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Mental Health Europe is the EU Liaison Office for Mental Health Promotion.

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I. NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

Good practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems

The first meeting with the partners in the project on "Good Practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems" took place in Brussels on 14-15 October 2005. Unfortunately only 8 of the 10 partner organisations could attend.

As already mentioned in our previous Newsletter, 5 partners come from the new EU Member States (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) and 5 from the old Member States (Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy and Scotland UK). They represent a good mix of different stakeholders: some have longstanding experience in fighting discrimination and exclusion of people with mental health problems; some smaller NGOs are eager to learn and to develop their knowledge in setting up collaboration with the different actors in the field (housing, public transport, leisure, employment).

Objective of this meeting was to give more in-depth information on the context of the project, the actions to be undertaken, the expected outcomes and on financial issues. Partner organisations exchanged information on their vision and mission and current activities. Further strategies and the action list for the future were discussed.

Mr Hugues Feltesse from DG EMPL (Social Inclusion Unit) kindly accepted to join the meeting on Saturday morning 15 October. He clarified his expectations about the project:

- better highlight the different obstacles people with mental health problems have to cope with in their fight to be considered as a full member of society;
- the need to have a better view on the long and painful process of de-institutionalisation and its cost;
- the issue of "good practice": transferability and cost effectiveness;
- the monitoring of such projects.

More to follow soon!

A complete list of the partner organisations can be found at: www.mhe-sme.org/.

For further information: Mary van Dievel, MHE Director, info@mhe-sme.org, Tel. +32 2 280 04 68; fax +32 2 280 16 04.

Meeting with promoters of projects to combat social exclusion and poverty

A meeting was held in Brussels on 27 October with the promoters of the Second Transnational Exchange Programme projects (DG EMPL) aimed at promoting the exchange of learning and best practice between EU Member States on policies and programmes to combat and prevent poverty and social exclusion.

MHE's project "Good practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems" is carried out in the framework of this programme.

Objective of the meeting was to clarify how the projects can contribute to the development of the European Union's social inclusion process in general and to the National Action Plans/inclusion in particular, to formulate the expectations of the European

Commission as to the developments of the projects over the two-year span, to promote exchange of information and mutual understanding, and to clarify financial and administrative practices.

Mary Van Dievel attended this meeting.

Launch of the Green Paper on Mental Health

Luxembourg, 24 October 2005

The WHO European Ministerial conference on Mental Health which took place in Helsinki on 12-15 January 2005 created a strong commitment to address the challenges associated to mental health problems on the basis of a comprehensive approach. The European Commission wanted to contribute to the implementation of the results, in partnership with WHO/Euro. Therefore the European Commission has been preparing the Green Paper "Improving the mental health of the population. Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union".

The purpose of this Green Paper is to launch a debate with the European institutions, governments, health professionals, stakeholders in other sectors including social partners, civil society including organisations of people with mental health problems, and the research community about the relevance of mental health for the European Union, the need for a strategy at EU-level and its possible priorities.

The Green Paper was formally launched on 24 October 2005 and involved about a hundred delegates including representatives of EU Member States, a broad range of stakeholders and sectors as well as academic experts.

European Commissioner Markos Kyprianou opened the conference and said that the Green Paper concentrates on four aspects:

- promotion of mental health within the population as a whole;
- preventive action, aiming to reduce the incidence of mental health problems;
- promote social inclusion and ensure the fundamental rights of people with mental health problems;
- collect reliable and comparable data on mental health and make high-quality research available as a basis for good policy decisions.

During the morning session facilitated by Giovanni Berlinguer MEP, representatives from European mental health NGOs and academic experts designed the context for public health interventions. During the afternoon, 3 sessions were dedicated to the entrance into the consultation process: (1) Dialogue with Member States: Building an Action Plan; (2) EU Platform on Mental Health and (3) Interface between research and policy: indicators, data, research.

During these 3 sessions, a number of so-called stakeholders were invited to give their view on the consultation process.

John Henderson was invited as academic expert and Mary Van Dievel as representative of Mental Health Europe.

Mental Health Europe will soon be launching the consultation process on the Green Paper towards its member organisations and other stakeholders in the disability, social and health sectors.

(Mary van Dievel, MHE Director)

Roundtable towards a mental health strategy

The Centre for Health & Ethics in Society (CHES) in partnership with Mental Health Europe (MHE-SME) is organizing an invitational Roundtable: "Towards an EU mental Health strategy: health stakeholder perspectives."

The event is supported by the Madariaga European Foundation and will take place on 23 November 2005 (14.00 -17.00). Background to this event is the European Commission **Green Paper Promoting the Mental Health of the Population. Towards a Strategy on Mental health for the European Union**, which outlines the relevance of mental health for some of the EU's strategic policy objectives (prosperity, solidarity and social justice, quality of life of citizens)

This Roundtable offers a genuine opportunity for all stakeholders in mental health across the European Union to make their voices heard and to come forward with concrete suggestions for priority actions, and to contribute to the EC consultation process. The aim is therefore threefold:

- To inform on the content of the Commission Green Paper and the consultation process;
- To analyse and comment on the scope and planned activities of this initiative;
- To exchange views and ideas in relation to the themes, priorities and actions of a future EU mental health strategy.

