



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I.NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE capacity building seminar – Vienna, 30 May 2007

Mental Health Europe will organise a capacity-building seminar for all its members, preceding its conference and General Assembly in Vienna (Austria). The seminar will be held on Wednesday 30 May from 9.30-17.30.

The aim of the seminar is:

- 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, within each Member State, at the national, regional and local level;
- to encourage the creation of national networks or platforms for dissemination of relevant European level information for the mental health sector.

For more information: MHE Secretariat, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org, or visit the MHE website, <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en.html>

MHE conference "No Health without Mental Health – From Slogan to Reality", Vienna (Austria), 31 May – 2 June 2007

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 the different European policies and the impact they have on the mental health of the population. Lectures, roundtable discussions and workshops will give opportunity for sharing information and deepening knowledge but also for exchange of good practice.

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 co-operation between the different organisations and institutions working on mental health issues at the national and European level.

The conference is structured as follows:

- the first day (Thursday 31 May) will focus on the European level policies and strategies, and their implementation at the national level;
- the second day (Friday 1 June) will be devoted to a series of workshops, with contributions from the local, national, regional grassroots level;
- on the third day (Saturday 2 June) the reports from the Round Tables and Workshops will be presented and Recommendations will be formulated; in a final plenary session, the lessons learned for implementation at the national level will be discussed.

For more information: MHE Secretariat, Tel +32 2 280 04 68, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org, or visit the MHE website, <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en.html>

New CAMHEE project

A new project funded by the EU Public Health program "*Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Enlarged EU - Development of Effective Policies and Practices*" (CAMHEE) has started in January 2007.

In the light of the Declaration and Action Plan endorsed at the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health (January 2005, Helsinki, Finland), the project aims to provide a set of recommendations and guidelines for effective child and adolescent mental health (CAMH) policies and practices in the European Union (EU), with a special emphasis on new EU Member States and accession countries.

To achieve this goal the project will focus on four main objectives:

1. To create a network of partners within the EU, which will adopt and implement modern and effective public health approaches in the new EU Member States and accession countries;
2. To develop guidelines and recommendations in the field of CAMH for the national and regional policies of the participating countries, based on evidence obtained through an independent analysis of the countries' situation, including an analysis of the context, resources, processes and outcomes;
3. To initiate and support activities in new Member States and accession countries in the field of CAMH, with a special focus on the implementation of effective and evidence-based policies and practices based on the involvement and participations of children, families and communities;
4. On the basis of the information, shared experience of the network and knowledge received through joint activities of all the project partners, to advise the European Union and the Member States on mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention among children and adolescents, with a special focus on the management of the changes needed in the new Member States to move from inherited patterns of institutionalisation and medicalisation to modern public health approaches based on the involvement of children, youth, parents and communities.

Besides the project's main theme, i.e. the analysis of child mental health policies in EU Member States, three specific topics were selected for more in-depth analysis:

1. Prevention of destructive and self-destructive patterns of behaviour in school settings;
2. Development of modern approaches in parent training, with special emphasis on parents who have mental disorders or represent other risk groups;
3. Development of effective community based activities in the field of CAMH, as alternatives to the tradition of institutionalisation and social exclusion, and to provide tools for an economic evaluation of this process.

It is expected that partners from both "old" and "new" EU Member States will form effective networks in the field of CAMH policies and practices and will develop recommendations which will be useful for politicians, professionals, parents and children in the EU.

The CAMHEE project involves 35 associate partners from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and United Kingdom.

A website of the project will be soon available.

For more information, please contact Dainius Puras, Scientific leader of the project, at dainius.puras@mf.vu.lt

Thanks to Dainius Puras, Associate Professor of Vilnius University, for this contribution.

MHE study on the allocation of personal budget to people with mental health problems

Mental Health Europe has just released the final results of its survey on the allocation of personal budget to people with mental health problems.

The survey was designed to determine whether people with mental health problems benefit from the "personal budget" that is allocated to people with disability and older people in various European countries.

The term "*personal budget*" includes a variety of approaches which directly fund disabled and older people to employ their own personnel and organise their own care.

The central idea behind the personal budget concept is to place the person who is supported, or given services, at the centre of the process and to give them the power to decide the nature of their own support.

Alongside other stakeholders, MHE is campaigning for independent living, i.e. the shift from institutional to community-based services for people with mental health problems, and for a more equal relationship between mental health service users and service providers, where the former are enabled to manage their own personal support system. The wide survey on "*personal budget*" that MHE launched in November 2005 has been part of this effort.

The final results of the survey make clear that there is still a long way to go in this respect. Yet, only a small number of countries provide a legal framework for personal budget. As might be expected, there are also various similarities and differences in the systems and approaches to personal budget prevailing in Europe. These reflect a range of priorities in the management of social and health care in European countries.

The process is, however, moving forward and new developments are expected in some Member States.

MHE believes that the issue of personal budget, whose aim is to enhance the independence of people with mental health problems, as well as disabled and older people, should be given greater consideration by European, national and local authorities and decision-makers.

Personal budget brings in an essential transformation in the traditional relationship between service providers and service users. It offers to mental health service users a significant decision making responsibility and marks a distinctive move towards their empowerment and self-determination.

