



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

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MHE General Assembly 2009 and capacity-building seminar for MHE members

MHE’s General Assembly 2009 is taking place in Brussels on Saturday 13 June 2009. The day before, on Friday 12 June, a capacity-building seminar for MHE members will be organised. The theme selected for the capacity-building seminar is “Empowerment” (empowerment of politicians, mental health service users and mental health professionals).

Please note that there are no more places available.

A full report on both events will be published on the MHE website.

I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

MHE re-elected to the Board of European Disability Forum: EDF General Assembly, Athens, 8-10 May 2009

On 8-10 May, the European Disability Forum (EDF) met in Athens for its General Assembly and Board Meeting. More than 100 voting members were present or represented. It was an active event since a new Board had to be chosen, the work programme approved and the budgetary implications negotiated and agreed. MHE is very pleased that this year 3 board members from the mental health sector were elected: Josée Van Remoortel from Mental Health Europe, Athena Frangouli from Social Firms Europe (CEFEC), and Erik Olsen from European Network of (ex)Users Survivor of Psychiatry (ENUSP). One of the major priorities will be to raise the need of persons with mental health problems and to strongly cooperate with EDF to see the UN Convention ratified without reservations.

For further information please visit the EDF website at <http://www.edf-feph.org/default.asp>

MHE policy work on disability: participation in Council of Europe meeting, Strasbourg, 27 April 2009

On 27 April, MHE participated in a meeting at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg together with other key organisations active in the field of disability and mental health. The aim was to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society regarding the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan "Improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015". The discussion was focused on how to promote the rights of people with mental health problems within the Action Plan. In the frame of this meeting, Mental Health Europe drafted a paper regarding its position towards the Action Plan of the Council of Europe and its recommendations to the Council of Europe for better addressing issues linked to mental health problems. Further discussions on these issues will take place at the meeting of the Bureau of the European Co-ordination Forum for the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan 2006-2015 (CAHPAH). This meeting will take place in October at the Council of Europe's seat in Strasbourg.

MHE was represented at the meeting of 27 April by Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer. *For more information on the policy work of MHE around human right issues please write to roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org*

MHE policy work on human rights: participation at the 2nd meeting of the Fundamental Rights Platform, Vienna, 5-6 May 2009

On 5-6 May, the second meeting of the Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP) took place in Vienna. Around 90 NGOs dealing with human rights provided the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) with feedback on its draft 2010 Annual Work Programme and suggestions for its 2011 Work Programme. The participants also discussed the impact of the economic crisis on human rights and the under-reporting by victims of human rights violations and what civil society organisations and the FRA can do to improve the situation.

MHE and other Brussels based umbrella organisations were represented at the Fundamental Rights Platform.

To read more about the Fundamental Rights Platform, please see the Fundamental Rights Agency's website at

http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/civil_society/fr_platform/fr_platform_en.htm

MHE policy work on the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being: conference on Mental health in Youth and Education, Stockholm, 29-30 September 2009

The first thematic conference for the implementation of the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-being will be on Mental Health in Youth and Education. The conference will be organised by the European Commission (DG Health and Consumers) and the Swedish Public Health Department, as an event under the Swedish Presidency.

The conference will pursue three main objectives:

1. To raise awareness about the importance of promoting mental health and well-being and of preventing mental disorders in youth and education;
2. To enable an exchange at EU-level on policy activities, good practices by stakeholders and research projects in Member States, and;
3. To endorse an implementation framework for the Mental Health Pact in the field of mental health in youth and education.

Five sub-themes have been identified for the process:

1. Parents and the early years;
2. Educational settings and learning;
3. The community environment;
4. The role of media, internet and new technologies, and;
5. The role of health services in promotion and prevention.

Mental Health Europe is contributing to the preparations of this event. All interested stakeholders, representatives, professionals and experts are invited take part into the event. A conference background document will be developed, adding a practical implementation dimension to issues raised in the consensus paper. This will provide a starting point and guide discussion at the conference. An online database of good practices in mental health, including policies, programmes, tools and resources, is being built up for the conference.