A number of key grass roots stakeholder groups have been invited to present their views and discuss these with the EU policy makers and the audience. The participation of some 40 key representatives from various departments within the European Commission, Permanent Representations, European Parliament and grass roots health stakeholder groups is anticipated.

For further information: MHE Secretariat, info@mhe-sme.org; Tel. +32 2 280 04 68, Fax +32 2 280 16 04.

News from MHE Staff

We would like to warmly welcome Fanny Muller who joined the MHE team on 10 October for an internship of 8 months. Fanny is French by nationality and has got a degree in law and is currently doing a Masters in Brussels in European Public Management.

To contact Fanny, please use fmuller@mhe-sme.org.

MHE representation at various meetings

Josée van Remoortel, Senior Policy Advisor, participated at the EDF Board Meeting in Cardiff on 2-3 October (cf page 4).

On 4 October, Roxana Radulescu, Project co-ordinator, attended a meeting at the European Parliament hosted by the Irish MEP Baibre de Brun on suicide prevention programmes (cf page 6).

Mary van Dievel, MHE Director, participated in the Social Inclusion Peer Review "Pathways to social integration for people with mental health problems: the establishment of social co-operatives", held in Athens, 5-7 October 2005 (cf page 7).

Mary van Dievel, MHE Director, Elisabeth Muschick, MHE Board Member, and Fanny Muller MHE trainee, attended the Social Platform Conference "Building social

policies on fundamental rights", which was organised in Brussels, on 11-12 October (cf page 5).

MHE Executive Committee met on 14 October in Brussels.

Colette Versporten, MHE Treasurer, represented MHE at the Annual Meeting of the WHO European Network for Health in Prisons, in London, 16-17 October (cf page 5).

Malgorzata Kmita, MHE vice-president, participated in the Round Table on Social Exclusion, organised by the UK Presidency in Glasgow during 17-18 October.

On 17-18 October, John Henderson attended the Summit "Tackling Health Inequalities" organised by the UK Department of Health in London.

Mary van Dievel also attended the Launch of the Green Paper on Mental Health, on 24 October, Luxembourg (cf page 3 and page 6).

She also made a presentation on MHE at AGE Health Experts meeting, on 25 October, in Brussels.

On 27 October, Mary van Dievel represented MHE at the EC Working Group of Promoters of Social Inclusion Practices, held in Brussels (cf page 2).

II. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS, ACTIVITIES AROUND WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Advocacy Group for the Mentally Ill (Cyprus)

The Advocacy Group for the Mentally Ill (AGMI) celebrated the World mental Health Day through a series of activities dedicated to EUFAMI's ZERO STIGMA Campaign 2005.

In line with the objectives of the World Health Report 2001 – "New Understanding, New Hope", AGMI organized some advocacy activities for the improvement of mental health services, directed to public authorities and decision makers. A Lecture was also organized on legislation and rights of mental health patients. Presentations looked at the role of Patients' Movement and offered an open space for questions and answers regarding the legislation and the situation of people with mental health problems.

On behalf of AGMI, Elise Torossian wished every success to all organizations, groups and people concerned with mental health, in these important efforts to celebrate the World Mental Health Day, conveyed appreciation to all those who work on the field, and assured all people affected and their families that AGMI would continue to support and promote their well-being.

Thanks to Elise Torossian, agftmi@cytanet.com.cy.

Walloon Institute for Mental Health (Belgium)

On 28 October in Charleroi (Belgium), the Walloon Institute on Mental Health (Institut wallon pour la Santé mentale) organised a Seminar « At the doors of care : accessibility in mental health".

After having tackled the issues of "network practices" in 2003 and "patients' rights" in 2004, the members of the Institute chose to work this year on the theme of accessibility to care, by limiting their investigation to 6

categories of services: mental health services, psychiatric hospitals, psychiatric services in general hospitals, shelter apartments initiatives, psychiatric care homes, INAMI conventions.

Several workshops allowed participants to prepare suggestions for enabling the accessibility to mental health care, with the aim to promote them further for every day and political practices.

This was an open event, for users and families, for mental health staff, for managers and for people working in the administration.

For further information: Institut wallon pour la Santé mentale, Tel. +32 81 23.50.15, iwsm@iwsm.be - accessibilite@iwsm.be et <http://www.iwsm.be>

Mental Health Institute for Children and Adults and the Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health (Greece)

The Mental Health Institute for Children and Adults along with the Society of Social Psychiatry and Mental Health celebrated the international day of mental health by organizing happenings in the central square of the community of Kallithea, Athens.

The aim was to set up a dynamic communication and feedback process with its residents. Prevention in the community aims at informing, sensitizing and empowering the public. A primary goal of Social Psychiatry is to help members of the community gain control and ameliorate their mental health. Mental health is not only the lack of mental illness but also a bio-psycho-social quality of life.

