



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I. NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE conference 2007

As you all know, Mental Health Europe will hold its 2007 conference in Vienna, from 31 May-2 June 2007. The conference will be co-organised by Pro Mente Austria and Pro Mente Vienna. Preparations for the conference programme are well underway and we hope to open the conference website in January 2007.

The meeting venue has been fixed now: the House of Industry, a beautiful building situated in the heart of Vienna.

MHE's General Assembly 2007 will be held in Vienna on 2 June 2007, after the conference.

Preceding the MHE conference and General Assembly, MHE is planning to hold a capacity building seminar, which is especially (but not exclusively) targeted at individuals and organisations in the mental health field coming from the new EU Member States and accession countries. The title of this training seminar would be: "*Working together in the EU: Capacity-Building seminar for mental health organisations from the EU-27 Member States*".

The aim of this capacity-building seminar will be:

- to provide assistance, including specialised training, to mental health organisations in order to strengthen their capacity to fight the social exclusion of people with mental health problems;
- to make available information about the social inclusion process at the European and national level that mental health organisations can use to improve the situation of social exclusion of people with mental health problems in their countries;
- to promote dialogue and exchange of experiences and information between mental health organisations - nationally between organisations within each new Member State/Accession Country; regionally between new Member State/Accession Countries; and between new Member State/Accession Countries and the European level.

More information will follow in our next Newsletters. Do not hesitate to contact us should you wish to contribute to the seminar and conference (info@mhe-sme.org).

Vienna welcomes you!

MHE Board meeting

MHE held its 20th Board meeting in Florence on 6 and 7 November 2006.

The agenda included discussions on Mental Health Europe's financial situation, the MHE Plan of Work for 2007-2008, the MHE conference 2007 in Vienna, and MHE's conference 2008 which will normally be held in Aalborg, North Denmark in August 2008.

On 7 November, Mental Health Europe delegates had a meeting at the Palazzo Vecchio, the magnificent Florence Town Hall, with representatives of the City of Florence and of the Tuscany Region. This meeting was organised by Donatella Miccinesi, director of AISMe (Italian association for mental health) and Pino Pini (MHE Board member), and it was attended by representatives from user and family organisations as well as the press.

We had the opportunity to discuss about the MHE project "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*" and based on this about the concerns of people with mental health problems with regard to access to health and social services, education, employment or housing in Italy as well as in other European countries. Examples of good practices that are successfully implemented in the Tuscany region for many years are self-help groups for people "hearing voices". In her statement to the representative of the Tuscany Region, Malgorzata Kmita, MHE President, also raised the issue of the mental health of children, young people and ethnic minorities, which should not be forgotten in the effort to improve the situation of social inclusion of people with mental health problems.

Finally, the possibility of collaboration between MHE, AISMe and the Tuscany Region on a project on mental health in prisons was mentioned. Further discussions about this will be held in the near future.

Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems – 4th Partners Meeting, Florence, 6-7 November 2006

The project partners got together for the fourth time and shared all the activities and events that had taken place since the last meeting in May 2006. A report on the situation of social

exclusion of people with mental health problems in the participating 10 countries was disseminated in the form of a press release by MHE, and some of the project partners were also successful in spreading the outcomes of this analysis through national and local newspapers.

Some of the project partners were moreover successful in establishing contacts with the national authorities and raising awareness of the project and the situation of social exclusion of people with mental health problems in the country, as well as they have got involved in the drafting of the National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion for the period 2006-2008 (previously National Action Plans on Social Inclusion). A point that was emphasized in this regard was that the project partners, who have successfully found an entry into this social inclusion process and have made the concerns of people with mental health problems heard in the drafting of the National Reports, should not cease efforts, but closely follow the monitoring and implementation of the National Reports. For the advancement of the concerns of people with mental health problems with regard to access to health and social services, education, employment, housing, transport and so on, it is crucial that what has been laid down in the National Reports also translates into practice.

Since the last meeting in May all the project partners have furthermore put a lot of effort into collecting good practices, either by sending out requests for good practices or by directly contacting people or organisations who are carrying out good practices. The good practices were then discussed in focus groups, which were organised in each of the partner countries, with the participation of people with mental health problems who are directly concerned.

The evaluated and selected best practices are soon to be published on a website which is specifically dedicated to the project. The website will also contain all the key information and documents related to the project as well as a list of events and links around the issue of mental health and social inclusion. Currently, preparations are made for carrying out some field exchange visits to Scotland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Belgium. These field exchange visits will serve as an opportunity for the project partners to learn about the selected best practices and meet with other stakeholders in the country as well as it will help the practices to gain visibility and support.

For further information about the project contact: Sogol Noorani, Project Coordinator, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, E-mail sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org

Mental Health Economics European Network, Phase II – 3rd meeting, Berlin, 16 – 18 November 2006

The third meeting of the Mental Health Economics European Network – Phase II (MHEEN II) took place at the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health from 16 to 18 November in Berlin (Germany).

The MHEEN II Network, led by the London School of Economics and Political Sciences with the technical support of Mental Health Europe, met to review the progress that the MHEEN II group has made so far, to discuss the research findings and to agree on the next steps that need to be undertaken.

On 16th November the meeting focused on the economics of mental health promotion and mental disease prevention. Fleur Baddrick from IMHPA (Implementing Mental Health Promotion Action) provided an update on the network activities, deliverables and expected outcomes. This stimulated a debate on the potential links between MHEEN II and IMHPA.

