



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I.NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

REMINDER: 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.

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>

REMINDER: 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.

MHE General Assembly will take place at the end of the conference, on Saturday 2 June 2007.

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>

5th Meeting of the partners of the MHE project "Good practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems" Brussels (Belgium), 24 March 2007

Since the last project partners meeting in November 2006 in Florence, several developments have taken place in the frame of this project.

The project partner identified and collected some more good practices for improving the social inclusion of people with mental health problems. As a result of the dissemination of information about the project in the newsletters of various European networks MHE also received many good practices from countries in the EU, which are not represented in the project. These good practices will now be assessed and evaluated and possibly included in the online database of good practices on the project website to be launched shortly.

Four field exchange visits to selected good practices in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Scotland and Belgium, were carried out and attended by the project partners as well as the project coordinator, Sogol Noorani, MHE President, Malgorzata Kmita, MHE Vice-President Elisabeth Muschik and Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Advisor. The field visits were evaluated by the project partners as a very positive activity; all the partners found it very useful to learn about the local situation, about the achievements but sometimes also challenges in the partner countries and to be able to discuss about this with the professionals and users working on concrete projects.

The project partners have made an effort to get involved in the EU Social Inclusion Process in each partner country. In many cases, the partners have successfully promoted the discussion on social inclusion and the situation of people with mental health problems so that this issue has been included in the National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2006-2008 (the former National Action Plans on Social Inclusion). MHE and the project partners will continue their efforts and try to stay involved in the monitoring of the National Reports and their implementation

Finally, the final conference of the project was discussed, which will be held on **Friday, 01 June 2007** in the frame of the MHE Conference 2007 in Vienna. The first session of the conference will address the issue of mental health and social inclusion from a broad perspective and highlight the achievements and challenges in the social inclusion process at the European and national level. The second session will focus on the outcomes of the project, in particular on what has been achieved through the project in terms of raising awareness,

establishing cooperation and implementing actions on the national level. The local perspective will be the focus of session three. Project partners and users will highlight the need to empower and involve users of mental health services in the social inclusion process and present ways how this can be realised. The fourth session will finally recapitulate the lessons learned from the project. Recommendations for strategies to improve the social inclusion of people with mental health problems will be presented and the following discussion will allow for exchanging ideas and views on possibilities for future actions.

More information about the conference can be found on the MHE website: www.mhe-sme.org.

For more information about the project: contact person, Sogol Noorani,

E-mail sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68

PROMENPOL Project

Recent reports indicate that the incidence and costs associated with mental distress and ill health are substantial and expected to rise globally in the next 15 years. Equally there is a rapid proliferation of solutions and responses at societal, organisational and individual level.

Against this background, PROMENPOL (Promoting and Protecting Mental Health – Supporting Policy through Integration of Research, Current Approaches and practices) set out on 1st January 2007 to identify useful and practical approaches to the promotion and protection of mental health. It will develop a systematic multidimensional approach to identifying and classifying effective tools for promoting mental health across the lifespan.

PROMENPOL will focus on tools that promote mental health for: students in schools, adults in the workplace and older people in residential homes.

PROMENPOL aims to impact a range of stakeholders in the mental health protection and promoting arena including policy makers, practitioners, researchers, and non governmental organisations representing mental health, schools and older people's issues, as well as social partners.

The project coordinator is the German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA).

MHE is one of the eight project partners. MHE has been included in Work Package n°4 and will be mainly in charge of the project's dissemination.

For more information: contact person, Dr. Karl Kuhn, E-mail Kuhn.Karl@baua.bund.be, or visit the project dedicated website, www.mentalhealthpromotion.net

European Conference on Mental Health, "Joining Forces across Europe for Prevention and Promotion in Mental Health", Barcelona (Spain), 13-15 September 2007

In support of the forthcoming European Commission Strategy on Mental Health, and building on the mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention components of the WHO Declaration and Action Plan for Mental Health, areas addressed by the conference will include:

- Evidence to practice for policies and programmes: outlining the most recent advances to support mental health policies and programmes at the local, national and European levels;
- Implementation: helping develop dissemination, implementation and management plans;
- Financing: supporting strategies for financing action and strengthening management systems across Europe;
- Building capacity and training: strengthening policy and advocacy development, and networking.

The conference will be action oriented and highly participatory, being structured around a large number of working sessions and discussion panels. A few plenary sessions will introduce each of the main themes. The conference aims to share examples, barriers and opportunities encountered throughout Europe in implementing prevention and promotion action for mental health. The outcomes of the conference will include a set of recommendations and suggested proposals to support implementation of action for mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention across Europe.

The conference is co-organised by the Health Department of the Government of Catalonia and the Imhpa network which has partners in 30 European countries and 7 international networks (including Mental Health Europe) who combine their expertise with the aim of developing and

disseminating evidence-based mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention strategies and policy options across Europe.

