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MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE..... 2	New resources for combating discrimination.. 6
CHES-MHE Roundtable "Towards a EU mental health strategy: health stakeholders perspectives", 23 November 2005 (Brussels, Belgium)..... 2	Communication on the results of the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003 7
MHE Human Rights Committee meeting, 25 November 2005 (Brussels):..... 2	Commission reshuffles its Directors General and Deputy Directors General teams..... 7
MHE Board Meeting, 26 November 2005 (Brussels) 2	José Manuel Barroso presents EU Commission's work programme for 2006..... 7
Management Committee of the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL), 30 November 2005 (Brussels) 2	VIII. COUNCIL OF EUROPE..... 7
MHE representation at various meetings..... 2	Report on freedom of association: 7
News from MHE staff 3	IX. VARIOUS 8
II. NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS, ACTIVITIES AROUND WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 3	Hamlet trust new partnership with Mental Health Foundation 8
Fokus (Czech Republic) 3	European Observatory and Health Monitor combine activities 8
Partnership for Children (UK) 3	Latest policy position paper by the Centre for Reflection on Mental Health Policy..... 8
III. NEWS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN NGOS 3	X. WEBSITES/ ONLINE INFORMATION 8
European Disability Forum 3	Slovak Disability Council..... 8
UK Presidency Disability Conference «Improving the life chances of disabled people», 8-9 November 2005 (London) 3	European Observatory on Health Systems and policies' web site..... 8
Social Platform 3	EUR-Lex: a comprehensive source for European Legislation..... 9
Social Platform Capacity-Building Seminar on Demographic change and the financial Sustainability of social protection systems, 16 November 2005 (Brussels) 3	EU Bookshop, a new online access to publications on the EU 9
IV. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION 4	XI. PUBLICATIONS 9
WHO Forum "Making Partnerships Work for Health", 26-28 October 2005 (Geneva, Switzerland)..... 4	Study on cultural policies and programmes ... 9
International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2005 4	Comparative tables of social protection systems in 13 member states of the Council of Europe, Australia, Canada and New-Zealand - 12th edition..... 9
V. EUROPEAN UNION 4	Issue 23 of HSC News International 9
Fourth Annual Round Table on Social Inclusion, 17-18 October 2005 (Scotland, UK) 4	New thinking about Mental Health and Employment..... 9
EU calls on Turkey to improve rights of people with mental disabilities..... 5	FEANTSA overview of progress in homeless policy-making over the last five years 9
The Open Method of Coordination..... 5	XII. FORTHCOMING EVENTS 10
VI. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT..... 5	
European Parliament report on social inclusion in the new Member States..... 5	
EP and ATD Fourth World called for the eradication of poverty in Europe..... 5	
VII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION 6	
Open Health Forum, 7-8 November 2005 (Brussels, Belgium) 6	

I. NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

CHES-MHE Roundtable "Towards a EU mental health strategy: health stakeholders perspectives", 23 November 2005 (Brussels, Belgium)

A Roundtable on the theme "*Towards a EU mental health strategy: health stakeholders perspectives*" was organised in Brussels by CHES, the Centre for Health, Ethics and Society, in partnership with Mental Health Europe on 23 November 2005.

The Roundtable offered a genuine opportunity for stakeholders in mental health matters across the European Union to make their voices heard and to come forward with concrete suggestions for priority actions, thereby ensuring that it will make a concrete and positive contribution towards the development and implementation of an effective and concrete EU strategy on mental health.

The full report will be available soon. We will publish the link to the report and the contributions of the different stakeholders in our next Newsletter.

MHE Human Rights Committee meeting, 25 November 2005 (Brussels):

MHE held its second Human Rights Committee meeting on 25 November 2005. The aim of the meeting was twofold:

1. to perpetuate this structure by enabling it to work: find funds for its secretariat, enlarge its membership, elect a chair and adopt working rules;
2. to discuss certain issues of concern to our member organisations, mainly personal budget and compulsory care in the community, in view of various documents from EU, Council of Europe,...

Next meeting of the Human Rights Committee is planned for May 2006.

Info: MHE secretariat, Tel (32) 2 280 04 68, Fax (32) 2 280 16 04, info@mhe-sme.org

MHE Board Meeting, 26 November 2005 (Brussels)

MHE's Executive Committee met on Friday 25 November, to prepare the Board Meeting taking place on Saturday 26 November 2005.

MHE's Plan of Work 2005-2006 and the involvement of Board members in each activity were discussed.

A first draft budget for 2006 was tabled and discussed. It was again stressed by the director that additional sources for core or project funding (not EC) should be found.

An update was given on MHE's activities during the last months and new membership applications were approved.

An important point of discussion was the EC Green Paper "*Improving the mental health of the population: towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union*" and the consultation process that will be launched by MHE.