The celebration revolved around activities with children, such as drawing, construction, road-theater and games in the central community square. Mental health professionals, people with psychosocial problems as well as the community residents, were given the opportunity to interact and to face and process the fears and stigma of mental illness in a relaxed and festive environment. Prevention in this realm consisted of bringing joy and the opportunity to play for the children, informing the parents and allowing the people in need, to participate in those activities. Hence we were all given the chance to celebrate the meaning of mental health in an enjoyable yet deeper way.

In Fokida, they invited key persons, schools, the neighborhood, relatives and others in order to thank them for the support and the protest they manifested towards the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, for the financial instability and insecurity they create to the workers and users of the mental health services of the region.

Thanks to Athena Frangouli, ekpsath@otenet.gr.

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

Please send us a brief description of the activities that you have undertaken around 10 October, the World Mental Health Day.

III. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS

European Disability Forum

Board meeting in Cardiff

The new EDF Board (elected in Barcelona last May) held a meeting in Cardiff (Wales), during 2-3 October. Disability movement leaders from 29 different European countries and 11 European NGOs have discussed the major priorities of the European disability movement, as well as its future strategies and campaigns at the European Union level.

Jane Hutt, Business Minister of the National Assembly of Wales and Lord Mayor of Cardiff and Councillor Freda Salway addressed the assembly. Minister Hutt particularly stressed the importance of guaranteeing the inclusion of disabled people following the social model, a key priority for the Welsh Assembly Government: "In 2002 we adopted the Social Model Disability which recognises that it is not disabled people who are the problem because they are different, but it is society's failure to accommodate that difference which amounts to discrimination".

Josée van Remoortel attended this meeting on behalf of MHE.

For further information: Helena González, EDF Communication and Press Officer, Tel. + 32 2 282 46 04; E-mail: communication@edf-feph.org

EDF Annual Report 2004-2005

The new EDF 2004-2005 Annual Report is now available from EDF Secretariat. The report gives an overview of the campaigns that EDF continues to develop to ensure the respect of the human rights of people with disabilities in all areas of EU work. In particular, it addresses: non-discrimination into practice, the European action plan for people with disabilities, EU structural funds, progress made in the transport and built environment areas, research and development, the UN Convention of Rights of Disabled People, etc.

For the first time, the report includes an easy-to-read version accessible for persons with an intellectual impairment.

To order a copy, please contact: Valérie Asselberghs, +32 2 282 46 03, valerie.asselberghs@edf-feph.org

Support from EP to combat discrimination on disabled air passengers

EDF welcomed the favourable position of the European Parliament Transport Committee to combat discriminatory treatment against disabled air passengers. The amendments adopted by the Transport Committee proposed a series of measures to be directly applied to airports and airlines, which include:

- provision of assistance, with an additional charge for the disabled passengers, from arrival to departure, and operated by airports through a central managing body;
- provision of disability awareness training to all staff dealing with disabled passengers;
- delivering of all essential information in alternative formats for customers with a

disability and no express time-limit for the carriage of guide dogs.

For further information: info@edf-feeph.org, tel. +32 2 282 4603, www.edf-feeph.org.

Social Platform

Conference « Building Social Policies on Fundamental Rights », 11-12 October

The aim of this meeting, where member organisations of the Social Platform coordinated seven seminars on themes relating to fundamental rights, was to debate how to make social policies linked to fundamental rights, but also to develop concrete recommendations.

The opening and final plenary sessions were chaired by a diverse range of distinguished speakers: politicians, academics, social NGOs representatives.

Among all these interventions must be underlined the outstanding presentation of Gilda FARRELL, member of the Social Cohesion Development Division in the Council of Europe.

She highlighted the fact that we could not possibly avoid analysing economic changes when debating on fundamental rights issues.

Besides, she invited the audience to think about the construction of a new form of collective responsibility where individuals become fully involved in. This reflection will as well be conducted in the Council of Europe, as it intends to constitute a dialogue platform between European institutions and representatives of the citizens.

At the closing of the conference, Anne-Sophie PARENT, President of the Social Platform, encouraged the European Commission to exploit article 308 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights not only to protect fundamental rights but also to promote them.

Mary van Dievel, MHE Director, Elisabeth Muschick, MHE Board Member, and Fanny Muller, MHE trainee, attended this conference which was organised in Brussels.

For further information: *Social Platform website*
<http://www.socialplatform.org>.

Stakeholder Forum in London, 24 October 2005

Anne-Sophie Parent, Social Platform President, and Fintan Farrell, Social Platform Vice-President, attended this forum.

Its aim was to gather input from civil society representatives to feed into the informal European Council of 27 October, where EU leaders will discuss the future of Europe's social systems.

As Social NGOs are confronted on a daily basis with the shifting needs of our societies and their impacts on people's lives, they are well aware of the need for reform. Their experience shows that if we want to achieve the EU's goal of social cohesion, people - not only economic growth - must be put at the heart of reforms.

That's why Anne-Sophie Parent pointed that *"EU leaders must bear in mind that reform must not mean abandoning the fundamental principles which are so important for a modern and cohesive society (...) A strong message is needed that the EU will deal with (people) biggest concerns and ensure there is a future for European values and principles in our economic and social models."*

"What matters is that welfare states, while adapting to new circumstances, are as important as ever to translate our shared values and principles into practice - and they also contribute to competitiveness and growth if they are well designed", added her colleague, Fintan Farrel.