For more information on the conference: visit the conference dedicated website, <http://www.gencat.net/salut/imhpa/Du32/html/en/dir1662/doc13013.html>

MHE representation at various meetings

On 16-17 April 2007, Mary Van Dievel, Director, participated in the EPHA (European Public Health Alliance) General Assembly and conference on Health and Enlargement in Bratislava (Slovakia). She gave a presentation on MHE and on the discrimination of people with mental health problems in workshop n°5 on Mental Health.

On 17 April 2007, Mary Van Dievel met in Vienna (Austria) with Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Vice-President, and Andreas Schwab, from the Pro Mente Akademie, to further discuss practicalities regarding the MHE conference.

On 17 April 2007, Sogol Noorani, Project Coordinator, attended the European seminar on Social Economy and Equal Opportunities organised by the European Standing Conference of Co-operatives, Mutualities, Associations and Foundations (CEP-CMAF) and the European Disability Forum (EDF) in the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels (Belgium).

On 19 April 2007, Mary Van Dievel met with EUFAMI (European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness) President Inger Nilsson and Secretary General Kevin Jones in Leuven (Belgium).

On 20-21 April 2007, Josée Van Remoortel, Senior Policy Advisor, represented MHE at the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL) User Involvement Seminar in Zagreb (Croatia). A more extensive report will be published in our next Newsletter.

On 25 April 2007, Mari Fresu, Project Coordinator, attended an open information day in Brussels on opportunities for submitting proposals under FP7 Health Research's Third Pillar "*Optimising the delivery of health care to European citizens*".

On 26 April 2007, Sogol Noorani represented MHE at the Social Platform's Social Policy Working Group in Brussels.

II. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

Spanish National Strategy on Mental Health

On 21 March 2007, the Spanish Ministry for Health and Consumption presented the National Strategy on Mental Health. FEAFES (Confederacion Espagnola de Agrupaciones de Familiares y Enfermos Mentales) took part in the launch event through the organisation of a lecture on "*Action and Vision of the Association Movement facing Stigma. Expectative of the people with mental illness and their families*". This lecture was led by FEAFES Vice President, Mr. Jose M^a Sánchez Monge, who participated together with Ms. Rosa Ruiz Salto, Manager of the confederation, in the expert committee responsible for drafting the strategy.

The Strategy, which is part of the Quality Plan for the National Health System, is the result of a long process of consensus between the Health Ministry, the regional authorities, the scientific societies and the movement of families and people with mental illness represented by FEAFES.

The National Strategy comes as a follow up of the Spanish commitment to the principles of the Declaration and Action Plan of the World Health Organization – Europe, signed in Helsinki (Finland) in 2005.

It consists in a document which describes the situation of mental health in Spain and prioritises six strategic lines: Promotion of mental health; Prevention of mental illness and combating stigma; Attention paid to mental disorders; Internal and external coordination of the involved institutions; Training of health professionals; Research on mental health and information systems on mental health. The document also includes examples of best practices developed in Spain by different public and private institutions committed to the association movement.

The full document can be downloaded at:

http://www.feafes.com/detalle_documentos.asp?ID_documento=361.

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

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

SUPPORT Project

SUPPORT is a project co-funded under the EU Public Health Programme (2003-2008), and runs until early 2009.

The project is led by the Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health with STAKES and NHS Health Scotland. It is supported by the Scottish Executive and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Finland.

SUPPORT provides a range of functions to further the European Commission's mental health priorities:

- SUPPORT will engage projects and stakeholders, sharing ideas, and raising the profile of the Commission's activities that relate to mental health;
- SUPPORT will promote and facilitate discussion and debate between all interested parties;
- SUPPORT will provide a pathway for information on the European mental health agenda, using an interactive website to deliver an information resource for a wide audience;
- SUPPORT will encourage the exchange of views and information and dialogue using a range of media, including events, newsletters, email discussions, briefings, and seminars.

Central to these aims is supporting the development and implementation of the proposed EU Mental Health Strategy. As this develops, SUPPORT will continue to encourage and facilitate discussion about all areas of interest in the work areas the strategy will cover, at all levels.

SUPPORT has been working over the winter with the European Commission to prepare for the much anticipated EU Strategy on Mental Health. A Commission Communication outlining a Strategy on Mental Health is at now an advanced draft stage and is due to start the process of approval with a view to publication by the summer of 2007. In addition to the formal documents produced by the Commission, SUPPORT will be producing a background paper to accompany the official publications. This will discuss some of the emerging themes in more detail, exploring the current evidence where available, and drawing on expert opinion to provide context. This paper will be available alongside the formal documents in the summer.

SUPPORT is currently developing the interactive areas of the project website. The site aims to make available the primary evidence relating to the main priorities identified in the Strategy, and facilitate discussion around the strategy content. It will also give users the opportunity to sign up to receive bulletins on project activity and strategy developments.

