



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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TABLE OF CONTENT

I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE	2
II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES.....	7
III. EY FOR COMBATING POVERT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION	10
IV. NEWS FROM OTHER (E)NGOs	12
V. PUBLICATIONS	14
VI. CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS	14

Dear readers,

We are pleased to send you our March Newsletter which contains again a lot of useful information about Mental Health Europe’s work and that of its member organisations.

March was a very busy month, with the reporting on our work in the frame of the Progress Work Programme 2009, our contributions to the preparation of the EC Thematic Conferences on “Mental Health in Older People” (Madrid, 21-22 April) and on “Stigma and Social Inclusion” (Lisbon, 15-16 November). Moreover we worked on the preparation of our conference on “Challenging Poverty – Creating Hope. Breaking the cycle of poverty and mental health problems”, the EU 2020 Strategy, the Disability Pact and last but not least our project “Violence against women at work”. A training for MHE Board and staff members was organised on 26 March, and a Board meeting was held on 27 March.

We invite you to share with us all relevant information about your activities in the mental health field.

Mary Van Dievel

I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

REMINDER - Mental Health Europe Conference 2010, Brussels

Mental Health Europe will hold its annual Conference 2010 "Challenging Poverty – Creating Hope. Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Mental Health Problems".

The Conference will take place on 22-23 October 2010 in Brussels, and is organised in the frame of the European Year 2010 against Poverty and Social Exclusion, in collaboration with the Institut Wallon pour la Santé Mentale and the Vlaamse Vereniging voor Geestelijke Gezondheid, and with the support of the Ligue Bruxelloise pour la Santé Mentale.

Research has shown clear bidirectional links between mental health and poverty. People experiencing poverty are particularly vulnerable towards developing mental health problems. Conversely people with existing mental health problems are more likely to experience poverty. Mental Health Europe will present the results of a survey that was conducted among its members prior to the conference, with a focus on poverty and mental health problems of children and young people, women, older people and migrants.

The conference Organising Committee met on 26 March to further discuss the conference programme.

More information will follow in the April issue of our Newsletter.

National Focal Point training in Bucharest

On 10-12 March Mental Health Europe organised the second National Focal Points* training in Bucharest, with participants from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Romania. The training was co-organised by the Romanian League for Mental Health. Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, and Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, presented the recent changes in the European Institutions due to the new Lisbon Treaty, as well as the developments in mental health, social and human rights policies. The participants exchanged their experiences, particularly regarding the implementation of the Mental Health Pact and the activities related to social inclusion and human rights. Moreover, Georgiana Pascu, from the Center for Legal Resources, gave a presentation on advocacy strategies for the enforcement of fundamental rights for people with mental disabilities living in Institutions. At the end of the training, the participants visited the Titan Dr. Constantin Gorgos Psychiatric Hospital.

The next trainings for National Focal Points will be organised in Madrid, Stockholm and Tallinn by June 2010.

For further information, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org

* NFPs are intermediaries between MHE and its member organisations and other stakeholders in their respective country in cases where a) information from the European level needs to be disseminated at the national, regional and local level, as well as in cases where b) MHE needs input from its members working at the local, regional and national level in order to report back to the European level on specific issues of consultation.

MHE launched a survey on seclusion and restraints

In the frame of its Committee on "Mental Health and Human Rights", MHE prepared a survey on the situation of seclusion and restraints in the EU countries. Persons with mental health problems are often institutionalized against their will. Patients who exhibit violent behaviour towards staff or fellow patients and/or out-patients who are violent against family members are a challenge for clinical management. The options for coercive interventions in such situations are regulated by specific legal provisions which differ in the European countries. The objective of this survey is to gather data in order to identify whether basic human rights are legally protected, to raise awareness on this issue. Moreover, it aims to invite national governments to introduce positive legislation regarding rules of seclusion and/or restraints, also gathering some good practices in the EU Member States.