For further information: www.socialplatform.org

IV. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Regional Committee endorses the WHO Mental Health Declaration and Action Plan for Europe

At its 55th meeting (12-15 September, Bucharest-Romania), the Regional Committee of the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe endorsed, through the Resolution EUR/RC55/R2, the Mental Health Declaration for Europe and the Mental Health Action Plan for Europe (adopted at the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health, Helsinki, January 2005). Having noted the five areas of priority identified for the next decade, The Regional Committee urged the WHO/EURO Member States to address these priorities by:

1. assuming the responsibilities they committed themselves to in the Declaration, in accordance with each country's constitutional structures, policies and national and subnational needs, circumstances and resources;
2. progressing towards reaching the milestones in the Action Plan by 2010;
3. developing, implementing and reinforcing comprehensive mental health policies aimed at achieving mental well-being and social inclusion of people with mental health problems by adopting appropriate measures in the twelve areas of action identified in the Action Plan.

The Committee also requested the Regional Director to take the necessary steps to ensure that mental health policy development and implementation are fully supported, and to report regularly of the progress made.

Important mention for NGOs, The Committee expressed satisfaction and support to the strong and fruitful collaboration with non-governmental organisations, including those involving users and family members, health professionals and other partners.

The WHO Regional Committee for Europe is made up of representatives of the 52 member states in the European Region. It meets every year in September to formulate regional policies, recommend and supervise WHO/Europe's activities, and approve the budget.

For further information: <http://www.euro.who.int/RC>

European Network for Prisons and Health Meeting

The WHO European Network for Prison and Health held its annual meeting in London, on 17 and 18 October. The Network currently involves 28 countries of the WHO European Region; several other countries will be joining shortly. The main goal of the meeting was to review the last 10 years of development in prison and

health and to give guidance for action throughout Europe for the next few years.

During several presentations, it came out that, in spite of the progress in knowledge about prisoners' health status, deeply increasing in numerous countries thanks to research progress, the health situation in most prisons must be improved.

While all speakers focussed on mental health or mental disease problems, few of them described good practices or prevention activities that are outstanding.

Professor Hjalmar van Marle's presentation (Erasmus University, Netherlands), entitled "Mental Health and Prisons" provided some impressive figures:

- 70- 85% of prisoners have a DSM IV diagnosis
- 5-10 % suffer from a serious mental health problem
- 23-30% suffer from depression and anxiety
- 40% are drug addicted
- 5% suffer from PST
- 30-70% present personality disorders

Given these statistics, it would be advisable that the theme of a future meeting be focussed on mental health: good practices, training of professionals and staff working with prisoners, with a specific attention on women prisoners' problems and youth prisoners' problems.

Thanks to Colette Versporten, MHE Treasurer, for this contribution.

V. EUROPEAN UNION

Ombudsman finds Council has given no valid reasons for continuing to legislate behind closed doors

In a special report to the European Parliament, the European Ombudsman, P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, found that the Council gave no valid reasons for refusing to meet in public whenever it is acting in its legislative capacity.

A special report is the Ombudsman's final recourse and is presented only in relation to important matters, on which Parliament could help persuade the institution or body concerned to alter its position.

The Ombudsman's inquiry into this matter followed a complaint from German MEP, Elmar Brok, and a representative of the youth group of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union), in which they allege that the Council's Rules of Procedure are not in conformity with Article 1 (2) of the Treaty on European Union (as amended by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997) according to which the Council and the other Community institutions and bodies must take decisions as openly as possible.

*For further information: Ombudsman's website
<http://www.euro-ombudsman.eu.int/release/en/2005-10-11.htm>*

VI. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Irish MEP calls on political attention on suicide

Speaking in the European Parliament on 30 September, Fine Gael MEP (Member of the European Parliament) Mr. Gay Mitchell highlighted on the need to establish a central European register for suicide cases. This, he

said, would allow an EU-wide analysis of data to take place, which could help identify the causes of suicide. "We know that the majority of suicide cases are linked to mental health, particularly depression. One might also think that there would be a relationship between suicide and major economic factors, such as unemployment and poverty. However, Ireland, which has had the best economic trend in most indicators in the period between 1980 and 2000, had had the highest increase in suicides during the same time."

For further information:

<http://www.finegaele.ie/fine-gael-news.cfm/NewsID/26686/action/detail/year/2005/month/10/level/page/aid/186/>

Irish families bereaved through suicide visit EP

On the same topic of the burden of suicide, the Irish MEP, Mrs Baibre de Brun, hosted a meeting, on 4 October, in Brussels with members of families bereaved through suicide. Participants highlighted that suicide, particularly, amongst young people, was a serious problem in Ireland, a problem which has appeared intractable to most of them. They expressed concern about the lack of awareness about the burden of suicide and the lack of political response and discussed about ways of tracking and providing long-term support for those who have attempted suicide and self harm and support for bereaved families in the aftermath of a suicide.