For further information: contact person, Chris O'Sullivan, E-mail chrs@sdcmh.org.uk, or visit the project website, www.supportproject.eu

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

III. REPORTS ON CONFERENCES

European Patient's Rights Day, Brussels (Belgium), 29 March 2007

On 29 March 2007, a "European Patients' Rights Day" conference was organised in the European parliament (Brussels) by the Active Citizenship Network (ACN).

The conference's aim was twofold:

1. to discuss the initiative of establishing a European patients' Rights Day;
2. to present the European Charter of Patients' Rights which was drafted by the ACN together with European country based civic organisations, as well as the main results and findings of the monitoring process of the European Charter of Patients' Rights carried out in 14 "old" EU Member States.

Opening remarks were made by a member of Commissioner Marcos Kyprianou's Cabinet – DG Health and Consumer Protection. He pointed out that the EC Consultation on Health Services highlighted some important patients' rights issues, such as patients' information or the need to protect patients' related data. The Commission is actually well aware of both the necessity to clarify the rights and entitlements of the patients and to enhance cooperation between the various European health systems. This will be accomplished through a "step by step" approach, which is considered as the most efficient way to tackle these issues. He added that a first assessment of the Consultation on Health Services will be realised in Spring 2007, on the occasion of the meeting of EU health ministers in Prague (Czech Republic), and concrete proposals will be made later in 2007 with a view to providing more legal certainty in this respect.

Member of Parliaments then insisted on the fact that patients should be the "driving force" of any reform of the health systems. Besides, strengthening the patients' rights could go through:

1. the adoption of the Charter on Patients' Rights by the European Parliament;
2. the speeding up of the European Constitution's adoption process: the Charter on Fundamental Rights, incorporated in the Constitution, proclaims the right to "a high level of human health protection";
3. the adoption of reliable legal instruments and adequate financial resources.

Next, Teresa Petrangolini, Secretary General of Cittadinanzattiva, stated that it was essential to establish a European Patients' Rights Day that would be celebrated on the same date in all the EU Member States. She went on explaining that the European Public Health alliance (EPHA) developed a specific Charter on Sexual Patients' Rights, based on the Charter on Patients' Rights, which has been translated in Russian and is currently implemented in this country. Moreover, the Charter on Patients' Rights is used as a legal basis in the Lazio region (Italy) and in several regions of southern Italy.

Then, Giovanni Moro, President of the Active Citizenship Foundation, gave a brief presentation of the report on the monitoring process of the European Charter, which called for the implementation of a patient-centered strategy.

To finish, the rights with the lowest attention in Europe - namely the right to respect of patients' time, the right of access to care, the right to free choice and the right to innovation - were presented and associated with a potential crisis of the European Social Model.

At the end of the conference an open debate took place.

Fanny Muller, MHE Information officer, attended this conference.

For more information: contact the Active Citizenship Network (ACN),

info@activecitizenship.net,

or visit the ACN website, www.activecitizenship.net

IV. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

European Disability Forum

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 up 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

First human rights monitoring of Croatian mental health and social care institutions

The implementation of an innovative two-year project funded by the European Union, "*Bridging the gap: civil society promoting access to justice for people with mental disabilities in Croatia*", started in the beginning of March 2007 in Croatia. For three days 20 human rights activists, including those with intellectual disabilities and psycho-social (mental health) disabilities, were trained to monitor mental health and social care institutions. Such monitoring is planned for the first time in Croatia this spring/summer and the results will be published nationally and internationally.

The importance of this monitoring must not be underestimated. Indeed it marks a double first. Not only is it the first time that such institutions in Croatia will be opened to public view, but so too will people with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities be full and active partners throughout the process: in the planning of visits, the monitoring of institutions, in the preparation of the report, and in advocating for change. Whilst human rights standards require full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life, their exclusion from specific involvement in such projects has, until now, been almost universal in Europe.

The teams of monitors, fully independent of the government, will inspect psychiatric hospitals and long-stay social care "homes" in Croatia. Their aim is to assess the quality of care of the approximate 20,000 patients detained in these institutions and excluded from community life. More specifically the teams will assess whether people's human rights are being ensured, fulfilled and protected.

Where human rights protection falls below the international human rights standards, practical recommendations will be offered to the government. If implemented, these recommendations will advance the rights of people in the institutions specifically, and people with intellectual disabilities and psycho-social (mental health) disabilities generally.

The report detailing the findings of the inspections and the subsequent recommendations will be made public nationally and internationally, and published in both Croatian and English.

For more information: contact MDAC, Tel +36 1 413 27 30, E-mail mdac@mdac.info, or visit the website, www.mdac.info

Source: MDAC Press Release

Social Platform

General Assembly, 27 March 2007

On 27 March 2007, the Social Platform's General Assembly elected a new President: Fintan Farrell, director of EAPN (European Anti Poverty Network). Other members of the management committee are: Claire Roumet (Cecodhas) and Dirk Jarré (EURAG) as vice-presidents; Patricia Prendiville (ILGA-Europe) as treasurer; Conny Reuter (Solidar), Patrick De Bucquois (Caritas Europa), Markus Held (CEV) as ordinary members.