The focus of the debate on the 17th morning was on the balance of care questionnaire and key related questions, e.g. on accuracy of the data and interpretations and how to make best use of the results. Julien Mosques from the Institute for research and information in health economics (IRDES) gave an overview of balance of care in France. The same day in the afternoon the topics of mental health financing and employment were discussed by the participants.

Finally, the last meeting day was dedicated to administrative issues, dissemination strategy and future activities of the network.

For further information about the project contact: Mari Fresu, Project Coordinator, E-mail mari.fresu@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68

MHE representation at various meetings

On 5 November, the MHE Finance Committee met in Florence (Italy).

On 6-7 November, the MHE Board meeting took place in Florence. (see p.2)

On the same days, a meeting of the partners of the MHE project "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*" was organised in Florence. (see p.2-3)

On 7 November, Mary Van Dievel, MHE Representative, had a meeting in Florence with journalists and representatives of the Tuscany Region. (see p.2)

On 14 November, Mary Van Dievel, Sogol Noorani, Project Coordinator, and Fanny Muller, Information Officer, participated in the bi-annual meeting of the Social Platform members with the European Commission, which took place in Brussels (Belgium).

From 16 to 18 November, Mary Van Dievel and Mari Fresu, Project Coordinator, attended the 3rd meeting of the Mental Health Economics European Network (MHEEN II) in Berlin (Germany). (see p.3)

On 17 November, Sogol Noorani represented MHE at the meeting of the European Commission with the European Networks active in the Social Inclusion and Protection Process in Brussels.

On 20 November, Elisabeth Muschik, Board member, participated in the Social Platform FRAND (Fundamental Rights and Non Discrimination) workgroup, organised in Brussels.

On 21 November, Elisabeth Muschik represented MHE at the Social Platform seminar on "*Enhancing NGOs expertise in fighting discrimination*" (Brussels).

On 22 November, Josée Van Remoortel, Senior Policy Advisor, attended a preparatory meeting for the Citizens Forum in Paris (France).

On the same day, Mary Van Dievel and Mari Fresu took part in the EU Health Policy Forum in Brussels.

On 23 November, Mari Fresu attended the 1st meeting for the project "*Comparative Cost Analysis: Community-based services as an alternative to institutions*", which was held in Brussels.

On 28 November, Mary Van Dievel participated in a meeting of the EU Platform for Rehabilitation in Brussels.

II. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

No social inclusion without mental health – From a patient's view

An individual member of Mental Health Europe, also actively involved in the work of the Flemish Mental Health Association, wanted to share the following with our readers.

According to him, it is important to ensure:

- the accessibility of care for everyone;
- the patients' participation;
- the social inclusion of the patients;
- efficient preventive measures for drug abuse, depression and suicide;
- effective measures to reduce the discrimination and stigmatisation of people with mental health problems.

Mental health problems are threatening public health. They should be placed on top of the European political agenda. Striving towards social acceptance of people with mental health problems is extremely important, not only for the patients themselves and for their relatives, but also for the mental well-being of the whole population.

The participation of the patients and their relatives regarding their treatment should be further encouraged, since it guarantees a better care. Patients should be more involved in European consultations and discussions as well.

A more consistent European policy on mental health would help to improve the situation in this respect.

Readers who would like to get in touch with the author can contact the MHE Secretariat.

Your activities and initiatives are important! They may also inspire others!

III. WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

"Forget-me-not Days", 10-14 October 2006-11-22

At the occasion of the 2006 World Mental Health Day (10 October), the Slovak League for Mental Health, which is a member of MHE, organised a huge campaign to raise public awareness on the importance of health prevention and social inclusion of people with mental health problems. It consisted in a series of activities that took place in September and October 2006;

The *"Forget-me-not Days"* opened with a press conference, followed by a media campaign of nearly three weeks as well as a nation wide public money collection (12-14 October).

On 11 October, the Slovak League for Mental Health organised a special exhibition in the "Nezabudka" gallery.

On 13 October, the Slovak League for Mental Health organised a ceremonious concert and awarded two special awards: one for the best media in mental health promotion in 2005 and one for the organisation which planned the best mental health awareness activities in 2005.

This campaign was in line with the strategy developed in the Slovak National Programme of Mental Health, which main objective is to shift psychiatric and other mental health care services from official institutions to community, to strengthen public awareness on mental health issues and promotion.

For more information: the Slovak League for Mental Health website,

<http://www.dusevnezdravie.sk/ktosme.htm>

Thanks to the Slovak League for Mental Health for this contribution.

FEAFES celebration of World Mental Health Day

During a press conference on 10 October, FEAFES - the Spanish Confederation of Associations of Families and People with Mental Illness - presented a new guide called *"Facing the reality of suicide: Orientations for its prevention"*, targeted especially to people with mental illness and their families. This booklet was elaborated by FEAFES, according to the recommendations of the World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It gathers references from different authors. More than 6,500 copies have already been distributed, with a threefold aim: giving practical and simple orientations for prevention to citizens, providing a background document to lobby for the improvement of the general mental health services and creating specific policies for suicide prevention. Like each year, most of the 190 member associations of FEAFES organised activities to celebrate World Mental Health Day. On this occasion, the declaration of the WFMH was adopted, completed with regional and local demands and read by policymakers or other relevant authorities all over the country. Other events such as conferences, seminars, demonstrations, fraternity lunches, information desks... were also planned to raise awareness on mental health.

For more information: FEAFES website, www.feafes.com

Thanks to María Jesús San Pío Tendero, from Asuntos Europeos, for this contribution.

Activities organised by FEMASAM on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day 2006

Information workshops: on 6 October, informative workshops were set up in the main shopping centers and hospitals of several areas around Madrid. The heads of FEMASAM member organisations provided information on mental health issues to the interested people and announced the World Mental Health Day as well.