MHE encourages its members to fill the questionnaire which was sent by email on the 16 March 2010. MHE also invites its members to send the survey to heads of hospitals in their countries in order to get answers from the professionals' community. All the answers should be sent by 15 May 2010.

For more information on the survey on seclusion and restraints, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, Coordinator of MHE Committee on Mental Health and Human Rights at MHE Secretariat at Roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org

MHE supports EDF for the inclusion of the Disability Pact as the 8th flagship priority of the EU 2020 Strategy

Recently, the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, unveiled the long-awaited 10-year plan (the EU 2020 Strategy) for greener growth and jobs in Europe. The Strategy proposes a set of targets on education, research, development and poverty reduction. The European Disability Forum (EDF) invited policy makers to include the European Disability Pact in the Strategy.

Ahead of the Spring Council meeting in Brussels, MHE sent a letter to the Council representatives to support the EDF proposal on the inclusion of the Disability Pact in the EU 2020 Strategy.

The European Disability Pact will help governments to translate the EU 2020 goals on inclusive growth into effective national targets and plans like inclusiveness of education systems, employment of persons with disabilities, adequate social protection of disadvantaged groups, as well as accessible markets, infrastructure and services.

To read the EDF European Disability Pact, please visit EDF website following this link <http://www.edf-feph.org/Page.asp?docid=20837&langue=EN>

For more information about MHE work on disability, please contact Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer at roselyne.bourgon@mhe-sme.org

NEWS ON MHE PROJECTS

2nd DAPHNE Partners Meeting – "Violence against women at work...Let's talk about it!", 26 February 2010

On 26 February, the DAPHNE partners met in Brussels to discuss about the latest projects developments and the new steps. The participants agreed on the final format of the communications tools, which will be translated in all the 8 partners' languages.

During the meeting it was decided to start the dissemination activities in June and to end them up on October 2010. The format of the project's final conference was also established: the event will take place on 7-8 December at the European Parliament (Brussels) and will involve EU Officials, Ministries, Ombudsmen, representatives of the Work Inspectorate and the main stakeholders.

A questionnaire for the partners has been set and sent in order to collect data on the implementations and the outcomes of the project to be used for the final evaluation. A website containing examples of good practices on the issue of violence against women at workplace will soon be available.

To know more about the DAPHNE project, please visit the following webpage <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/our-projects/current-projects/daphne-phase-III.html>

HELPS meeting in Aalborg, 22-25 March 2010

On 22-25 March MHE Senior Policy Adviser, Stijn Jannes, participated in the meeting for the European Network for Promoting the Health of Residents in Psychiatric and Social Care Institutions (HELPS) project, which was held in Aalborg, Denmark.

The aim of the project is to improve the physical health status of residents with mental disorders, mental disability or dependency living in social and health care institutions. Indeed, residents in health and social care Institutions have a poor physical health status resulting in reduced life expectancy. Being the absence of specific policies to improve the health status of these groups of people, HELPS aims at bringing together a multi-disciplinary consortium to gather relevant knowledge in the field and identify best practices across Europe.

During the meeting the working groups reported about their activities and the HELPS toolkit was presented. The future steps of the project were also discussed together with the issues of implementation and monitoring strategies.

MHE WEBSITE UPDATES

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

- Our projects/ Current projects
Violence against women in the workplace...Let's talk about it! The mental health impacts of violence and harassment against women at work

MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS

On 2 March, Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, participated in the meeting of the "Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care" organized in Brussels.

On 5 March 2010, Roselyne Bourgon, MHE Human Rights Officer attended a workshop on the Disability Strategy 2010-2020 held in Brussels by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

On 10-12 March, Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, and Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, held the National Focal Points' Training in Bucharest.

On 18 March, Roselyne Bourgon attended the breakfast meeting with Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, held by the European Policy Center in Brussels.

On 20-21 March, Josée Van Remoortel participated in the European Disability Forum Board Meeting, held in Thessaloniki.

