



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE – SANTE MENTALE EUROPE aisbl

Boulevard Clovis 7, B-1000 Brussels

Tel +32 2 280 04 68 - Fax +32 2 280 16 04

E-Mail: info@mhe-sme.org

www.mhe-sme.org

TEST FOR THE GERMAN EU PRESIDENCY ON MENTAL HEALTH

Germany, who will take over the EU Presidency from Finland on 1st January 2007, presented recently its priorities for its 6 months term. These priorities include: to take up the issue of the future of the European Constitution, to bring the EU closer to the citizens, and to prepare a declaration for March 2007 (50th anniversary of the Rome Treaty) expressing the objectives and hopes of European construction of the next half century. In the area of Health, the German Presidency has three key issues: Health Promotion, Innovation, and Access to Healthcare. The Presidency is aiming to finalise the health action programme until 2013, to develop a Community framework on health services and co-operate with WHO on health promotion.

The German Presidency will work closely with the following two Presidencies, the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidency, with a view to best achieving the objectives set out in the programme. To this end they will also cooperate with the other institutions of the European Union and in particular with the Commission and the European Parliament on the basis of their respective competences.

The following sets out some questions that may help the European Union to move towards a more social Europe respectful of the fundamental rights of all, especially those who experience mental health problems.

Employment:

Has the German Presidency contributed to improving the situation of people with mental health problems in the area of employment?

To succeed in the area of employment, MHE calls on the German Presidency to:

- further strengthen the social dimension of the revised Employment Strategy, thereby acknowledging people with mental health problems as one of the vulnerable groups furthest from the labour market.
- improve the process of learning from each other within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination by facilitating the link between national/local policy makers and mental health NGOs and by better involving and informing them.
- raise awareness on issues related to the employment of people with mental health problems in the frame of the European Year of Equal Opportunities (2007).

Social Policy:

Has the German Presidency contributed to improving the situation of people with mental health problems in the area of social policy?

To succeed in the area of social policy, MHE calls on the German Presidency to:

- strengthen the European social model, in particular by providing support to people with mental health problems and promoting their social inclusion.
- promote the implementation of the European Pact for Gender Equality on a European and national level, and in this context, to protect vulnerable categories such as women and girls with mental health problems against discrimination and enabling them to better participate in social, professional and political life.
- promote the implementation of the European Pact for Youth, and in this context, to provide equal opportunities for young people with mental health problems.
- address the demographic change and emphasise the role of older people with mental health problems as active citizens, bearing in mind their potential to contribute to the economic and social development of our societies.
- raise awareness in the context of the "alliance for families" and to intensify the exchange of views and experience on family friendly policies and on enhancing care services for people with mental health problems.

Health:

Has the German Presidency contributed to improving the situation of people with mental health problems in the area of health?

To succeed in the area of health, MHE calls on the German Presidency to:

- actively pursue work on the wide range of Community activities which aim to contribute to a high level of mental health for all citizens, focusing on mental health promotion, prevention of mental distress, innovation and access to mental health care (in the community).
- include mental health as one of the key issues in the new Public Health Programme and in the discussions on a new European Health Strategy.
- improve access to mental health care by taking into account the existing inequalities affecting migrant, women, young and elderly people with mental health problems.

Human Rights:

Has the German Presidency contributed to improving the situation of people with mental health problems in the area of human rights?

To succeed in the area of human rights, MHE calls on the German Presidency to:

- improve the situation of people with mental health problems with regard to:
 - o abuses in psychiatric institutions
 - o abuses in rehabilitation centres and orphanages
 - o alternatives to institutions in the community
 - o monitoring mechanisms and legal protection