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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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

*Brussels, 3rd December 2009*

## **Mental Health Europe Recommendations on Mental Health and Well-being for EU Trio Presidency Programme**

**On 1 January 2010, the next Trio of EU Presidencies, starting with Spain, followed by Belgium and Hungary, will take up its mandate. Prior to the decision on the outline of the Trio Presidency's 18-months programme, Mental Health Europe (MHE) addressed the Prime Ministers of these countries in a letter and urged them to dedicate adequate attention to mental health and well-being issues.**

The Trio Presidency is entering into its mandate at a crucial time when decisive and targeted actions will be needed in order to keep the European economy on the recovery track, to ensure that economic growth will be sustainable and to tackle the various impacts of the economic downturn and recession on the employment and social situation.

The shape of the EU-2020 strategy will be a key challenge for the Trio Presidency. This new strategy should enable the EU to make a full recovery from the financial and economic crisis; this is of vital importance as the crisis is already having a negative impact on public health in many Member States. The whole population and the mental health sector in particular can be seriously affected.

Taking steps to prevent mental health problems before they occur or to reduce the severity of mental health problems is a crucial undertaking. People experiencing poverty are particularly vulnerable towards developing mental health problems, mostly due to financial hardship or unemployment.

The European Union is a key actor for the promotion and protection of the mental health and well-being of the population, therefore shaping better and coordinated policies in the EU is crucial. Consequently, Mental Health Europe calls on the Trio EU Presidency to put the following priorities on the EU agenda:

- Work towards the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being
- Integrate mental health into other EU policies
- Take action in the field of social determinants of (mental) health
- Fight against poverty and social exclusion of all excluded groups in society
- Strengthening the Open Method of Coordination (OMC)
- Make quality health and social services a basic right for all EU citizens
- Promote equal rights for all, including people with mental health problems
- Take initiatives to fight effectively against all forms of discrimination

- Include mental health as a key priority in the forthcoming European strategy on gender equality
- Address the link between gender and mental health in the context of combating poverty
- Recognise gender issues as key to the Lisbon strategy

**Mental Health Europe calls on the upcoming Trio EU Presidency to take a concrete commitment to bring forward mental health and well-being in the EU by undertaking the necessary steps to improve the prevention of mental health problems as well as to foster the social inclusion and human rights of people with mental health problems.**

To read MHE's recommendations for the EU Trio Presidency of Spain, Belgium and Hungary, 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)