



**Lunch debate on**

## **ENSURING MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUTH IN MODERN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES**

**- Turning the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing into reality -**

**Wednesday, 3 December 2008, 12h00 – 14h30**

Venue: European Parliament, Brussels, room P7C050

### **Speaker biographies and presentation abstracts**

(In order of intervention)

#### **Ms. Malgorzata Kmita**

Malgorzata Kmita has been the President of Mental Health Europe (MHE) since 2006, and MHE Vice-President since 2004. She has worked in the area of mental health in the United Kingdom and Europe for more than 25 years.

She is particularly active in human rights and gender issues, as well as in the developments of the accession countries. In 2005, she contributed to the plans around the improvements of mental health amongst children and young people traumatised by wars in Kosovo and Macedonia. She is a member of MIND, the National Association for Mental Health in the United Kingdom, and has been involved with the developments of mental health projects in Poland, her native country. Malgorzata is a qualified Mental Health Social Worker and also holds post-graduate qualifications in Management of Change in the Community.

She has practised in many deprived communities in the North of England and has led developments in mental health services in the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors, these included adult mental health strategy developments, children's and young people's mental health, women's mental health as well as employment, leisure and housing projects.

#### **Mr. Jürgen Scheftlein**

Jürgen Scheftlein is Policy Officer in the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumers, Health Determinants-Unit. His field of responsibility is mental health. Mr Scheftlein is a historian by academic background, following studies of history, German language and literature as well as political science in Cologne. After his studies Mr Scheftlein worked in the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation. He joined the services of the European Commission in 1997, where he worked in the Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry on small and medium-sized enterprises before his present position. Mr Scheftlein is married and father of a nine year old son.



**Prof. Ernesto Caffo**

Ernesto Caffo is Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. He is President and founder of the SOS - Telefono Azzurro Onlus, President of the Foundation 'Child for Study and Research into Childhood and Adolescence', Vice-President of the 'International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions' (IACAPAP) and Past President of the 'European Society European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry' (ESCAP).

He is Board Member of the 'International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children' (ICMEC) and Board Member of 'European Federation for Street Children'. Currently he covers relevant academic positions, like the directorship of the Specialization School in Child Psychiatry at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. He coordinated various international research programs, such as HOT 114 - aimed at promoting a safer use of the Internet - supported by the European Commission. He is the author of several books and articles on developmental psychopathology, autism, child psychiatry, child abuse and children's rights.

**Abstract "Promoting Well-Being in Children and Adolescents"**

Current estimates indicate that at least one out of every four to five young people in the general population will suffer from at least one mental disorder in any given year. Similar data have been previously reported by the World Health Organisation, showing that world-wide up to 20% of children and adolescents suffer from a mental illness with at least mild functional impairment: one adolescent in five has behavioural, cognitive and emotional difficulties and one adolescent in eight suffers from a mental disorder.

The evidence surveyed in this presentation provides a substantial foundation for the strong potential of prevention programs as part of the spectrum of mental health interventions for children and adolescents, both by strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors. This presentation highlights the need for activating the link between evidence-based research and practice to give every child access to these programs and the chance to fulfil their potential.

**Dr. Werner Leixnering**

Werner Leixnering is Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist (Adlerian Individual Psychology). Since many years he is specialized in social psychiatry concerning young people and has been engaged in many socio-therapeutic institutions in Austria. At present Werner Leixnering works in Upper Austria, where he is heading a center for youth psychiatry.

As permanent medical adviser for pro mente Austria he is a regular child and adolescent psychiatry consultant in a rehabilitation center for mentally ill young people from pro mente Upper Austria and in a welfare center for children from SOS Children's Villages Austria. Werner Leixnering is engaged in developing mental health services for children and adolescents in Upper Austria.

**Abstract "Strategies to help young people at risk of mental illness. The Austrian example."**

Although the mental health movement was founded in a certain way by Freud's and Adler's ideas in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Austria, especially including the so called "Education Counselling Centers" in Vienna (which later on had been succeeded by the Child Guidance Idea in the U.S.), the development of modern child and adolescent mental health units in our country is still not



satisfying. As one reason for that, it is to be mentioned that child and adolescent psychiatry has been established as own medical speciality only in 2007. This presentation will give an overview about the actual situation and development goals for the following years, especially exemplified by Upper Austria.

### **Mr. Christoffer Grønstad**

Christoffer Grønstad is a Bureau Member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) 2007 - 2008. His portfolio within the YFJ is strongly linked to Global Youth Work Development and United Nations coordination. This year he was appointed to the UN's Expert Group assisting the Secretary General in developing the 2015 Goals and Targets for the World Program of Action for Youth.

For 3 years (2004 - 2007) Christoffer was the president of the Norwegian Children and Youth Council. In November 2008, Christoffer chaired the Working Group on the policy paper on health and well-being of young people adopted at the General Assembly of the organisation. At the same General Assembly Christoffer was elected Vice President of the European Youth Forum 2009-2010.

### **Abstract "Shaping the future of mentally healthy generations"**

During the last two years the focus on young people's health has increased in Europe and also in the European Youth Forum. This has resulted in a policy paper on health and the well-being of young people, adopted at the General Assembly in November 2008. The European Youth Forum has thus developed a set of demands to responsible authorities but also sees the clear responsibility of Youth Organisations to provide safe environments for young people in Europe. Based on personal experiences, many years in voluntary youth work and Health policy related work, Christoffer will present the demands to the governments and highlight the responsibilities which youth organisations are willing to take on.

### **Mr. Gregor Henderson**

Gregor is the Chair of Young Scotland in MIND, a national membership forum for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. The forum has over 200 members and brings together NGO's who are working across the full spectrum of children and families issues and across a wide range of settings. Gregor also works as an adviser and consultant to a range of national Governments, public and private sector organisations on mental health and wellbeing.

Gregor was the first Director of Scotland's innovative and now internationally renowned National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing from April 2003 to March 2008. Previously the Director of the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health and a Senior Fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College London, Gregor's main interests are in combining policy, research evidence and practice in transforming the way people, communities and societies think and act about mental health. Gregor lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.