur on large scale, prejudice and shame are still present. On the website [www.1opde4.nl](http://www.1opde4.nl) films of users and carers of the mental health and addiction can be viewed.

An interesting sector: The campaign is mainly directed towards people between 20<40 years. The early age of the audience is the rational for choosing an online campaign. GGZ Nederland wants to stress that mental health care doesn't only represent a high cost for the society, but also "an investment in the mental resilience of the country".

For more info please see [www.1opde4.nl](http://www.1opde4.nl)

## **New Offices for Sto Koluri Split**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August STO KOLURI SPLIT, the Croatian Association for Psychosocial Well being, was officially settled. The association opened two regional offices, one in Zadar and one in Dubrovnik.

For more information please send an e-mail to [adhinfo@stokoluri.hr](mailto:adhinfo@stokoluri.hr) or [stokoluri@xnet.hr](mailto:stokoluri@xnet.hr)

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

### **Call for proposals published by Directorate General Research**

On 30 July 2009, Directorate General Resarch published a call for proposals within the 7<sup>th</sup> RTD Research programme. In particular the topic "Social Platform on Sustainable Lifestyles" gives NGOs and Civil Society Organisations the opportunity to apply for funding.

You will find further information on the following links:

[http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7ActivityCallsPage&id\\_activit y=8](http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/dc/index.cfm?fuseaction=UserSite.FP7ActivityCallsPage&id_activit y=8) and [http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index_en.html)

### **Creating Conditions for Independent Living: European Day of Disabled Persons Conference**

To mark the European Day of People with Disabilities, the European Commission organises a policy conference in Brussels on 3-4 December 2009, in close cooperation with the European Disability Forum (EDF). The Conference will contribute to a better understanding of issues related to independent living, in particular economic autonomy, community services and assistive technologies.

For more information, please see

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=429&langId=en&eventsId=205&furtherEvents=yes>

## **European Parliament adopted a motion on Lithuanian law on the Protection of Minors against the Detrimental Effects of Public Information**

The European Parliament, meeting in plenary session in Strasbourg on 17<sup>th</sup> of September, discussed and adopted a motion for resolution on the situation in Lithuania regarding the recently adopted homophobic legislation. MEPs say the wording of the law is "vague and legally unclear and might lead to controversial interpretations". It is unclear what kind of materials are concerned and whether the law extends to books, art, press, publicity, music, theatre, exhibitions or demonstrations. While acknowledging the need for "appropriate legal protection" of children, Parliament stresses the importance of fighting discrimination "in particular when it is based on sexual orientations." Parliament welcomes more recent steps to review the changes and asks Lithuania to ensure that their laws are compatible with international and European human and civil rights legislation. MEPs call the Agency for Fundamental Rights to give an opinion and for Parliament's Civil Liberties Committee to follow up the issue. The Parliament adopted its resolution by 349 votes in favour to 218 against with 46 abstentions.

MHE welcomes the motion and will follow up on the outcomes of this vote.

*To read the text of the motion, please see the following link*

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2009-0019&language=EN&ring=B7-2009-0030>

For more information about MHE activities in this field, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer at [Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org](mailto:Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org)

Source: European Parliament Press service

## **Swedish Ministers presented Presidency Priorities in the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee**

On 2-3 September, Swedish Minister for Elderly Care and Public Health Maria Larson, Swedish Minister for Employment Sven Otto Littorin as well as Bettina Kashefi, State Secretary responsible for sickness insurance, pensions and social insurance administration at the Swedish Ministry for Social Security, presented the EU Presidency priorities in their respective areas, followed by a question-and-answer session with the members of the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee.

The presentations highlighted the Swedish Presidency's goals towards promoting society wellbeing, healthy and dignified ageing, disabled people. They also stressed the importance of improving the quality of care towards a more individual, tailor-made approach according to the individual's personal needs, labour market inclusion and the fight against poverty. The Swedish Ministers also called for an improved cooperation between health care and social protection sector as well as an enhanced exchange of best practices of the EU member states.

Mental Health Europe had presented its view on the Swedish Presidency Priorities to the Swedish Presidency in July 2009.