The General Assembly also selected the new Annual theme for 2008: Civil Dialogue in the EU Member and candidate States.

For more information: Social Platform website, <http://www.socialplatform.org/default.asp>

Source: Social Platform Weekly Update

The European Older People's Platform - AGE

AGE elects new President

The AGE (the European Older People's Platform) General Assembly on 19-20 April 2007 elected its new President, Bart de Steur, from The Netherlands.

For more information: contact person, Isabel Borges, Tel +32 2 280 14 70, E-mail isabel.borges@age-platform.org

Source: AGE Press Release

V. EUROPEAN UNION

2010 European Year for fighting exclusion and poverty

The European Commission had announced in its Social agenda that 2010 should be the European Year for fighting exclusion and poverty. Therefore the Commission's work

programme for 2007 has tabled a proposal for a decision to be taken by the Council and by European Parliament accordingly.

A questionnaire has been drawn up to consult key stakeholders, identified in the context of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) on Social Protection and Social Inclusion, in view of the Commission's preparations of its proposal (due in October 2007) for designating 2010 as "*the European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion*".

To allow the Commission to take your comments into account, replies need to be submitted to the Commission by **Friday 25th May 2007**. Contributions should be sent by e-mail to the mailbox installed for this purpose: EMPL-EY-2010-CONSULTATION@ec.europa.eu

To download the stakeholders' questionnaire:

http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Social_Inclusion/Questionnaire%20for%202010%20European%20year%20for%20fight%20against%20poverty.doc

Source: Social Platform Weekly Update

New president of European anti-torture watchdog

In March 2007, Mr. Mauro Palma, an expert on the Italian prison system, was elected as the new President of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).

Mr Palma's appointment, which comes so soon after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, is an ideal opportunity for the CPT to adopt the language of rights in the Convention in its work monitoring mental health and social care places of detention. More specifically, it is an opportunity for the CPT to focus on encouraging States to develop community based alternatives to institutionalisation and to include persons with psycho-social (mental health) disabilities and intellectual disabilities throughout its monitoring process.

For more information: the CPT website, www.cpt.coe.int.

Source: MDAC Press Release

Support EPSU campaign and ETUC petition for quality public services in Europe

The European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU) has launched a campaign on "*quality public services in Europe*". The campaign will last until June 2007 and has a national dimension of awareness-raising and mobilisation at national level and a European dimension. Parallel to the EPSU initiative, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has launched a Europe-wide petition calling on the European Commission to take action to protect and strengthen public services that are vital to the wellbeing of all European citizens.

MHE invites its member organisations to circulate this information and to encourage signing the petition.

To access the EPSU campaign: <http://www.epsu.org/a/2141>

To access the ETUC petition: <http://www.petitionpublicservice.eu/>

Source: Social Platform Weekly Update

VI. PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Future Portuguese Presidency to organise the 6th European Round Table on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Portugal 16-17 October 2007

To follow-up on the conferences held under the Community Action Programme on combating poverty and social exclusion, the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union will organise the Sixth Round Table Conference, on "*Minimum Social Standards: a strategy to fight poverty*", under the new Community "PROGRESS" Programme 2007-2013.

The aim of these roundtables is to promote a dialogue between all EU stakeholders in the context of the European Social Inclusion process in particular as regards its development and implementation at national and local level. Similarly to the previous conferences, the upcoming Round Table in Portugal (in Ponta Delgada – São Miguel, Azores) will bring together different relevant actors representing civil servants from EU Member and Applicant States, EU decision-makers, and experts as well as representatives of leading anti-poverty non governmental organisations.

In view of the considerable differences that exist among EU Member States concerning the situation of poverty and exclusion and the different approaches in dealing with these issues, the role of minimum social standards will be the main theme of the 6th Round Table.

The final programme of the conference will be confirmed at a later stage.

For more information: the European Commission's website,

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

Source: CoverAge

VII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

A Social Reality Stocktaking Exercise: Europe needs your view!!

MHE would like to invite its member organisations to contribute to a public consultation on Europe's social reality. Dramatic changes are underway in European societies: in the nature of work; modern family life; demographic trends; the position of women in society; social mobility and the incidence of poverty and inequality. Values are changing and societies are becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural. This social dynamic presents new challenges. To seek a wide range of views on the changes that are underway in European societies, the European Commission has launched a public consultation on the "social reality" of Europe today.

MHE will contribute to this wide-scale consultation and wants to encourage you to send us your views on current social trends and on what contributes in your opinion to today's "well-being". We need your views on mental health and well-being in today's Europe, on access to education, employment, health and other social services etc., in order to help us make heard the voice of organisations and individuals active in the field of mental health and well-being in Europe.

You can take part in this public consultation by commenting on the issues for discussion. Your replies should then be sent by email to the MHE secretariat (sogol.noorani@mhe-sme.org) until **16 May 2007**. We will collate the responses and send a joint MHE contribution to the Commission.