On 23 March, Roselyne Bourgon attended the meeting of the European Parliament's Disability Intergroup in Brussels.

On 23-25 Stijn Jannes, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, attended the HELPS Meeting in Aalborg.

On 24 March Mary Van Dievel and Astrid Mechel participated in the meeting of the Advisory Committee for Thematic Conference "Combating stigma and promoting social inclusion in mental health" in Brussels.

On 24 March, Roselyne Bourgon represented MHE at the seminar organized in Brussels by the European Coalition for Community Living on "Funding exclusion while promoting inclusion? – The use of the European Union funding to maintain the institutionalisation of people with disabilities".

On 25 March, Yves Brand, attended the Determine Final Conference on "Health across Sectors" in Brussels.

On 26-27 March, MHE organised its Board Meeting and Board Training in Brussels.

On 31 March Josée Van Remoortel participated in the meeting of the "Ad Hoc Expert Group on the Transition from Institutional to Community-based Care" organized in Brussels.

31 March, Mary Van Dievel participated in the stakeholders meeting with the upcoming Belgian EU Presidency to prepare the 9th Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion, held in Brussels by the European Commission.

NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Mind called for regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists (UK)

Mental health charity Mind presented new evidence to illustrate the barriers that people face when trying to make a complaint about counsellors and psychotherapists and urgently called for independent statutory regulation to help protect clients from malpractice. Mind's snapshot poll highlighted that psychological therapies remain one of the least regulated areas of mental health practice in the UK.

To know more, please see

http://www.mind.org.uk/news/3069_mind_calls_for_regulation_of_counsellors_and_psychotherapists

Mental Health Foundation organises the Mental Health Action Week, 4-11 April 2010 (UK)

Each year the Mental Health Foundation uses the Mental Health Action Week to raise awareness on mental health issues. This year's topic is focusing on loneliness: a new report on loneliness and mental health will be available from 6 April.

A selection of Good Mental Health Packs full of useful information for those interested in promoting good mental health will also be available.

To know more about the initiative and to order the materials, please visit the following webpage <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-action-week-2010/>

Mental Health Social Exclusion (SMES Europa) seminar in Athens, 24-26 February 2010

On 24-26 February Mental Health Social Exclusion (SMES Europa) held a seminar in Athens entitled "Invisible wounds: migrants' integration through welcome, solidarity and participation". The seminar organised in the frame of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion aimed at promoting a new migration policy in the respect of migrants' health and mental health.

To know more about the seminar, please see http://www.smes-europa.org/index_athens.htm

Mind's new campaign "Time to Challenge" (UK)

Mind's new campaign "Time to Challenge", launched together with Rethink, aims to confront the stigma and discrimination people with mental health problems face in the workplace and to show the employers the real benefits of monitoring a supported staff.

"Time to Challenge" has launched a new resource on the Time to Change website, which is packed with information including guidance and tips for line managers and human resources professionals, information for employees on topics such as managing stress and when and how to disclose mental health problems, and advice for those applying for jobs.

To know more about the campaign, please see http://www.mind.org.uk/campaigns_and_issues/time_to_change/time_to_challenge

Mental Health Foundation launched the Mental Capacity Audit Tool (UK)

Together with the Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities, the Mental Health Foundation has been working with the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to build a free online tool that will help carers and practitioners working in health and social care to evaluate their own assessments of mental capacity. The Assessment of Mental Capacity Audit Tool (AMCAT), which takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete, generates a confidential report based on the user's responses to a series of questions about how they've carried out a mental capacity assessment. The individually generated PDF report includes advice and suggestions about how to carry out assessments in the future.

To know more about the tool, please visit the webpage <http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/media/news-releases/news-releases-2010/25-february-2010/>

Advocacy France participated in the French "Week on Mental Health Information"

On 15-21 March, the French "Week on Mental Health Information" took place in all the regions foreseeing 300 events among conferences, debates and workshops. The theme of this year was "Mental health: how to talk about it without stigmatising?" ("Santé mentale: comment en parler sans stigmatiser?").

