



PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY SCORECARD

(JANUARY - JUNE 2021)

MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS

To engage with and analyse the performance of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU), Mental Health Europe has devised a scorecard system through which we evaluate each Presidency's commitment to and promotion of mental health. The performance of each Presidency is rated based on the following criteria:

- **Promotion of mental health and well-being,**
- **Commitment to the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities,**
- **The involvement and empowerment of users of mental health services.**

SCALE OF APPRECIATION:

HOW WAS THE WEATHER DURING THE PORTUGUESE PRESIDENCY?



GOOD



FAIR



AVERAGE



POOR

PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Portuguese Presidency notably implemented the European Pillar of Social Rights and its Action Plan one of the key priorities of its six-month mandate. This translated into the organisation of the [Porto Social Summit](#) on 7 and 8 May 2021, which saw the participation of EU institutions, heads of Member States and social partners. This was a particular relevant moment as, for the first time in a year, civil society was invited to participate and speak through the representation of the Social Platform, of which MHE is a member. During the event, the [Porto Social Commitment](#) was presented and signed by the EU institutions, the social partners and the Social Platform. The document



outlines the engagement of its signatories to work together and cooperate to advance social rights in Europe. The Commitment does not mention mental health specifically, however it covers a series of areas of relevance for socio-economic determinants of mental health and it is still a positive sign that, after years, a Presidency put social rights at the heart of its semester and involved civil society in the process.

COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITIES

During the Portuguese Presidency, the new [EU Disability Rights Strategy 2021-2030](#) was presented, followed by a [High-Level video conference](#). In June, the [Council Conclusions on the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#) were adopted. While on the one hand these initiatives show the willingness to continue working on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), they also fall short to take concrete commitments from the side of the EU institutions to tackle existing barriers and human rights violations, as well as to mention the specific challenges faced by persons with psychosocial disabilities. For instance, the Council Conclusions do not mention the need to remove legal barriers put in place by systems of guardianship and coercion, in favour of supported decision-making systems. MHE find it also particularly worrying that the Council Conclusions do not reflect on the proposal of ratifying the 2000 Hague Convention on the International Protection of Adults, which could [contradict Article 12 of the UN CRPD on legal capacity](#). Instead, the Convention could risk cementing substituted decision-making across Europe, and concerns we not sufficiently addressed during the [High-Level Conference on the International Protection of Vulnerable Adults](#) which took place in March 2021.



The Portuguese Presidency also published a [progress report on the Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive](#). Although we remain far from its adoption, this action allowed for the negotiations on the proposed Directive to start again, after having been blocked for more than ten years

INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF USERS OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Despite the willingness to tackling issues of concerns for users of mental health services through documents and events, the Portuguese Presidency scored poorly on the involvement of experts by experience in the design and delivery of said documents and events. None of its three key events, the Porto Social Summit, the High-Level Conference on the International Protection of Vulnerable Adults and the High-Level video conference on the new Disability Strategy had people with lived experience as speakers, nor they were involved in the design of the programme or consulted in the development of key documents.



CONCLUSION

The Portuguese Presidency performed very well in contributing to the advancement of social rights and well-being in Europe. The Social Summit – with the strong engagement of civil society – can be considered an unprecedented and landmark moment. Unfortunately, the same level of commitment was not shown for psychosocial disabilities and the involvement of service users. [Given the expectations on this Presidency](#), this was certainly a missed opportunity to contribute to a more inclusive EU and to uphold human rights standards.

Find out more about our work: www.mhe-sme.org • twitter.com/mhesme • facebook.com/mentalhealtheuropa