Roxana Radulescu introduced the project "Guidelines for Suicide Prevention Programmes" (that MHE carried out between 2002-2004), its outcomes and recommendations. She also gave an introduction to the major European policy developments in the area of mental health and suicide prevention.

VII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Consultation paper (Green Paper) on Mental Health

As mentioned above, The European Commission (EC) has adopted a consultation paper (Green Paper) on mental health: *Improving the mental health of the population; Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union*; (COM (2005) 484 final of 14 October 2005).

The document outlines the relevance of mental health for some of the EU's strategic policy objectives (prosperity, solidarity and social justice, quality of life of citizens), proposes the development of a strategy on mental health at Community-level and identifies its possible priorities. The EC invites European institutions, Governments, health professionals, stakeholders in other sectors, civil society including patient organisations, and the research community to communicate their views on this document and the questions raised in its section 8.

Contributions in the context of this consultation process should be sent to the Commission by **31 May 2006**, on the following ways:

- a) by email to "mental-health@cec.eu.int", or
- b) by post mail to the following address:
European Commission, Directorate-general for Health and Consumer Protection, Unit C/2
"Health Information", L-2920 Luxembourg

The Green Paper is available in French, English and German at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/green_paper/consultation_en.htm

Commissioner Kyprianou's statements on stronger partnership - Gastein Forum

At the European Health Forum Gastein (7 October), Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection Markos Kyprianou spoke about growing inequalities and stronger partnerships in health. He highlighted the extent of inequalities in health status and incidence of diseases and the different levels of medical capacity, but also the divide between rich and poor, well educated and poorly educated, and even between communities and genders. He stated that, if we want to understand inequalities, we also have to look at a country's general approach to health, including promotion and prevention. Countries have much to gain from working together to bridge health inequalities. Talking about mainstreaming health concerns into other policies, he gave the example of health being made a key funding area of the European Regional development Fund, starting from 2007.

On the issue of partnership with citizens and civil society, he highlighted the need to foster a culture of health with citizens and for citizens and his commitment to giving civil society a stronger voice in the EU policy making. He gave the example of the open consultation on mental health (Green Paper) and of the one on nutrition.

For further information:

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/05/584&type=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Evaluation of the 1996-2002 Public Health Programme

The final Evaluation of the Eight Community Action Programmes on Public Health (1996-2002) was released by the Commission in July 2005. It was produced by Deloitte, a company specialised in Business advisory.

The programme with most relevance to mental health was the Health Promotion Programme, which provided the entry point for EC actions and projects on mental health promotion. The results of the evaluation of this programme were most favourable, recognising among its strengths the important outputs, results and, in the case of mental health, the framing of policy reports. The evaluation considered that the programme did achieve European added value, such as influenced essential issues such as mental health and it promoted and enhanced networking.

Overall, this programme showed real impact. It succeeded in putting mental health promotion high at the political agenda at national and EU level and led to a Council Resolution on the promotion of mental health. The report also stated that, given the presence of NGOs in the programme, a particular issue is the importance to further invest in these actors without being penalised by the rigidity of the co-financing criteria. Important issues outstanding include to define more precisely what is meant by "health promotion" and "mental health promotion".

The Recommendations include to envisage different financial approaches according to difficult types of beneficiaries, mainly the NGOs.

While the lateness of this final report may have failed to influence the new public health Programme 2003-2008, it is imperative that the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council give due to serious reflection to the positive recommendations provided through the report

(Thanks to John Henderson for this contribution, john.henderson53@btopenworld.com)

Social Inclusion Peer Review

Social Inclusion Peer Review "Pathways to social integration for people with mental health problems: the establishment of social co-operatives" – Athens, 5-7 October 2005

The meeting was organised to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions implemented so far to promote limited liability social co-operatives (KOISPEs). KOISPEs aim to integrate people with mental health problems socially, economically and professionally as a means to contribute to their treatment and economic independence. The discussions were based on 4 main objectives, adopted by Europe's leaders in Lisbon and Nice in 2002:

- facilitating employment and access to resources, rights, goods and services
- preventing the risk of exclusion
- helping the most vulnerable
- mobilising all relevant actors.

Hugues Feltesse from the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs – Social Inclusion Unit, stressed that increasing the integration of groups with a high risk of being a victim of social exclusion – such as people with mental health problems – is among the seven priorities of the European social inclusion process.

For this meeting a discussion paper was prepared, and comments were received from all the different stakeholders present

The current peer review exercise has 3 main objectives:

1. mutual learning
2. improve the effectiveness of policies and strategies
3. facilitate the transfer of key components of policies, institutional arrangements, approaches, methods and organisational frameworks that have proved effective in combating poverty and social exclusion.

The Greek social co-operative programme for people with mental health problems was introduced by representatives of the Greek Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, explaining the legal framework for the social co-operatives.

A visit to a social co-operative and a support structure was organised.

Working groups on key issues regarding the social co-operatives discussed:

- Economic viability versus therapeutic role and function of social co-operatives
- What different services alongside the creation of social co-operatives need to be provided as part of the de-institutionalisation of mental health care?

- The changing role and status of mental health professionals in social co-operatives and the training needs of these professionals and other workers.

