



**MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE**



## **MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE**

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## **NEWSLETTER N° 10/2011** **October 2011**

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One of the busiest months in 2011, October has allowed us to both finish organizing our next events and to do some planning for the upcoming year. We also interviewed potential candidates for the Director position at Mental Health Europe, and thus have some very exciting news to share with you - Maria Nyman will take up the position of MHE Director starting next year. Maria, a Swedish citizen who has lived in Brussels for nine years, has an educational background in EU law and human rights, and is currently being trained in leadership and management. She has been working at the European Disability Forum since 2005, first as Policy Officer, and then, since January 2011, as Campaign Manager and Policy Officer. Maria applied to become Director of MHE as she wanted to progress professionally within a civil society organization that advocates for respecting the human rights of all persons. Moreover, she is interested in raising awareness about mental health promotion and the prevention of mental health problems, and in activities aimed at reducing the prejudice and stigma attached to mental health problems. She wishes to further explore the impact of the UNCRPD in relation to mental health, in order to ensure it applies effectively to persons with mental health problems and that the relevant policy making at the European level is reflecting and respecting the rights guaranteed under this convention. Apart from Swedish, her mother tongue, Maria is fluent in both English and French. She will start working at Mental Health Europe on January 4, 2012, and MHE would like to wish her a very warm welcome.

We would also like to inform you that we have opened the call for abstracts for our 2012 Conference, which will be organized in Split, Croatia, in June. The topics are available both in our newsletter and on the front page of our website.

For any questions on our upcoming conferences and events, please do not hesitate to contact us. We always look forward to hearing from you, and to seeing those who will participate in our Extraordinary General Assembly on November 5.

Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director

## I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

### MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

#### **MHE opens call for contributions for 2012 Conference**

Mental Health Europe has announced a call for contributions for its 2012 Conference, which will engage with the social determinants of mental health, in a bid to emphasize the role society plays in both reinforcing and addressing inequalities. The conference will bring together experts from the European Commission, the WHO and the United Nations to present different methods for improving the social environment in schools and workplaces, encouraging inclusion within the community, and developing strong and supportive networks which can have a positive impact on mental health. Grass roots experts will also contribute with examples of good practices found throughout Europe. MHE welcomes abstract submissions for the following parallel sessions:

- Meeting the basic needs of children and youth as an investment in the future
- Changing the attitude of employers towards people with mental health problems
- A framework for the establishment of strong and supportive networks
- The role of volunteering in establishing networks in rural and remote areas
- The human rights aspect of the access to quality community-based services
- Deinstitutionalisation and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The role of the media in changing people's attitudes towards mental health issues
- Solidarity between generations in the mental health field – Round Table debate

To submit an abstract, of 400 words at most, please complete the attached form and send it to Yves Brand at [yves.brand@mhe-sme.org](mailto:yves.brand@mhe-sme.org) and Maja Soco at [maja.soco@stokoluri.org](mailto:maja.soco@stokoluri.org) by March 15, 2012.

#### **MHE warns governments of sharp rise in mental health problems**

It is not news anymore that the financial crisis had a devastating effect on the world economy. Its consequences were felt in all areas of life – securing jobs became more difficult, purchasing power went down, and so did people's trust in their governments. But the credit crunch also had an unexpected consequence, one that reflects a deep chasm in our society – **a sharp rise in mental health problems**, largely caused by uncertainty and fear for the future.

Therefore, on World Mental Health Day, MHE issued a press release and a position paper reminding governments of the mental health effects of the economic crisis, and their particular impact on vulnerable groups – young people, older people and people with existing mental health problems.

MHE pointed out the need governments and European policy-makers to understand that the rise in mental health problems in Europe is due as much to the crisis as to governments' response to it. Budget cuts, the reduction of allowances for families and disabled people, diminishing benefits and a decrease in the number of staff working in social services will only worsen this already dire situation, and harm the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.

Mental Health Europe thus urged policy-makers to realize that the crisis will not last forever, but that cuts in social services, although seemingly-cost efficient now, will have lasting negative effects. Social welfare is not only a right, but a means to improve mental wellbeing.

MHE also issued recommendations on the modernization of social protection systems and other programs that could reduce the mental health effects of the economic crisis.