Demonstration of solidarity for the World Mental Health Day: The Madrid Federation of Mental Health Associations (FEMASAN), together with the main professionals' associations of the Community of Madrid, led the demonstration that took place on Saturday 7 October in Madrid. More than 4,000 people called upon the policy makers to take care of mental health issues and to implement an action plan on suicide prevention. In particular family representatives, professionals as well as mentally ill health people made strong plea to give more power to health authorities on psychiatric rehabilitation, and to increase the level of financial support to the mental health sector.

The demonstration was organised by: the Madrid Federation of Mental Health associations (FEMASAM), the Spanish Association of Neuropsychiatry Professionals of Mental Health, the Madrid Association of Mental Health (AMSM), the Madrid Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation (AMRP) and the Association of Mental Health Nurses.

Presentation of the Action Plan on Suicide Prevention: On 20 October, the Health Council of the Community of Madrid, together with FEMASAM, presented the Suicide Prevention Action Plan of the Community of Madrid. Key local policy makers, professionals and academics took part in the event.

For more information: FEMASAN website, www.femasan.org

Thanks to FEMASAN for this contribution.

What have you done for World Mental Health Day? Send us your contributions!

IV. REPORTS ON CONFERENCES

22nd Congress of the Danubian Psychiatric Association, 11-15 October 2006, Albena (Bulgaria)

This congress was organised by the Bulgarian College "Private Psychiatry", together with the Bulgarian Psychiatric Association and the Bulgarian Society of Biological Psychiatry, on the theme "*Psychiatry – Today and tomorrow: Relapse prevention, comorbidity in the psychiatry, resocialization*".

Almost 500 persons participated in the symposium, mostly general practitioners coming from Bulgaria. Since only a few non governmental organisations (NGOs) are currently working in Bulgaria, the congress aimed, amongst other things, to interest the participants in the creation and development of such structures in Bulgaria.

Rita Donabauer, from Pro Mente Austria, participated in the symposium and represented MHE and CE FEC (Confederation of European Social Firms) in various workshops.

For more information: the congress dedicated website, <http://www.danubecongress2006.info>

Thanks to Rita Donabauer for this contribution.

"The Right to Health is a Human Right", FEANTSA Conference, Wroclaw (Poland), 12-13 October 2006

This FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless) conference and information day was organised on the theme "*The Right to Health is a Human Right: Ensuring access to health for homeless people*".

It was an opportunity to discuss the mental and physical health problems, as well as the severe social problems - including addiction to drugs and/or alcohol - commonly experienced by people who are homeless.

Preben Brandt, a Danish psychiatrist working for Project UDENFOR in Copenhagen, represented Mental Health Europe at the conference and made a presentation on the background of the European Commission Green Paper on Mental Health and people with complex problems.

Talking about his own experience of people suffering from mental ill health combined with social problems (addiction, homelessness, poverty, lack of education...), Preben put emphasis on the fact that these people are really the most neglected as they are very often not respected nor heard and suffer from stigmatisation, either in the community or in the health services.

Experience as well as research show that they are confronted to a specialised system dealing poorly with complex problems and that they are not able to defend their own rights. Moreover, the different health services work alone, without any coordination between themselves.

To ensure a good mental health service to people with mental ill health and severe social problems, it is possible to use a few existing tools which have proven to be useful and respectful of the people's dignity:

- specialised and multidisciplinary teams;
- separate units that are in the same time part of the general mental health system;
- access to both outreach, outpatient and clinical services;
- ensuring co-work between the different services;
- accompanying users to other services;
- ability to fit in the special needs of the surrounding community;
- diversification of the proposed services: treatment, harm-reduction, care and social support.

Improving the services for the socially excluded people with complex mental health problems requires strategies to reduce the barriers of poverty, isolation, service fragmentation and hostility combined with psychiatric and social work.

Besides, it requires listening to what users have to say and granting them a right to get involved in the decisions related to their treatment and care.

For more information: FEANTSA website,

[http://www.feantsa.org/files/Health Annual Theme/Annual theme documents/European report/EN Annual theme report 2006 Health.pdf](http://www.feantsa.org/files/Health%20Annual%20Theme/Annual%20theme%20documents/European%20report/EN%20Annual%20theme%20report%202006%20Health.pdf)

Thanks to Preben Brandt, from Projekt UDEFOR, for this contribution.

V. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

European Disability Forum

EDF Work Programme May-December 2007

Due to the late approval of Progress, the EU new action programme, under which EDF will receive its funding, a call for proposal has recently been launched in order to cover the period between May and December 2007. The following call of the programme will cover again a full financial year from January to December 2008.

In view of this call, EDF prepared its work programme for the period from May to December 2007. The proposed work programme was approved by EDF Board on early October 2006.

The work programme focuses on eight main priority areas, and includes the description of key activities to be undertaken by EDF, as well as its objectives and the involvement of EDF members.

The 8 key priorities are:

- follow-up on the implementation of the Structural Funds;
- fighting discrimination in employment;
- the EDF 10th anniversary campaign;
- follow-up on the United Nations Convention on the rights of people with disabilities;
- access for all in transport, built environment and information and communication technologies;
- access to quality and affordable services;
- the European Year of Equal Opportunities in 2007;
- to work towards a coherent and comprehensive European disability strategy.

In identifying its priorities, EDF ensured to be as much as possible in line with the priorities of the European Commission's priorities for 2007.

The European Commission also issued its 2007 work programme recently.

