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MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

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I.NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE response on public transport

In March 2008, Mental Health Europe (MHE) submitted its response to the European Commission's Green Paper on urban transport, *"Towards a new culture for urban mobility".* The Green Paper is an important instrument for achieving better, securer and more accessible transport in Europe.

The recently published MHE report *"From Exclusion to Inclusion – The way forward to Promoting Social Inclusion of People with Mental Health Problems in Europe. An analysis based on national reports from MHE members in the 27 EU Member States"* highlights the problems that are faced by people with mental health problems in the field of transport. In its contribution to the Green Paper consultation on urban transport, MHE reiterates the specific needs and challenges that people with mental health problems encounter when using public transport.

Public transport is an essential instrument for tackling social exclusion: it is crucial for guaranteeing access to employment, to social and health services and to friends, family and the wider community. However, people with mental health problems are often experiencing barriers and/or reduced accessibility to transport.

The main problems that they encounter are the following:

- Financial problems: public transport is expensive and people with mental health problems cannot benefit from the reductions or financial support that are granted to other disabled persons;
- No personal assistant: there are no possibilities to hire a personal assistant to accompany people with mental health problems;
- Lack of transport possibilities in remote areas: as a consequence people with mental illness have to undergo hospital treatment rather than treatment in outpatient facilities;
- Attitude of staff: the staff approach towards people with mental health problems is often discriminatory and unfriendly.

Therefore, MHE believes that public transport in Europe should become more accessible, available and affordable to all citizens, including people with mental health problems.

MHE recommends paying special attention to remote and rural areas, providing people with mental health problems with price reductions or fares affordable for low incomes and raising the awareness of transport staff to the specific problems that people with mental health problems face.

The full text of the MHE response is available at:
http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/Consultation_Green%20Paper%20on%20urban%20mobility_contribution%20MH..pdf

The Green Paper "Towards a new culture for urban mobility" is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/clean/green_paper_urban_transport/index_en.htm

For more information contact the MHE Secretariat: Email info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, Fax +32 2 280 16 04

MHEEN II Policy Briefings

A series of new policy briefings from the Mental Health Economics European Network (MHEEN II), which was coordinated by the London School of Economics together with MHE, is now available on the MHEEN II website. These include an overview of the findings from the project as well as summaries on the role of economic evaluation; promotion and prevention; the balance of care; employment; financing and tools such as the European Service Mapping Schedule (ESMS). Four policy briefings are available on the MHEEN II website at http://www.mheen.org/Documents&Material.htm. The others will follow soon.

For more information: contact Mari Fresu, MHE Policy Officer, Email mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68

Farewell message for Clara Gomez

At the end of April Clara Gomez's four-month internship at the MHE Secretariat came to an end. Clara has been working hard on the DAPHNE III Programme and the drafting of a MHE project proposal.
The MHE Secretariat would like to warmly thank Clara for her commitment, her efforts and her good temper. We also wish her all the best for her future job at UNICEF.

REMINDER: MHE conference "Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing. An Opportunity for Intercultural Dialogue", 7-9 August 2008, Aalborg (Denmark)

For more information: the MHE Secretariat, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, or visit the Conference dedicated website, http://www.mhe-aalborg.dk/

MHE representation at various meetings

On 8 April, Mary Van Dievel, Director, represented MHE at the European Patients' Forum (EPF) General Assembly in Brussels.
On the same day, Mari Fresu, Policy officer, and Olivia Merlet, trainee, attended the Eurochild and UNICEF event *"Improving the Well-Being of Young Children in Europe: The Role of Early Years Services",* which was organised at the European Parliament in Brussels, while Clara Gomez, trainee, attended the ERIO (European Roma Information Office) Roma Conference *"International Roma Day: Still fighting for our Rights"* at the European Parliament.

On 8-9 April, Pino Pini, MHE Board member, represented MHE at the European Patients' Forum conference on *"Health Literacy". (see p. 7)*

On 15 April, Mary Van Dievel and Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Vice-President, participated in the Social Platform General Assembly in Brussels.
On the same day, Mari Fresu took part in a meeting of the European Parliament Interest Group of Carers in the European Parliament in Brussels.

On 15-16 April, Fanny Muller, Information and Human Rights Officer, represented MHE at the Spring Session of the Council of Europe INGOs (International Non Governmental Organisations) held in Strasbourg (France).

On 17 April, Mary Van Dievel participated in the kick-off meeting for the PROGRESS Programme organised by the European Commission – DG Employment and social Affairs, in Brussels.

On 17-18 April, Elisabeth Muschik represented MHE at a meeting organised by the European Commission – DG Enlargement, on the theme *"Civil Society Development in South-East Europe".*

On 28-29 April, the MHE Briefing Meeting with Directors of Mental Health Organisations was held in Brussels.

II. MENTAL HEALTH AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

In line with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, MHE has created a new section on "Mental Health and Ethnic Diversity" in order to promote increased awareness about the situation of all the people in Europe, in particular ethnic minorities, who often face difficulties in becoming a full part of the economic, political, cultural and social lives of their countries. MHE wants to work towards ensuring quality mental health care and social services, human rights and equal opportunities that are accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised groups in society. This will also be the focus of the MHE Conference 2008 "Diversity in Mental Health and Well-being – An Opportunity for Intercultural Dialogue", which will take place in Aalborg (Denmark) on 7-9 August 2008 (for more information: http://www.mhe-aalborg.dk/).

Consequences of transatlantic slavery, by Marcel Vige

For Britain and the western world in general the terms 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'culture' have particular resonance given the economic and political power imbalance between western

nations and those collectively referred to as the 'developing world'. This power imbalance is in large part rooted in the experience of chattel slavery – the transfer on an industrial scale of natural and human resources from the developing world to the west leading to the impoverishment of the former and enrichment of the latter, an imbalance that persists to this day.