*To read our position paper in full, please go to:*

<http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/Position%20paper%20WMHD.pdf>

*Our press release is available at: [http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases/world\\_mental\\_health\\_day.html](http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases/world_mental_health_day.html)*

*For more information, please contact MHE Information and Communications Officer Silvana Enculescu at [silvana.enculescu@mhe-sme.org](mailto:silvana.enculescu@mhe-sme.org)*

### **MHE to organize lunch debate at European Parliament**

Mental Health Europe decided to choose active ageing as the topic for its 2011 Awareness-raising event at the European Parliament. Together with MEP Frieda Brepoels, MHE is organizing a lunch debate where mental health professionals and government officials will have the opportunity to discuss the value older people bring to the workplace, and the innovative new mechanisms needed for older people to continue contributing to society in a meaningful and constructive manner.

**Staying active – The impact of (un)employment on the mental health of an ageing Europe** will take place on Wednesday, December 7, at the European Parliament in Brussels. Speakers will include Richard Wynne, Director of Work Research Centre in Ireland, Bart Julliams, Adviser for Employment in the Cabinet of Philippe Muyters, Flemish Minister of Finance, Budget, Employment, Planning and Sport, Jacques van der Vliet from the Standing Committee of European Doctors and Brian Howard, CEO of Mental Health Ireland.

*For more information, or to register, please contact Mental Health Europe at [secretariat@mhe-sme.org](mailto:secretariat@mhe-sme.org) or Katrien Uyttersprot at [katrien.uyttersprot@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:katrien.uyttersprot@europarl.europa.eu).*

### **MHE sends out questionnaire on psychiatric homes**

Early next year, Mental Health Europe, with the support of Open Society Institute, is going to publish the first-ever European report on the state of institutional and community based care in the mental health field in Europe. The report will consist of an analysis of the issue at European level (policies, legislation, tendencies) and of short country reports providing basic data/statistics and legal analysis from 30 European countries.

During October 2011, MHE sent out a questionnaire to all of its members and also to government experts working in 27 European countries. The questionnaire is designed to collect basic data about the number of people with mental health problems living in institutions/hospitals and/or in the community in Europe.

If you wish to support our cause by filling out the questionnaire, please contact Gabor Petri, MHE Human Rights Officer at [gabor.petri@mhe-sme.org](mailto:gabor.petri@mhe-sme.org).

### **MHE Vice-President presents mental health networks in Europe**

Rita Donabauer, the vice-president of Mental Health Europe, used MHE as an example of how to build successful European mental health networks at the 8th Country-Triangle Congress on Care in Psychiatry, organized in Bern. MHE's activities and networking strategies were

presented to the 350 participants, along with a description of the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

*For more information, please contact Rita Donabauer at [Donabauerr@promenteooe.at](mailto:Donabauerr@promenteooe.at)*

## **World Mental Health Day**

### **More resources needed for mental health, Ban Ki-moon says**

On World Mental Health Day (WMHD), UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pleaded for more resources to treat mental health problems. According to the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO), one in four people will require mental health care at some point in their lives. However global spending on mental health still counts for less than \$3 per capita per year.

The current financial insecurity and associated fiscal austerity measures have caused a rise of mental health problems on a global scale, yet governments spend most nearly 70% of their resources for long-term mental health care on psychiatric hospitals. If countries would focus more at the primary care level, they would reach more people and prevent the need to receive expensive hospital and institutional care, Ban Ki-moon said.

On (WMHD), the WHO also launched the WHO Mental Health Atlas 2011, which presents data from 184 states, covering 98% of the world's population.

### **MHE Board member speaks at WMHD conference in Portugal**

To celebrate World Mental Heath Day, the Portuguese Health Minister organized a two-day conference in Lisbon, building capacity among mental health users, carers and professionals in light of the rapid deinstitutionalization process taking place in Portugal. Speakers included ENUSP and EUFAMI representatives, WHO officials, as well as MHE Board member Pino Pini.

Pino Pini presented the Joint Experiences and Local Mental Health Systems (JE-LMHS) project, which stresses the need for professionals, users, carers and members of the local community to collaborate on innovative solutions for people who do not accept therapeutic or psychosocial approaches.