To access the Commission's work programme: the Commission's website, http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm

For more information: EDF website, <http://www.edf-feeph.org/en/welcome.htm>

Source: EDF Weekly Flash

2005-2006 EDF Annual Report

The new EDF annual report for the year 2005-2006 has been published. The report is presented in a new user-friendly format. It describes the main successes of the year and the key priorities for EDF in a very user-friendly way.

EDF continuously strives to avoid the use of EU and disability expert jargon in order for the information to be accessible to all persons interested in disability issues whether familiar or not with the work at EU level.

Moreover, the annual report includes a section in easy-to-read format and is available in large print or Braille upon request.

To place an order: contact person, Valérie Asselberghs, E-mail valerie.asselberghs@edf-feph.org, Fax 32 2 282.46.09.

Social Platform

Social Platform Annual Conference on "Social Values and Democracy: Renewing the guiding principles of the European Union", Brussels (Belgium), 5-6 December 2006

The European social model represents a common vision of society shared by all EU Member States, enshrined in the existing EU Treaties and reaffirmed in the Constitutional Treaty. While each EU country has its own model of social and economic policy mix, serving to help implement this common vision, all 25 countries have affirmed their commitment to the same key values and objectives based on fundamental rights and social justice.

The Social Platform will organise a two-day conference in December 2006 to address the European social model and will address 2 key questions:

- Social values in EU politics: Are we moving forwards or backwards?
- Would the EU be more social if it were more democratic?

The plenary sessions will give an overview of this debate and a series of workshops will be organised by Social Platform members on specific themes of relevance to the debate around the European social model. The diversity of Social Platform's member organisations will spur a highly informed debate from different perspectives.

The conference is targeted at European and national policy makers, European and national NGOs, researchers, social partners and other interested parties.

For further information: contact person, Pearly Raynal, pearly.raynal@socialplatform.org, or see the Social Platform website, <http://socialplatform.org/code/EN/abou.asp?Page=772>

Key level academics ready to join forces with NGOs to fight social rights violation

The condemnation of France for denying medical assistance to undocumented migrants or of Greece for breaching the right to housing of Roma population has been made possible by the Council of Europe Revised Social Charter. Unfortunately this instrument has not yet reached its full potential (especially if compared to the European Court of Human Rights) and calls are regularly made to non governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade unions to use more systematically the collective complaint mechanism.

On the 18-19 January 2007 the academic network on the European Social Charter is organising a training and advocacy session and asked the ETUC and the Social Partners to be co-organiser of the event. In order to make the most of these two days with top level academics (i.e. Gerard Quinn, Mark Bell, Pádraig Kenna), the Social Platform has proposed a bottom-up approach to this seminar. Starting from concrete cases of social rights violation taken from national NGOs they will discuss how a complaint can be lodged, which article can be invoked, how much resources are needed and what result can be expected.

For more information: contact person, Roshan Di Puppo, roshan.dipuppo@socialplatform.org.
Source: Social Platform Weekly Mailing

VI. EUROPEAN UNION

Celebration of the EU's 50th birthday in Member States

In the middle of October, officials from member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament agreed on two main pan-European festivities for the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome in 2007. Member states stepped down different plans proposed by the

Commission earlier this year - including Eurovision-style singing event and an EU marathon - and instead picked "*more realistic and cheaper plans*", diplomats said.

The deal includes the appointment of two citizens' "faces" per member state who will "tell their story" about the impact of the European Union on their daily life, to be shown on a film or a video blog.

Besides, Commission Vice-President Margot Wallström and Parliament Vice-President Alejandro Vidal-Quadras presented the winner of the EU's logo competition to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome: Szymon Skrzypczak, a twenty-three year old Polish design student.

The winning design consists of the word "*together*" written in different colours and typefaces expressing "*the diversity in European history and culture*". In each language version, the word will be replaced by its translation. A sub-line "*Since 1957*" will make the connection with the actual historical event.

The contest attracted more than 1,700 young designers from all member states.

The winning logo will be used by all EU institutions, member states and regions during the festivities in 2007.

For more information: the commission dedicated website,

http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/50/index_en.cfm

Source: Social Platform Weekly Mailing

VII. PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Germany will try to revive the European social model during its presidency

Germany is to seek ways to breathe life into the European social model during its six month stint at the helm of the EU beginning in January.

According to an outline of the programme for its EU presidency, obtained by Reuters, Berlin will concentrate on creating more jobs, as this is one of the main concerns of citizens and will also try and make the bloc's social model more relevant.

It plans to host a ministerial conference that makes clear that the economy, employment and social affairs do not contradict one another and wants to make sure that the social effects of European laws are taken more strongly into account.

The European social model, which has proved hard to pin down to a single coherent definition, has been a constantly recurring theme in EU debate over the last two years.

It was a dominant feature of discussions on the EU law on opening up the market in services, with its opponents claiming its aims of making it easier for service providers to set up in different member states would undermine the social model's fabric.

It has also cropped up in several other debates including the one leading up to the referendum on the constitution in France - which saw the charter rejected - and in issues such as protecting European shoe manufacturers from cheap Chinese shoe imports.

Berlin's stated intentions in its programme indicate it is going to have another stab at the problem of how to keep essential elements of the model such as social protection, with Europe facing an increasingly tougher struggle to keep itself competitive, against other rising economies such as China and India.

For more information: EUobserver website, <http://euobserver.com/851/22647>

Source: Social Platform weekly Mailing

Health priorities for the next three EU Presidencies

Last October, the combined programme covering the period January 2007 to June 2008 of the three next Presidencies of the European Union (Germany, Portugal and Slovenia) was unveiled.