Intertwined within these power dynamics is a more profound legacy to do with the framing of racial and cultural identities, perceptions of 'us' and 'other', and interactions between racialised groups and individuals. The extent to which the world is shaped by these dynamics is also about the degree to which they affect us all. The 2007 bicentennial of the abolition of transatlantic slave trade by the United Kingdom Parliament can be seen as an attempt to understand and respond to what slavery means to us both individually and collectively.

The various ways people engaged with the bicentennial activities and the idea of the year itself reflects the disparate ways that people have struggled to come to terms with the issues. Many of the public events and much of the public discourse on the bicentennial have tended to emphasise the role of White historical figures such as the abolitionist William Wilberforce. There is also an emphasis on the thematic links with current forms of exploitation. As a result the bicentennial is interpreted as an opportunity for historical reference and reflection, while at the same time providing a campaigning mechanism to throw light upon a range of very real and serious modern-day problems including child labor, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and forced marriage. What is less evident is the decisive role in the downfall of slavery played by Black abolitionists such as Olaudah Equiano. Also absent from mainstream discourse is an exploration of how slavery and its legacy have impacted on the consciousness and general well-being of people identified as African-Caribbean (Black) and those identified as European (White).

A starting point might be to explore the interaction between the experience of slavery and the nature of 'blackness' – specifically the extent to which African-Caribbean identity is built upon the experience of exploitation, dislocation and loss. These aspects of experience encompass the narratives about African-Caribbean people, transmitted through formal education and informal cultural discourse, which tend to take slavery and the colonial domination of Africa as the starting point at which African people are deemed worthy of interest. This has profound implications for the mental well-being of African-Caribbean people, particularly those living in western countries.

The various ways that African-Caribbean people respond to stereotypical versions of themselves is a critical mediator of mental well-being. The issue is how best to make sense of the negative social connotations associated with blackness, such that they do not lead to destructive forms of self-perception. The construction of healthy forms of 'self' is a particular challenge faced by African-Caribbean people throughout the Black Diaspora, in particular those in western countries where the legacy of chattel slavery has generated an environment toxic to their mental well-being.

Also worthy of reflection is the impact of slavery on the European psyche – specifically how issues of race and culture are addressed in light of the ascendancy of the western world, through the exploitation and continued plight of Africa. Such an analysis would directly address the discomfort of dealing with the bicentennial beyond the factual, and highlight the need to understand slavery on a more profound level.

The real opportunity being offered by the bicentennial is to draw attention to the ways in which the era of chattel slavery continues to determine social norms and interpretations of 'self' and 'other'. Developing such awareness is a critical step to moving beyond this legacy. It enables proper identification and understanding of the terms upon which wider society engages with African-Caribbean people. This will also assist African-Caribbean people in developing self-concepts beyond the historically rooted stereotypes. In particular, this is critical to overcoming limiting conceptions of 'victim', 'oppressed' or 'other'.

It is probably over-ambitious to expect government responses to the bicentennial to adequately deal with the issues touched upon in this article. However, as part of any self-determination process, it is crucial that official forms of recognition do not reinforce the narrow understanding of chattel slavery and its impact. To do so would be to reinforce the toxicity referred to above.

As part of the self-determination process, African-Caribbean people are compelled to generate alternative forms of self-understanding beyond that provided by western society – in short, a renegotiation of what it means to be African-Caribbean. Here, African-Caribbean people draw

on a range of reference-points based on a deeper knowledge and appreciation of their African-Caribbean history and culture. This is, in effect, a reworking of the mythology of blackness into a form that draws upon the totality of African-Caribbean history, consciousness and culture. This is fundamental to true mental wellness.

Many thanks to Marcel Vige, Diverse Minds Manager (Mind, London) and Member of the MHE Committee on Mental Health and Minority Ethnic Communities, for this contribution.

The information contained in this article does not necessarily reflect MHE's position or opinion.

Creation of the European Migration Policy Centre

Franco Frattini, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, supported on 11 March the establishment of a European Migration Policy Centre (EMPC), the opening of which is envisaged for as early as the autumn of 2008.

The main objectives of the Centre will be to develop specific tools to ensure that research serves policy-making and actions and provide policy-makers and other stakeholders with methodologies that address migration governance needs. The centre will also support the production and efficient use of databases on the main dimensions of migration

For more information: read the EC Press Release,
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/423&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en

III. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

BELGIUM – Networks of Mental Health Services

Following the study on the networks of mental health services carried out in 2006-2007 by the Walloon Institute for Mental Health (IWSM - Institut Wallon pour la Santé Mentale), the Walloon Region commissioned the Institute to prepare an overview of the work realised by the networks of mental health services (MHS). This study will be based on a questionnaire addressed to the various services (pending) and on other investigations which should help the Walloon Region to reach a decision on the proposal to create liaison officers in the MHS – this proposal was mentioned in a ministerial orientation note approved by the Walloon government in July 2007.

Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Officer, has been contacted by the IWSM to provide some expert insights on the issue.

For more information: contact person, Isabelle Deliége, Email i.deliege@iwsm.be

Source: IWSM

Denmark: Projekt UDENFOR opens shelter for people from Eastern European countries

An increasing number of Eastern Europeans who came to Denmark in order to seek work find themselves living in the streets. In response to this new phenomenon, MHE member Projekt UDENFOR - in cooperation with a number of organisations - established a shelter for people from Eastern European countries.

Many Eastern Europeans come to Denmark in order to find work and to look for a better life but not everyone is successful. As many do not wish to go back to their home country, they end up living in the streets. Many are undocumented migrants and therefore authorities will not provide them with the simplest social assistance. This is why Projekt UDENFOR and other homeless organisations in Denmark decided to set up a shelter that specifically targets people from Eastern European countries. The shelter opened on the 28 January 2008.