For more information about the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being and its implementation, visit the European Commission's website at http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/index_en.htm

MHE policy work on the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being: Round Table "Reducing the psychosocial impact of the financial and economic crisis", 27 April 2009

In the frame of the implementation of the European Pact for Mental health and Well-being, Mental Health Europe participated in the Round Table event "Reducing the psychosocial impact of the financial and economic crisis", held on 27 April 2009 in Brussels. The event was hosted by Commissioner for Health Ms Androulla Vassiliou and was prepared in cooperation between DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and DG Health and Consumers.

The focus of this Round Table was on the impact of the current crisis on the mental health and well being of the population, and it highlighted responses to these challenges. Speakers presented research evidence, stakeholder contributions and the policy perspective. A variety of key sectors, in particular health, social affairs and employment as well as education and civil society, were present.

Mental Health Europe was represented there by Malgorzata Kmita, President, and Mary Van Dievel, Director. Ms Kmita gave a presentation on the role of NGOs and offered some policy recommendations from MHE's perspective. In her presentation, she stressed the importance of human mental capital and the grassroots role of NGOs, which can raise awareness, lobbying decision-makers, organise campaigns and empower self-health strategies. NGOs can also translate European policy messages such about the achievements of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being, inform about recent policy developments at the EU level, share

the many existing good practices across countries, and strengthen solidarity between service users. The crisis would be an opportunity to engage into a more holistic and participative vision in Europe based on the principles of equality, justice and mental health as a human right.

The meeting minutes and presentations are available online at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/ev_20090427_en.htm

To read the MHE policy recommendations presented at the Round Table please visit the MHE website at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>.

MHE policy work on the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being: MHE at the "Mental Health and Gender" event, 13 May 2009

On 9 May 2009, Mental Health Europe participated in the seminar "Mental Health and Gender: Key Issues for the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being" which was organised by the SUPPORT project in cooperation with the European Commission, DG Health and Consumers. This event, which took place in Brussels, was part of the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being.

Gender is important to many of the determinants of mental health, often linked to inequity in society, including gender inequality. There are clear differences between genders in mental health and mental illness in Europe.

The meeting discussed some of the key challenges and opportunities for gender and mental health, collectively and in relation to the mental health of men and women. It went on to hear some key perspectives about issues relating to gender and mental health in two of the five Pact themes, mental health in youth and education, and the prevention of suicide and depression.

Mental Health Europe was represented by Lucy Vallis, Project coordinator, and Mari Fresu, Health Policy Officer. Lucy Vallis introduced the new MHE project "Violence against women at work...let's talk about it!", funded by the European Commission, DG Justice, under the DAPHNE community programme. The project is in partnership with 8 European countries with varying levels of reported violence against women in the workplace. [(for information on this please see the link below)]. The overall objective of the project is to raise awareness of the harmful mental health impacts of violence and harassment against women at the work place and the collection of best practices for prevention. It is targeted at (women) employees, employers, trade unions, employers' organisations, NGOs, health and social services and job centres. The aim is to raise awareness and to talk about this hidden problem, to promote attitudes of zero tolerance and thereby to prevent violence and harassment against women at work as well as mental health problems that result from it.

For more information on the MHE project on the violence against women at work, please visit <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/our-projects/current-projects/daphne-phase-III.html> or contact Lucy Vallis, MHE Project Coordinator, at lucy.vallis@mhe-sme.org

For more information on the seminar please visit <http://www.supportproject.eu/aboutsupport/events/gender-seminar.htm>

NEWS ON PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES IN WHICH MHE IS INVOLVED

News from the MHE project "Violence against women at work...let's talk about it!"

The MHE European project "Violence against women at work...let's talk about it! The mental health impacts of violence and harassment against women at work", funded under the DAPHNE community programme, is on target and the national partners are busy collecting data on the situation of violence and harassment against women in the workplace and the subsequent mental health impacts from their respective countries in readiness to send the completed questionnaire back to MHE in August.