Advocacy France participated in this big event projecting the movie "Je suis fou, et vous?" ("I am a fool, and you?"), which testimonies the experiences of two (ex)users. The movie was a great success.

To know more about the initiatives organised during the French Week, please see <http://news.doctissimo.fr/semaine-d-information-sur-la-sante-mentale-comment-eviter-la-stigmatisation- article6699.html> (available only in French)

For further information about the Advocacy France movie, please see <http://www.advocacy.fr/>

New awareness raising initiative in Flanders (Belgium)

"Te Gek!?" (Too crazy!?) is the name of the new Foundation for image building in mental health set up in Flanders (Belgium) together with the financial group Cera.

During 3 years, more than 170 projects and initiatives aimed at improving the "image" of mental health were carried on by diverse groups and associations, often with very creative activities.

"Te Gek!?" is taking over the mission. The main objective of this new Foundation is to raise awareness about mental health problems. The focus of the future campaigns will be addressed to key groups such as young people, teachers and general practitioners. Social inclusion will represent the final target of the future initiatives.

For further information about the Foundation, please visit the following website www.tegek.be

Psychological Support Group's support to the European Year 2010 (Gibraltar)

The Psychological Support Group sent out a Press Release to the local press in Gibraltar focusing on the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The Chairperson of the organisation, Mrs Emily Adamberry-Olivero, also gave an interview for the television news.

To watch the TV Interview, please visit the following webpage

<http://www.gbc.gi/news/news-player.php?programme=61&episode=1227>

To know more about the event, please send an email to PSGCARE@yahoo.com

Projekt Udenfor's new Communication Officer (Denmark)

Starting from 29 March 2010 Fabricius Trine is replacing Lisette Lykke Andersen as Communication Officer during her maternity leave.

You can contact Fabricius Trine at trf@udenfor.dk

II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES

EU 2020 Strategy

During the European Council Meeting on 25-26 March 2010, the EU heads of states and governments have discussed the EU's strategy leading to the year 2020 "A European Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth".

While the strategy covers a broad range of issues such as the exit from the current crisis, fostering employment, research and innovation, climate change, education and combating poverty, the aspect of mental health is only indirectly touched upon. Positive components are the intention to increase efforts to reduce health inequalities to ensure that everybody can benefit from growth as well as promoting a healthy and active ageing population to allow for social cohesion and higher productivity. The new strategy aims at the implementation of programmes to promote social innovation for the most vulnerable groups of people, in particular by providing innovative education, training and employment opportunities for deprived communities and to fight discrimination (e.g. disabled).

Furthermore, it is foreseen to undertake an assessment of the adequacy and sustainability of social protection and pension systems and to identify ways to ensure better access to health care systems.

Unfortunately it has been communicated that no decision has been reached on the two targets "increasing education levels and social inclusion"; these themes will be fine-tuned at the EU June summit.

The complete text of the EU 2020 strategy can be downloaded via the following link: <http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

To read MHE response to the EU 2020 consultation, please go to <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>

New peer reviews in social inclusion and social protection in 2010

Peer Reviews on Social Protection and Social Inclusion are a key instrument of the Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC). They enable an open discussion on social protection and social inclusion policies in the EU Member States and aim at inducing mutual learning processes. Peer Reviews take place in the form of expert workshops where primarily government specialists from selected participating countries exchange best practices in policy formulation and reforms.