An extensive report of the seminar will be available on the Non Discrimination Units website at the end of November/beginning of December. More details will follow in our next Newsletter.

Mary Van Dievel and Athena Frangouli attended this meeting on behalf of Mental Health Europe.

2007-European Year of Equal Opportunities for All

The European Commission had designated 2007 as the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All to promote equality and non-discrimination in the EU. Several themes are proposed: rights, representation, recognition, respect and tolerance. The proposed budget of 13.6 million euros will cover preparatory actions in 2006 as well as activities in 2007. Initiatives announced by the Commission include: a feasibility study to look at possible new measures to complement existing EC anti-discrimination legislation and the creation of a high-level advisory group to look at the social and labour market integration of minorities.

For further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2005/jun/antidiscrimination_en.html

Internship for young Roma University graduates

The European Commission, in co-operation with the Open Society Institute, offers 10 three-month periods of internships for young Roma university graduates from all new member states (excluding Cyprus and Malta), Bulgaria, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo, and Turkey. The training periods involve work experience in one of the Commission's departments. The deadline for applications by email or by post is 1 December 2005.

More information and the application form can be found at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/news/news_en.htm

VIII. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Case law of the European Court of Human Rights available in Central and Eastern European languages

The Council of Europe is carrying out a special project to ensure that the case law is available in Central and Eastern European languages. This include initiatives based on on-going legal bulletins, including either extracts, summaries or, in certain cases, the full texts of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights; publications containing extracts of the cases and commentaries or summaries of judgments; and compilations containing practically the full texts of the judgments with only the facts of the case summarised. The judgments chosen for translation include cases of the Court where the interpretation of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was first established and which are often cited in the later cases, and cases concerning issues of particular relevance for a given country.

The Council of Europe provides financial contribution to the case law projects in the framework of Co-operation Programmes. This funding often comes from voluntary contributions by Member States. The Council of Europe relies heavily upon local partners for the implementation of the case law projects, and often on the Information Offices of the Council of Europe.

For further information, visit the database of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

<http://www.humanrights.coe.int/aware/GB/publi/caselawdtb.asp>

IX. VARIOUS

Reflection Paper on the Contribution of Ordinary People to National Mental Health Policies

The Centre for Reflection on Mental Health Policy (UK) has recently issued a policy position paper "*Acta non verba – What contribution can ordinary people make to the development of national mental health policies*".

This informed and interesting position paper introduces the debate on the topic of "Top Down or Bottom Up" planning of National Mental Health Programmes. It focuses on NGO experience in some of the regions of Romania and introduces the concept of the preference to foster development of Local planning at a real community level, aggregating these in the setting of a national forum and proceeding to challenge the national administration with the outcome from civil society.

The secondary debate is that of professional planning or ordinary citizen planning, which opens upon yet the third debating point of empowerment or not from professionals and those in authority, to ordinary citizens and users of services.

This is a timely debate and, as mentioned, has a resonance in the new Member States of the EU and the new countries of the former USSR. The wisdom imparted is based on a 10-year journey through regional experiences in Iasi, Cluj, Brasov and Bucharest. Importantly, this report draws attention to the importance of the commitment from more than 30 ministers of health in Europe and 21 national representatives to the WHO European Region Declaration and Action Plan for Mental Health in Europe.

The paper can be downloaded from:

http://www.interaction.uk.net/pdf/interaction_policy_position_paper_2.pdf

Thanks to John Henderson for this contribution.

Training the Trainers Project (Netherlands)

The Haarlem Academy for Psychiatry has started – as did the Rotterdam Training Centre – a training for users of mental health services. During 2 years, ex-users are trained to become staff members of mental health care facilities. There seems to be a big demand from mental health care providers for trainers with personal experience in mental health care.

The Academy pays for training in books and provides day of theoretical training and a minimum of 20 hours of practical training each week. At the end of their training, the trainers receive a certificate of Social Trainer.

The service providers are pleased with the new "trainers by experience", since the contact with the patients is much easier (*extracts from Psy, n°9 – 2005*)

Child depression treatment to avoid drugs

A new guidance from the British National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE), announces that antidepressant drugs should not be prescribed to children with mild depression and, in case of moderate to severe depression, should only be given in combination with psychological therapy.

The recommendations, drawn up jointly by NICE and the National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health, say therapeutic psychological treatment should be the first option for treating all forms of depression. Besides, they call for better training in detecting depression in children for school nurses and other community-based health care professionals, and parallel treatment for parents with psychiatric problems.

The NICE guidelines follow a 2003 decision by the government's committee on the safety of medicine to end use in children of all but one of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), including Seroxat, citing unacceptable risks. Controversially, the committee allowed continued use of Prozac despite US studies indicating a link with suicidal thoughts, growth retardation and heart problems.

According to charity Young Minds, one in 10 five-to 15-year olds in the UK now suffers a behavioural, emotional or hyperactivity disorder, manifesting itself commonly as depression, anxiety, an eating disorder or aggressive behaviour.