Management Committee of the European Coalition for Community Living (ECCL), 30 November 2005 (Brussels)

The Management Group of the European Coalition for Community Living met in Brussels on 30 November 2005. This organisation is in charge of the follow-up of the recommendations of the EU project "Included in Society" which ended last year.

The management partners are Autism Europe, ENIL (European Network for Independent Living), Inclusion Europe, Mental Health Europe, Open Society Mental Health Initiative and the Centre for Policy Studies at the Central European University in Budapest.

The management group took a number of important decisions. Inès Bulic has been recruited as new coordinator. She will work partly from Budapest and from Brussels. At the meeting the partners decided on the vision and mission of the ECCL, the definition of community living, the workprogramme and the budget.

The committee will meet 4 times a year.

Josée Van Remoortel is MHE's representative in the ECCL.

Thanks to Josée Van Remoortel for her contribution.

MHE representation at various meetings

John Henderson, Senior Policy Advisor, Brian Howard, MHE Board Member, Nace Kovac, MHE Board Member, and Mary Van Dievel, MHE Director, were present at the Open Health Forum, organised in Brussels on 7-8 November 2005. (cf page 6)

Elisabeth Muschik presented and represented Mental Health Europe at the launch of the "Psychiatric Enquête" in Linz, Austria, on 10-12 November 2005.

Elisabeth Muschik participated in the study visit to Bucharest, Romania, organised by the Social Platform from 13-15 November 2005. She met with representatives of some of MHE's member organisations in Romania (Aripi and Estuar).

On 16 November 2005 Elizabeth Muschik, MHE Board Member, and Fanny Muller, MHE trainee, attended the Social Platform Capacity-Building Seminar on Demographic change and the financial Sustainability of social protection systems in Brussels. (cf page 4)

Elizabeth Muschik participated in the Social Policy Working Group, organised in Brussels by the Social Platform on 17 November 2005.

Mary Van Dievel, Elizabeth Muschik, and Fanny Muller took part in the biannual meeting with the Commission on 18 November 2005 (Brussels).

On 23 November 2005 Mary Van Dievel, John Henderson and Elizabeth Muschik attended the CHES-MHE Roundtable entitled "*Towards an EU mental health strategy: health stakeholders' perspectives*" in Brussels. (cf page 2)

Josée Van Remoortel, MHE Senior Policy Adviser, participated on 30 November 2005 in the first meeting of the Management Committee of the "European Coalition for Community Living" (ECCL). (cf page 2)

News from MHE staff

Roxana Radulescu has been working for 3 years at Mental Health Europe, as project co-ordinator for the Mental Health Economics project, but also on other activities such as the co-organisation of the pre-event in Brussels on suicide prevention for the WHO/Euro Helsinki conference (January 2005), the update of the MHE website, the Grundtvig projects on training of parents and training of trainers, etc.

We are very thankful to Roxana for her precious contribution in various MHE activities these last 3 years. Roxana has decided to leave Mental Health Europe, to take up a job as project manager at the European Public Health Alliance, a European NGO in the health sector, from 16 November 2005 on.

We thank Roxana for her work and friendly presence. We will miss her very much and we send her our best wishes for the future.

Sogol Noorani will join the Mental Health Europe team from 1 December 2005 on.

Sogol will work as project co-ordinator for the EU project "Good practices for combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems"; she already participated in the first partners meeting in October.

Sogol is German and has a diploma in Educational Science and a Masters in Cross-Cultural Psychology. She worked at WHO Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, where she coordinated the Mental Health Atlas 2005 project.

We warmly welcome Sogol to the MHE team.

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

Fokus (Czech Republic)

A campaign for mental health called "Weeks for Mental Health" is held annually in the Czech Republic since 1990.

This year activities were widely associated with World Mental Health Day. They were organised in 17 towns all over the country.

In Prague demonstrations started on 7 September with a big parade in the centre of the city, accompanied by drums and flags. They included various happenings, cultural events, exhibitions, workshops, open doors in several organisations, etc.

Yet the campaign has really grown up and has clearly become deep-rooted in the annual autumn events.

Thanks to Pavel Rican for this contribution: info@fokus-cr.cz

Partnership for Children (UK)

The number of children benefiting from Zippy's Friends has now passed 50,000, with record numbers enrolling for the current school year.

The programme, which helps young children to develop coping skills, is now being taught in kindergartens and schools in ten countries. The latest to join is Iceland, where classes started last month.

Partnership for Children's director, Chris Bale, sees a clear pattern emerging in the development of Zippy's Friends in different countries: "(...) we've learned...that once a school or kindergarten has used the programme,

it invariably wants to run it again the following year. Teachers see the benefits, for children and even for themselves."

There are plans to start the programme next year in China, Ireland, France and the Netherlands, and discussions are continuing about launching in a number of other countries.

Thanks to Chris Bale and Caroline Egar for this contribution.