The three Presidencies are committed to actively pursue work on the wide range of Community activities which aim to contribute to a high level of health for all citizens, focusing on health promotion, disease prevention, innovation and access to healthcare.

Final agreement on the new Public Health Programme should be reached in the first half of 2007 and discussions on a new European Health Strategy will be initiated as soon as the Commission has submitted its Communication.

In the field of disease prevention, the Presidencies will address specific health issues such as promotion of mental health, alcohol abuse and alcohol related harm, injury prevention,

healthcare associated infections and promotion of healthy diets and physical activity, in particular for children and adolescents.

Pandemic disease planning and preparedness as well as the continuous combat against HIV/AIDS will remain high on the agenda.

Concerning access to healthcare, the existing inequalities affecting migrants and gender inequalities will be addressed.

Work on the proposal for a Regulation on advanced therapy medicinal products and on the revision of the medical devices Directive will be conducted with the aim of strengthening innovation in this field and to improve security and quality for patients. Final agreement should be reached at the latest in the first half of 2008. Work on the initiatives on the donation and transplantation of organs is also expected.

The three Presidencies will seek to advance work on a Community framework for healthcare services.

Careful attention will be paid by all three Presidencies to future developments at the international level, in particular to cooperation within the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the field of tobacco control (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control) and in the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR).

For more information: the Slovenian government website,

<http://www.uvi.si/eng/slovenia/publications/slovenia-news/3703/3737>

MHE will review the full programme of the three EU Presidencies to find out what they intend to do regarding mental health in general. More information will follow in our next Newsletters.

VII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

A new commissioner-designate for multilingualism

On 30 October 2006, Commission President José Manuel Barroso announced that he has assigned the portfolio of multilingualism to Romanian commissioner-designate, Leonard Orban.

Leonard Orban will be in charge of a portfolio taken from Jan Figel, current commissioner for education, training, culture and multilingualism. Figel said: "*Languages are at the heart of the European identity, and the Commission's role in this area, when it comes to translating the EU's legislation, providing the necessary interpretation to thousands of meetings or encouraging the teaching of languages, is crucial.*"

In 2007, the EU will have 23 languages, including Romanian, Bulgarian and Irish. Orban speaks Romanian, English, French and has passive Italian.

For more information: the Commission's website,

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/figel/news/docs/orban_multiling_en.pdf

Source: EurActiv Daily Update

New Communication on the demographic future of Europe

Europe's ageing population is an unprecedented challenge for the whole of society, but it is a challenge we must rise to, and we must rise to it now, concludes the European Commission's new Communication on "*The demographic future of Europe, from challenge to opportunity*". It underlines Member States' ability to meet the challenges of a shrinking workforce and an ageing population. The keys to success are the promotion of demographic renewal, more jobs and longer working lives, higher productivity, integrating migrants and sustainable public finances.

For more information: the Commission's website,

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=183

Consultation on action at EU level to promote the active inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market

The Commission has published the responses it received on the consultation on minimum income it launched in February. Comprehensive social assistance policies are in place in most Member States and activation policies have been implemented to bring excluded people back to the labour market, but there is still a sizeable 'hard core' of people with little prospect of finding a job who, for that reason, remain at high risk of falling into poverty and social

exclusion. The main challenge is thus to ensure that social protection policies effectively contribute to mobilising people who are capable of working while achieving the wider objective of providing a decent living standard to those who are and will remain outside the labour market.

To access the responses: the Commission's website,

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/active_inclusion_en.htm

Source: Social Platform Weekly Mailing

DG Employment and Social Affairs

2007 European Year of Equal opportunities logo launched as final implementing bodies are confirmed

The logo for the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All has been revealed. The design – three figures side-by-side with the EU flag – is available in two different, vivid colour combinations, as well as in black and white for print. The logo and the guidelines for its use will soon be available for download from the Year's website.

In total, 27 countries (the 25 EU Member States, Bulgaria and Romania) have confirmed their participation in the 2007 European Year. In 26 of the 27 countries, national implementing bodies have been appointed. These organisations, generally the ministry or government agency for equality issues in each country, are responsible for the Year at national, regional and local level. Contact your national implementing body to find out more about the Year in your country.

For more information: the Year's website,

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/equality2007/index_en.htm

Training manual in 23 languages

A training manual from the EU-funded project "*Capacity building of civil society dealing with anti-discrimination*" is now available in all official EU languages as well as Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish. Copies are available online or as hard copies in limited numbers. To request hard copies, send an email to the European Commission at empl-antidiscrimination@ec.europa.eu

To download the training manual:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/public/pubst_en.htm#train

DG Health and Consumer Protection

New Commissioner designated for Consumer Affairs from January 2007

Meglena Kuneva, the current Bulgarian Minister for European Affairs, has been nominated to become

Commissioner for Consumer Protection once Bulgaria joins the European Union in January 2007.

Commission President José Manuel Barroso announced the nomination on 26 October, and Ms Kuneva attended a hearing at the European Parliament in the end of November.

Ms Kuneva has a background in law and journalism.

For more information: the Commission website,

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

Source: DG Health and Consumer Newsletter

IX. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

A new education and training programme

On 25 October, the European Parliament adopted the Commission's ambitious proposals for the "*Lifelong learning*" Programme, a new action programme in the field of education and training. For the first time, a single programme will cover learning opportunities from childhood to old age. The Lifelong Learning Programme will cover the period 2007-2013, and is the successor to the current Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and eLearning programmes. It has a budget of € 7 billion to support projects and activities that foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the European Union, so that they become a world quality reference.