*For more information, please contact MHE Board Member Pino Pini, at [pn.pini@gmail.com](mailto:pn.pini@gmail.com)*

## **World Mental Health Day in Upper Austria**

In the frame of the World Mental Health Day, Pro mente Upper Austria organized a Open Day for Mental Health in Linz, Austria, on October 14. Presentations by professionals were held on the topics mental health in older age, mental health in youth, prevention and treatment of addictions, mental health at the workplace as well as changed living environments and their effects on mental health.

More information (in German), including the presentations, is available at:  
<http://pmooe.at/sitex/index.php/page.7/action.view/entity.detail/key.1339/>

## **UPDATE ON NEW ITEMS ON MHE WEBSITE**

The MHE website has been updated with new information in the following sections:

- Home page - The description of our 2012 Conference in Split, Croatia is now on the front page of our website, while on the right side you can find the poster of the said conference  
[http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Conference%202012%20Poster\(1\).pdf](http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/Conference%202012%20Poster(1).pdf)
- Home page – The call for contributions for our 2012 Conference is now under the news section, on the front page of our website <http://www.mhe-sme.org/>
- Press releases - Our press release on the occasion of World Mental Health Day is now on our website, at [http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases/world\\_mental\\_health\\_day.html](http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases/world_mental_health_day.html)
- Position Papers – The MHE position paper published on World Mental Health Day is online at  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/Position%20paper%20WMHD.pdf>
- MHE leaflets – The new MHE brochure is available on our website at  
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/flyer%20.pdf>

## **MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS**

On October 3-4, MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri participated in the Seminar on deinstitutionalization organized by the European Association of Service Providers of Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), in Brussels.

On October 5, MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri attended a lobbying event organized at European Parliament by European Disability Forum and Mental Disability Advocacy Center as part of the Save the Vote campaign.

On October 6, MHE Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel participated in the Social Policy Working Group, organized by the Social Platform in Brussels.

On October 10, MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri participated in a conference on social housing organized by the European Economic and Social Committee, in Brussels.

On October 11, Astrid Mechel participated in the Open Days workshop on "Social Cohesion in European Cohesion Policy – Meet the Projects", organized by the European Commission Directorate General for Regional Policy in Brussels.

On October 11, MHE Network Development Officer Yves Brand participated in the meeting of the European Parliament Interest Group on Carers, which took place in Brussels.

On October 11-12, MHE Information and Communications Officer Silvana Enculescu participated in the Professional Development Programme, organized by the European Public Health Alliance in Brussels.

October 12, MHE Network Development Officer Yves Brand took part in the EU Health Policy Forum, organized in Brussels.

October 14, MHE Network Development Officer Yves Brand attended a EuroHealthNet study visit, in Brussels.

On October 17-18, MHE Director Mary Van Dievel and MHE Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel represented MHE at the First Annual Convention of the European Platform Against Poverty and

Social Exclusion, organized by the Polish EU Presidency and the European Commission in Krakow, Poland.

On October 18, MHE Daphne Project Coordinator Karina Huberman participated in the round table discussion on the launch of the ENGENDER policy briefings - Better health policy for all-Promoting Gender Equity in Health, which took place in Brussels.

On October 26-27 MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri participated in a work forum on the UN CRPD, organized in Brussels.

## **NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS**

### **SHINE publishes report on institutions in Croatia**

SHINE, Mental Health Europe's Croatian member has published a report on their human rights monitoring programme in psychiatric hospitals and residential homes. The report 'Out of Sight' was carried out in cooperation with Mental Disability Advocacy Center and is available at <http://www.udruga-sjaj.com/download/outofsight.pdf> in English and on the website of SHINE, in Croatian: [www.udruga-sjaj.com](http://www.udruga-sjaj.com)

### **AISMe meets with Health Ministry consultant**

MHE member AISMe has met with the Teresa Di Fiandra, consultant to the General Directorate for Health Prevention at the Italian Ministry for Health, on October 6. AISMe presented their activities as MHE Focal Point and also asked for support in their strive to implement the UNCRDP in Florence. They also discussed the possibility of developing the user-led Tuscany Network into a national user network, as well as means to strengthen the AISMe national profile.