*To read MHE viewpoint, please go to <http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/MHE%20view%20on%20Swedish%20Presidency%20work%20programme.pdf>*

### **Ah Hoc Group on the Transition from Institutional Care to Community-Based care**

On 23 September, the members of the Expert group were invited to handle over the final report to Commissioner Špidla. He was very pleased with the outcomes since they cover the major group of people who spend long years on institutional care: people with physical or intellectual disabilities, mental health problems, elderly and children. The actual number of people in institutional case is difficult to ascertain, but it is certainly in the millions.

The report identifies several key challenges on deinstitutionalisation and a set of common basic principles. It also indicates the Member States as main actors in the achievement of high quality standards in this field. The meeting gave members the opportunity to address Recommendations to the European Commission: namely to present a Communication on the transition to community-based care and to build common basic principles into all relevant EU policies.

A follow-up meeting with all the experts will be organised.

*The report is now available in English, but will be soon published in all EU languages.*

### **Barroso's concessions on Social issues**

The European Parliament approved the appointment of José Manuel Barroso as President of the European Commission for a second term on 16 September 2009. President Barroso made concessions on social issues which are collected in his position document "Political guidelines for the next Commission". President Barroso's political guidelines include proposals to engage a social impact assessment for new legislation; a women's charter to address the gender pay gap; a framework for quality public services.

*To read the full text, please see*

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/president/pdf/press\\_20090903\\_EN.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/press_20090903_EN.pdf)

Source: Solidar

### **Barroso: Next EU Commission to have a Commissioner for Human Rights and Civil Liberties**

José Manuel Barroso stated that the next European Commission is likely to have a new Commissioner responsible for Human Rights and Civil Liberties. The promise about the new portfolio has been made by Barroso in a meeting with the Liberal Democrats' MEPs during which Barroso tried to convince about his re-election as President of the upcoming Commission. Currently the European Commission has a Justice, Freedom and Security Commissioner, but critics have long argued that it is too broad to give enough attention to data protection issues as well as the pressing problem of immigration and the rights of migrants in member states.

*For further information please visit this link <http://euobserver.com/9/28643/?rk=1>*

Source: Eurochild INFO FLASH (29/2009)

### **Online debate on EU health and consumer policy**

The Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) celebrated its 10th anniversary this autumn. On this occasion an online discussion on EU health and consumer policy was launched. EU health and consumer policy touches many aspects of the daily life of Europeans, from the safety of the food they eat or the products they use, to the protection they enjoy when making purchases. The on-line debate was launched on September 14 providing Europeans with a good opportunity to make their voices heard on health and consumer policy and to get involved in a discussion with others. While visiting a special sub-site it is also possible to vote in an on-line opinion poll and learn more about EU initiatives by watching video-clips or links provided. The specific channel on Debate Europe (<http://europa.eu/debateeurope>) will be open until 9 October 2009. The conclusions of the on-

line discussion will be presented during an anniversary seminar on 23 October 2009 which will be attended by current and former Commissioners, stakeholders and the media. It will also be made available on the DG SANCO website.

*For more information, please contact Jan-Marek Ziolkowski at the following email address [jan-marek.ziolkowski@ec.europa.eu](mailto:jan-marek.ziolkowski@ec.europa.eu)*

### **Fundamental Rights Agency undertakes a study on how to link human rights education to its key target groups**

The European Agency on Fundamental Rights (FRA) has commissioned the Change Institute (CI) with Professor Audrey Osler, founding Director of the Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education (CCHRE) at the University of Leeds, to undertake a preparatory study investigating how human rights education can best be linked to key FRA target groups. This study will assist in identifying areas where the FRA may bring added value to existing work and enable it respond to identified needs. The aim of the study is to ensure that not only the needs of the stakeholders and targeted groups are identified, but appropriate materials related to education and training are developed to ensure sustainability and long term effectiveness, as well as complimentary with existing initiatives. The preparatory study includes a mapping of existing human rights education initiatives throughout Europe, an institutional needs assessment for advancing human rights education across the EU including at European and Member State level as well as a targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders. MHE has been asked to contribute as relevant stakeholder. The consultation took place on 15 September and included some elements on what Mental Health Europe considers as priority for actions to be undertaken by the FRA in the field of human rights education.