For more information: the Commission's website,

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1478&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Source: Commission Press Release

X. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

A new Director-General for WHO

Further to the sudden and sad loss of Dr. Lee Jong-Wook, the World Health Organization (WHO) has appointed a new Director General, Dr. Margaret Chan from China, who stated that she wanted to be judged by the impact WHO's work has on the people of Africa and on women across the globe. As Director-General she would focus on six key issues for WHO: health development, security, capacity, information and knowledge, partnership, and performance.

MHE would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr Chan for her recent nomination and wishes her all success in her new post.

For more information: WHO website, <http://www.who.int/en>

Source: WHO Press Release

Preventing suicidal behaviours

Suicide rates have increased by 60% worldwide in the last 45 years. In particular suicide rates among young people have been increasing and suicide is now ranking among the three leading causes of death around the world among those aged 15-44. Suicide is a complex phenomenon and its prevention requires a multifaceted approach. The World Health Organization's (WHO) immediate objective is to bring together national authorities, civil society and the private sector in selected countries where the need is greatest to agree on action plans to address the main local risk factors for suicide.

For more information on WHO's suicide prevention strategy: Global Programming Note 2005-2007, http://www.who.int/nmh/donorinfo/msd_preventing_suicide.pdf

Source: WHO e-Update

XI. VARIOUS

Do we dare to care? - Mental health care in Sierra Leone

Rosaline was 36 years old when the problems occurred. She started to hear voices, stopped taking care of herself and she became an increasing burden and embarrassment to her family. Everybody in her small village knew her as the "crazy woman".

Rosaline does not live in a country where there are any mental health care facilities. She lives in the small West African country of Sierra Leone that is trying to recover from a long and bloody civil war. With only one psychiatrist, one old-fashioned psychiatric hospital and two psychiatric nurses (all located in the capital, Freetown), the country seems ill-adapted to deal with people like Rosaline.

In 2002, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation conducted a survey and found that 2% of the population was psychotic, 4% had severe depression, 4% had substance misuse, 1% had mental retardation and 1% had epilepsy. The WHO advocated the creation of community based mental health services. Little to nothing has changed since then.

That is the challenge Sierra Leone is facing now. It is a challenge for its Ministry of Health, but also for non governmental organisations (NGOs), grassroots organisations and the few motivated professionals who advocate for the development of a proper mental health care system in the country. Given the limited human and financial resources, it is however a challenge that they can not face alone.

After working in the country for almost two years as a psychologist, Katia Verbiest has seen the possibilities for change and capacity-development. She has encountered young and motivated professionals who have been trained by the Emergency NGOs from the last decade. Now, it is time to support them in developing a mental health care system that is adapted to the specific cultural and socio-economic context of the country. HealthNet TPO and the Medical

Research Centre (MRC) are willing to support her. But looking for funding is hard in a donor-world where mental health is considered as not that important.

For more information about the mental health project in Sierra Leone or to help Katia Verbiest to make a difference, contact her at kativb@hotmail.com

Thanks to Katia Verbiest, Clinical psychologist in Sierra Leone, for this contribution.

XII. WEBSITES/ONLINE INFORMATION

New HEAL website

In October, HEAL (the Health and Environment Alliance) has launched a striking, colourful and lively new version of its website. This follows swiftly on its name change on 21 September from the "European Public Health Alliance Environment Network" (EEN) to the "Health and Environment Alliance".

One exciting addition is "Recent Developments", home page, centre column, which gives a brief update of the alliance's recent activities and achievements. The home page also highlights HEAL's main issues: environment and health policy, mercury, toxics, climate change, air quality and public participation, and provides a link to the "Healthy Environments for Children" website, HEAL's project linked to the World Health Organization. Another new feature is the "Resources and press corner" containing all HEAL's press releases, publications, reports and open letters.

To access the HEAL website: www.env-health.org

XIII. PUBLICATIONS

Making the link between mental health and youth homelessness - A pan-London study

The transitional years from childhood to adulthood are a significant milestone in a young person's life. There are a number of factors that hinder a successful transition including a reported increase in the risk of homelessness. This new study from the Mental Health Foundation examines this phenomenon among 16-25 year olds. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from services involved with young people experiencing homelessness across London and from the young people who accessed these services.

Key findings included a lack of integration between services attending to housing and mental health needs simultaneously and a lack of mental health awareness, including low confidence across service sector staff to provide basic emotional support for young people within the generic housing and homelessness sector. However, the study also identifies promising practice examples.

To access the full version of the study: the Mental Health Foundation UK website,

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/>

Source: FEANTSA Flash

Council of Europe - Activity report 2005

The highlight of the Council of Europe's activities in 2005 was the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government which took place in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May. A political declaration and an action plan were adopted at the summit, laying down the principal tasks and priorities of the Council of Europe for the coming years.

Co-operation was increased with the OSCE and the UN and with many of its various bodies in 2005. The intervention of the Council of Europe's Secretary General in the UN Security Council was the first time a Secretary General was given the opportunity to speak directly to this important organ of the United Nations. Expanding further its work in the area of protecting human rights, the Council of Europe also opened three conventions for signature at the 3rd Summit: the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and two conventions related to the fight against terrorism. 2005 saw a significant increase in measures aimed at monitoring and building capacity to fight corruption, money laundering and other types of serious crime.

To place an order directly: Council of Europe Publishing,

http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/redirect.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2066

Psychological drug research: current themes and future developments

What are the current findings of psychological research in the drug field with regard to personality traits, personality disorders and co-morbid psychopathology, as well as alcohol- and drug-related expectancies? In this publication, Jorge Negreiros, professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Porto and member of the Pompidou Group Research platform, attempts to answer these questions. The limitations and future developments in this area of research are also addressed in the final section of this report.

