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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Mental Health Europe welcomes the Belgian EU Presidency and reminds of its commitment towards mental health and well-being

Today 1 July 2010, Belgium is taking up the Presidency of the European Union for the next six months. The Belgian EU Presidency is entering its mandate in a new political era, as it comes during the first implementation phase of the Europe 2020 Strategy that will shape the EU's policies for the next decade. Mental Health Europe (MHE) welcomes the new EU Presidency and expects that the implementation of its work programme - as part of the joint programme of the Spanish-Belgian-Hungarian Trio Presidency¹ - will be supportive to the mental health and well-being of the population.

Mental Health Europe supports the Belgian Presidency's plans to work on **improving the effectiveness of the social open method of coordination**, so that EU member states keep on coordinating their policies and exchanging practices in the fields of social inclusion, health and pensions.

Mental Health Europe is pleased with the Belgian Presidency's focus on the **creation of jobs in the social and health sector** by promoting a "work and ageing society pact". In particular, MHE supports the Presidency's goal of promoting **access to employment** and integrating all talents by taking account also those unemployed who are the most excluded from the labour market, which is often the case of people with mental health problems.

Also, MHE hopes that the Belgian Presidency's work on the **implementation of the principle of equality** of treatment of individuals without distinction of religion, **disability**, age or sexual orientation will contribute to combat the discrimination faced by people with (a history of) mental health problems.

While welcoming the Presidency's commitments in the field of public health, especially the attention on **training of health professionals** and on the **social factors of health**, Mental Health Europe invites the Presidency not to neglect the mental health policies and the actual implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

¹ 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>

Mental Health Europe strongly welcomes the Belgian Presidency's work on the EU accession to the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** and looks forward to its actual implementation.

Finally, MHE believes that the **fight of violence against women** – which will be addressed by the Presidency – is a high policy priority as it has a deep impact on women's mental health and therefore needs to be tackled through appropriate actions on the EU level.

Mental Health Europe hopes that the Belgian EU Presidency will successfully implement its work programme and will achieve its ambitious goal to foster the development of an inclusive society with equal opportunities for all citizens.

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