The following Peer Reviews related to mental health and/or social inclusion are taking place in 2010 (exact dates are still to be confirmed):

- Germany: care and residential care
- Romania: social services
- Netherlands: pensions
- UK: good places to grow old
- France: tools to fight against poverty
- Hungary: programme for children
- Portugal: homelessness

More information and the full Peer Review Programme 2010 will soon be available at <http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.eu/peer-reviews>

The European Parliament adopted the Report on Gender Equality in the EU

The Belgian MEP Marc Tarabella's Report on "Equality between women and men in the European Union" was adopted on 10 February by the European Parliament in Strasbourg. By adopting the report, the European Parliament calls on the European Commission to draw up a proposal for a directive on combating violence against women, establish paternity-leave entitlement on a Europe-wide basis and revise the legislation on equal pay.

The European Parliament also called on the European Commission to establish a European Year for Combating Violence against Women within the next five years. The MEPs also endorsed the Spanish Presidency's proposals to introduce the European protection order for victims and a common EU-wide telephone helpline for victims of violence.

Finally, the Parliament urged the European Council, the European Commission and the Member States to defend social rights and to guarantee that the economic and financial crisis will not lead to cuts in social benefits and social services.

To read the European Parliament's Resolution on "Equality between women and men in the European Union – 2009", please see

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0021+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

Women's Health Report published by the European Commission

The European Commission published a Report on "Women's Health in the EU". The report presents an overview of the state of women's health in the EU, focusing on adolescents and older women in the 27 EU-Member States and the European Economic Area (EEA) countries. It addresses both the differences between men and women and the differences among women living in different Member States. The document also examines the main patterns of mortality and morbidity and the health risk factors at different stages of women's lives reporting on the current situation and recent trends in European women's health.

You can find the report [Women's Health Report - data and information on Women's Health in the EU](http://ec.europa.eu/health/population_groups/docs/women_report_en.pdf) at http://ec.europa.eu/health/population_groups/docs/women_report_en.pdf

If you wish to obtain a hard copy of the Report, please contact Mr. Eric Schilles by e-mail at eric.schilles@ec.europa.eu

Public hearing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 22 February, Brussels

On Monday 22 February the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights hosted a public hearing on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The European Council decision to ratify the Convention was adopted in November 2009. However, the ratification procedure is being postponed until all 27 Member States will have ratified it nationally. This procedure could take years in many of the remaining 13 Member States that have not yet ratified the Convention. Latvia ratified the Convention on 1/03/2010 and France ratified the Convention and the optional protocol on 18/02/2010.

The Spanish Presidency announced that a Code of Conduct, a document outlining the details of the EU ratification of the UN Convention, will be adopted at the Council Human Rights Working Group (COHOM), meeting in April. Some concerns were raised about the importance of including organizations of persons with disabilities in the work on the implementation of the Convention.

During the hearing the participants didn't reach a consensus on the possibility of assigning the Fundamental Rights Agency the role of independent monitoring mechanism required by the Convention.

To know more about the hearing, please visit the European Parliament website at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/public/story_page/047-69398-053-02-09-908-20100223STO69397-2010-22-02-2010/default_en.htm

Source: EDF Members' Mailing

The new Public Health website is online!

A totally new Public Health website has been online since Monday 21 December. The website has been fully renovated both in the content and in the form.

50 new texts and 14.000 documents are organised in a thematic approach, while the information is presented by topic.

On the homepage you can access easily to the 8 main themes: Steering EU Public Health, Ensuring Health security, Taking Action against Diseases, Health in the Society, Fostering Good Health, Improving Healthcare, Indicators and Data and Risk Assessment.

The dynamic information such as press material, videos, events, key documents, publications and consultations are gathered under the "Related information" section.

To know more, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm

Health and Consumers' brand new E-Mag now available

The Directorate General for Health and Consumers published the E-Magazine titled "Europe in action for healthier, safer, more confident citizens".

This video reproduces the book experience: while turning the pages, you will be able to view several videos related to Directorate General for Health and Consumers' policy areas.