To place an order directly: Council of Europe Publishing,

http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/redirect.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2123

Prevention of disabilities linked to chronic diseases

Worldwide diseases have changed to include more chronic conditions, while the majority of current health systems continue to provide treatment and acute care rather than continuity of care. Even more dramatic changes in the health needs of the world population are anticipated, with non-communicable diseases as the leading cause of disability. The present report, drawn up by a Council of Europe Committee of Experts, proposes appropriate means of prevention aimed at reducing disabilities caused by chronic diseases. The setting up of individualised programmes of psycho-social rehabilitation aiming at the full development of the person, and measures to promote the full integration of people with disabilities into society are some of the recommendations made.

To place an order directly

http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/redirect.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=2134

The Right to Health is a Human Right

FEANTSA, the European Federation of National Organisations working with the Homeless, launched a new comprehensive European Report on *"The right to health is a human right: Ensuring access to health for people who are homeless"* at its 2006 European Conference in Wroclaw, Poland on 13 October 2006.

FEANTSA's new European Report highlights that people who are homeless face substantial and sometimes insurmountable, difficulties when seeking to access quality healthcare in all European countries.

Drawing upon the expertise of FEANTSA's over one hundred members across the EU, It also provides a genuine source of information and recommendations on issues in relation to health and homelessness across Europe.

To download the report: <http://www.feantsa.org/code/en/theme.asp?ID=35>

XIV. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

10-14 December 2006

5th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health, "Living in Harmony: Promoting creative synergy in a stressful world", Hong Kong (China)

The Fifth International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health will provide a platform to share evidence-based practices among social workers from diverse cultures and societies.

Within the five-day programme, there will be physical exercises, tai-chi, hands-on techniques of Asian origin, Satellite Symposia in social service organisations, field visits as well as social programme and local hospitality with "Hong Kong style". Study Tours and Post-Conference Tours will also be organised to give the participants a first-hand experience of the cultural heritage of the East.

For more information: the conference dedicated website,

<http://www.swh2006.com/en/welcome.html>

30-31 January 2007

1st Equality Summit and Opening Conference of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, Berlin (Germany)

Increased diversity in a changing, multicultural society is one of the greatest challenges facing the European Union (EU). In recognition of this diversity and in order to highlight its positive value in society, the EU has declared 2007 the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All and hopes through this initiative to contribute to a just society.

In order to help achieve this goal, an Equality Summit at ministerial level will be held every year, bringing together high-ranking representatives at EU and national levels. The first Equality Summit is to be held by the German Presidency of the European Council in Berlin on 30 and 31 January 2007. At the same time, the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All will be inaugurated in collaboration with the European Commission.

This will be the first time that high-ranking representatives from the Member States, the social partners, civil society and European anti-discrimination bodies come together to discuss the promotion of equal opportunities in Europe.

For further information: the conference office of the agency Steinrücke+ich, Tel +49-30-400 44 590, E-mail berlin@steinrueckeundich.de

16 February 2007

EAP-SFU European Symposium "PSYCHIATRY - PSYCHOLOGY - PSYCHOTHERAPY: Similarities and Differences", Vienna (Austria)

The European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP), in collaboration with the Sigmund Freud University (SFU), organises a European Symposium on the theme "PSYCHIATRY - PSYCHOLOGY - PSYCHOTHERAPY: Similarities and Differences" at the Sigmund Freud University in Vienna.

Based on the "Strasbourg Declaration on Psychotherapy of 1990" the EAP represents high training standards for a scientifically based and stands for a free and independent practice of psychotherapy.

To register to the conference: send an E-mail at eap.headoffice@europsyche.org

For more information: EAP website, <http://www.europsyche.org>

9-11 March 2007

"Investing in Mental Health Policy and Economics Research" conference, Venice (Italy)

This event will provide a good opportunity of exchanging experience and key results in the field of mental health as well as raising awareness about the MHEEN II (Mental Health Economics European Network phase II - 2005-2007) network. MHEEN members are strongly encouraged to send their contributions to the ICMPE before 30 October 2006.

For further information and to download the abstract and registration forms: the ICMPE webpage <http://www.icmpe.org/test1/events/events.htm>.

17-21 March 2007

15th European Congress of Psychiatry, Madrid (Spain)

This annual congress is organised by the Association of European Psychiatrists (AEP).

The theme of the congress will be: "European Psychiatry – Science and Art".

The aim of the congress is to open new perspectives on the Science and Art of psychiatry and on issues related to treatment and patient care. The state-of-the-art lectures, plenary lectures and core symposia will provide a full update on the most important aspects of treatment in psychiatry and on the latest achievements in this field.

For more information: the congress website, <http://www.kenes.com/aep2007/welcome.asp>, or send an e-mail at aep2007@kenes.com.

25-27 March 2007

6th International Conference "Public benefit for the Disabled", Cracow (Poland)

Due to unpredicted circumstances, the conference has been rescheduled from 26-28 November 2006 to 25-27 March 2006.

The conference will take place in connection with ceremonial inauguration of 2007 – European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

Debates will proceed about oncoming matters:

- obtaining the status of organisation of public benefit and organisational and administrative service;
- cooperation of national and local governments with non-governmental organisations on the base of legislative regulations and disability laws;
- impact of laws, concerning non-governmental organisations, on: rehabilitation, accessibility, transport, education, etc... of disabled people; anti-discrimination activities and equal opportunities for all; mass media as instruments exposing activities of non-governmental organisations...
- practices of non-governmental organisations of public benefit (or their counterparts in other European countries) and their influence on activities for equal opportunities for all.