For further information: www.publichealthnews.com

X. WEBSITES/ ONLINE INFORMATION

Video Library in Mental Health

The National Audio-visual Mental Health Centre (France) has made available a distribution catalogue of more than 350 videos in the field of mental health and public health, on various topics, such as: autism, suicide, anorexia, adoption, addictive behaviour, psychoanalysis, the elderly, infancy.

For further information: www.cnasm.prd.fr and Michael Spreng, michael.spreng@cnasm.prd.fr

Communicating Europe – Commissioner Wallström's weblog

The weblog set up by Margot Wallström is an innovative way of linking directly to the citizens. It provides information about Margot Wallström's work as a Commissioner for Institutional Relations and Communication strategy, her personal opinion about current issues and policies and other topics across all sectors, giving the opportunity to react to them directly.

<http://weblog.jrc.cec.eu.int/page/wallstrom>

XI. PUBLICATIONS

Guide for NGOs in Working with the Media

"Working with the Media" is a joint publication of the World Health Communication Associates, the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), The European Environment Network (EEN) and the Media Wise Trust, aiming to help NGOs and other health communicators to become more active and effective in their relations with the media.

NGOs often feel that working with the media will be too difficult or require resources and skills that are simply not available. This guide is aimed at helping to overcome those challenges. Available in 5 languages (English, French, German, Russian and Spanish), the guide is divided into 12 chapters, the first five of which focus on strategy, policy and skills. Chapter 6 addresses ethical issues and provides some guidelines. Chapter 7 defines "media advocacy" and the role of "messages". Chapter 8 provides hints on how to sensitise the media, e.g. against stereotyping. Chapter 9 deals with the difficult issue of raising awareness without causing undue fear. The last three chapters deal with campaign planning and evaluation, and social marketing.

To order a copy, please contact Monica Guarinoni, European Public Health alliance Environment Network, info@env-health.org, Tel. +32 2 233 3875.

To download the manual: <http://www.env-health.org/a/1720>

New version of the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour.

The European Ombudsman published a new version of the European Code of Good Administrative Behaviour.

The Code contains the rules and principles which European Union institutions and bodies, their administrations and their officials should respect in their relations with the public. It informs citizens of what they have a right to expect from the administration, and officials of how they should behave in dealing with the public.

Institutions and officials who follow the Code can be sure that they will thereby avoid instances of maladministration.

The publication exists in 20 official EU languages and in the languages of the EU candidate countries.

To download the publication: <http://www.euro-ombudsman.eu.int/code/en/default.htm>

The Official Directory of the European Union

This guide to the administrative structure of the European institutions is a reliable source of information concerning the names and addresses of senior civil servants. It includes official organisation charts of EU institutions and citizens' representatives. It reflects the major changes that have taken place in 2004: the new composition of the European Commission and of the European Parliament, and the impact of the enlargement. Available in German, English and French Price (excluding VAT): EUR 50.

Contact person to order a copy: Paul Feyt paul.feyt@pfconsult.com, tel. +352 241 799.

The Directory is compiled using the IDEA database, which is regularly updated and may be consulted at

the following website:
<http://europa.eu.int/idea/en/index.htm>

The contribution of health to the economy in the European Union

This new study paper, published by DG SANCO of the European Commission, reveals that improving the health of the people of Europe might also boost the economy of the region.

The report reviews an extensive body of research and policy documents from high-income countries: cost-of-illness studies; the impact of health at the individual and household level on labour market outcomes, education and saving; the impact of health on the level and the growth rate of national income; and the welfare impact of health.

A key message of the publication is that better health can have a positive impact on various economic outcomes, and is not merely an automatic by-product of economic progress. This finding provides a critical implication for policy: policymakers interested in improving economic outcomes have a powerful justification to invest in health as one means to achieve their economic objectives. More research is needed in Europe to strengthen the empirical findings and to stimulate the debate and policy-making process to tackle much of the avoidable disease faced by the EU member states.

To download the report:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_overview/Documents/health_economy_en.pdf

For further information: Professor Martin McKee at martin.mckee@lshtm.ac.uk (Tel: +44 7973 832 576) or Marc Suhrcke at msu@ihd.euro.who.int (Tel: +39 041 279 3887).

XII. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

9-10 November 2005.

EPHA Conference on health and well-being of children and young people (Brussels, Belgium)

The aim of the conference is to explore if children and young people are adequately supported and protected within the EU framework, and to share examples of good practice in working with and empowering young people.

Info: [Sidsela Nyebak, intern1@epha.org](mailto:Sidsela.Nyebak@epha.org), www.epha.org

9-13 November 2005

2nd European Conference of Brief Strategic and Systemic Therapy European – “Ways of Brief Therapy, Best Practices, Best teaching” (Arezzo, Italy)

The conference gives an opportunity to share information on the best therapeutic techniques and clinical, managerial and psycho-social interventions

Info: <http://www.bsst.org/>

14 November 2005

Eurochild 2nd Annual Conference: The Position of the Child in the EU social policy process (Brussels, Belgium)
The conference will start on a debate about the issue of children's rights within the European Commission and then focus on social exclusion and poverty of children. Representatives of the European Commission, as well as from other networks working in the area of social exclusion and poverty are invited at the event.

