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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***For immediate release***

*Brussels, 10 September 2009*

### **MHE and FEANTSA call on Members of European Parliament to enhance policies on homelessness and mental health**

**Mental Health Europe (MHE), together with FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless, joined forces and 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.

Having a new European Parliament in place, FEANTSA and MHE feel it is time to remind policy makers of **previous commitments and to call for more consideration of people faced with mental health problems, extreme poverty and exclusion.**

In a common set of policy recommendations encompassing a broad range of aspects, MHE and FEANTSA pointed 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 the right to live in a society where he/she feels safe and secure. Also, 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 constitute not only a violation of fundamental rights**, but 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.

National governments should be encouraged to place the fight against homelessness and mental health problems high on the political agenda. The exchange of best practices between EU Member States should be further fostered.

**MHE and FEANTSA believe that Members of the European Parliament can make a difference and therefore call on the MEP's to support and initiate policy measures to fight against homelessness and to promote the mental well-being of the population.**

To download FEANTSA's and MHE's joint paper, visit the MHE website at <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](http://www.mhe-sme.org)