The study can be downloaded from the MHE website at:

<http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/reports/Final%20Results%20of%20the%20MHE%20Survey%20on%20Personal%20Budget.pdf>

MHE representation at various meetings

On 1 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, flew to Copenhagen (Denmark) to meet with Palle Heilesen, Office Manager of the MHE member organisation SIND (Danish Association for Mental Health). After that, she met with Margarethe Ahlefeldt from the Egmont Fonden, together with MHE Board member Marianne Kastrup.

On the same day, Sogol Noorani, Project Coordinator, attended the meeting of the promoters of the 2nd transnational Exchange Programme projects, organised by the European Commission, DG EMPL: Social Protection and Integration, and gave a presentation on the MHE led project "*Good Practices for Combating Social Exclusion of People with Mental Health Problems*".

On 2 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel had a meeting in Aalborg with Jens Ibsen, President SIND North Denmark, Finn Graa Jakobsen, President SIND Denmark, Inger Grønhøj, Psychiatry Consultant, and Anne-Grethe Rasmussen, Educational Consultant – Psychiatry, for a first discussion about the MHE conference 2008.

On the same day, Mari Fresu, Project Coordinator, and Sogol Noorani participated in the European Commission's Info Day on European research activities concerning Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), which took place in Brussels (Belgium).

On 5 March 2007, Sogol Noorani participated in the Services of General Interest Working Party, organised by the Social Platform in Brussels (Belgium).

On 6 and 26 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel met with Elisabeth Muschik, Vice-President, to further discuss the MHE conference in Vienna.

On 9 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel and Sogol Noorani met with Mrs. Marie-Anne Paraskevas from the Social Inclusion Unit, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, to discuss about her involvement in the MHE capacity-building seminar, the MHE conference in Vienna and the final seminar for the EU project on "*Good practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems*".

On 15 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel and Joséé Van Remoortel, Senior Policy Advisor participated in a celebration at the Flemish Federation for community mental health centres in Gent.

On 17-18 March, Elisabeth Muschik attended the meeting of the European Disability Forum's Employment and Social Affairs Committee in Brussels.

On 20 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel and Mari Fresu had a meeting with Dr Albert Jan Schutte from Organon and representatives from Weber Shandwick to exchange information on mental health policies and schizophrenia.

On 21 March 2007, Mari Fresu represented MHE at the launch event of the Bulgarian HIT Health System Review, which took place in the European Parliament in Brussels.

On 22 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel participated in a meeting with Eufami, Astra Zeneca and Hill&Knowlton on the follow up of the EC Green Paper on Mental Health.

From 22 to 23 March 2007, Sogol Noorani, Malgorzata Kmita, President, and Josée Van Remoortel participated in the field visits organised in Belgium in the framework of the project "*Good practices for combating the social exclusion of people with mental health problems*". Mary Van Dievel, Elisabeth Muschik and John Henderson, Senior Policy Advisor, took part in the first part of the partners meeting.

On 24 March 2007, they attended the project's partners meeting in Brussels.

On 23 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel, Mari Fresu and John Henderson had a teleconference call with the London School of Economics to discuss further activities of the Mental Health Economics Network and further collaboration opportunities.

On 24 March 2007, a meeting of the MHE Executive Committee took place in Brussels.

On 27 March 2007, Mary Van Dievel and Elisabeth Muschik, Vice-President, participated in the Social Platform General Assembly in Brussels.

On 28 March 2007 in the morning, Sogol Noorani attended the preparatory meeting of the 4th Round Table on Poverty, organised in Brussels.

In the afternoon Sogol Noorani participated in the Thematic Review Seminar "*Modernising and activating benefit and social protection systems to promote employment*".

On 29 March 2007, Fanny Muller, Information Officer, represented MHE at the European Patients' Rights Day, held in the European Parliament in Brussels.

II. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

News from the Czech Association for Mental Health (CAPZ)

An innovative project co-funded by the EU - PHARE Programme 2003 and the Czech government was carried out in the Middle-Czech district from November 2005 to August 2006. The project, entitled "*Support for the providers of social services of the Middle-Czech district in the stripping of restrictive equipments*", aims to increase the quality of social services in the Middle-Czech region. Social care institutions and retirement homes using restrictive equipments such as cage beds were offered educational and consultancy support to facilitate the elimination of restrictive equipments.

One of the project's key activities was to experiment whether personal assistants could be an efficient alternative to restrictive beds. And it was actually confirmed that personal assistance leads to an important – in some cases fundamental – improvement in the users' quality of life. For this reason the Middle-Czech region and the providers of social services decided to maintain personal assistance when the patients are in danger of being restrained.

Personal assistance is not, though, the only solution to the question of restrictive equipments. Other modifications have to be made as well, with regard to the institutions' equipments, the patients' privacy, the number of users living in the institutions and the management of the organisations and working teams.

But the issue of constraint goes far beyond the use of protective beds. The project has pointed out that even if constraint through the use of cage beds tends to disappear – the project has led to a reduction in the number of cage beds (from 52 at the beginning of the project to 3 on 1 June 2006), it is important not to replace them by another type of constraint, such as restrictions on the users' freedom of movement.