On 13 May MHE was invited to present the project at a seminar on Gender and Mental Health organised by the Support Project and the European Commission in Brussels (*see related article above*). The seminar also provided participants with key information on relevant issues that will be addressed in the various thematic conferences to implement the Mental Health Pact this year, namely the conference on Mental Health in Youth and Education (29 – 30 September, Stockholm) and the one on Prevention of Depression and Suicide (10-11 December, Budapest).

On 15-16 June MHE will attend a round table conference at the European Commission on Equality between men and women in a time of change. The sessions will include, among other gender issues, gender based violence and how to make further progress towards gender equality. A report on the conference will be published in next month's newsletter.

For information on bullying and harassment in the workplace please visit

<http://www.andreadamstrust.org/>

For information on campaigns to prevent violence against women please visit

<http://epacvaw.org/>

For background information on violence in the workplace please visit

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/>

UPDATE ON NEW ITEMS ON MHE WEBSITE

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

- Homepage:

MHE Manifesto for European elections

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

European Commission conference on Youth Health "Be healthy- Be yourself"

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

MHE General Assembly on 12-13 June 2009, Brussels

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

Seminar "Mental Health and Gender: Key Issues for the European Pact For Mental Health and Well-being"

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

- About MHE / MHE Members / MHE members in Belgium

<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/about-mental-health-europe/our-members.html>

- News & Events / Forthcoming events: European Commission conference on youth health "Be healthy- Be yourself"
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/forthcoming-events.html#288>
- Our Projects / Current projects: DAPHNE project
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/our-projects/current-projects.html>
- Publications:
 - Reports/ Spanish version of the "From exclusion to inclusion" project
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/reports.html>
 - Reports on INGO Conference - Report on Spring Session:
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/reports-sessions-council-of-europe-ingo.html>

MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS

On 5 May Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, participated in the Social Platform Social Policy Working Group, Brussels.

On 5-9 May, Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, attended the European Disability Forum General Assembly in Athens.

On 8 May, Astrid Mechel attended the Spring Alliance Meeting at the Social Platform, Brussels.

On 13 May, Lucy Vallis, MHE Project Coordinator, and Mari Fresu, MHE Health Policy Officer, attended the seminar "Mental Health and Gender: Key Issues for the European Pact For Mental Health and Well-being" organised by the SUPPORT project and the European Commission in Brussels. On this occasion Lucy Vallis gave a presentation on the MHE project "Violence against women at work...let's talk about it!"

On 14 May, Astrid Mechel participated in the Stakeholder Meeting for the preparation of the 2009 Roundtable Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, organized by the European Commission, DG Employment, in Brussels.

On 14 May, Mari Fresu attended the meeting of the EU Health Policy Forum hosted by the European Commission in Brussels.

On 14 May, Peter Kinderman, Chair of the MHE Committee on Mental Health and Human Rights, and Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer, participated in the FRAND Working Group meeting at the Social Platform in Brussels.

On 26 May, Peter Kinderman and Roselyne Bourgon participated in a meeting of experts at the Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna.

On 29 May, Lucy Vallis attended the conference "Barriers to Healthcare Services for Migrants" hosted by the European Commission in Brussels.

On 28 – 29 May, Malgorzata Kmita, MHE President, participated as a keynote speaker in a meeting on "Destigmatisation and Improving the Quality of Care in Psychiatry" in Prague.

NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

The Confederación Española de Agrupaciones de Familiares y Personas con Enfermedad Mental launches the report "From exclusion to inclusion"

The Confederación Española de Agrupaciones de Familiares y Personas con Enfermedad Mental (FEAFES) launched the Spanish version of the MHE report "From exclusion to inclusion". This report presents an overview of the situation of social inclusion of people with mental health problems across 27 Member States of the European Union. It is based on national reports, which have been prepared by MHE members with experience in the field of mental health and social inclusion. The documents collect some basic information about the most pressing challenges and needs people with mental health problems are facing on a daily basis with regard to their access to health and social services, education and training, employment, housing, transport, leisure/social activities and safeguarding of civil and human rights.