Info: www.eurochild.org

17-18 November 2005

Council of Europe Forum “Reconciling labour flexibility and social cohesion” (Strasbourg, France)
<http://www.coe.int/socialcohesion/forum2005>

19-22 November 2005

Congress of the European Academy of Childhood Disability, Monaco

Info: www.eacd2005.org.

19-22 November 2005

EUROCITIES Conference (Lyon, France)

The theme of the Conference is “European cities open up the world” and will focus on the key role played today by cities in international cooperation. The following themes will be examined during the two main working sessions of the conference: (1) City practices around the world: how and why cooperate with European cities; and (2) Local government: a key partner in international cooperation.

Mayors and representatives of the European Union will debate the roles that the cities can play in defining and implementing international cooperation policies.

Info: www.eurocities2005.lyon.fr

24 November 2005

MIND Conference “Coping with coming off psychiatric drugs” (London, UK)

MIND is organising a one-day conference to debate the way forward for professionals prescribing psychiatric drugs and for individuals taking them. Over the past two years MIND's “Coping with coming off project” has researched people's experience in coming off psychiatric drugs – what happens, what helps, what the effects of withdrawal may be. The conference will report service users' views and experiences of coming off psychiatric drugs, will explore implications for clinical practice and service provision, will address concerns about risk, will focus on access to information, will explore choice, control and coercion and will look at strategies and models of support for coming off medication.

For further information: www.mind.org.uk

1-2 December 2005

The European Day of Disabled People Conference, (Brussels, Belgium).

The conference is organised by the European Disability Forum and the European Commission. The theme of this year will be “Living together in a common society”; towards de-institutionalisation”.

Info: www.edf-feph.org

NEW!! 1-2 December 2005

The European Medical Law Conference 2005 (Luxemburg City)

The conference will focus on cross border health care and the consequences and possibilities that EC health policies have for health care providers, patients and national legislators. Lectures will concern EC law and its impact on national legislation and policy, both in general and health care in particular, case law and procedures of the Court of Justice of the European Communities; a closer look at the future of cross border health care and business possibilities.

Info: <http://www.imrab.se>
Contact: imrab@imrab.se, tel. +46 (0)8 731 50 55

NEW!! 8-9 December 2005

EuroHealthNet conference "In good Health: Linking Social Inclusion and Health from Practice into Policy" (Edinburgh, Scotland)

The conference, organised by NHS Health Scotland and EuroHealthNet, is for practitioners and policy makers in the health and social field and is an associated event for the UK Presidency of the EU 2005.

It has three main aims:

1. highlighting the strong correlation that exists between social exclusion and poor health;
2. summarizing and disseminating the results of the EuroHealthNet project "Tackling Health Inequalities and Social Exclusion in Europe";
3. focussing on issues relating to 'practice-based policy'

The conference will also provide practitioners and policy makers from across Europe with further networking opportunities. This is designed to stimulate the exchange of good practice, improve understanding between practitioners and decision makers, and encourage better interaction between professionals from the social and the health field.

Info: <http://www.eurohealthnet.org>

Contact person: Margit Andreasen - Tel: +32 2 235 03 22, Email: m.andreasen@eurohealthnet.org

NEW!! 23-25 February 2006

Catalan Congress on Mental Health: Needs and responses in mental health: the construction of treatment (Barcelona, Spain)

The Congress will promote the value of the human being and the integrity of the person who is assisted. The therapeutic practice is not a professionals' exclusive property, it must be a multidisciplinary cooperation between carers and patients.

Info: <http://www.fccsm.net/3ccsm.html>

13-18 March 2006

7th International health film festival (Liège, Belgium)

The main objective of *Image Santé* – the International Health Film Festival of Liège is to promote health education and information through any audiovisual means and to present current developments in the field of new media, medical informatics (CD-ROM, Internet, Telemedicine and imagery in general).

Info: www.imagesante.org

NEW!! 10-13 May 2006

XXIII Congress of the Spanish Association of Neuropsychiatry, "Abriendo claros, construyendo compromisos", (Bilbao, Spain)

This triennial congress will gather several multidisciplinary groups, in order to make them work on three papers related to:

- psychopathology of the psychotic symptoms
- continuity of mental health care
- consequences of the psychiatric reform in Spain.

The aim is to cover a broad range of current academic and scientific contents, as well as various orientations and professional interests.

Since the scientific committee of the congress has not finalized the program, people interested in presenting

an activity (debate, conference...) can fulfil an online reply form.

Info: <http://www.ome-aen.org/23CongresoAEN/>

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Should you have any questions or should you wish to make a contribution, please do not hesitate to send us an e-mail at info@mhe-sme.org.

Mental Health Europe is committed to:

- the promotion of mental health and prevention of mental distress
- protecting the rights of people with mental health problems
- removing stigma and discrimination
- ensuring a fair share of resources for mental health

Do you share our vision? Then join MHE now and you will strengthen the voice for mental health in Europe.

First name: _____

Family name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Country: _____

Tel.: _____

Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Occupation or organisation: _____

Date: _____

Account number: _____

Bank details: _____

Completed form to be returned to:

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