For further information regarding this public consultation: the Commission's website,

http://ec.europa.eu/citizens_agenda/social_reality_stocktaking/index_en.htm,

or contact the MHE secretariat, E-mail info@mhe-sme.org, Tel +32 2 280 04 68.

EU funded project on the treatment of mentally ill or disordered persons in prisons

Mental disorders in prison are a serious worldwide increasing problem, which is fed by several sources. A recent WHO-Study provided information from 13 European countries. It suggested that none of the 13 investigated prison systems had sufficient mental health care resources available to meet the needs of persons concerned.

Detailed data describing the current situation of mentally ill persons and identifying factors contributing to their increasing imprisonment and scrutinising side-effects of prison sentences that may contribute to the mental ill-health of prison inmates is of major concern. However, details of the problem dimension or the quantity of missing care resources are unknown. Adequately meeting the psychological and mental health care needs of mentally disordered prisoners is important for primary and secondary prevention of mental ill-health, and might contribute substantially to a better social integration after release from prison.

In September 2005, the EUPRIS study (Treatment of mentally ill or disordered persons in European prison systems - Service provision and outcomes) started, with the aim of providing essential information for this purpose. It will gather structured information on the current state and routine practices in the EU Member States and additional countries participating in the study, resulting in a thorough overview of the issue, a description of the most crucial information deficits as well as in the identification of models of best practice.

The interim report of the study, as well as its annexes, is now available on the Commission website: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_projects/2004/action1/action1_2004_17_en.htm#3

Call for expressions of interest for the compilation of a list of experts for evaluation activities in connection with the public health programme

A call for expressions of interest was launched on 15 December 2004 to establish a list of experts for evaluation activities in connection with the public health programme.

These evaluation activities consist of three domains:

1. evaluation of proposals submitted under annual calls for proposals;
2. review of technical reports of finished or ongoing projects;
3. monitoring of the implementation of programme actions in the light of its objectives.

Individuals interested in submitting their candidature are invited to read the call text published in the Supplement to the Official Journal:

http://ted.europa.eu/Exec?DataFlow=ShowPage.dfl&Template=TED/N_one_result_detail_curr.htm&docnumber=209392-2004&docId=209392-2004&StatLang=EN

To apply, please send your CV to the following E-mail address **before 15 September 2007**: sanco-php-calls@ec.europa.eu

DG Employment and Social Affairs

Launch of EU anti-discrimination tour

On 25 April 2007, European Commissioner Vladimir Špidla launched in Strasbourg the fourth EU stop-discrimination truck tour aimed at informing people about the "For Diversity. Against Discrimination" campaign, as well as the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. During the seven-month tour, the truck will visit 21 countries and cover more than 18,000 kilometres. The giant 30-tonne vehicle is designed to inform citizens of their rights under EU and national anti-discrimination legislation and will help the EU in its drive to combat discrimination and promote the messages of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All.

The in-built 50-square-metre stage will host an information and entertainment programme specially developed with the help of campaign partners including ministries, unions and employment associations in each country. Visitors will receive information and consultation about how to protect themselves against discrimination at the workplace with the help of EU directives.

For more information about the truck's destination and programme in each country: the EC "stop-discrimination website", <http://www.truck07.stop-discrimination.info/842.0.html>

DG Health and Consumer Protection

Consultation backs EU action on health services

Responding to the request by many healthcare stakeholders for greater clarity over what Community law means for health services, the Commission launched a public consultation process on 26 September 2006 regarding Community action on health services. Over 270 responses have been received from national governments, regional authorities, international and national umbrella organisations, social security institutions, universities, industry and individual citizens.

On 20 April 2007, EU Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou presented the results of this consultation to the Informal Health Council in Aachen (Germany). The majority of contributors to the Commission's consultation favour some form of Community action on health services, combining both legislative elements and practical support for cooperation between European health systems. Contributors saw a need for better information to patients to enable informed choices about cross-border care and greater clarity about the procedures to follow, with a broad consensus that quality and safety of healthcare should be ensured by the country where treatment is provided.

Many contributors felt that any Community action should be based on the common values (universality, access to good quality care, equity and solidarity) and principles (quality, safety, care that is based on evidence and ethics, patient involvement, redress, privacy and confidentiality) of EU health systems (as set out notably by the Council in June 2006). A majority of contributors also felt that a combination of supportive practical tools and legally binding measures would be best.

The Commission intends to bring forward proposals for Community action on health services toward the end of 2007.

For more information and to download the summary report and all individual responses to the consultation: the European Commission website,
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/co_operation/mobility/news_en.htm
Source: EC Press Release

EuroCoDe - European Collaboration on Dementia

The aim of this EU funded project is to develop a European network of all the players active in the area of dementia to jointly develop consensual indicators and to develop an ongoing dialogue between these actors to identify ways of developing synergies and a closer collaboration on a European level. For the development of these guidelines and indicators, the network will bring together a number of established pan-European organisations, European projects and informal collaborations.