To read the full version of the document in Spanish please see http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/MHE%20From%20Exclusion%20to%20Inclusion_spanish%20version.pdf

II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES

Implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-Being, after the high level conference

The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being, launched at the High Level Conference "Together for Mental Health and Wellbeing" on 12 June 2008, 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 wellbeing and preventing mental disorders. This will continue through 2009 and 2010.

The Pact will be implemented through a series of five Thematic Conferences in each of the priority areas, which will be hosted by Member States in partnership with European Commissions' bodies and other stakeholders.

- 29–30 September 2009 – Mental Health in Youth and Education. – Stockholm, Sweden.
- 10–11 December 2009 – Prevention of Depression and Suicide – Budapest, Hungary.
- 21–22 April 2010 – Mental Health in Older People – Madrid, Spain.
- 8–9 November 2010 – Mental Health in Workplace Settings – Berlin, Germany.
- 2nd Semester 2010 – Combating Stigma and Social Exclusion – (date to be confirmed)

Together with other stakeholders and experts, Mental Health Europe and its members are engaged with the process and get involved in these events in several ways: by gathering examples of action and good practice; by joining the consultation process to develop the conference working documents; by raising awareness of the Pact at the EU, national and local level; by assisting with building capacity and mobilising support for the Pact.

To see the official website on the Mental Health Pact: <http://www.ec-mental-health-process.net/>

For more information on the activities of MHE around the implementation of the Pact please write to Mari Fresu, MHE Health Policy Officer, at mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org

Source: newsletter on the implementation of the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-being

The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers launches new calls for tender

The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers has launched several calls for tender. The tender are in the fields of skin allergies, indoor air quality, electromagnetic fields, training of health professionals, capacity building, exchange of organs between EU countries and the implications of population ageing on health-care needs.

You will find all the information under: <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/tenders.html>

Further tenders will be launched in summer 2009.

For any questions please contact EAHC-HP-TENDER@ec.europa.eu

Launch meeting for a Children's Rights Platform

On 2-3 June, the Council of Europe is setting up a platform on children's rights, including a network of focal points and representatives of civil society, ombudspersons, international organisations and experts, and research institutions. Priority item on the agenda will be to endorse the future guidelines on integrated national strategies for the protection of children against violence.

More information and download of the concept paper:

http://www.coe.int/t/transversalprojects/children/Events/LaunchMeetingPlatform_en.asp

European Parliament Report on Active Inclusion and the Renewed Social Agenda adopted

In its last plenary session in Strasbourg before the elections of a new European Parliament in June 2009, the outgoing European Parliament adopted the report on the EU's Active Inclusion strategy, put forward by the MEP Jean Lambert. The Recommendation on Active Inclusion, which sets the European policy lines for the strands adequate income support, inclusive labour markets as well as quality services, was adopted by the European Commission in October 2008. Mental Health Europe had actively contributed to the European Commission's consultation process as well as to the European Parliament's report. In particular, MHE is of the view that vulnerable groups in society such as people with mental health problems who are often excluded from the labour market have the right to a dignified life.

The European Parliament also adopted a report on the Renewed Social Agenda. In its report, the European Parliament calls upon the Council and the Commission to reaffirm the importance of a strong social Europe, incorporating sustainable, effective and efficient social and employment policies, in view to the economic recession, and calls on the Commission to develop an ambitious Social Policy Agenda for the period 2010-2015.

