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## **PRESS RELEASE**

Brussels, 13 June 2007

### **Mental Health Europe launches database with good practices for promoting social inclusion of people with mental health problems on: [www.mentalhealth-socialinclusion.org](http://www.mentalhealth-socialinclusion.org)**

On 01 June 2007, Mental Health Europe (MHE) launched the website of its transnational exchange project "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*". The website was launched on the occasion of the presentation of the final outcomes of the project in the frame of the MHE Conference 2007 in Vienna (31 May-02 June). It contains a database of small, local initiatives that are easily transferable to other countries and that could help to end the stigma and social exclusion of people with mental health problems.

Social exclusion is what happens when society marginalises people so that they are not able to play a full and equal part in their community. Many people who suffer from mental health problems live in poverty and experience stigma and discrimination. At best 15% of working-age people with long-term mental health problems are working, which is far lower than any other group of disabled people; and unemployment, a lack of adequate housing and social networks may result in people becoming seriously isolated and excluded from society. While good mental health can help people to be intellectually and emotionally fulfilled and integrated into social, educational and professional life, poor mental health can become both a cause and a consequence of social exclusion and stigmatisation.

Against this background MHE, together with project partners from 10 different EU Member States, carried out the EU-funded project "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*". The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the relationship between mental ill-health and social exclusion and to provide evidence and highlight the success of existing best practices that can contribute to tackling the inequalities that people with mental health problems encounter in access to health and social services, employment, education, training services, housing, transport, leisure activities as well as the protection of their civil and human rights.

One of the central outcomes of the project is its website, which includes an online database of good practices combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems – a tool that is unique of its kind. The database contains all the "best" practices from the 10 partner countries broken down by country and also by area. It is conceived as a source of inspiration for anybody who wants to learn about small, local initiatives that help supporting the social inclusion of people with mental health problems and that are easily transferable to other European countries. MHE intends to constantly update the database as well as to extend it to include good practices also from other European countries.

If you know of any good practices combating social exclusion in any of the area listed above, e.g. training, employment, housing, social/leisure activities, transport etc., or with a focus on a particular group, e.g. women, young people, elderly, migrants etc. who experience mental health problems, please let us know about them or send us the names and details of the contact person for the project or initiative.

Please visit the website at: [www.mentalhealth-socialinclusion.org](http://www.mentalhealth-socialinclusion.org)

For further information about the project please contact: Sogol Noorani, Project Coordinator, [sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org](mailto:sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org), +32 2 280 04 68.