*For more information, please MHE Board Member Pino Pini, at pn.pini@gmail.com*

## **II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES**

### **First Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion**

The Polish EU Presidency and the European Commission organised the first Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion, a successor of the previous annual Roundtables on Poverty and Social Exclusion. The Poverty Platform is one of the seven flagship initiatives of the EU 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. At the event, held on October 17-18 in Krakow, Mental Health Europe was represented by Director Mary Van Dievel and Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel. Social Ministers from Denmark, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania and Spain, as well as the Belgian State Secretary for Social Integration and the Fight against Poverty, presented their countries' experiences of the first year after the launch of the Poverty Platform and their countries' strategies and current state of play in meeting their national poverty-reduction targets.

The first part of the Convention was dedicated to six workshops organised by European NGOs. Topics included family and child-centered approaches for combating poverty, labour market inclusion of young people, social innovation for active inclusion, fighting poverty and social exclusion of older people, building up a dynamic national, regional and local engagement in the fight against poverty and the role of the social economy.

During the second day of the Convention, site visits to local initiatives were organised. For example, the participants had the possibility to visit **U Pana Cogito (At Mr Cogito's) – Hotel and Restaurant**, where 21 persons suffering from psychological disorders, mainly schizophrenia, are employed. From the income of the hotel and restaurant, rehabilitation measures, medicines and training sessions of the workers are financed. Another initiative, the **Com-Com Zone Development Centre**, run by the **Siemacha Association**, combines free-of-charge and commercial services. The main objective of the project is to provide help for people in crisis, and develop the social skills and natural talents of children and young people. Apart from physical activities in their modern sports facilities which include a swimming pool, gymnasium and a fitness room, psychotherapy in cooperation with the Krakow Psychotherapeutic Institute is offered for young people and their families. The project is financed through a grant from the municipality, as well as income from the sports facilities and private donors.

To read the closing speech of Laszlo Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, go to:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/682>

### **European Parliament Interest Group on Carers**

MHE participated in the meeting of the European Parliament Interest Group on Carers, which was held on October 11 in Brussels. The group discussed the European Innovation Partnership on Healthy and Active Ageing, with Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the European Commission. Ms. Kroes indicated the importance of the innovation partnership in lifting barriers that are of concern for the carers. She also pointed out the need to involve end-users (carers and patients) in the process of initiating and developing the products that relieve carers from their daily tasks.

*For more information, please contact MHE Network Development Officer Yves Brand at  
yves.brand@mhe-sme.org*

### **EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation from 2014 onwards**

Within the EU's new budgetary period 2014-2020, the European Commission will be managing a new instrument, the EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation (PSCI), in support of employment and social policies across the EU. The PSCI integrates three existing programmes: Progress (Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, out of which Mental Health Europe receives its Core Funding), EURES (European Employment Services) and the European Progress Microfinance Facility, extending the coverage of the latter. For the period 2014-2020, Progress will continue its current activities (analysis, mutual learning and grants) and will encompass a specific budget for social innovation and experimentation, i.e. testing of innovative policies on a small scale. It is planned that the most successful projects can be up-scaled, for example with support from the European Social Fund. Out of the EUR 574 million proposed for Progress in the 2014-2020 period, EUR 97 million will be allocated to experimental projects.

These proposals will be adopted by the end of 2012, in connection with the EU's overall Multi-Annual Financial Framework for the period 2014-2020.

## **Website of the European Year 2012 launched**

The European Commission has launched its official website for the European Year 2012 of Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. The challenge for politicians and stakeholders will be to improve opportunities for active ageing in general and for living independently, which will include diverse areas such as employment, health care, social services, adult learning, volunteering, housing, IT services or transport. The European Year aims to raise awareness on active ageing, with older people playing an active role in society, live healthy and fulfilling lives and maintaining solidarity between generations in societies with rapidly increasing numbers of older people. Stakeholders such as NGOs are invited to get involved in the EY 2012 and to share their initiatives in the field of active ageing with the possibility to publish these on the EY 2012 website.

To visit the EY 2012 website, go to: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/ey2012.jsp>

To learn more about MHE's activities in the frame of the EY 2012, contact MHE Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)

## **New European report on non-discrimination legislation and mental health**

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has launched a new report on 'The legal protection of persons with mental health problems under non-discrimination law' today. The publication analyses how national and international non-discrimination legislation and case law defines "disability" and the consequences of this for the "duty to provide reasonable accommodation" for people with disabilities in employment.