For more information: contact person, Klára Malíková, E-mail klara.malikova@capz.cz, or the CAPZ website, www.capz.cz

Source: CAPZ Newsletter

News from FEFES and AEN

The Confederacion Espanola de Agrupaciones de Familiares Y Enfermos Mentales – FEFES and the Asociacion Espanola de Neuropsiquiatria - AEN have actively participated in the drafting of both the programme and the presentation of the Spanish National Strategy on Mental Health.

To download these documents (in Spanish): FEFES website, http://www.fefes.com/DocDocumentos/311284948_2_Jornada%20Estrategia%20Salud%20Mental.pdf (an English version will be available soon)

Promoting disabled friendly tourist facilities in the cross-border area (NETMEN)

The project, initiated by MHE member ŠENT – the Slovenian National Association for Mental Health -, was set up because of the difficulties encountered by disabled people when using tourist facilities and because of the rejection of disabled guests by tourist organisations.

The project is financed by the European Union within the framework of the Community Initiative Programme INTERREG IIIA Slovenia-Austria 2000-2006.

A new trademark »DISABILITY FRIENDLY« has been developed within the NETMEN project, with the intent to differentiate and promote disability friendly tourist facilities. This will enable a better overview of the offer for the disabled in some regions in Slovenia and Austria.

With the help of the trademark, a database of tourist organisations that have joined the trademark and are ready to receive guests with all types of disability, will be established on the project dedicated website.

For more information: contact person, Barbara Filipič, Tel +386 1 5830 125, E-mail bfilipic@alianta.si, or the project website, www.invalidom-prijazno.eu.

New Executive Director for the Estuar Foundation

Since 15 February 2007, Ms Cristina Poplauschi has replaced Luminitia Costache as Executive Director of the Estuar Foundation.

To contact Ms Poplauschi: E-mail cristinapoplauschi75@yahoo.com

Aripi Association: new contact details

The new contact details of the Aripi Association are:

Sos. Berceni 10-12
CP. 041902
Bucuresti, sector 4,
(inside Trepte Center)
RO- BUCHAREST

Tel +40 765-211860
Fax +40 21-3343471
E-mail
aripi_association@yahoo.com and
Stefan_bandol@yahoo.com

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

III. REPORTS ON CONFERENCES

Report on the conference organised by the Regional Council of Picardie, with the support of the CEMEA-France, Clermont de l'Oise (France), 23-24 February 2007

In the framework of the cooperation between the Regional Council of Picardie (France) and the regions of Thuringia (Germany) and Trenčín (Slovakia), this meeting, titled "Evolution of practices in the mental health field", aimed at exchanging experiences and comparing practices.

The first theme was about the management of mental health policy in these three countries.

Next was a presentation on the social representation of madness by Patrick Coupechoux, a journalist working for Le Monde Diplomatique, as well as some presentations on the link between social unrest and mental illness.

Four workshops were organised around the following topics:

- The patient in the mental health care system, his/her position and rights;
- Working within networks;

- The training of carers;
- Suicide, a final expression of pain.

MHE collaborated actively on this meeting: Colette Versporten, Board member, made a presentation on the subject "Are we moving towards a European psychiatry?".

To receive the conference's papers, please write an E-mail to: fdutry@cr-picardie.fr.

Thanks to Colette Versporten, MHE Board member, for this contribution.

IV. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

European Coalition for Community Living

Join the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL)

ECCL was established at the end of 2005, as a Europe-wide, cross-disability network, working towards the social inclusion of people with disabilities by promoting the provision of comprehensive, quality community-based services as an alternative to institutionalisation. ECCL's mission is to advocate for, and monitor progress towards, deinstitutionalisation in Europe. ECCL campaign for, and provide information on, the development of comprehensive, quality community-based services and deinstitutionalisation.

For more information about ECCL's current work, members and how to join: ECCL website, <http://www.community-living.info/>,

or contact directly Ines Bulić at coordinator@community-living.info

European Disability Forum

EDF Board meeting, Berlin (Germany), 24-25 February 2007

EDF held its Board meeting in Berlin in the framework of the German Presidency of the European Union (EU).

A special guest was Ms Wallis Goelen, Head of Unit G3 Employment of People with Disabilities – DG SANCO (Health and Consumer Protection) – European Commission. She stressed various actions undertaken by the EU to implement the equal opportunities strategy.

An important debate took place around the adoption of EDF's position paper on an EU comprehensive legislation fighting discrimination of people with disabilities.

Next, the review of the structural funds made clear that non governmental organisations should be more active and ensure that the funds are used properly. A toolkit was prepared.

Another point on the agenda was the EDF's 10th anniversary sign-up campaign, which received much attention. The final ceremony is planned for 4 October 2007 and 1million signatures are expected.

Then, a follow-up plan on the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, adopted on 13 December 2006, was discussed and approved. Board members comments addressed mainly the importance of ensuring that the rights of people with psychosocial disabilities are covered by the Convention.

