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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Brussels, 20 January 2010

Mental Health Europe's Message for the European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

The European Year 2010 for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion is being officially launched during a conference of the Spanish EU Presidency on 20 January 2010 in Madrid. In its message for the EY 2010, Mental Health Europe (MHE) would like to draw the attention of policy-makers and other stakeholders to the particularly vulnerable situation of people with mental health problems.

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. Uncertainties about the future dominate their daily lives.

Mental Health Europe's message stresses the importance to implement the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing, which was launched in 2008, and to foster measures for the promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental health problems. Mental health should be incorporated in the development of all policy areas such as health, social policies, housing, employment, training, justice, fundamental rights.

Ensuring access to quality health care and social services is of utmost importance for the health and well-being of all citizens. Another important role is being played by education and lifelong learning to promote social inclusion and to enable people to get access to quality jobs. The fight against poverty and social exclusion should be amplified with one of its goals to achieve that people in employment as well as those who are out of work should be able to live a life in dignity.

Mental Health Europe is calling on policy makers and all other stakeholders to protect the most vulnerable members of society by promoting social justice as well as the mental health and wellbeing of the population – a decisive factor for social cohesion in Europe!

To read the complete message of MHE for the EY 2010: <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