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PRESS RELEASE

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Mental Health Europe's Position on the occasion of the High-level Conference on Labour Market Inclusion

On 26-27 October 2009, the Swedish EU Presidency is holding a High-level Conference on Labour Market Inclusion in Stockholm. On this occasion, Mental Health Europe (MHE) would like to call on policy-makers to adopt measures to foster the inclusion of young people with mental health problems into the labour market.

Mental Health Europe welcomes the High-level Conference on Labour Market Inclusion, particularly as one of its main areas for discussion will be focussing on labour market inclusion for young people with health problems. Young people with (mental) health problems have a dual disadvantage. On the one hand they lack experience and therefore have fewer chances to enter into employment and on the other hand when they have additional (mental) health problems; employers are even more reluctant to employ them. This effect is being emphasised by the current economic and financial crisis.

Mental Health Europe puts forward a set of recommendations for policy-makers to promote the inclusion of young people with mental health problems into the labour market. An early intervention to streamline mental health and wellbeing of the population at all levels should be fostered to respond to the needs of youth in today's society and to ease their successful integration into the labour market. Provisions should be made for the overall framework to support families to enable youth to grow up in an environment that supports the development of their skills. Teacher training to address the ability to provide this support to the youth plays a crucial role.

The state and its Public Employment Services should assume their responsibility to ensure the provision of functioning guidance and counselling for young people, tailored to the individual needs of the young people including those with mental health problems and also provide opportunities to receive job coaching after having taken up employment.

Support for anti-stigma campaigns and activities in media, schools and at the workplace is needed to promote the integration of young people with mental disorders, and promote good examples of successfully integrated people with health problems into work towards employers.

Mental Health Europe furthermore calls on policy-makers to improve the overall working conditions in Europe to ensure a long and (mentally) healthy working life by minimizing the precariousness of workers, promoting secure contracts and cushioning the effects of unemployment by the provision of a minimum income that allows everyone to live in dignity.

To read the full position paper: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>

For further information:

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Notes to Editors:

Mental Health Europe (MHE) is a European non-governmental organisation committed to the promotion of positive mental health, the prevention of mental distress, the improvement of care, advocacy for social inclusion and the protection of human rights for (ex-) users of mental health services, their families and carers. For more information: www.mhe-sme.org