This network would respond to the objectives of the Community Action Programme concerning the creation of a sustainable health monitoring and information system for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Particular attention would be paid to the development of information and the definition of indicators relating to the prevalence, diagnosis, treatment and management of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, as well as the risk factors and potential risk reduction or prevention strategies for this group of diseases. Finally, the socio-economic impact of dementia would be studied, as well as the social support provided by Member States to people with dementia and their carers.

The interim report of the project is now available online:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_projects/2005/action1/action1_2005_10_en.htm#3

Information sheet on the costs of health care abroad

Social security is a key issue for persons exercising their fundamental right to free movement. But without coordination at European level national social security legislations may lead to disadvantages in the field of social security for European citizens and their families who move within the European Union. True free movement therefore needs protection of these rights. Council Regulation (EEC) N°1408/71 offers practical and satisfactory solutions to most of the cross-border problems that may arise in the field of social security.

To find more information on that topic, including on the European Health Insurance Card: the European Commission website,

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_information/dissemination/hsis/hsis_16_en.htm

VIII. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

MHE comments on European Parliament Resolution on Social Protection and Social Inclusion In response to a request from Liz Lynne, MEP (ALDE), who has been appointed rapporteur for the European Parliament Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion - which is based on the Council Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2007 adopted on 22 February 2007, MHE has submitted comments and additions on the European Parliament Resolution on the joint report. The main points MHE wished to emphasise are:

- that unemployment levels of disabled people, and especially people with mental health problems remain across the European Union remain unacceptably high;
- that the Member States should make optimal use of the potential offered by the open method of coordination process, in particular to ensure the active participation of the national and sub-national levels in the social inclusion and social protection process as well as the involvement of civil society organisations, e.g. in the drafting and implementation of National Reports on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion;
- that there is a need to combine benefit systems with active labour market policies to ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness and make work pay for job seekers, in particular disadvantaged people including people with mental health problems;
- that the de-institutionalisation of disabled people is a crucial issue that must be achieved, but that this requires a sufficient level of community-based quality services favouring independent living, the right to personal budget and personal assistance, and full participation in society within Member States;

- that there is an urgent need for the de-stigmatisation of people with mental health problems, and for increased resources for the promotion of mental health and well-being, the prevention of mental disorders as well as for treatment and care.

For more information: read the full text of the Council Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2007, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st06/st06694.en07.pdf>, or visit the European Commission's webpage on Social Affairs, http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/jrep_en.htm#joint_report

IX. UNITED NATIONS

Early signature of the UN Treaty on Disabilities

On 3 April 2007, eighty-one Member States and the European Community signed a landmark new treaty that aims to improve the lives of the world's estimated 650 million people with disabilities, a record for the first day of signature of any convention - more than four times as many as was needed for the Convention to enter into force immediately.

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, initiated in 2002 by Mexico, is the first UN convention to be adopted since the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers in 1990. The Convention was adopted on 30 March 2007.

Some 44 countries signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which will give individuals recourse to an expert committee on the rights of persons with disabilities when all national options have been exhausted.

Shortly before signing the Convention, the Commission, representing the European Communities, stepped back from its initial plan to sign the Convention's optional protocol. The U-turn came after the UK, Denmark and Poland expressed concerns that the legal implications would be too far-reaching in the employment field, where the European Communities have competences. They feared an EC signature would be equivalent to them being a party, even when they are not.

The Commission holds that: *"Before addressing a complaint to the committee, the individual must in any case have exhausted all the available domestic remedies at national level, so resort to the committee does not come lightly."*

The Convention outlaws discrimination against persons with disabilities in all areas of life, including employment, education, health services, transportation and access to justice. It requires that public spaces and buildings be accessible to persons with disabilities, and calls for improvements to information and communications infrastructure.

For more information: visit the Convention dedicated website,

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/>

Source: UN Press Release

X. VARIOUS

PPD - Psychological Centre for the Polish People (Ireland)

There are over 200 thousand Polish people living in Ireland but the actual number is probably two times higher than this figure. This is quite a huge number which proves that the Polish community is one of the largest ethnic groups in Ireland.

The Poles with mental health problems can count on support from the Irish services. However, the language barrier still seems to be a big problem, especially at the beginning when they start living in a foreign country. It is, indeed, much easier to describe emotional, mental, or behavioural problems in a mother tongue.

That is why a Psychological Centre for the Polish People – PPD was set up in Dublin in 2006.

Its main objective is to represent, promote and advance psychology within the context of improving community wellbeing and scientific knowledge.

PPD has launched various programmes, including a community day care centre, online counselling, phone support, a substance abuse programme and an alternative cultural integration programme.

This service is free of charge.

A non-profit organisation, PPD is now looking for financial support or any other support due to its growth.