Please find the report here:

[http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications\\_per\\_year/2011/pub-legal-protection-persons-mental-health-problems\\_en.htm](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications_per_year/2011/pub-legal-protection-persons-mental-health-problems_en.htm).

## **MHE representative tackles health in prisons**

MHE treasurer Colette Versporten took part in two WHO initiatives related to prisoners' health-a WHO Health in Prisons working group meeting working group and a conference organized by the said group in Abano, Italy.

On October 4 -5, the annual meeting of the WHO health in prisons working group aimed to strengthen the platform for exchange of information between WHO Europe and the network members. Participants debated whether health care in prison should depend on the Ministry of Justice or the Ministry of Health and the first version of "Stewardship of Prison health: a guidance framework" paper was presented.

October 6 marked the start of the international conference on "Health in prisons and continuity of care for prisoners,' where WHO Europe and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime presented a paper on the health of women in prison.

*For more information, please contact MHE Treasurer Colette Versporten at [coletteversporten@gmail.com](mailto:coletteversporten@gmail.com)*

## **News from European Countries**

### **Homeless, Mental Health and Wellbeing Guide published in UK**

Homeless Link, an umbrella organization for 500 homeless charities in the UK, has now launched a new online guide that has as its purpose to support homelessness services work successfully with people that suffer from various mental health problems and different needs of well-being. It focuses on addressing the staff and managers to provide the personalized and dynamic support that clients with mental health problems often need to live happy and fulfilled lives.

The guide was developed as seven out of ten homeless people have a mental health problems that need to be addressed and Homeless Link stated that many do not get the support they need. The guide especially looks at how organizations can ensure that the mental health needs of homeless people can be met at a local level.

A link to the organization and guide can be found here: <http://www.homeless.org.uk/mental-health-guide>

## **News from other ENGOs**

### **EDF asks Poland to ratify the UN CRPD**

The European Disability Forum has asked Poland to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the end of the polish Presidency, and urged the EU to deliver on its commitments.

"It is now time for the EU to go next step on the implementation. The only way forward for the European Institutions is to work in compliance with the UNCRPD. The Convention is clear in the principles and values, the objectives and in the mechanisms. The European Disability movement will be an active player to ensure the respect of the human rights text," EDF President Yannis Vardakastanis said.

*For more information, go to [www.edf-feph.org](http://www.edf-feph.org)*

### **Join the campaign – Votes for all**

Mental Health Europe has decided to support the campaign led by Mental Disability Advocacy Center (Budapest), which aims to influence decision makers at the European level in order to change legislation and provide universal voting rights for all, including people with mental health problems. Most major European non-governmental organizations have joined this campaign, including European Disability Forum, Inclusion-Europe, Human Rights Watch and European Network of (ex)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry. The said organizations, coordinated by MDAC, have held several side events at the UN Headquarters in New York and during the Freedom Drive in Strasbourg, and have met with members of the European Parliament in Brussels in order to raise support for this worthy cause.

*For more information about the campaign, go to <http://www.savethevote.info>.*

## **ENIL launches resolution on effect of cuts**

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) launched a **Proposal for a Resolution of the European Parliament on the effect of cuts in public spending on persons with disabilities in the European Union**. The Resolution outlines measures that should be taken by the Member States, the European Council and the European Commission to ensure that cuts in public spending do not lead to further social exclusion and institutionalization of people with disabilities. ENIL argues that doing so is everyone's responsibility under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

ENIL has received information from many of its members about the way cuts are affecting Independent Living services for people with disabilities, such as personal assistance and direct payments. Some of the examples are listed in the Background note accompanying the Proposal.

The Proposal was presented to Members of the European Parliament at the Disability Intergroup meeting on September 15.

*For more information, please contact Ines Bulic, ENIL Policy officer and Regional Teams Manager, at [ines.bulic@enil.eu](mailto:ines.bulic@enil.eu).*

## **Nominate for the SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards**

Each year, the SOLIDAR Silver Rose Awards celebrate individuals and organizations whose extraordinary struggles contribute to social justice and solidarity in Europe and throughout the world.