Further information on this programme: Partnership for Children's website,

<http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk>

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

UK Presidency Disability Conference «Improving the life chances of disabled people», 8-9 November 2005 (London)

The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire, called on the European Union to end discriminations against disabled people, as a condition to reach the Lisbon goals. "Breaking down barriers throughout Europe is key to ensure that disabled people can play their full role in society", said Mr Blair in a message addressed to the participants.

"If we are truly committed to the Lisbon goals, we need to ensure disability remains high on the EU agenda and to work together at the highest level", added Anne McGuire, in line with the demands of the European Disability Forum (EDF), which represents 50 millions people in Europe.

Ms McGuire strongly encouraged the Disability Ministers of the EU-25 to meet annually, a proposal very much welcomed by EDF President, Yannis Vardakastanis: "To bring real change, the European Union must put disability at the forefront of the political agenda. What we need now is that EU leaders develop a long-term vision on disability, with strategic objectives and a clear calendar".

"It is not about empowering disabled people...", argued in London Stig Langvad, chair of EDF's Danish member organisation, "...it is about empowering governments to deliver change. Without the direct involvement of disabled people in decision-making, this will simply never be achieved".

For further information, please contact Helena González-Sancho Boderó, EDF Communication and Press Officer: tel (32) 2 282 46 04, communication@edf-feph.org

Social Platform

Social Platform Capacity-Building Seminar on Demographic change and the financial Sustainability of

social protection systems, 16 November 2005 (Brussels)

On 16 November 2005 the Social Platform held in Brussels its Capacity-Building Seminar on "*Demographic change and the financial sustainability of social protection systems*".

The aim of this seminar was to:

- develop knowledge about the impact of demographic change and the modernisation of social protection;
- understand how social protection systems are funded in different member states and what reforms are being discussed;
- learn more about the calculation of sustainability;
- discuss reform alternatives and the political discourse around demographic change and social protection from a gender perspective.

The conference began with a comprehensive and academic presentation on "*European social protection systems and the challenge of demographic change*" by Professor Jos Berghman, from the Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium).

Then Ms Nicole Flasquelle, from the Belgian Planning Bureau, an organisation which facilitates research and analyse in the social, economic and sustainable development fields, told us about "*The financial sustainability of the Belgian social protection system*".

Finally, Ms Pascale Vielle, from the Belgian Institute for Equality between Women and Men, proposed a more specific approach, speaking on "*The political discourse of demographic change and social protection from a gender perspective*", mainly focussing on women's discriminations in European social protection systems.

All the speakers insisted on the fact that the drift of national pension systems should be limited by urgent and drastic European initiatives. We need altogether new social governance, strong enough to challenge the actual prevailing economic governance.

Elizabeth Muschik, MHE board member, and Fanny Muller, MHE trainee, attended the seminar.

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

IV. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

WHO Forum "*Making Partnerships Work for Health*", 26-28 October 2005 (Geneva, Switzerland)

This year's theme for the WHO Forum was "*Making Partnerships Work for Health*". While the power of partnerships has been broadly recognized, the Forum aimed at demonstrating what partnerships for health really meant and how they contributed to improving the health of people, in particular vulnerable and marginalized groups.

The Forum is a dynamic and interactive engagement of action and commitment for its Member States, Secretariat and Interested Parties (NGOs, foundations, partnerships, academia, the private sector, and United Nations agencies and financing institutions) to tackle these issues.

The Forum was designed to simultaneously address key health concepts, while encouraging the principles of dialogue, exchange, collaboration, and building effective partnerships by learning from each other and from country experience.

For further information: WHO web site,
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/events/2005/global_forum/about/en/index.html

International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2005

For International Human Rights day World Health Organisation Headquarters (WHO HQ) is focusing on mental health.

A photo essay/presentation will be unveiled on 7 December 2005 at press conferences in Geneva and New York to illustrate the abuses and discrimination faced by people with mental disorders. WHO will also highlight the solutions available to reduce the suffering of people with mental disorders, and the work WHO is doing to bring about these solutions.

The web feature will be displayed on the WHO website, www.who.int, at 10 am on 7 December 2005.

Contact person at the WHO Mental Health Policy and Service Development (MHP): Natalie Drew, Tel (41) 22 791 32 06, Fax (41) 22 791 41 60, drewm@who.int

For further information: WHO website,
http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/en/

V. EUROPEAN UNION

Fourth Annual Round Table on Social Inclusion, 17-18 October 2005 (Scotland, UK)

The Fourth Annual Round Table on Social Inclusion took place in Glasgow, Scotland on the 17th and 18th of October 2005. It is an activity planned under the Community Programme to combat social exclusion.

The round table was attended by over 300 delegates from all over Europe, including representatives of the new accession countries and of various NGOs from Romania and Bulgaria.

