



**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

## **71st session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (RC71)**

### ***Speech by MHE Director, Claudia Marinetti, during the session on The Mental Health Coalition: building an economy of well-being***

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Thank you very much for the invitation. At MHE, we applaud the efforts of The WHO Regional Office for Europe's commitment to strengthen its partnerships to help build stronger and healthier societies for all, including one that reflects the vision of "no health without mental health". We also welcome the plans for the WHO European Framework for Action on Mental Health 2021-2025, which includes the WHO Europe flagship initiative, the Mental Health Coalition.

Mental Health Europe (MHE) is a European non-governmental network organisation committed to the protection of the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities, the promotion of positive mental health, the prevention of mental distress, the improvement of care and social inclusion, for over 35 years. At a European level, MHE, with its diverse membership acts as a hub for knowledge exchange and mutual learning between Members, who are experts in the field of mental health and are based in all regions throughout Europe, including 73 members from 30 European countries (27 Member States and Norway, Serbia and Israel).

In hindsight, Mental Health Europe can support the work of The Mental Health Coalition, in a plethora of ways. Firstly, as the largest European Organisation focusing on mental health, our Members are key actors which can support the implementation of the activities of the Coalition. With their expertise, they are best placed to feed into and enrich the work and knowledge exchange within the Mental Health Coalition and apply this at national level, including through engaging with national policy-makers, authorities and other stakeholders. They can certainly be integral in raising awareness, sharing and ensuring more actors are informed about and engage with the work of this flagship initiative.

Alongside integrating the expertise of MHE's membership, MHE works closely with the European Institutions and international bodies to mainstream mental health in all policies and end mental health stigma. MHE coordinates the European Parliament Coalition for Mental Health and Wellbeing, which brings together Members of the European Parliament committed to the inclusion of positive mental health in all policies. This space can be utilised to support in informing the work of both Coalitions, by providing a space for knowledge exchange and coordinated efforts to promote mental health as a critical priority for public health across the European Region.

Moreover, Mental Health Europe has recently launched the Mental Health Advocacy Platform, consisting of European and national organisations and people with lived experience, who are dedicated to working on mental health and coordinating advocacy efforts and activities. With an intersectional approach to mental health at the centre of this Platform, this can undoubtedly support the implementation of the European Programme of Work and reinforcing the determination to leave no one behind.

A key component of MHE's new strategic plan, which we hope will also be applied to the Mental Health Coalition includes co-creation, which ensures that equality-based partnerships are fostered by involving experts by experience, their supporters, service providers and other actors.

We sincerely hope that Member States will endorse the WHO European Framework for Action on Mental Health. With such clear strategic objectives, this Framework will certainly aid the work of Mental Health Europe, as well as other actors, and close persisting gaps in mental health. Whilst we welcome all the strategic priorities, we are particularly pleased to see that the Framework also includes The Pan-European Mental Health Data Platform, as we have continuously advocated for more research and action-driven by disaggregated data, which is necessary to provide consideration for intersecting factors that may place certain groups in the high-risk category.

We hope the Framework for Action will be endorsed and truly look forward to supporting its implementation, through the Pan-European Mental Health Coalition, as well as continuing our collaboration with WHO Europe and its partners, to contribute to healthier and fairer societies.