To see the full text: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2009-0241+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

The full report on Active Inclusion and the Renewed Social Agenda can be downloaded at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2009-0263+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

UN High Commissioner Office for Human Rights reports on legislative measures to implement UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

The United Nations High Commissioner Office for Human Rights released its annual report with a thematic study on "enhancing awareness and understanding of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". In the section regarding the content of legislative measures for implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the report states that considering that persons with disabilities have legal capacity, their defence in criminal trials should therefore not be based on negation of criminal responsibility because of the existence of a mental or intellectual disability. The report also highlights the situation of institutionalized persons saying that deprivation of liberty on the ground of their mental disability and other elements such as dangerousness or care and treatment has to be considered as discriminatory and as such to be prohibited. He underlined the need for

abolishment of legislation authorizing the institutionalization of people with disabilities on the grounds of their disability without their free and informed consent.

To read the study of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner, please click on this link <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/10session/A.HRC.10.48.pdf>

Employment Summit

On 7 May 2009, the Czech EU Presidency held an Employment Summit in Prague. The aim was to assess the impact of the current financial and economic crisis on employment and to identify good practices in reducing the worst effects of the crisis. Another important objective was to improve the employment situation in the future by stimulating the coordination among the European Union, its Member States and the social partners. The outcome, although being rather weak in terms of alleviating the situation of the vulnerable groups in society, is that the 27 EU Member States did agree on the following 10 actions to be implemented:

On national level:

1. Maintain as many people as possible in jobs, with temporary adjustment of working hours combined with retraining and supported by public funding (including from the European Social Fund).
2. Encourage entrepreneurship and job creation, e.g. by lowering non-wage labour costs and flexicurity.
3. Improve the efficiency of national employment services by providing intensive counselling, training and job search in the first weeks of unemployment, especially for the young unemployed.
4. Increase significantly the number of high quality apprenticeships and traineeships by the end of 2009.
5. Promote more inclusive labour markets by ensuring work incentives, effective active labour market policies and modernisation of social protection systems that also lead to a better integration of disadvantaged groups including the disabled, the low-skilled and migrants.
6. Upgrade skills at all levels with lifelong learning, in particular giving all school leavers the necessary skills to find a job.
7. Use labour mobility to match supply and demand of labour to best effect.

On the European level:

8. Identify job opportunities and skills requirements, and improve skills forecasting to get the training offer right.
9. Assist the unemployed and young people in starting their own business, e.g. by providing business support training and starting capital, or by lowering or eliminating taxation on start-ups.
10. Mutual learning and exchange of good practice on the anticipation and management of restructuring.

Source: The Open Society Mental Health Initiative Weekly Update

Council of Europe INGO Conference adopted a Resolution on a recommendation regarding the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On 29 April, the INGO Conference met for its Spring Session. Among other issues on the agenda, the Conference voted on a Resolution towards the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe regarding the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Resolution calls on the Committee to set clear recommendations to Member States to influence them at ratifying the UN Convention as soon as possible including all provisions. The Resolution has been adopted by the Conference of INGO.

For more information on the work of the INGO Conference, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer at Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org

Call for expression of interest in DG Health & Consumers Stakeholder Dialogue Group

DG Health & Consumers is looking to renew up to 10 of the members of its Stakeholder Dialogue Group (SDG). The group will comprise up to 20 individuals altogether.

This notice is a call for expression of interest in becoming a member of the Stakeholder Dialogue Group. The term is 4 years non-renewable as of the date of appointment. Members act in their personal capacity. Candidates will be selected on the basis of their overall working experience in the field of DG Health & Consumers consultation and participatory processes such as:

- knowledge of being a representative of a key stakeholder for DG Health & Consumers at EU and/or national level;
- experience with influencing policy processes at EU and national level;
- experience in participating in and organising consultations;
- experience of membership organisations/direct contact with citizens;
- knowledge of organisations that have not been involved with DG Health & Consumers, work at the national level, and are an example of the organisations that DG Health & Consumers would want to engage with;
- understanding of stakeholder inequalities in terms of political influence;
- understanding of the financial issues stakeholders are facing and how to best address these.

DG Health & Consumers will ensure that the composition of the group is balanced in terms of policy areas, sectors, stakeholder categories, geographical coverage and gender. Given the geographical composition of the confirmed members from the previous mandate, recruiting stakeholders from the new member states is an important goal.