For more information: Project UDENFOR website, http://www.udenfor.dk/uk/Menu/Front-page

Source: FEANTSA

SPAIN – AEN moved office

AEN, the Spanish Association of Neuropsychiatry, has moved office. The new contact details are as follows:

Asociacion española de neuropsiquiatra
C/ Magallanes, 1 - sótano 2 - local 4
E - 28015 - MADRID
Email: aen@aen.es

Tel +34 636 72 55 99
Web www.aen.es

UK - News from Mind

- *Mind response to EU consultation on medicines information for patients:*

In the beginning of April, Mind submitted their response to the recent EU consultation on information to patients. In the paper, Mind underlined that they would welcome an EU strategy on medicines information for citizens, to assist people to make choices and use medicines safely and to best effect. Mind strongly disagree with the specific proposal under consultation as they think this effectively allows promotion of medicines to citizens and fails to address the real need people have for independently evaluated information that compares different treatments (both medicinal and other treatments).
For more information: contact person, Alison Cobb, Email a.cobb@mind.org.uk

- *Another assault - Mind's campaign for equal access to justice for people with mental health problems:*

Mind's new research exposes shockingly high levels of bullying, harassment and exploitation experienced by people with mental health problems while living in the community.
Mind believes everyone has an equal right to personal safety, and that people experiencing mental distress have the same rights to justice as anyone else.
Sign Mind's petition to the UK government at: http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/anotherassault/
For more information on the campaign: Mind website, www.mind.org.uk/anotherassault
Thanks to Alison Cobb, Mind Policy Officer, for this contribution.

IV. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

Autism Europe

First World Autism Awareness Day

Last December, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which declares April 2nd as World Autism Awareness Day.
At the occasion of the first World Autism Awareness Day, Autism Europe recalled to the Member States of the European Union and of the Council of Europe that they should pay a particular attention to autism considering the high prevalence of this disability, and to the respect of the dignity and human rights of people with autism. Because of the complexity of their needs, they form an especially vulnerable group even among disabled persons. As underlined by the Council of Europe, people with autism are often the subject of more serious discriminations.
Besides, Autism-Europe requested that the Member States pay a particular attention to adapted care and education for people with autism under this rights-based approach.
For more information: visit Autism Europe website, http://www.autismeurope.org, or send an email to secretariat@autismeurope.org
Source: Autism Europe

ECCL - European Coalition for Community Living

ECCL Statement on the right of children with disabilities to live in the community

On the occasion of the European Parliament debate *"Bringing an end to institutionalisation of children with disabilities in the EU"*, hosted by Kathy Sinnott MEP, which took place on 4 March 2008, the ECCL made a statement on the the right of children with disabilities to live in the community.
You can download this statement from the ECCL website:
http://www.community-living.info/documents/ECCL_Statement_EP_March08.pdf

EDF – European Disability Forum

Follow up actions: "1million4disability" campaign

The EDF Board, during its meeting on 8-9 March, discussed and approved the proposed campaign strategy at European and national level to keep the pressure and lobby to obtain a

comprehensive and specific piece of antidiscrimination legislation guaranteeing equal rights in all aspects of life for all disabled persons.
According to its 2008 work programme, the European Commission will propose in June 2008 a new Directive implementing the principle of equal treatment outside employment. Nevertheless, the proposal encouraged by DG employment and social affairs needs to be approved by the College of EU27 Commissioners. Prior to this voting in June 2008, the proposal will be presented and debated at the European Commission Interservices' consultation in April 2008.
For more information: contact the EDF Secretariat, Email secretariat@edf-feph.org, Tel + 32 2 282 46 00
Source: EDF

EPF – European Patients' Forum

Report on the EPF Spring Conference, 8-9 April 2008, Brussels

Patients' organisations, health professionals, health advocacy organisations, industry representatives and policy makers from national and EU level gathered at the EPF Annual Spring Conference held in Brussels on the theme *"Health Literacy".*
Opening the Conference, new Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou told the audience that the European Commission wished to develop important European projects on health literacy because they were convinced that better health information and education was crucial to the achievement of improved quality of care and health outcomes.
Professor Ilona Kickbush, representing the World Health Organization, stressed the users' perspective and the opportunity to widen the "doctor-to-patient relationship" through the involvement of other professionals, relatives, carers, self-help groups, etc.
Brian Auger, representing the pharmaceutical industry, insisted on the importance of respecting some key principles, such as not having direct relationships with users.
MHE Board member Pino Pini represented MHE at the Conference. During the plenary and the workshops, he pointed out that mental health users can be consulted and invited to produce their own health literature. He also underlined that MHE always supported users to speak out and actively participate in civil society.
Participants finally acknowledged unanimously the need to increase the health literacy skills of patients, citizens and health professionals and the need for a wider distribution of trusted high quality health information. They called for the European institutions and EU Member states governments to take steps forward to institutionalised patients' empowerment, to engage in supporting and implementing health literacy policies and programmes and to support setting up a European Health Literacy Network.
For more information: contact person, Nicola Bedlington, Nicola.bedlington@eu-patient.eu, or visit EPF website, www.eu-patient.eu
Many thanks to Pino Pini for this contribution.