To see the video (available only in English), please follow the link

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/sanco_e_mag/index_en.htm

Children's well-being ignored in Europe's 2020 Strategy

The Commission's proposal for a 2020 Strategy ignores the population group that has arguably the most to gain (or to lose) from the Europe's 10-year vision. While recognizing that 19 million children are at risk of poverty in the EU, the proposed flagship initiative of a European platform against poverty fails to identify children among the at-risk groups.

Eurochild called on the European Commission to adopt a Recommendation on child poverty and well-being. Such a Recommendation will set a clear framework for integrated policy-making taking account of the best interest of all children.

To read the Eurochild Press Release, please see <http://www.eurochild.org/index.php?id=263>

Outdated psychiatric hospitals to close (Ireland)

The Irish Minister of State with responsibility for mental health pledged to close a total of 14 Victorian-era psychiatric hospitals and transfer a total of 1,200 patients to more modern community-based facilities within the next three years.

The Department of Health has secured €50 million to invest in new facilities and modernise the mental health service, as set out in its official policy, "A Vision for Change".

There are also plans for a major campaign to tackle the stigma which surrounded mental health issues. The two-year campaign will involve celebrities, sports stars and other personalities who will seek to raise awareness of mental health issues and highlight the fact that around one-in-four people develop a mental health problem at some stage in their life.

To know more, please see

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2010/0301/breaking54.html>

III. EY FOR COMBATING POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The Year 2010 is the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. The key objectives are to raise public awareness about these issues and renew the political commitment of the EU and its Member States to combat poverty and social exclusion. The EY 2010 aims to challenge stereotypes and collective perceptions of poverty to ensure everyone can play a full and active role in society.

MHE has created a new section in order to increase awareness about the link between mental health and poverty.

Research has shown clear links between mental health and poverty. People experiencing poverty are particularly vulnerable towards getting mental health problems, since due to financial hardship or not having a job frequently their social contacts are suffering and uncertainty about the future dominate their daily lives.

Visit the EY 2010 website at www.2010againstopoverty.eu

Visit the Social NGO Coalition's website for the EY 2010 at www.endpoverty.eu

Read the MHE message for the EY 2010 at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>

REMINDER - National Focus Weeks and Thematic Milestones

National Focus Weeks

National Focus Weeks have been designated in EU Member States (plus Iceland and Norway). NGOs are strongly encouraged to organise activities linked to the Year in their country. Ways in which NGOs can mark this week include:

- Awareness-raising on poverty and social exclusion issues: challenges and solutions
- Visibility of local anti poverty and social inclusion initiatives (open days for example)
- Engaging local and national media on the theme of poverty and social exclusion
- Events involving people experiencing poverty
- Joint events between national members of European networks
- Joint events between national and European Members of Parliament
- Engaging with other national stakeholders: trade unions, employers, schools, enterprises...
- Press conferences
- Media interviews

The calendar of National Focus Weeks is available at

http://www.endpoverty.eu/IMG/pdf/National_Focus_Weeks_Calendar.pdf

Thematic Milestones

Part of the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion are the so-called "thematic milestones", which are carried out via specific media activities implemented at EU and national level (dissemination of background materials, articles, audio-visual materials).

Setting the Context (January-February)

- What is poverty and social exclusion?
- Poverty and Fundamental rights

Groups at risk (March-June)

- Women
- Roma, Ethnic minorities and migrants
- People with a disability
- Homeless people
- Poverty across generations: children, youth and the elderly

Solutions (July – October)

- Inclusive labour markets
- Social protection systems and access to services, including access to health protection
- Access to education and culture

Challenges and Commitments (November – December)

- Attitudes towards poverty and social exclusion
- Building a fairer society

If you would like to get involved in the National Focus Weeks or the Thematic Milestone activities, please contact your National Implementing Body (list of NIBs is available at http://www.2010againstopoverty.eu/extranet/NIBs_table.pdf) at least 6-8 weeks prior to the respective dates.