Finally, Mr. Franz Müntefering, German Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, declared that Germany will sign the UN Convention and encourage other countries to do so. He also insisted on the need to protect both social and civil rights of disabled people and on the greater discrimination experienced by women with disabilities compared to disabled men.

Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Advisor, represented MHE at the meeting.

For more information: the EDF Secretariat, info@edf-feph.org,

or the EDF website, <http://www.edf-feph.org/>

Thanks to Josée Van remoortel for this contribution.

REMINDER: EDF "1MILLION4DISABILITY" Campaign

EDF (European disability Forum) European wide campaign, aiming to collect 1 million signatures in favour of European legislative measures to combat any form of discrimination against persons with disabilities, protect their rights and improve the quality of life of more than 50 million disabled citizens, was launched on 23 January 2007.

If we want to reach the goal of 1,000,000 signatures, 5,000 signatures a day will have to be collected, electronically and manually, till the date of the **official closing of the campaign, 4**

October 2007. MHE members are strongly encouraged to sign the campaign and to broadcast it in their respective countries and networks.

For more information and to sign the campaign: the campaign dedicated website:

www.1million4disability.eu

Mental Disability Advocacy Center

Bulgaria accused of violating right to education of over 3,000 institutionalised children

In February, the Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) submitted a collective complaint to the Council of Europe's European Committee of Social Rights, arguing that Bulgaria is violating the right to education and discriminating against children with actual and perceived intellectual disabilities, by failing to provide education for over 3,000 children institutionalised in so-called "Homes for Mentally Disabled Children". These institutions are often found in remote areas and staffed by unqualified people with little or no understanding of the needs or rights of children with intellectual disabilities.

MDAC further asserts through the complaint that Bulgaria – a Member State of the European Union – cannot invoke a lack of resources or "progressive realisation of rights" as a defence for its discriminatory practices. The alleged violations have arisen as a direct result of inappropriate and inadequate policy and its implementation.

For more information: MDAC website, <http://www.mdac.info/>

Source: MDAC Press Release

Open Society Mental Health Initiative

OSMHI will support a national-level deinstitutionalisation initiative in Serbia

The initiative, called the "*Community for All Initiative: Serbia*", is part of a joint effort between the Open Society Mental Health Initiative (OSMHI) and the Serbian Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy. Judith Klein, Director of OSMHI, and Slobodan Lalović, the Serbian Minister of Labor, signed on 29 November 2006 a Memorandum of Understanding outlining a comprehensive plan. The plan is implemented by the Ministry in partnership with OSMHI and the Down Syndrome Aid Society Serbia since 1 January 2007. Serbia's initiative is unprecedented in Central and Eastern Europe.

For more information: OSMHI website, <http://www.osmhi.org/index.php?page=98>

Source: OSMHI Weekly Update

Social Platform

New website

On 9 March 2007, the Social Platform launched its new website. A brand new look and improved operability will make surfing and browsing the site easier.

One of the new features of the website is the integration of the "Weekly Update" (currently known as the "Weekly Mailing"). This electronic publication circulated every Friday is now accessible to the wide public via an online subscription.

The new website is accessible using the same URL address: <http://www.socialplatform.org/>.

V. EUROPEAN UNION

Call for a more social EU Constitution

Nine EU Member States have signed a declaration to include more "Social Europe" in the Constitution.

The text was presented on 14 February 2007 in Paris, by French Labour Minister Gerard Larcher. Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg and Italy are among the signatories of the declaration who think it is necessary to link the institutional re-launch to a revival of the "*Social Europe*".

The document underlines the need to "*strengthen the European social model*" and "*strengthen economic and social convergence within the EU*" in order to promote employment, equal opportunities in the labour market, life-long learning and the modernisation of the social

protection system. The signatories believe that the fight against unemployment should be a top priority for EU member states.

For more information: read the whole declaration (in French),

http://www.euractiv.com/29/images/Un%20Nouvel%20Plan%20pour%20l%27Europe%20sociale_tcm29-161787.pdf

Source: EurActiv Daily Update

EU Agency for fundamental rights took up its work on 1 March 2007

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the successor to the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), took up its work in Vienna (Austria) on 1 March 2007. The primary task of the Agency is to make expert insights available to the European institutions and Member States in matters relating to fundamental rights. It will gather and analyse information. It will also develop methods and standards to attain improved comparability, objectivity and reliability of data at the European level. Furthermore, the Agency's work will include in-house scholarly research, either within the scope of its annual work programme or at the request of the European Parliament, the Council or the Commission; it will also prepare expert opinions on certain issues for the institutions and Member States.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights on the one side, and the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on the other, will complement one another in a way which will avoid duplication of work. Unlike the ECHR, the Agency for Fundamental Rights will not adjudicate specific cases; rather, within the scope of its work programme, it will serve to provide the institutions, Member States, civil society and the general public with academic expertise and background information on specific issues dealing with fundamental rights. A cooperation agreement with the Council of Europe will ensure close cooperation.

In its work, the Agency will depend in no small part upon support from civil society and the large number of non-governmental organisations. For that reason, the Regulation expressly provides for close cooperation with non-governmental organisations and the institutions of civil society, as well as for the establishment of a cooperation network ("*fundamental rights platform*").

Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Vice-President, attended the launch event of the Agency in Vienna.

For more information: EUMC website, <http://eumc.europa.eu/eumc/index.php>

Source: Press Release of the EU German Presidency

European Research Council

The European Research Council, the first pan-European funding organisation to support frontier research across all fields of science and scholarship is now a reality. The formal act of establishment has been adopted by the European Commission and the first call for proposals, focused on researchers early on in their careers, has been launched, offering nearly 300 million euros of direct grants in 2007. By inviting the most original minds to push the boundaries of current knowledge, the ERC can open the way for new discoveries that can help Europe answer its pressing social, environmental and economic challenges. A conference held in Berlin on 27-28 February 2007 marked the official inauguration of the ERC.

For more information: the European Commission website,

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/223&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

Source: Press Release of the European Commission

VI. COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council, 22 February 2007, Brussels (Belgium)

The Employment, Social Policy, Healthcare and Consumer Council adopted two reports on employment, social protection and social inclusion. These reports bear messages with regard to achievements accomplished within the Lisbon agenda for growth and employment, the running of the labour markets, cohesion and social protection. European Ministers also confirmed the need to enhance Europe's social dimension. Portugal and Finland both

presented a joint contribution saying that the European social model is the key factor in responding to future challenges.

For more information: the Commission website,

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/202&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Source: The Letter, Robert Schuman Foundation

VII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EU priorities for 2008

Presenting the Commission's priorities for 2008 on 27 February 2007, Catherine Day, Secretary-General, said that the EU must act positively to the opportunities presented by globalisation, in order to reassure citizens that Europe's future was being shaped as they would wish it to be.

The priorities identified by the Commission include:

- creating a "knowledge society" and ensuring ongoing growth by means of the Lisbon Strategy;
- ensuring that the EU keeps "its edge" in climate-change measures and sustainable growth;
- tackling the intertwined problems of demography and migration;
- continuing to focus on the twin-track approach by which greater efforts are being made to convince citizens of the EU's relevance, so that Member States will have the confidence to make much-needed institutional changes.

Internally, she explained that the Commission was changing the way it was working as regards better regulation.

For more information: EurActiv website, <http://www.euractiv.com/en/agenda2004/eu-priorities-2007-meeting-challenges-globalisation/article-162029>

Source: EurActiv Daily Update

DG Employment and Social Affairs

Latest anti-discrimination law review out

The European Network of Legal Experts in the field of non-discrimination has published the fourth issue in its series of law reviews. The review gives an overview of case law from the European Court of Justice and European Court of Human Rights, as well as European policy and national legal developments.

The law review is now available online in English, French and German. Hard copies can be ordered at: review@non-discrimination.net.

For further information: the European Commission website,

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

DG Health and Consumer Protection

New documents in the field of Public Health

On 16 February 2007, the European Commission published three important documents in the field of Public Health:

1. the Commission Decision adopting the Work Plan for 2007 for the implementation of the programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008) – Available in 21 languages:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/keydo_programme_2003_2008_en.htm
2. the Commission's decision adopting the new general principles and criteria for the selection and funding of actions under the Public Health Programme:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l_046/l_04620070216en00450050.pdf
3. the call for proposal for 2007 under the responsibility of the Executive Agency for the Public Health Programme (PHEA):
http://ec.europa.eu/phea/calls/call_for_proposals_en.html

Besides, the final report of the DG SANCO Peer Review Group on Stakeholder Involvement is now available on DG SANCO website:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/reports/peer_review_report_2006_en.pdf

Reducing alcohol-related harm across the EU

A factsheet and a special Eurobarometer on the reduction of alcohol-related harm across the EU are now available on the Commission website.

To read the factsheet:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/alcohol_factsheet2_en.pdf

To read the special Eurobarometer on attitudes towards alcohol:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/ebs272_en.pdf

Evaluation of Health-EU - The Public Health Portal of the European Union

The European Commission is carrying out a review of The Public Health Portal of the EU and invites you to have your say.

To participate, complete the online survey, which is available in 22 languages:

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/news/ilogos/promotion_en.htm

VIII. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Launch of the new WHO report on neurological disorders

A new report from the World Health Organization (WHO), "*Neurological Disorders: Public Health Challenges*", was launched at the European Parliament on 27 February 2007. The launch was hosted by John Bowis, Member of the European Parliament (MEP).

The report reveals that of the one billion people affected worldwide by neurological disorders - ranging from epilepsy to Alzheimer disease, from stroke to headache -, 50 million suffer from epilepsy and 24 million from Alzheimer and other dementias. An estimated 6.8 million people die every year as a result of neurological disorders. In Europe, the economic cost of neurological diseases was estimated at about 139 billion euros in 2004.

Access to appropriate care is difficult for many people with neurological disorders, their families and caregivers. The report recommends a series of simple but effective actions. It argues for greater commitment from decision makers, increased social and professional awareness, strategies that address stigma and discrimination, national capacity building and international collaboration.