EPHA – European Public Health Alliance

EPHA moved office

Since the beginning of April the EPHA new address is:
Rue de Trèves 49-51
6th floor
B – 1000 Brussels
The telephone and faxes remain the same: phone +32 2 230 3056 - fax +32 2 233 3880

Information to Patients: EPHA final response

EPHA submitted its final position to the European Commission consultation on *"Information to Patients"* on Monday 7 April 2008.
To read the EPHA final response, visit the EPHA website: http://www.epha.org/a/2625

MDAC – Mental Disability Advocacy Center

CPT urges reform within mental health and social care institutions in Bulgaria

Following its February visit to places of detention, which include mental health and social care institutions, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has raised a number of concerns that warrant urgent and detailed attention by the Bulgarian government. Many of these concerns mirror those already raised by MDAC by way of legal complaint before the European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg).
The most serious concerns relating to mental health institutions relate to lack of staff, staff training and resources. This has led to incidences of violence, very limited therapeutic options and insufficient provision of rehabilitation programmes as preparation for independent life in society.
The ease at which legal capacity is removed, guardianship imposed and abuses perpetuated has formed a major focus of MDAC's recent work. So too do they form the basis of complaints currently before the European Court of Human Rights, the judgments of which are enforceable under international law.
For more information: MDAC website, www.mdac.info
Source: MDAC

Europe's highest human rights court holds that Russia violated rights of man with mental health disabilities

The European Court of Human Rights (Strasbourg, France) holds Russia in violation of numerous human rights of a young man with mental health disabilities. In its judgment of 27 March 2008 the European Court of Human Rights found several violations of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
For more information: visit MDAC website, www.mdac.info
Source: MDAC

Social Platform

Social Platform's final letter on the EP resolution on the situation of Fundamental Rights in the EU

On 11 March, the Social Platform sent its final letter on the forthcoming European Parliament (EP) resolution on the situation of Fundamental Rights in the EU to MEP Giusto Catania, the rapporteur in charge of the issue.
In the letter the Platform highlighted three issues it considered as essential to be addressed in the forthcoming EP's resolution: the need for the structure of the EP resolution to mirror the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; the need for the EP resolution to address how the EU institutions would enhance protection of fundamental rights in the EU; and the need for the EP resolution to call for an enhanced dialogue on Fundamental Rights between the EU and civil society.
Social Platform members, amongst which MHE, were consulted and had the opportunity to contribute to the Social Platform's letter, which MHE fully supports.
For more information: contact person, Richard Poláček,
Email richard.polacek@socialplatform.org, Tel +32 2 508 1636

Social Platform elects a new President

On 16 April 2008, Conny Reuter, Secretary General of Solidar, was elected president of the Social Platform. He succeeds Fintan Farrell, Director of the European Anti-Poverty Network, who served the 6 year maximum mandate in the Management Committee. Myria Vassiliadou, Secretary General of the European Women's Lobby, joined also the Management Committee team for the coming year.
For more information: contact person, Anne Hoel, Email anne.hoel@socialplatform.org, Tel+ 32 2 508 16 35

V. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

European Council conclusions: the "social" messages

The European Council met on 13 and 14 March 2008. Below are the main points raised and decided by the European Council:

1. **Lisbon strategy and post 2010 period:**
   The European Council launched the second three-year cycle of the Strategy by confirming that the current Integrated Guidelines (Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and Employment Guidelines) remain valid and should serve for the period 2008-2010. According to the European Council, the *"focus of the new cycle will be on implementation".* The European Council reconfirms the importance of the social dimension of the EU as an integral part of the Lisbon Strategy and in particular stresses the need to further integrate economic, employment and social policies.
2. **Social policy and renewed Social Agenda:**
   According to the European Council *"providing high-quality education and investing more and more effectively in human capital and creativity throughout people's lives are crucial conditions for Europe's success in a globalised world".* The Council considers that *"they are also effective ways of fighting inequality and poverty and can contribute to reducing youth unemployment".*
   In this context, combating poverty and social exclusion, promoting active inclusion and increasing employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market are all of major importance. To this end all the appropriate instruments and tools available at Community level should be used.
3. **Flexicurity:**
   According to the European Council, intergenerational solidarity should be considered within all four components of flexicurity. The European Council also stresses that continued attention needs to be given to youth employment, and in particular to the transition from education to employment in the context of the implementation of the European Youth Pact. Attention should also be given to the employment of disabled persons. The availability and affordability of quality child care should be increased in line with national and Community targets. Efforts should be pursued to reconcile work with private and family life for both women and men, substantially reduce gender pay gaps and implement the European Pact for Gender Equality.

To read the full Council conclusions:
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/99410.pdf
Source: Social Platform

Slovenian presidency launches a portal for NGOs

The Slovenian EU Council Presidency has launched a portal for NGOs increasing the possibilities for them to play a role during the Presidency.
To access the portal: http://www.predsedovanje.si/en_gb.utf-8/prva-stran/predsedovanje-novice.html

VI. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Open consultation on patient safety in the European Union

On 25 March 2008 the European Commission launched a public consultation on patient safety.
The consultation aims at developing the Commission's proposal for on general patient safety issues planned for the end of 2008.
The proposal will address the important issue of patient safety throughout the European Union including a specific section on addressing healthcare-associated infections (HCAI), on which separate public consultations have been held.
Two main goals of the Commission's general patient safety proposal will be:

- supporting Members States in their efforts to minimise harm to patients from adverse events in their health systems, through appropriate policies and actions to improve safety and, therefore, quality of care.
- improving EU citizens' confidence that they will receive sufficient and comprehensible information available on levels of safety and available redress in EU health systems, including healthcare providers in their own country and in other Member States.

Contributions should be completed on-line by ***20 May 2008***.
Given the public relevance of patient safety issues, MHE invites all interested parties to participate to the consultation.
For more information: the European Commission website,

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/patient_safety/consultation_en.print.htm
and http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=patientsafety

Strong reactions against the Commission intention to limit the anti-discrimination directive only to disability

Commissioner Špidla stated in the beginning of April that the Commission's proposal on non-discrimination outside employment will cover only disability. This has prompted strong reactions from key actors at EU level.
A communication, a non binding document, will cover the other grounds of discrimination, i.e age, sexual orientation, religion and belief. According to the Commission, it is not realistic to propose a comprehensive directive including all the grounds, considering the opposition from some Member States.
A coalition of Non discrimination NGOs - the Older People's Platform (AGE), the European Network against Racism (ENAR), the European Region of the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA - Europe) and the European Youth Forum (YFJ) - have addressed their shared concerns to José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. While fully supporting a future legislative initiative on disability, they consider that there should be legislation to cover all Article 13 discrimination grounds. The non-discrimination networks have therefore requested a meeting with President Barroso to discuss their mutual concerns and to seek assurances that an opportunity for a legal basis to counter such discrimination and to promote equal opportunities for all will not be missed.
On 23 April, the Social Platform sent a letter on further legal steps to protect all people from all forms of discriminations to the European Commission, the Council and the European Parliament. In the letter, the Platform called on the EU institutions to make sure that the future social agenda to be adopted in June 2008 includes a clear recommendation to broaden the scope of anti-discrimination legislation for all grounds and policies beyond Article 13.
For more information and to read the Platform's letter: the Social Platform website,
http://www.socialplatform.org/PolicyStatement.asp?DocID=17398