The winners are awarded at a ceremony in the European Parliament, which this year will take place on March 6 2012 hosted by MEP Véronique de Keyser, Chair of the Silver Rose Jury 2012.

Previous award winners include Morgan Tsvangirai, former opposition leader in Zimbabwe; Robert Badinter, former French Minister; Labour Education Foundation in Pakistan and the Latvian Trade Union of Health and Social Employees.

Nominations are open until November 23, 2011.

*For more information, please go to  
[http://www.solidar.org/Page\\_Generale.asp?DocID=13975&la=1&langue=EN](http://www.solidar.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13975&la=1&langue=EN)*

## **EAPN publishes booklet on active inclusion and briefing on EU 2020 Strategy**

In 2008, the European Commission launched its Active Inclusion Strategy to foster the integration of socially excluded people to (re)enter the labour market or to actively participate in the community, with the aim to ensure a life in dignity for everyone. The strategy is composed of three pillars: minimum income, access to quality services and labour market inclusion.

This September, the European Anti-Poverty Network published a new booklet exploring how the strategy has been put into practice, highlighting good and bad practices in the Member States, as well as the role of EU Structural Funds in bringing active inclusion forward. The booklet also gives policy recommendations for both the European and national levels.

Moreover, EAPN published a briefing on the EU 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. The paper outlines the features of the EU 2020 Strategy and its seven flagship initiatives and explains how the policy processes function on the European and national levels. Finally, the briefing elaborates how NGOs can get engaged in the Strategy, in

particular by getting involved in the preparations, implementation and evaluation of the National Reform Programmes which the EU Member States write every year.

To download the booklet, go to: <http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/eapn-books/2011-active-inclusion-booklet-en-web.pdf>

To read the full briefing, go to: <http://www.eapn.eu/images/stories/docs/EAPN-position-papers-and-reports/2011-briefing-note-europe-2020-en-final.pdf>

To read MHE National Focal Points' analysis of the National Reform Programmes 2011, go to: [http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/National%20Reform%20Programmes%20analysis%20by%20MHE%20National%20Focal%20Points\\_June2011\\_final\(1\).pdf](http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/National%20Reform%20Programmes%20analysis%20by%20MHE%20National%20Focal%20Points_June2011_final(1).pdf)

*For further information about the EU 2020 Strategy, the National Reform Programmes and opportunities to get involved in the processes, please contact MHE Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)*

### **III. EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING 2011**

*The year 2011 has been proclaimed as the European Year of Volunteering. The aim of the European Year 2011 of Volunteering (EYV 2011) is to increase the popularity of volunteering and raise awareness of its societal value in the European Union. Activities for the EYV 2011 include awareness-raising initiatives such as conferences and seminars for the exchange of best practices.*

*As a member of the NGO Alliance for the European Year 2011 on Volunteering (EYV 2011), Mental Health Europe will pursue common activities with the Alliance and put emphasis on the dimension of volunteering for and by people with mental health problems.*

EY 2011 website: <http://europa.eu/volunteering>

Website of the European Year 2011 of Volunteering NGO Alliance: <http://www.eyv2011.eu>

*For information on MHE's work on volunteering and social inclusion, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at [astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org](mailto:astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org)*

### **European Council Conclusions on Volunteering**

The European Union has adopted Conclusions on the role of voluntary activities in social policy during the EPSCO (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs) Council meeting on October 3, 2011. The Conclusions underline the importance of voluntary activities in terms of strengthening of civil society, activating citizens (including those from vulnerable groups), enhancing social cohesion, solidarity between generations, inter-cultural dialogue, the improvement of social skills and acquisition of professional qualifications and key competences. The Council invites the EU Member States to take action and to further promote volunteering and recognition of competences gained.

To read the full text of the Council conclusions, go to: <http://www.eyv2011.eu/resources-library/item/390-the-role-of-voluntary-activities-in-social-policy-council-conclusions>

#### **IV. CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS**

**Conference - 'Social inclusion of youth on the margins of society: more opportunities, better access, and higher solidarity.' European Commission DG Research & Innovation, MADOU Auditorium, in Brussels, Belgium. November 17-18 2011.**

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

*Please send your contributions to [info@mhe-sme.org](mailto:info@mhe-sme.org)*