To download the full report: WHO website,

http://www.who.int/mental_health/neurology/neurological_disorders_report_web.pdf

For more information: WHO website,

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2007/pr04/en/index.html>

Source: WHO Press Release

Reform of the European Parliament

The European Parliament's Conference of Presidents (leaders of each of the political groups) unanimously agreed on 15 February 2007 to set up a working group to reform the Parliament. The working group will focus on making the work of the Parliament more efficient, increasing MEP attendance and making plenary sessions more lively and media-friendly. The group also intends to introduce an annual debate on Parliament's priorities and give out with the practice of renewing senior positions in Parliament halfway through the legislature.

For more information: the European Parliament website,

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-3202-050-02-08-901-20070215IPR03201-19-02-2007-2007-false/default_en.htm

Source: EP Press Release

European Parliament adopts a report on Social Services

On 14 March 2007, the European Parliament adopted the report by MEP Ferreira on Social Services in the European Union, and stressed the need for a positive approach to Social Services of General Interest (SSGI). The report recalls that it is nonsensical to oppose, on the

one hand, the standards relating to competition, public aid and the market and, on the other, the concepts of public service, general interest and social cohesion. The report also takes the view, however, that it is necessary to reconcile the above by promoting "positive synergy" between the economic and social chapters, and states that the standards in relation to competition, state aid and the internal market must be compatible with public service obligations, and not the other way round.

To download the full report: the European Parliament website,

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2007-0057+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Source: Cecodahs newsflash

IX. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Mental Health and Prisons

The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe has been supporting a "Health in Prisons Project (HIPPP)" project for 12 years. The project aims at promoting health in prisons.

A network of 34 European countries works for this programme, whose objectives are to gather key actors in order to bring health in prisons closer to public health bodies, to create a pool of knowledge and experience and to be used as an impetus mechanism to support the countries and institutions' health policies so as to improve health in prisons.

As a result of the work carried out during one year, a conference is organised every year. The topics selected so far related essentially to physical ill-health: tuberculosis, HIV, etc. The theme chosen for the conference of October 2007 in Slovakia is (finally) mental health.

Prison is well known for being an environment detrimental to good mental health: it is neither a place for prevention, neither a place for maintaining the prisoners' mental health. A large part of detainees suffers from mental illnesses or drug addiction. Nearly 10% of this population needs either treatment or careful aftercare, but these are lacking in prisons.

An action plan has been proposed to improve mental health in prisons. It will be based on a forthcoming document which will be elaborated this year, discussed and amended during the Conference of October 2007 and widely disseminated afterwards to all interested persons and decision makers.

The following principles are objectives to achieve:

1. all prisons will establish a programme to reduce the effects of detention on mental health and to encourage the promotion of mental health;
2. staff should be trained to the early diagnosis of mental health problems and the provision of primary care;
3. prisoners in need of mental health care should not be imprisoned;
4. prisoners waiting for relocation in some specialised mental health institution should be in charge of experienced workers and should have access to specialised support, i.e. support provided in community-based mental health services.

MHE is involved in this programme. MHE call its members – organisations, services and individuals experienced in this field –to help with the creation of an active working group on mental health and prisons.

For more information: Lars Moller, WHO Project Manager Health in Prisons, Tel 0045 39171214, E-mail lmo@euro.who.int, or contact the MHE Secretariat, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68

Thanks to Colette Versporten, MHE Board Member, for this contribution.

Improved website on mental health

Over the last few years, much has happened in mental health, and WHO Europe has been busy supporting the implementation of the Helsinki Declaration and Action Plan. To reflect the many important developments within the mental health area since the Ministerial Conference in Helsinki, the website for the WHO mental health programme has been reworked both in terms of content and design. The website now contains comprehensive information about work in countries.

To visit the site: <http://www.euro.who.int/mentalhealth>

X. UNITED NATIONS

Results of a global survey on Government Action on Implementation of the UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities

During a press conference held in the United Nations Headquarters in February 2007, Sabri Rbeihat, UN Special Rapporteur on Persons with Disabilities, announced that not a single country had yet taken all the measures necessary to provide equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, according to the first global survey examining Government actions to achieve that goal.

The survey was sent to Government bodies and disabled persons' organisations in 191 countries and responses were received from 114 countries. The questionnaire asked about a wide range of issues, including policies and legislation, allocation of resources, housing, health, and medical care.

Mr. Rbeihat said the questionnaire served an important function as an awareness-raising tool.

For more information: the UN website, <http://www.un.org/News/>

Source: UN Press Release

XI. VARIOUS

Open Exhibition exploring the theme of mental health

In recent years there has been a growing public understanding of how the arts can play a powerful role in promoting positive mental health and well-being.

To draw attention to the subject, Project Ability, one of Scotland's leading specialist arts organisations, will host an Open Exhibition exploring the theme of mental health. The exhibition, titled "*Mental Image*", will be launched during Mental Health Week in October 2007. Project Ability is inviting artists from all over the world to submit artwork (in any medium) that reflects their ideas and feelings on mental health, either from a perspective of well-being or of illness. The works that are selected will be exhibited in Project Ability's two galleries from the 4th October until 23rd November.