2009: European Year of Creativity and Innovation

The European Commission has proposed to make 2009, the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, for economic and social reasons. The European Commission justifies this decision so far arguing the need for more education and training to make better use of knowledge and innovation. Activities throughout the Year will put a strong emphasis on education. Social entrepreneurship will be highlighted too. The year will be coordinated by DG Education and Culture.
For more information: EC website,
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/482&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

DG Employment and Social Affairs – DG EMPL

2008 Programme for Peer Reviews in the field of Social Inclusion and Social Protection

Under the Community Action Programme to increase co-operation in combating social exclusion, the European Commission has launched a Peer Review in Social Inclusion Programme. This strand of the programme aims at promoting the identification and exchange of good practices in the field of social inclusion policies throughout the European Union. Stakeholders can be invited to participate in a review either by the host country (national stakeholders) or by the European Commission (EU stakeholder networks: normally two per review). MHE participated in the EU peer review programme of 2005 on *"Pathways to social Integration for people with mental health problems: the establishment of social cooperatives in Greece"* and will take part in this years peer review on "*Initiatives by the social partners for improving the labour market access of disadvantaged groups".*
The Commission has published a first version of the 2008 programme for peer reviews in the social protection and social inclusion field (see annex 1 and 2). The dates for some of the peer reviews are available on the peer review website (http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net/peer-reviews/2008). The dates for the other reviews still have to be confirmed and some further changes in the composition of the groups can be expected. MHE will follow-

up developments in this area and communicate the confirmed dates to its members who can then try to participate at the meetings through contacting their national governments.
For more information: contact Sogol Noorani at the MHE Secretariat,
Email sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68

13 projects selected by the European Commission through the PROGRESS programme

Through its PROGRESS programme, the European Commission will support 13 projects aimed at exchanging policies, good practices, and innovative approaches in the context of the social inclusion and social protection strategy and the Open Method of Coordination. The selected projects focus on key policy areas such as preventing poverty and social exclusion of children, preventing homelessness, facilitating access for all to financial services, strengthening the social inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities, and promoting quality health-care and social services for the most vulnerable groups.
For more information: the Commission website,
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/transnational_exchange_en.htm#mutual_learning

Health and Consumer Protection – DG SANCO

From the Green Paper to the Mental Health Pact

Following up on the consultation on the Commission's Green Paper on Mental Health, a decision was taken by the Commission not to develop a formal communication on mental health, but to take a more action-oriented approach in order to support action on mental health in the EU. The process will be developed around the 4 priority areas - Prevention of Depression and Suicide; Youth, Education and Mental Health; Mental Health in Workplace Settings; and Mental Health and Older People - and will stress the work across boundaries and sectors. Priority will also be given to aspects of combating social exclusion and stigma.
A High-Level Conference on Mental Health will take place on 13 June 2008. This event is expected to be a pragmatic and visible way to tackle priority areas in mental health. The conference is led by Commissioner for Health Ms Vassiliou. Commission President Barroso will participate in the event. Commissioner Figel, for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, and Commissioner Špidla, for Employment, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities are supporting the event. Ministers of Health and Ministers from other sectors (e.g. Education) across EU Member States are expected to participate. The final aim of the Conference is to establish a European Pact on Mental Health, to encourage Member State Governments and stakeholders from key sectors to invest in mental health as a common interest and responsibility, and to engage into a follow-up long-term process of exchange and cooperation.
It is expected that the conference will be followed-up during 2009-2010, possibly by the preparation of a Commission proposal for a European Council Recommendation, and by the organisation of thematic meetings, in each of the priority areas, for the development of action.
For more information:

- *the announcement of the High Level Conference on the EC website, http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/mental_health_en.htm*
- *the website dedicated to the preparatory work towards the EC Mental Health Pact, in which Mental Health Europe is officially involved as thematic expert for the drafting of a Consensus Paper: http://www.ec-mental-health-process.net/index.html*

EUPHIX: the European Public Health Information and Knowledge System

EUPHIX is a web-based knowledge system for health professionals, policy makers and others. It presents structured European public health information, giving a special insight into similarities and differences between EU Member States.
EUPHIX is a product of the EUPHIX project, which receives funding from the EU (DG SANCO) and the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) and is developed at the RIVM (www.rivm.nl), in collaboration with 12 partners and DG SANCO.
EUPHIX contains a broad body of scientific knowledge and data covering: the status of European health; health determinants (including mental health); health interventions and systems; health policies; the demography of European countries; and cross-cutting health themes (such as children's health).

Text and data on EUPHIX are written and reviewed by the EUPHIX Expert Network, a team of over 40 health experts. EUPHIX also serves as a platform for European Public Health projects to present their results. If you want to contribute, please contact info@euphix.org.
For more information: visit the EUPHIX website,
http://www.euphix.org/object_document/o4581n27010.html

Health Programme 2008-2013: new resources available!