The Stakeholder Dialogue Group was established by a Commission decision in September 2007. The mandate of the group is to advise DG Health & Consumers on best practice in the consultation process and help it to better tailor its involvement processes to stakeholder needs in the areas of public health and consumer protection. The SDG meets 4 times a year for day-long meetings.

Interested applicants are invited to submit a one-page letter explaining why they consider their professional background relevant to the activity of the Stakeholder Dialogue Group and a CV of maximum 2 pages by **16 June 2009** to: SANCO-stakeholders@ec.europa.eu

For more information on the Stakeholder Dialogue Group please visit http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/sdg/index_en.htm

Source: EUHPF

Businesses urge EU to drop anti-discrimination plans

Citing the ongoing recession, EU employers' group BusinessEurope has called on the European Union to withdraw a directive aimed at fighting discrimination and at implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in areas outside employment, causing outcry among social NGOs. Philippe De Buck, director-general of BusinessEurope, called on EU ministers meeting on Thursday to ensure that social legislation does not put companies under further strain. "We call for the anti-discrimination directive to be withdrawn and for ideas about introducing legislation on EU collective redress to be dropped" Philippe De Buck says.

Last autumn, BusinessEurope stressed that the draft directive "does not respect the subsidiary and proportionality principles," according to which legislation at EU level should only be considered as a last resort when action by national authorities is insufficient. "The need for such additional legislation in the field of discrimination has not been evidenced by the European Commission, and the EU's policy efforts must be geared towards awareness raising

activities and the exchange of good practices at European level," wrote the confederation of European business in a November 2008 position paper.

To read the whole article on Euractiv website, please visit this webpage <http://www.euractiv.com/en/social/europe/businesses-urge-eu-drop-anti-discrimination-plans/article-182651>

For more information regarding the EU directive proposal on non discrimination, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org

Source: Euractiv Daily Update, 27 May 2009

Scotland's Mental Health and its Context: Adults 2009

A 3-year programme of work to establish children and young people's mental health indicators for Scotland is now underway. A modification of the adult mental health indicators framework is being used as the draft working framework. The newly developed adult mental wellbeing scale, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), is also being validated for use with children aged 13 to 15.

For further information on the work and outputs please see the NHS Health Scotland website <http://www.healthscotland.com/scotlands-health/population/mental-health-indicators/children.aspx>.

For more information on the adult or children and young people's mental health indicators please contact Jane Parkinson, Public Health Advisor at NHS Health Scotland, at jane.parkinson@health.scot.nhs.uk

III. NEWS FROM OTHER (E)NGOs

Policy Seminar: Barriers to Health Care Services for people with Mental Health Disorders

The seminar "Barriers to Health Care Services for people with Mental Health Disorders" was organised by the European Health Management Association (EHMA) in Brussels on 22 April 2009. Focus of the event was on the result of the EU study on "Quality in and Equality of Access to Health Care Services" (Health QUEST), faced by three groups of disadvantaged people: persons with mental illness, migrants and elder people. This first seminar was on people with mental disorders. About 20 key organisations, including MHE representative Josée Van Remoortel, debated the results of the researchers.

The aim of this policy seminar was to:

- Present evidence of barriers to healthcare access for people with mental health problems from an EU perspective
- Present three country studies addressing barriers to health care and policy initiatives to tackle these barriers.
- Engage a debate among the researchers, the representatives of the key NGOs and experts on the policy implications and the way forward.

The conclusions of the study provided a number of examples on how general access to health care can be improved but also on more specific policy to reform the psychiatric care and at the same time improve access to mainstream health care.

MHE is concerned by the issue of access to health care services. Stigma is the major barrier to health care. Since mental health problems are very often associated with good physical health, people with mental illness are at higher risk, face great barriers of access to health care and die earlier. Actions to reduce mortality rates and improve the treatment are prominent needs.