For more information: Project Ability website,

<http://www.project-ability.co.uk/news/mentalimage.htm>

Swiss Court Ruling Allows Euthanasia For Mentally Ill

A ruling by Switzerland's highest court has opened up the possibility that people with serious mental illnesses could be helped by doctors to take their own lives.

Switzerland already allows doctor-assisted suicide for terminally ill patients under certain circumstances. The Federal Tribunal's decision puts mental illnesses on the same level as physical ones.

Various organisations exist in Switzerland to help people who want to commit suicide, and helping someone to die is not punishable under Swiss law as long as there is no "selfish motivation" for doing so.

The move has been labelled as "dangerous" as it could lead to a rapid rise in the number of people travelling to Switzerland for assisted suicide.

In their ruling the judges made it clear certain conditions would have to be met before a mentally ill person's request for suicide assistance could be considered justified: "*A distinction has to be made between a death wish which is an expression of a curable, psychiatric disorder and which requires treatment, and [a death wish] which is based on a person of sound judgment's own well-considered and permanent decision, which must be respected.*"

Whether any Swiss physician would be prepared to prescribe a lethal dose of pentobarbital to a mentally ill person remains unclear. One internationally renowned expert on medical ethics said such a policy would be both difficult to enforce and dangerous to apply. According to him, the policy could lead to a "very slippery slope", opening the door to anyone who claims to have unbearable psychological or emotional suffering to request help in dying: people with terrible burns, those who are severely disfigured, those who are emotionally bereft at the loss of a child or partner, and even those suffering from career failures.

Switzerland is one of a number of countries in Europe that allow assistance to terminally ill people who wish to die. The Netherlands legalised euthanasia in 2001 and Belgium did in

2002, while Britain and France allow terminally ill people to refuse treatment in favour of death.

For more information: *The Scotsman* website,
<http://news.scotsman.com/index.cfm?id=183882007>

Source: *The Scotsman*

XII. WEBSITES/ONLINE INFORMATION

ILC-UK web-based mental health resource

This website, based on the report of the International Longevity Centre UK (ILC-UK) "*Moving to social integration of people with severe mental illness: from policy to practice*", is designed to act as a resource for advocacy groups wishing to lobby their national governments for better policies and improved service provision.

To directly access the website:

<http://www.advocacyonline.net/cms/cmsloader?WfJVLp&view=1901,381,1181,0,-html>

New website on Social Anxiety

The website provides resourceful information for a number of topics in education and disabilities, as well as a special information page on Social Anxiety. The special webpage includes in-depth data relating to social anxiety: overview, symptoms, cause and perspectives, treatment, history, support services, books, etc.

To directly access the website: http://www.k12academics.com/social_anxiety.htm

XIII. PUBLICATIONS

New research and theory paper on child mental health care

A new research paper from Atle Ødegård, Clinical psychologist and Associate Professor at the Molde University College (Norway), has been published on line in the International Journal of Integrated Care (IJIC).

The paper, entitled "*Exploring perceptions of interprofessional collaboration in child mental health care*", is based on the statement that children with mental health problems are dependent on many persons, and that it is the professionals' responsibility to investigate the best way to help these children and their families.

The paper proposes a tentative theoretical model (PINCOM) and a measure of mental health and school professionals' perception of interprofessional collaboration (IPC).

To read this research paper and discover its results and conclusions: *IJIC* website,

<http://www.ijic.org/>

Report on health-care sustainability in Europe

A report on "*Financing Sustainable Health Care in Europe*" has been drafted by a number of European stakeholders. The aim is to present specific recommendations for Member States and the EU to boost healthcare productivity and efficiency.

The initial recommendations of the report were presented on 7 December 2006, and include:

- Increased competition in health care provision leading to results-oriented healthcare and increased accountability;
- "incentivising" consumers to consume wisely and suppliers to produce efficiently;
- empowering patients through increased access to health information, and;
- rewarding innovation and reforming health-technology assessment (HTA) to improve the relative effectiveness of health care (balancing innovation, medical progress and productivity gains with health-care budgets).

The full report, detailing these four initial recommendations was officially launched in a conference on "*Sustainable healthcare financing: new approaches for new outcomes*" in Helsinki (Finland) in February 2007.

For more information: *SITRA* website, <http://www.sustainhealthcare.org>

Implementing Mental Health Promotion

This book, edited by Margaret Barry and Rachel Jenkins, provides a comprehensive overview and practical guide to implementing mental health promotion programmes with different population groups across a range of settings. It shows how information from research can be used to inform programme development and best practice. The text is written from a 'how-to' perspective, combining an exploration of current research with practical advice to support the planning and implementation of programmes. The book provides examples of successful international programmes illustrating the process of implementation. Case studies of practical aspects of project development and delivery from different countries are included in order to illustrate the real life application of programmes

To order a copy: Elsevier website,

<http://intl.elsevierhealth.com/catalogue/title.cfm?ISBN=044310025X#toc>

XIV. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

19-21 April 2007

6th European Conference of ACENDIO, "Nursing Communication in Multidisciplinary Practice", Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

The focus of this conference is on the communication of nursing within multidisciplinary practice for the enhancement of patient care.