Two new documents on the Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health 2008-2013 *"Together for Health",* which came into force on 1 January 2008, can now be downloaded from the DG Sanco website:

1. A factsheet:
   http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/documents/prog_factsheet_en.pdf
2. A booklet:
   http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/documents/prog_booklet_en.pdf

VII. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

European Parliament adopts resolution on situation of women in prison and the impact of the imprisonment of parents on social and family life

On 13 March, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the particular situation of women in prison and the impact of the imprisonment of parents on social and family life.
In this resolution the Parliament recalls the "specific nature" of women's prisons and insists that security and reintegration arrangements aimed at women should be put in place.
The EP also recalls further that for women who have been abused, exploited and excluded resettlement arrangements in a supportive environment responsive to their individual needs is important.
The EP also asks Member States, amongst others, to guarantee women equal, non-discriminatory access to health care of all kinds; to adopt a comprehensive prison health policy that allows the identification and treatment of physical and mental disorders occurring following imprisonment and to provide medical and psychological assistance to all prisoners, male and female, suffering from addictions, with respect, however, for the specific circumstances of women; to take all measures necessary to provide psychological support to all women prisoners and, in particular, those that have been the victims of violence or mistreatment, mothers raising children alone and juvenile offenders.
The EP also asks the Commission to pay particular attention to the prison population in its action programme to combat social exclusion.
To read the full text of the EP resolution: the EP website,
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0102+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN
Source: Social Platform

EP Committee on Employment and Social Affairs adopts non-discrimination report

On 1-2 April, the Members of the Employment Committee of the European Parliament (EP) debated and voted the report on Progress made in equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the EU (the transposition of Directive 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC). Despite the active lobbying by businesses and employers' organisations that had been calling the MEPs to reject any Commission's proposal for extension of the European anti-discrimination legislative framework, the compromise was found between those calling for a horizontal directive covering disability, age, sexual orientation and religion, and those supporting a step-by-step approach which would gradually introduce progressive ground-specific measures to combat discrimination.
In particular, Committee members:

- called for putting an end to the hierarchy of protection against the different grounds of discrimination and therefore welcomed the Commission's intention to draw up a comprehensive directive to combat discrimination under Article 13 ECT, which would have to prohibit all forms of discrimination, including direct and indirect discrimination in all areas already covered in the Race Directive, discrimination by associations and

discrimination linked to perceived membership of a protected group, harassment, instruction to discriminate, as well as unjustified failure to make a reasonable accommodation;

- insisted that any new proposed legislation duly reflects all the specificities of the different respective grounds;
- expressed that the material scope of the new proposal should be broad covering all the areas that fall under EU competence as well as education, life long learning, social protection including social security, housing and healthcare, images of discriminated groups in the media and advertising, physical access for people with disabilities to information, telecommunication, electronic communications, transport modes and public spaces, social advantages and access to and supply of goods and services which are available to the public.

The report will be voted in plenary in Strasbourg in May 2008.
To read the full text of the draft report on Progress made in equal opportunities and non-discrimination in the EU: the EP website,
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-398.471+02+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN
Source: EDF

MEP launches EU anti-discrimination petition

A new petition to convince the European Commission and Member States to bring forward a European anti-discrimination directive has been launched on 17 April by ALDE MEP Liz Lynne (Lib Dem, UK). She wants to put pressure on the EU Commission and Member States to bring forward a horizontal directive, after it emerged that some Member States have expressed strong objections to the proposal.
To sign the petition: http://www.signtostopdiscrimination.org/

MEPs approve new Cypriot Commissioner for health Androula Vassiliou

On 9 April MEPs voted in favour of the appointment of the new Health Commissioner, Androulla Vassiliou. This appointment follows the resignation of Markos Kyprianou who left the Commission to occupy the position of Foreign Minister of Cyprus.
For more information: the EP website,
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/066-26199-100-04-15-911-20080408IPR26050-09-04-2008-2008-true/default_en.htm

European Parliament calls for end to street homelessness by 2015

In April, 438 Members of the European Parliament representing all EU countries and the whole political spectrum, called upon Member States and the EU institutions to take urgent action to end street homelessness by 2015.
MHE joins in with FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) to welcome the adoption of the Written Declaration 111/2007 on ending street homelessness, which sends out a clear political message that the issue of homelessness is an urgent one across Europe and must be tackled in a determined and focused way. The Declaration further calls on the development of a European framework definition of homelessness, the gathering of reliable statistical data, and the elaboration of 'winter emergency plans' as part of a wider homelessness strategy.
The adoption of the Declaration is seen as an important step in the fight against homelessness, giving renewed momentum for follow up initiatives. It also displays a shift in approach; rather than merely *managing* homelessness, there is now the political impetus to actually *end* homelessness. This echoes developments that have already taken place in a number of European countries, such as Scotland and Finland, which have pledged to end the problem and have implemented measures to do so.
MHE and FEANTSA call for this commitment to be debated in national parliaments and for concrete steps for ending homelessness to be elaborated, both on a national and EU level.
For more information: visit FEANTSA website,
http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/pg.asp?Page=963
Source: FEANTSA

VIII. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Council of Europe and European Union launch two-year training programme for national human rights structures

The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, and the European Union (EU) have launched on 3 April 2008 a two-year programme aimed at setting up an active network of independent non-judicial bodies in Council of Europe member states, with a special focus on non-EU countries.
This joint programme, or *"Peer-to-Peer Project",* aims to empower national human rights structures (i.e. ombudsmen and national institutions) to help prevent and find solutions to human rights violations more effectively. Through a series of training programmes, peer review activities and exchanges of good practices, specialised staff members belonging to national structures will strengthen their own human rights competences and increase their awareness of the possibilities for co-operation with international mechanisms.
The programme also foresees the possibility of providing technical assistance to establish new independent and effective human rights structures at the domestic level.
The "Peer-to-Peer Project" has been designed to better respond to the human rights priorities identified both by national structures and the Commissioner. The funding for the project amounts to 900,000 euros to be provided on an equal basis by the European Union and the Council of Europe.
For more information: CoE website,
https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1270083&Site=DC&BackColorInternet=F5CA75&BackColorIntranet=F5CA75&BackColorLogged=A9BACE
Source: Social Platform