IV. NEWS FROM OTHER (E)NGOs

Access to health care workshop in Rotterdam

Mental Health Europe participated in the 7th Forum of the World Alliance of Cities against Poverty on "Confronting the Crisis Collectively - Working Together to End Poverty". The conference took place on 24-26 February 2010 in Rotterdam (Netherlands) and was jointly organised by the United Nations Development Programme and the City of Rotterdam. MHE Social Policy Officer, Astrid Mechel, contributed as a panelist in the workshop "Access to basic services, education and health care" and discussed the aspects of mental health policies in Europe. In particular, she outlined the attributes of the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing and the importance of a targeted and early promotion of good mental health at all levels of society. The issue of combating stigma and discrimination was also highlighted in order to pave the way for a more effective inclusion of people with mental health problems into society and the labour market.

For further information, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org

Mental Disability Advocacy Center hails a compensation for non-pecuniary damage, 3 March 2010

On 4 March 2010, the European Court of Human Rights ordered the Russian government to pay 25,000 EUR damages to Mr Pavel Shtukaturov, a Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) client, a man with mental health disabilities who was unlawfully deprived of legal capacity and arbitrarily detained in a psychiatric hospital for more than six months. The judgment follows a judgment on the merits issued by the same court in March 2008, which found that Russia was in violation of several provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights.

25,000 euro is the largest amount of compensation the European Court of Human Rights has ever awarded to an applicant in a disability rights case. In its judgment the Court reiterated that the amount of compensation for non-pecuniary damage (a compensation for pain and suffering) aims at providing reparation for the moral damage caused by the violation and that the Russian State has a legal obligation to "restore as far as possible the situation existing before the breach."

In awarding compensation the Court noted that the Russian judicial system had failed to remedy the past wrongs which had in fact persisted for Mr Shtukaturov over the previous four years.

For more information, please read the whole article on MDAC website following this link <http://www.mdac.info/en/mdac-hails-compensation-milestone-global-human-rights>

Source: MDAC

The European Disability Forum called for the inclusion of women with disabilities in the EU gender policies

The first week of March the European Disability Forum (EDF) participated in the UN discussion on the key challenges for gender policies and called for women with disabilities to be included in EU agenda. Although the European Union is working to fight discriminations, the specificities of women with disabilities are generally lost in these initiatives. Indeed, women with disabilities face multiple discrimination, making them among the most marginalized and excluded citizens in Europe and that's why they should be covered by all disability-specific actions.

To know more about EDF activities related to women with disabilities, please see http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13855&thebloc=23949

The European Disability Forum held its Board Meeting in Thessaloniki, 20-21 March 2010

The European Disability Forum (EDF) Board meeting held in Thessaloniki had a long and dense agenda. Some important documents were proposed for discussion and feedback, such as the Disability Pact and the Equal Treatment Directive.

The follow-up of the UN Convention was very important for MHE. Details about the state of ratification of the Convention were discussed together with the working methods and rules of procedure agreed by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability.

The examination of the Member States by the UN Committee will start soon: Slovenia, Spain, Hungary and Austria will be among the first countries to report.

The International Disability Alliance (IDA) will soon prepare a toolkit that EDF will disseminate through its members in order to prepare alternative reports.

EDF will also assume the financial and administrative management of IDA.

Two reports were presented on the issue of "women and children".

For further information about the EDF Board, please see <http://www.edf-feph.org/>

Children's High Level Group re-launched as Lumos (UK)

The Children's High Level Group unveiled its new name - Lumos - and a new brand with a rallying call to put an end to the systematic institutionalization of disadvantaged children across Central and Eastern Europe.

Lumos will no longer work in Romania: the project will be continued by the Asociatia Children's High Level Group. In the meantime, the group chaired by J. K. Rowling will continue its work in the Czech Republic and the Republic of Moldova, as well as expanding into other countries.

To know more about Lumos' activities, please visit its website at <http://www.lumos.org.uk/>

The European Patients' Forum launched a new website

The European Patients' Forum (EPF) has launched its redesigned website to offer a rich source of information for patients and patient organisations within Europe. Improvements have been made on the navigational tools to provide easier accessibility for users with disabilities.