For more information: ACENDIO website,

<http://www.oudconsultancy.nl/acendioadam/amsterdam/acendioprogramth.html>

26-27 April 2007

Conference on "Mental Health in Humanitarian Settings", Oslo (Norway)

The objectives of the conference are:

- to increase awareness of why it is important to take care of mental health in humanitarian settings;
- to place mental health higher on the agenda of international humanitarian organisations, non governmental organisations and governments;
- and to include mental health in humanitarian programmes.

For more information: the conference dedicated website,

<http://www.copewithcrisis.no/english/index.html>

NEW!! 8 May 2007

Final "Closing the Gap" Conference, "Action for Health Equity", Brussels (Belgium)

While European countries have amongst the highest levels of health in the world, not everyone benefits equally. The main aims of the conference are:

- to generate support for addressing health inequalities;
- to highlight what is being done at the local, national and EU level;
- to discuss strategic initiatives to tackle health inequalities from across the EU partner countries;
- to involve other policy sectors in achieving this goal.

For more information: the European Health Inequalities Portal,

<http://www.health-inequalities.eu/>

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)

The main themes of this event will be: Support in decision-making and legal representation; Full citizenship and legal protection; and Withdrawal of legal capacity and its consequences.

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

10-12 May 2007

9th NNDR conference, "Participation for all - the front line of disability research", Göteborg (Sweden)

The NNDR (Nordic Network on Disability Research) conference will provide a broad platform for current and new challenges in disability research.

For more information: the conference dedicated website, <http://www.nndr2007.com/>

NEW!! 17-20 May 2007

16th CEDEP Seminar, Democracy and Mental Health, Bucharest (Romania)

This seminar is organised by the European Committee on Law, Ethics and Psychiatry (CEDEP), in cooperation with the Romanian Mental Health Association.

The main themes of the seminar will be:

- Overview of situation in Europe, particularly in the new EU Member States;
- Psychiatry in politics, law and ethics;
- What is democratic psychiatry?;
- Faces of the user.

A transnational reflection will be sought from psychiatry and mental health professionals, users, jurists and magistrates, sociologists, philosophers, elected politicians, etc.

For more information: contact person, Raluca Nica, E-mail lrs@clicknet.ro, or visit CEDEP website, www.vvqg.be/CEDEP

24-26 May 2007

International Congress of the Ligue Bruxelloise Francophone pour la Santé Mentale (LBFMS), "Jusqu'ici tout va bien...", Brussels (Belgium)

The project of the organisers is to foster thinking on background questions (Mental Health and new life styles, Mental Health and Public Health, The notion of resistance...), organised in transversal themes, from clinical practices and the reading received from sociology, anthropology, philosophy, law and other disciplines that are nowadays associated with mental health.

For more information: the LBSM Secretariat, Tel +32 2 511 55 43,

E-mail emessens@skynet.be

31 May–2 June 2007

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

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.

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.

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

5-6 June 2007

Employment Week 2007 Conference, Working Europe - Creating more and better jobs, Brussels (Belgium)

Creating quality employment is a top priority for Europe's socio-economic future, as its political leaders work to promote its competitive performance. How can the public and private sector, as employer, employee, agency or official contribute?

For more information: the conference website, <http://www.employmentweek.com/>

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>

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 will bring together 400 delegates from key national and European public and private welfare organisations to learn together about maximizing potential for all, young or old, no matter their disadvantage or disability.

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)

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.

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

28 August – 1st September 2007

24th IASP World Congress, "Preventing Suicide across the Lifespan: Dreams and realities", Killarney (Ireland)

This IASP (International Association for Suicide Prevention) congress will deal with the concerns at the increase in suicide and the many aspects of dealing with this social and medical tragedy.

For more information: the congress website, <http://www.iasp2007.org/>

31 August, 1-2 September 2007

"A world of possibilities", 8th International Congress of Autism Europe, Oslo (Norway)

The aim of the Congress is to clarify the practical outcomes, values and implications of research in terms of its contribution to the quality of life and development of persons with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder). All presentations should reflect this aim.

For further information: the Congress website, <http://www.autismcongressoslo.org/comweb.asp?ID=1&segment=1&session=>

NEW!! 25 - 27 October 2007

5th European Congress on Violence in Clinical Psychiatry, "Prevention, Treatment and Management of Violence at the Individual, Institutional and Governmental Level", Amsterdam (the Netherlands)

The purpose of the congress is to promote and disseminate current knowledge within relevant areas of the recognition, assessment, prevention, treatment, interventions, post incident care and therapeutic safety management of violence in mental health care within clinical psychiatry.

The congress is also organised with the aim to provide researchers, health care practitioners (psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses and other professionals), managers, educators, trainers, developers, theorists and others with the opportunity to present their work, to exchange information, to network and to promote international collaboration.

The congress will offer plenary lectures, seminars, workshops and poster presentations.

For further information: the Congress dedicated website,
<http://www.oudconsultancy.nl/violenceadam/index.html?1165518627968>

18-21 November 2007

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

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)

The key objectives of the conference will be:

- 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>

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

Please send it to info@mhe-sme.org