IX. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Family burden and policy making

The first in the series of mental health topic updates is now available on the WHO website. This is a contribution by Dr. Lorenza Magliano from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research and Training in Mental Health at the University of Naples, Italy.
The paper *"Families of people with severe mental disorders: difficulties and resources"*, gives an overview of several European studies that define the needs and coping strategies of carers, giving input to effective practice and policy making and successful collaboration between mental health professionals and users' relatives. It makes the case for family involvement as a fundamental ingredient of the management of severe mental disorders, and maintains that support for families and collaboration between mental health professionals and users' relatives should be explicitly identified as one of the objectives of mental health policies, nationally and internationally.
The paper is available under "Highlights" on the front page of the WHO mental health website:
http://www.euro.who.int/mentalhealth

X. UNITED NATIONS

Update – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

On 3 April 2008 the Convention received its 20th ratification, triggering the entry into force of the Convention and the Optional Protocol 30 days later. Currently, there are 24 ratifications of the Convention, 14 ratifications of the Optional Protocol, 127 signatories to the Convention, and 71 signatories to the Optional Protocol.
A commemorative event for the entry into force of the Convention and its Optional Protocol will be held on 12 May 2008 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York (USA. The event will be available via webcast on the UN webcast site: http://www.un.org/webcast
For more information: visit the Convention dedicated website, www.un.org/disabilities

Summer School on Korczak's ideas and contemporary children and youths problems

The UNESCO Chair of Janusz Korczak and the Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw (Poland) in cooperation with the Polish Committee of UNESCO and the Information Office of the Council of Europe organise the summer school on Korczak's ideas and contemporary children and youths problems.
The main streams/topics for presentations, workshops and discussions will be:

- Conditions and long term consequences of physical punishment in childhood;
- Education of children and youth toward creativity, tolerance and democracy.

The summer school will take place from 21 until 27 September 2008 in Warsaw.
For more information: visit the Academy website, www.aps.edu.pl, or send an Email to UNESCO-chair@aps.edu.pl

XI. VARIOUS

UK - News from the Sainsbury Centre for Mental health

- *2008 Sainsbury Centre Lecture, 17 March 2008, London:*

Supported employment offers people with mental health problems a chance to get work, to achieve recovery and to lead fulfilling lives, a leading US expert said.
Delivering the 2008 Sainsbury Centre Lecture, Professor Robert Drake, Professor of Psychiatry and of Community and Family Medicine at Dartmouth Medical School, New Hampshire, USA, called on mental health services in the US and the Europe to help people to get and keep employment in ways that are proven to work.
To download Robert Drake's presentation: the Sainsbury Centre web site, www.scmh.org.uk

- *Making Recovery a Reality:*

Mental health services need to offer people more opportunities to get their lives back and focus less on medication and symptom control, according to a policy paper published in March by the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health.
'Making Recovery a Reality', by Geoff Shepherd, Jed Boardman and Mike Slade, says helping people to recover their lives should be the top priority for mental health services. This means giving service users the chance to determine what future they want for themselves and offering practical support to help them to achieve it.
'Making Recovery a Reality' says mental health services need to change radically to focus on recovery. They need to demonstrate success in helping service users to get their lives back and giving service users the chance to make their own decisions about how they live their lives.
To download the policy paper: the Sainsbury Centre web site, www.scmh.org.uk, or order a copy by phone, +44 20 7827 8300 (price: GBP5.00 plus postage)
Many thanks to Andy Bell, Director of Public Affairs at the Sainsbury Centre, for this contribution.

XII. WEBSITES/ONLINE INFORMATION

Commission's new inter-active web-service on services of general interest

The Commission has launched in January its interactive web-based service to provide *"clear and practical information for stakeholders on how EU rules apply to services of general interest".* It covers areas such as health, social services, energy, telecommunications, transport, radio and television, postal services and schools.
You will find all relevant documents, as well as a list of frequently asked questions.
To visit the website: http://ec.europa.eu/services_general_interest/

XIII. PUBLICATIONS

Discriminations towards people suffering from mental health

A study was carried out by a Swiss team to identify the perception of health professionals (HPs) about the existence, causes and risk factors of social, economic and political practices that undermine the rights of people suffering from mental illnesses (PSMIs). A questionnaire was submitted to health professionals from 17 countries and 4 continents. The results of the study show the continuation of practices like being locked up, physical violence, rationing of care, seclusion within care facilities, and serious attacks on the patients' rights. For more than

60% of the respondents, the existence of these practices is attributable to the economic, social and political contexts of the countries.
For more information: the CTNERH (Centre technique national d'études et de recherches sur les handicaps et les inadaptations) website (in French),
http://194.199.119.233/Saphir/Scripts/Show.bs?bqRef=23910

A stepped care programme for depression management: an uncontrolled pre-post study in primary and secondary care in The Netherlands

Stepped care strategies are potentially effective to organise integrated care but unknown is whether they function well in practice. This paper evaluates the implementation of a stepped care programme for depression in primary care and secondary care.
To read the paper: the International Journal of Integrated Care (IJIC) website,
http://www.ijic.org/

Work-related stress: older workers face higher psychosocial risks

A new report by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA) shows that the main psychosocial risks of work-related stress are related to 5 main topics: new forms of employment contracts and job insecurity; the ageing workforce; work intensification; high emotional demands and violence at work; a poor work-life balance.
To download the report: OSHA website, http://osha.europa.eu/publications/reports/7807118

Access to Social Europe

Written by Nicholas Moussis, a lawyer and former European Commission adviser, 'Access to social Europe' presents the many facets of a wide-ranging policy that has repercussions on the everyday life of all EU citizens. Published in September 2007, the 5th edition has been completely revised and updated and provides a comprehensive analysis of the major political and legislative developments that have occurred in the social sector since the establishment of the Common Market.
For more information and to order a copy: the European Study Service website,
http://www.europeanstudyservice.com/socialeurope.html