For more information: contact person, Krystian Fikert, E-mail krystian@theppd.eu, or visit PPD website, <http://theppd.eu/>

Promoting optimum management for ADHD

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in children - a complex disorder characterised by developmentally inappropriate levels of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity - has received considerable attention in the lay press, partly because of controversy over its treatment with stimulant drugs. Recently, interest in ADHD treatment returned to the mainstream media following the publication of new research in the journal *Health Affairs*. The study showed that the global use of medications (including non-stimulant drugs) to treat ADHD in children aged 5–19 years has risen threefold between 1993 and 2003. In 1993, 31 countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development had adopted the use of ADHD medications but by 2003 the number had grown to 55.

Increases in the use of medications for ADHD raise alarms about the possible over-identification and over-treatment of the disorder. Stimulant drugs - the first-line treatment for severe cases of ADHD - have side-effects, they can be addictive, and their use can be abused. But under-recognition is also of concern in some countries, where cases actually diagnosed and treated by clinicians remain far below the population prevalence. Untreated ADHD can lead to poor self-esteem, academic achievement, peer and family relationships, and increases in accidental injuries.

Detailed, accurate, and comprehensive assessment by well-trained specialists is crucial for proper diagnosis of ADHD. Behavioural treatment should be used for less severe cases and can be used alongside medication in more severe cases. Identifying the cultural and economic factors that lead to over-treatment in some countries and under-treatment in others, will also be important for promoting optimum management of the disorder.

For more information: *The Lancet* website,
<http://www.thelancet.com/journals>

Suicide continues to be a major killer of men in many parts of the EU

Figures from Scotland suggest that the number of men taking their own lives has risen by almost a quarter in 15 years. The suicide rate was notably higher in deprived areas.

A study for the Scottish Executive found a 22% increase in the male suicide rate between 1989 and 2004. (Over the same period, there was a 6% rise in female suicides.) The rate in Glasgow was "significantly higher" than the average for both men and women.

In Belgium, suicide rates are similarly distorted with 11 in every 100,000 women taking their own lives in 1997 compared to 31 men. The ages at which Belgian men are most likely to commit suicide is between 35 and 54 and over 75.

In most western countries, with the exception of some around the Mediterranean, suicide has been increasing since the 1950s. In Belgium, a country of 10 million people, it now kills seven people a day.

For more information: website of the European Men's Health Forum,
http://www.emhf.org/index.cfm/item_id/464/CFID=7324228&CFTOKEN=78492262/
Source: EMHF Newsletter

Mental Health Foundation's Mental Health Action Week 2007 (United Kingdom)

The Mental Health Action Week 2007 took place from 9 to 15 April 2007. On this occasion, the Mental Health Foundation raised awareness about the importance of friendship and its positive impact on mental health. New materials including a booklet offering guidance for people with mental health problems and their friends were created for this purpose.

Besides, the Mental Health Foundation website provided: the "*Keeping us going*" booklet and posters; Frequently Asked Questions about friendship and mental health; real-life stories about friendship and mental health; information on the Foundation's celebrity supporters; the Foundation's research findings about friendship; and a discussion board to share your experiences of the impact of your friendships on your mental health.

For more information: the Mental Health Foundation website, www.mentalhealth.org.uk

New Mental Well-being Impact Assessment Toolkit

If you are interested in assessing the potential impact that a policy, service, strategy or project would have on a community's mental well-being then the Mental Well-being Impact Assessment toolkit provides a step by step guide to doing this and identifying changes for improvement. It will also raise awareness and understanding about mental well-being amongst stakeholders and communities.

The Care Services Improvement Partnership has developed and tested this work over the last year and welcomes its widespread use to further improve the methodology for mental well-being impact assessment. The partnership is continuing to develop capacity and use of the toolkit in Lambeth and Lewisham, Liverpool and the North West region (United Kingdom).

For further information and to download the toolkit: Care Services Improvement Partnership website, <http://www.northwest.csip.org.uk/mwia>

XI. WEBSITES/ONLINE INFORMATION

New website on meeting the costs of health care abroad

More and more people receive health care in another European country to the one where they live or are insured, be it unplanned care during a holiday or work visit, or a trip made specifically to receive medical treatment. This new site informs citizens about the conditions for meeting the financial costs of health care abroad through their national social security or health systems.

These important issues in the daily life of many Europeans are dealt with in particular by the European rules on coordination of social security systems applying to citizens during their travels in Europe.

The information provided is designed to be as concrete and complete as possible. It includes examples of reimbursement levels for health care costs abroad in different situations, with the aim of giving people a broad idea of their rights. It is nevertheless subject to confirmation and clarification by the relevant social security institution or national health system depending on the individual case.

To directly access the website:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_security_schemes/healthcare/index_en.htm

New website of OSI's "Nextmile" project

The Open Society Institute (OSI) has officially launched the web site of its project "*The Next Mile of the European Civil Society Infrastructure (Boosting the potential of Bulgarian and Romanian Civil Society Organisation to improve the Social Environment)*".

