

## **Mental Health Europe regrets the missed opportunity of a Mental Health Strategy for the European Union**

Press Release – 7 December 2007 – for immediate release

On 6 December 2007, European Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou announced<sup>1</sup> that the foreseen EU Mental Health Strategy has been replaced by plans for the establishment of a "Mental Health Pact". The first step in this process will be a high level Conference on Mental Health in June 2008. The conference is expected to involve Ministers of Health from Member States and high-level representatives from the health and other relevant sectors.

*"We deeply regret that the European Union has failed to reach an agreement on the adoption of a common EU Mental Health Strategy", says Mary Van Dievel, Director of Mental Health Europe. "While the Commission's new proposal aims to strengthen cooperation across policy fields and Member States, which is to be welcomed, it does not provide a solid basis for joint action in one of the key areas of competence of the Union, namely the promotion of mental health and well-being".*

Article 152 (ex Article 129) of the EC Treaty lays down that a high level of human health protection, including mental health, shall be ensured in all community policies. Mental Health Europe believes that, in line with the Treaty provision, the EU needs to develop a comprehensive strategy on promoting positive mental health and well-being for all, and to encourage better cooperation between Member States in order to address inequalities within and between countries.

At the same time, Mental Health Europe is aware that fundamental differences and gaps exist between individual Member States' mental health policies. A cooperation framework on mental health promotion is fundamental to ensure that these differences and gaps across the European Union are taken into account and effectively addressed.

***Mental Health Europe calls upon the European Union and the Member States to ensure that the foreseen Mental Health Pact adopts a wide-ranging approach to promoting good mental health and well-being, and addresses the whole of the European population across all settings. An effective Mental Health Pact shall also support the implementation of appropriate measures and actions that go beyond the mere execution of a series of thematic conferences.***

### ***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)

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<sup>1</sup> Health and Consumer Affairs Council, 6 December 2007, Brussels