XIV. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NEW!! 15 May 2008
Pour la Solidarité and CEDAG (European Council for Voluntary Organisations) Conference, "How to foster civil dialogue in Europe?", Brussels (Belgium)
The conference aims to present the results of the European project *"Promote civil dialogue in Europe: mutual learning between civil society organisations in old, most recent and new member States"* to a large audience.
For more information: contact person, Diane Grossot,
Email diane.grossot@pourlasolidarite.be, or visit the project's website,
http://www.beingcitizen.eu/

23-25 May 2008
ENMESH (European Network for Mental Health Service Evaluation) Conference 2008, "Good Practice, Good Outcome?", Krakow (Poland)
Further information about this conference, including registration forms, are available on the conference dedicated website: www.enmesh2008.pl

4-6 June 2008
2nd International Conference on Community Psychology, "Building Participative, Empowering and Diverse Communities - Visioning Community Psychology in a worldwide perspective", Lisbon (Portugal)
For more information: the conference dedicated website, http://www.2iccp.com/

11-12 June 2008
Employment Week 2008, 15th Annual Conference and Exhibition, Brussels (Belgium)
For more information: the Week dedicated website, http://www.employmentweek.com/

NEW!! 18-20 June 2008
AIGS Congress on "Psychosocial rehabilitation, let's open the borders", Liege and Eben-Emaël (Belgium)
During this Congress, organised by the Association Interrégionale de Guidance et de Santé asbl (AIGS) and Intersanté asbl, in collaboration with Socrate Réhabilitation, themes such as *"Rehabilitation, recovery, participation: theory or practice?", "The "cement" of psychosocial rehabilitation: access to paid work",* or *"The Socrate-rehabilitation support programme to training and employment" will be addressed.* The Congress aims to redefine the concept of social rehabilitation and foster debate on the issue of "mental health and work".
For more information: visit the Congress website (in French), http://www.rehabpsy.be/

19-21 June 2008
World Psychiatric Association Thematic Conference, "Depression and relevant psychiatric conditions in primary care", Granada (Spain)
For more information on the conference: contact person, Dr. Francisco Torres- González, E-mail ftorres@ugr.es, or visit the conference dedicated website, http://www.wpa2008granada.org

NEW!! 26-27 June 2008
AFASER, ARFI and ARFIE European Seminar, "Intellectual Disability and Mental Health Issues – Reflections and Practices", Paris (France)
This European seminar aims to highlight the various directions of social policies in the field, describe and foresee what health and social cooperation work needs to be done, and will stimulate the debate and the exchange of useful practice for the future.
For more information: contact person, Véronique Lafontaine,
Email apemh-euroformat@skynet.be

26-28 June 2008
21st CEFEC Conference, "Employment and Quality of Life in Europe: Common Strategies for Social Inclusion", Lisbon (Portugal)
For more information: CEFEC (Confederation of European social Firms, Employment initiatives and social Co-operatives) website, http://www.cefec.org/

30 June - 4 July 2008
33rd ICSW Global Conference, "The dynamics of social welfare in globalization: Lessons from the past, challenges for today and tomorrow", Tours (France)
For more information: the Conference dedicated website, http://www.icsw2008.org/en/

2-4 July 2008
16th European Social Services Conference, "Shaping the future of local services in Europe", Paris (France)
For more information and registration: the conference dedicated website, http://esn-eu.org/paris/eng/
9-11 July 2008
ICCHP 2008 – 11th International Conference on Computers Helping People with Special Needs, "eQuality: A Global Challenge - Equal Access to the Information Society as a Global Challenge", Linz (Austria)
For more information: the Conference website, www.icchp.org

7-9 August 2008
MHE Conference 2008, Aalborg (Denmark)
For further information and to sign up for the MHE2008 Newsletter, please visit: www.mhe-aalborg.dk, or contact the MHE Secretariat, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org

27-30 August 2008
12th European Symposium on Suicide and suicidal Behaviour, "Working Together to Prevent Suicide: Research, Policy and Practice", Glasgow (Scotland)
For more information: contact the Conference organizer, E-mail organising@esssb12.org

10-12 September 2008
"From Margins to Mainstream", 5th World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioural Disorders, Melbourne (Australia)
For more information: the conference office, Email info@margins2mainstream.com, Tel +61 3 9370 1265

NEW!! 20-25 September 2008
XIVth World Congress of Psychiatry, "Science and Humanism: For a Person-Centered Psychiatry", Prague (Czech Republic)
Courses, plenary sessions, workshops and video sessions will be organised around a great variety of topics, such as anxiety disorders, child and adolescent psychiatry or health promotion.
For more information: the conference dedicated website, www.wpa-prague2008.cz

NEW!! 21-27 September 2008
Summer School on Korczak's ideas and contemporary children and youths problems, Warsaw (Poland)
For more information: visit the dedicated website, www.aps.edu.pl, or send an email to UNESCO-chair@aps.edu.pl

22-24 September 2008
Ifdm 2008, 4th International Forum on Disability Management, "Breaking down barriers together", Berlin (Germany)
For more information: the Forum dedicated website,
http://www.disability-manager.de/e/ifdm2008/index.html

26-28 September 2008
2nd Congress of Transcultural Psychiatry in the German speaking Countries, "Refugees – Women and Children – Everybody is a stranger all over the world", Vienna (Austria)
For more information: visit the website www.transkulurellepsychiatrie.de,
or contact alexander.friedmann@meduniwien.ac.at and solmaz.golsabahi@marienhospital-hamm.de

16-19 April 2009
12th International Congress of IFPE, "Well being and mental disorder: epidemiological tools in the global village", Vienna (Austria)
For further information: visit the Congress dedicated website, http://www.ifpe2009.at/

Do you wish to share information, announce something or make a contribution to the MHE Newsletter?

Please send it to info@mhe-sme.org