*More information available on the EHMA website at www.ehma.org
To read the full report visit the European Commission website at http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/studies_en.htm#healthcare*

Equity Channel website launch

EuroHealthNet, a member organisation of the EU Health Policy Forum, recently launched the website www.equitychannel.net which focuses on social determinants of health. The aim of this website is to help bring about the changes that will mean greater health equity for all: to stimulate and support changes in policies at international, national and local levels, and to bring together involvement from people from all backgrounds and communities.

The World Health Organisation has received a report from its Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) which shows the widespread health inequalities that exist between and within countries. This is not just about poor health among poor people, important though that is. The report shows a clear link between quality of life and health across all people and communities, known as the health gradient. This online networking tool will help to rapidly share knowledge and expertise.

*Please visit the website at www.equitychannel.net
For more information about the project please contact Clive Needle at c.needle@eurohealthnet.eu
Final report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health available at http://www.who.int/social_determinants/thecommission/finalreport/en/index.html*

Mental Health Disability Rights International received the 2009 Human Rights Award!

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) announced that Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI) is the recipient of the 2009 Human Rights Award. The award is given to "individuals and organizations whose efforts exemplify the capacity of human beings to act courageously and effectively to prevent human rights violations, to protect others from human rights violations and their psychiatric consequences, or help victims recover from human rights abuses." Past awardees include President Jimmy Carter and Senator Paul Wellstone.

For more information about MDRI, please visit the MDRI website <http://www.mdri.org/index.html>

Source: MDRI

ADHD-Europe has been officially set up

ADHD-Europe, a pan European organisation of national and regional non governmental organisation working in the field of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder AD/HD, has officially set up.

For further information please visit the website <http://www.adhdeurope.eu/> or send an e-mail at info@adhdeurope.eu

IV. PUBLICATIONS

Towards a Mentally Flourishing Scotland

The policy and action plan "Toward a mentally flourishing Scotland" outlines the Scottish Government's plans for mental health improvement for the period 2009-2011.

To read the full document please visit

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/05/06154655/0>

V. CONFERENCES

New International Master in Mental Health Policy and Services

A new International Master in Mental Health Policy and Services is promoted by the New University of Lisbon, in collaboration with the World Health Organization. The Masters is a two-year course. It will start on the 7 September 2009, with a two-week residential session, at the Faculdade de Ciências Médicas campus in Lisbon. A second two-week residential session will take place in Lisbon, from 29 March to April 2010.

For more information:

http://www.fcm.unl.pt/gepg/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=400&Itemid=420

30-31 May, 1 June

28th Annual Seminar "20 Years of Reflections, Studies, Actions in Europe for Ethics and Rights in Psychiatry and Mental Health, Paris

For further information please contact Eric Messens, Treasurer of CEDEP at

emessens@skynet.be

4-5 June 2009

Child Injury Prevention. Child Violence Prevention. Child Mental Health Promotion. International Seminar, Prague

For more information please visit

<http://www.childsafetyeurope.org/csi/eurosafe2006.nsf/wwwVwContent/15F0371C5720E97FC125759E00214DEA?opendocument&context=DF3E2F14A4051F2BC12571850037F1C1>

24-27 June 2009

"My Life!" Europe in Action 2009 Conference on "Full Participation and Equity", Tampere, Finland

For further information and to read the full programme please visit www.kvtl.fi/mylife/en

30 June – 2 July

Conference on "Mental Health care for Asylum Seekers in the European Union – Addressing the needs of specifically vulnerable groups", Vienna

For further information please contact www.arcotel.at/wimberger

10-12 September

XXII Conference of Social Firms Europe – CEFEC "Social Firms – A New Dimension of Enterprise", Prague

For more information please visit www.cefec2009inprague.cz

Please note that the European SMES Seminar "Invisible Wounds – Dignity and Health" will take place in Athens, and not in Malta, on 18-19 November 2009.

For more information please visit www.smes-europa.org/smes_Seminar_2009.htm or send an e-mail at smeseu@smes-europa.org

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

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