*For more information about MHE key activities in human rights field, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer at [Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org](mailto:Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org)*

### **EU Parliament president accepts disability rights demands**

During the week of 14-17 September, 440 people from 21 European countries met in Strasbourg for the Freedom Drive. The group included disabled people with their personal assistants. The common cause being Independent Living: deinstitutionalization, the right of personal assistance and the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. One of the 8 demands of Freedom Drivers handed over to EU Parliament President Jerzy Burzek and to Richard Howitt MEP on 16 September was to the European Community to ratify the human rights convention.

Freedom Drivers furthermore asked for a continuation of the development of community-based services to achieve deinstitutionalization across Europe.

*To read more about the 8 Freedom Drive Demands, please see [www.enil.eu/enil.index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=239](http://www.enil.eu/enil.index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=239)*

### **Jerome Vignon leaves the European Commission**

Jerome Vignon left his post as European Commission's Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities due to retirement.

### **New Director General at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities**

Nikolaus van der Pas had left his post as the European Commission's Director General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities due to retirement. Mr van der Pas is succeeded by Robert Verrue, who started his duties on 1 June 2009. In the past, Robert Verrue was the Director General responsible for "Taxation and Customs Union".

### **REMINDER: 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)*

### **Second Conference of States Parties of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities September 2-4, 2009, UN Headquarters, New York**

Regular conferences of States Parties of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have been foreseen in the Convention itself: Article 40 of the Convention stipulates that "The States Parties shall meet regularly in a Conference of States Parties in order to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the present Convention." The Second Conference of States Parties took place therefore in United Nations Headquarters on 2-4 September. It began with a panel presentation and interactive dialogue on the United Nations' Update on the Implementation of the Convention.

*To know more about this Conference, please see the following link <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1479>*

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

### **Northern Ireland announces single bill approach for Mental Health**

Health Minister Michael McGimpsey recently announced the future pathway for new mental capacity and mental health legislation for Northern Ireland. Traditionally enacted as two separate areas of law, mental capacity and mental health legislation will, for the first time, be encompassed into a single piece of legislation.

*For further information, please see [http://thegovmonitor.com/world\\_news/britain/northern-ireland-announces-single-bill-approach-for-mental-health-4387.html](http://thegovmonitor.com/world_news/britain/northern-ireland-announces-single-bill-approach-for-mental-health-4387.html)*

### **Social Firm Europe moves to the UK**

Starting from September 2009 the Social Firm Europe (CEFEC) Secretariat is moving to UK under the supervision of the new elected Secretary General of Social Firms Europe CEFEC Mrs. Sally Reynolds, Chief Executive of Social Firms UK.

*To have detailed information on the upcoming modifications concerning the Secretariat, please check the CEFEC website at [www.cefec.org](http://www.cefec.org)*

## IV. PUBLICATIONS

### **Thomas Hammarberg, High Commissioner for Human Rights, viewpoint's publication**

The High Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe, Thomas Hammarberg, published a viewpoint on the question of legal capacity and full enjoyment of human rights for persons with mental disabilities. Underlining the importance of a full compliance with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Commissioner calls for policies to ensure that the full legal capacity is combined with the right of the individual to seek support. At the same time, he recommends that the exercise of this support be always regulated with safeguards to avoid the trust to be misused. MHE contributed to the work of the Commissioner on this issue among other stakeholders. MHE welcomes warmly High Commissioner's initiative to focus on the issue of legal capacity which is a key challenge in the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

To read the viewpoint, please see the following link:

[http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/previous2009\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Viewpoints/previous2009_en.asp)

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

### **United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights revises its Handbook for Parliamentarians on the UN Convention "From Exclusion to Equality"**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights revised its Handbook for Parliamentarians on the UN Convention and its Optional Protocol "From Exclusion to Equality, realizing the rights of persons with disabilities". The updates mainly give further clarification on supported decision-making and freedom from unwanted medical interventions.