For more information: the website of the Polish Association of Disabled People's website, www.pson.ip.krakow.pl

10-12 May 2007

Europe in Action Conference, "Citizens' Rights for All – Full citizen's rights and legal protection for people with intellectual disabilities", Warsaw (Poland)

During the European Year of equal Opportunities 2007, people with intellectual disabilities, family members, legal professionals and policy makers will discuss at this event the following main themes:

- Support in decision-making and legal representation;
- Full citizenship and legal protection;
- Withdrawal of legal capacity and its consequences.

For more information: the conference dedicated website, www.EuropeInAction.org

31 May–2 June 2007

MHE conference 2007, "No Health without Mental Health: from slogan to reality", Vienna (Austria)

The MHE conference will focus on the outcomes of the consultation process of the European Commission's Green Paper "Improving the Mental Health of the Population" and the upcoming strategy for the next years.

The focus of the conference will be on the connection and the coherence between European policies and the impact they have on the mental health of the population.

Lectures, round-table discussions and workshops will give opportunity for sharing information and deepening knowledge but also for exchange of best practices.

Participants coming from all European countries will be encouraged to discuss the possibilities of implementing strategies on mental health throughout the whole life-span and to initiate cooperation between the different organisations and institutions working on mental health issues at the national and European level.

Additionally, MHE's annual General Assembly will take place at the end of the conference.

You can contribute by sending us your ideas for workshops you would be interested in.

For further information please contact: office@promente-Wien.at or info@mhe-sme.org

13-15 June 2007

8th European Union of Supported Employment (EUSE) Conference, Belfast (Northern Ireland)

The Conference, "Supported Employment – Working for All?", aims to promote good practices in Supported Employment as well as exploring how the model can be used with other disadvantaged groups. The Conference will also pose the question "Is Supported Employment working for all?" and if not, why not?

For more information: the conference dedicated website, <http://www.euseconference2007.org>

NEW!! 18-19 June 2007

15th European Social services Conference, "Opportunity for All: the challenge for social and health services in a diverse Europe", Berlin (Germany)

This conference is organized by the European social network in cooperation with the German Presidency of the European Union. It brings together 400 delegates from key national and European public and private welfare organizations to learn together about maximizing potential for all, young or old, no matter their disadvantage or disability. With over 30

presentations, workshops and debates this conference will bring Europe's best practice together in one comprehensive event.

For more information: contact person, Sarah Wellburn, Tel +44 1273 549817, E-mail sarah.wellburn@socialeurope.com

19-23 August 2007

World Mental Health Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health, Hong Kong (China)

The 2007 Congress will bring together international and local experts with diverse backgrounds including mental health practitioners, community partners, as well as users and carers of mental health services, to address a wide variety of topics of significant interest in mental health.

This year's congress theme is "*Impact of Culture on Mental Health: East meet West*".

For more information: the Congress Secretariat, Tel +852 2778 7173, Fax +852 2770 9345, e-mail info@wmhc2007.com, or the congress dedicated website, www.wmhc2007.com

25-29 August 2007

13th International Congress of the European Society for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, "Bridging the gaps – Integrating perspectives in child and adolescent mental health", Florence (Italy)

The 13th International Congress of ESCAP will be designed to offer clinicians, researchers, health workers, and others interested in the welfare of children and adolescents with a genuine appreciation of contemporary and appropriate methods of assessment and intervention. The program will be especially sensitive to the fact that the developmental periods of childhood and adolescence represent a crucial time for timely diagnostic evaluation and for the implementation of effective treatments.

For more information: contact person, Cecilia Sighinolfi, E-mail cecilia.sighinolfi@azzurro.it, or visit the conference dedicated website, http://www.escap-net.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=69&Itemid=148

18-21 November 2007

SMES-EUROPA 10th Conference, "After 15 years...", Rome (Italy)

15 years ago (1992), in Rome, a first seminar was organised to mark the beginning of the SMES' movement.

The aim of the conference is:

1. A retrospective evaluation: "...*what is the situation after 15 years?*," what has been changed in a positive or a negative way?
2. Perspectives and proposals for the future, for absolute priorities in right and access to health and social services for homeless people.

For more information on the conference: the SMES-EUROPA website, http://www.smes-europa.org/Rome2007_10conf_SMES_UK.htm

19-21 June 2008

World Psychiatric Association Thematic Conference, "Depression and relevant psychiatric conditions in primary care", Granada (Spain)

Depression will be second to cardiovascular disease as a global cause of disability by 2020.

PREDICT is the European Commission 5th Framework Study of the predictors of depression in general practice attendees in six European and one Latin American country.

The results of this ground-breaking research will form the basis of this conference, with the following key objectives:

- To present new data on predictors of depression;
- To debate their significance for health promotion and prevention of depression in family practice;
- To promote inter-professional exchange between mental health and primary care professionals on management of depression and other common mental disorders in family practice.

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>

For Diversity



Against Discrimination

www.stop-discrimination.info

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

Please send it to info@mhe-sme.org

Mental Health Europe is committed to:

- the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental distress;
- protecting the rights of people with mental health problems;
- removing stigma and discrimination;
- ensuring a fair share of resources for mental health.

Do you share our vision? Then join MHE now and you will strengthen the voice for mental health in Europe.

First name:

Family name:

Address:

City:

Country:

Tel.:

Fax:

E-mail:

Occupation or organisation:

Date:

Account number:

Bank details:

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