You can visit the website at www.eupatient.eu

The World Federation for Mental Health's new President

On September 2009 the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) elected its new President, Tony Fowke. Mr. Fowke doesn't have a medical background and intends to guarantee equal access for all people to mental health services, breaking down all barriers. In his commitment, the new President also underlined the importance of mental health promotion and prevention. During the last months, Deborah Wan has been elected as WFMH's next President. She will start her mandate in 2011, after Mr. Fowke's completion of his term from 2009 to 2011.

To know more about the WFMH, please visit its website at www.wfmh.org

V. PUBLICATIONS

The Social Platform published a guide on the dialogue between the EU and the civil society organisations

The Social Platform recently published a guide entitled "How to establish an effective dialogue between the EU and civil society organisations" as the result of a two year process on the theme of participatory democracy and civil dialogue. The toolkit tries to give practical suggestions to the questions: which structures are necessary in your institutions to make the dialogue with citizens and civil society effective? how can people, via their associations, make their voice heard to decision makers?

The publication is split into two parts: 7 recommendations for decision-makers, and 7 recommendations for civil society organisations.

To read the publication, please see <http://www.socialplatform.org/News.asp?news=23994>

ECCL report "Wasted time, wasted money, wasted lives...a wasted opportunity?", 24 March 2010

On the occasion of its seminar (24 March), the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) published a new report highlighting that the EU funds are being used to renovate or build new residential institutions for people with disabilities in many Central and Eastern European countries. This means that disabled people continue to be segregated and puts them at risk of serious human rights abuses.

The report, "Wasted time, wasted money, wasted lives ... A wasted opportunity?", affirms that the practice of using Structural Funds to maintain the system of institutional care is against the EU policy objectives, the EU law as well as the European and International human rights standards. In the report, ECCL also lists a number of recommendations addressed to Member States and the European Commission.

To read the Report, please follow the link www.community-living.info

VI. CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

5-8 May 2010

XXIV Danube Congress of Psychiatry "The strategy of rolling horizons: personalised medicine in psychiatry", Zagreb – Croatia

For more information, please visit www.danubepsychiatry.com

13-15 May 2010

CEDEP Seminar "Taking care of the human aspect: individual, legal practices and human rights in mental health", Malta

For further information, please see <http://www.cedep-europe.eu/sem/sem10eng/frame1eng.html>

21 June – 02 July 2010

Summer School on Human Rights, Minorities and Diversity Management, Bolzano - Italy

To know more, please visit the webpage

<http://www.eurac.edu/Org/Minorities/IMR/SummerSchool.htm>

24-25 June 2010

II European Conference of the CONNECTIONS Projects, "Drugs, Alcohol and Criminal Justice: ethics, effectiveness and economics of intervention", London

To register to the Conference, please see

<http://www.conferenceconsortium.org/events/dacj2010/>

INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN MENTAL HEALTH LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The International Diploma on Mental Health Law and Human Rights is currently accepting applications for the academic year 2010-11. The course, now in its third year of existence, is organised with the collaboration of the WHO and the ILS Law College in Pune, India.

More information about the Diploma is available at: www.mentalhealthlaw.in. Applications can be submitted online at <http://www.mentalhealthlaw.in/content/online-application> (deadline 30 June 2010).

INTERNATIONAL MASTERS IN MENTAL HEALTH POLICY AND SERVICES

The International Master in Mental Health Policy and Services, promoted by the New University of Lisbon, in collaboration with the WHO, is accepting applications for 2010-2011. The course will start on the 20th September 2010, 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 4 to 16 April 2011.

More information about the Course can be found at the site <http://www.fcm.unl.pt/immhps/>

All the Conferences and Events announced in the previous issues are available on the MHE website at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/forthcoming-events.html>

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