This Handbook aims to assist parliamentarians and other politicians in efforts to realize the Convention so that persons with disabilities can achieve the transition from exclusion to equality. The Handbook seeks to raise awareness of the Convention and its provisions, promote an appreciation of disability concerns, and assist parliaments in understanding the mechanisms and frameworks needed to translate the Convention into practice.

*To read the Handbook please visit the following webpage:*

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/training14en.pdf>

### **New Online Anti-Discrimination Resource**

The European Network of Legal Experts in the non-discrimination field has launched a new website to make its wealth of information on the implementation of EU anti-discrimination Directives accessible to all. The new website holds information on legal developments in the non-discrimination field both at Member State and at European Union level, and the publications of the European Network of Legal Experts.

To visit the website of the European Network of Legal Experts in the non-discrimination field, please see the following link: <http://www.non-discrimination.net/?jsEnabled=1>

Source: European Disability Forum Weekly Update 15-2009

### **Eurofound publishes two new issues**

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) issued two new publications entitled "Childcare services in Europe" and "Drawing on experience – Older women workers in Europe". These latest issues in Eurofound's series provide pertinent background information and policy pointers on the themes of accessibility to childcare services and protections of old workers' rights.

To read the full issue "Childcare services in Europe", please see <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2008/95/en/1/EF0895EN.pdf>

To read the full issue "Drawing on experience – Older women workers in Europe", please see <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2008/85/en/2/EF0885EN.pdf>

### **The European Coalition for Community Living published a Report on Article 19 of the UN Convention**

The European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) published its report "Focus Report on Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities", which sets out the key steps for implementing the right to live in the community. It provides detailed commentary on Article 19, including its huge potential to bring about change to the lives of people with disabilities in Europe and possible challenges in achieving such change. The Report suggests specific actions that national, regional and local governments, the European Community and the Council of Europe should take to give effect to this right. It aims to assist individuals and organisations involved in promoting, implementing and monitoring the CRPD, such as policy makers, organisations of people with disabilities and service providers.

The report is available on ECCL website at [www.community-living.info](http://www.community-living.info) or by writing to [coordinator@community-living.info](mailto:coordinator@community-living.info).

## **V. CONFERENCES**

**25-28 November 2009**

**Congress "psychiatric Disorders during Lifespan", Berlin**

For further information, please visit [www.dgppn-congress.de](http://www.dgppn-congress.de)

**26-27 November 2009**

**European Conference "The forgotten Children", Vilnius, Lithuania**

For more information, please see [www.eufami.org](http://www.eufami.org)

**1-3 July 2010**

**1<sup>st</sup> International Congress on "Borderline Personality Disorder", Berlin**

For further information, please visit the website at [www.borderline-congress.org](http://www.borderline-congress.org)

**21-25 March 2011**

**16<sup>th</sup> World Congress "The interpersonal Dynamics of Identity", Bern**

For registration please send an e-mail to [wadp2011@interplan.de](mailto:wadp2011@interplan.de)

**25-28 May 2011**

**3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on ADHD, Berlin**

For further information, please visit [www.adhd-congress.org](http://www.adhd-congress.org)

**29 May-3 June 2011**

**10<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Biological Psychiatry, Prague**

For more information, please see [www.wfsbp-congress.org](http://www.wfsbp-congress.org)

**17-21 September 2011**

**8<sup>th</sup> Congress of ISAAP "Adolescence – A second chance?", Berlin**

For further information, please visit [www.isaap2011.org](http://www.isaap2011.org)

2010 being proclaimed the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, SMES-Europa deemed appropriate to postpone the seminar "**Migrants; Invisible Wounds, dignity and vulnerability**" to be held in Athens from 18-20 November 1009 to next year, March 2010. Proposed new dates are 17-19 March 2010 (dates and venue to be confirmed). Please pencil these new dates in your diary. MHE will keep you updated but you are also kindly invited to check SMES-Europa website for all additional information at [http://www.smes-europa.org/INVISIBLE\\_WOUNDS\\_Athenseminar\\_2010.htm](http://www.smes-europa.org/INVISIBLE_WOUNDS_Athenseminar_2010.htm)

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)*