The website is trilingual – English, Bulgarian and Romanian – and shall provide an online platform for sharing good practices, useful information and services among civil society organisations, networks and other relevant stakeholders active in the social field.

To directly access the website: <http://www.nextmile.eu/>

XII. PUBLICATIONS

Mental Health Policy and Practice across Europe

This new book maps the current state of policy, service provision and funding for mental health care across Europe, taking into account the differing historical contexts that have shaped both the development and delivery of services. A holistic approach is adopted that aims to assess the influence on mental health of environmental factors such as housing, poverty, employment, social justice and displacement.

For more information: the website of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies,

http://www.euro.who.int/observatory/Publications/20070209_1

Beyond De-Institutionalisation: The Unsteady Transition towards an Enabling System in South East Europe (2004)

This report by Handicap International South East Europe, addresses the unsteady transition towards an enabling system aimed at facilitating the full participation of people with disabilities. It is meant to serve as a base for further research.

To download the full report: the website of the Disability Monitor Initiative,
<http://www.disabilitymonitor-see.org/documents/DMR.pdf>

ESN Report 2006: Social Services and Social Inclusion

"Social services have a proud history of caring for and supporting the vulnerable and excluded in our society. They have been key to the local delivery of the welfare state and form an important part of the European social model. ... This timely report reminds us of what social services do to support the inclusion of minority groups and disabled people." - Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

This (bilingual English/French) report, which was launched at the ESN – European Social Network - seminar on child poverty and welfare in Copenhagen on 15 March 2007, reveals the vital role for social services in combating social exclusion and poverty. The report is the basis for a practice-led input into the European policy framework by local and regional social services in Europe.

To download the report:

http://www.socialeurope.com/inclusion/alldownloads/esn_social_services_report.pdf

Risk factors in adolescent drug use: Evidence from school surveys and application in policy

What are the risk factors in adolescent drug use? Can any reply be found in the school surveys and could this evidence be applied in policy? It is to these questions that the authors attempt to reply. They first compile the needs of political decision makers and then use the ESPAD (European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs) survey as a vehicle to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the risk factors for substance use in Iceland, France and Malta. Finally, the use of ESPAD data in science, the media and in public policy is tackled from the French experience.

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=2184

XIII. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

17-20 May 2007

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

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.

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.

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

NEW!! PICUM International Conference on "Access to health care for undocumented migrants in Europe", Brussels (Belgium), 28-29 June 2007

This conference, organised within the framework of the EU project "Access to Health Care for Undocumented Migrants", aims to bring together non governmental organisations, local authorities, health care providers, policy makers, researchers and other professionals to discuss the health care challenges facing undocumented migrants. This event will provide a forum to share creative examples and strategies to address the problems associated with insufficient access to health care for undocumented migrants in Europe.

For more information: visit PICUM website, <http://www.picum.org/>

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)

The 2nd International Suicide Postvention Seminar "*Suicide Postvention: Realities and aspirations*" will be held on 28 August, as a pre-event of the congress.

The 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!! 14-16 September 2007

4th EUFAMI Congress, "Touching the Stars – Towards a Better Quality of Life", Toruń (Poland)

The Congress is aimed at family members, people with experience of mental illness and health and social care professionals. The Congress will provide up to date information on the state of mental health services in Europe.

For more information: the EUFAMI website, <http://www.eufami.org/>

NEW!! 11-13 October 2007

EAMHID 6th European Congress on Mental Health in Intellectual Disability, Zagreb (Croatia)

The congress, titled "*Mental Health: A Human Right for People with Intellectual Disability*", is organised by the European Association for Mental Health in Intellectual Disability (EAMHID).

Based on a framework of social justice and human rights the congress will have a focus on practice and research related to mental health issues in intellectual disability. It will be a unique opportunity to promote mental health issues of persons with intellectual disability from the perspective of the local and national community and their efforts in assuring human rights of this often marginalized population.

For more information: the congress' website, <http://www.zagrebcongress2007.org/>

NEW!! 18-19 October 2007

4th Three-Country Conference on Care in Psychiatry, "Competence - Between Qualification and Responsibility", Bielefeld-Bethel (Germany)

The first Three-Country Conference in 2004 in Bielefeld-Bethel has proven to be a valuable forum for professional exchange and thus makes a valuable contribution to the development of psychiatric care.

The aim of the conference is to provide and disseminate knowledge and to provide an opportunity for exchange of information in the field of psychiatric healthcare. There will be

contributions on theory and practice, on research on different problems in the daily practices and on innovative practices.

The conference offers carers, managers, educators, project managers, teachers, students, researchers, scientists and representatives of other health related professions (psychiatrists, psychologist, sociologists etc.) the opportunity to present their research work, to present projects, to exchange information, to do networking, to learn from each other and to promote international cooperation.

For more information: the conference dedicated website, www.pflege-in-der-psychiatrie.de, or contact the conference's secretariat, Tel +49 521 772 78024, E-mail Bruni.Aussendorf@evkb.de

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.

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