The events were organized over 2 days and were delivered in six strands:

- Inclusive Labour Market
- Children and Families
- Social Exclusion in later life
- Ethnic Minorities and Social Exclusion
- Housing and Homelessness
- Partnership for Inclusion.

Different workshops and site visits were organised to bring joint thinking together, share knowledge and skills and bring each session to a general conclusion to be integrated into a European vision. Experts from many fields were invited to reach conclusions.

The overall theme of the conference was "*Halfway to Lisbon*" - this reflected that we are in the mid point of the 10 years between the Lisbon Council at which the Social Inclusion Agenda was set and the year 2010 by which time member states are committed to making a decisive impact on Poverty in Europe and identifying potential solutions and recommendations.

There are currently 69 million people in Europe who live in poverty and 92 million people who are for various reasons economically inactive, therefore the message and the press release of the Round Table Event was:

"Europe needs strong Welfare which needs Strong Social Europe".

Social Cohesion was seen as the principal value in making the social and economic progress. Equity and

Efficiency were considered as the most essential values in creating just and economically stable societies.

Much discussion and concern centred on the Roma people in Europe and on the issues of women and economic migrants.

Impact on Mental health of the new markets and migration was discussed, as well as the stigma of being different, sensitive, ill, disabled or poor. It appeared that New Employment policies and the work-life balance have not reached the marginalized groups, women, the disabled, single parents, the mentally ill.

Thanks to Malgorzata Kmita, Vice President MHE, for this contribution.

EU calls on Turkey to improve rights of people with mental disabilities

In September 2005, Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI), an international advocacy organization dedicated to the human rights and full participation in society of people with mental disabilities worldwide, released its report, "*Behind Closed Doors: Human Rights Abuses in the Psychiatric Facilities, Orphanages and Rehabilitation Centres of Turkey*". This report details the human rights abuses perpetrated against children and adults with mental disabilities in Turkey.

MDRI described the widespread use of ECT treatment on psychiatric patients – including children – without the use of anaesthesia. Investigators also found evidence of children dying from starvation, dehydration and lack of medical care in so-called rehabilitation centres.

The European Union responded on 9 November by voicing their concern in the annual Turkey accession 2005 progress report.

"It is extremely important that the EU has raised concerns about the human rights of people with disabilities in Turkey," said Eric Rosenthal, Executive Director of MDRI. *"Abuses that take place behind the closed doors of institutions are all too often overlooked by the public and international oversight bodies. By raising these concerns, the EU report ensures that egregious abuses against children and adults with mental disabilities will be taken into account as Turkey applies for EU accession."*

In October, the country was again stunned when video aired on Turkish television depicting toddlers being beaten at a state-run orphanage in Malatya. Province.

To order a copy of the report or to view video clips and photographs: MDRI website, www.mdri.org

The Open Method of Coordination

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is a voluntary process that all Member States have committed themselves to pursuing in the context of the Lisbon Strategy. It consists in soft law method used in many policy areas such as education and training, pensions and health care, etc... EU governments set their own national policies rather than having EU-wide policy laid down in law. However, it makes sense for governments to share information, adopt best practice and bring their national policies into line.

This method can be a way of creating greater visibility, encouraging a strategic and integrated approach, mainstreaming the issue of poverty and social

exclusion, mobilising all relevant actors and finally to encourage mutual learning.

The OMC is supported by a Community Action Programme (2002-2006) to encourage cooperation in fighting social exclusion, which provides funding to a wide range of activities.

List of national members of the Social Protection Committee can be obtained from MHE.

For further information: European Union web site, http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/index_en.htm

VI. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

European Parliament report on social inclusion in the new Member States

On 9 June 2005 the European Parliament adopted the report of MEP Csaba Óry on challenges to be faced by the new Member States in combating poverty and social exclusion and promoting greater solidarity.

The Parliament:

- considered that the process of social inclusion in the new Member States must be accelerated;
- maintained that those who, because of illness, old age, or disability, or because there was no suitable work to be had, could not earn a livelihood must be guaranteed a decent income through social security;
- urged the new Member States, in formulating their policy, to treat social inclusion as a social problem falling under the Lisbon Strategy;
- called on the new Member States to extend educational measures, tackle illiteracy, with special reference to the requirements of all minorities, especially, in some countries, the Roma;
- called on the new Member States to mobilise civil, professional and social organisations, particularly NGOs, to participate actively in combating poverty, and called on them to create the legal and financial conditions for the involvement of these organisations in the fight against poverty and social exclusion;
- urged the Commission to complete the harmonisation of poverty statistics as soon as possible, so that the prevalence of social exclusion could be compared throughout the EU-25.

To download this resolution: European Parliament website,

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2005-0244+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=3&NAV=X&L=EN>

EP and ATD Fourth World called for the eradication of poverty in Europe

The members of the EP (European Parliament) Intergroup, the Fourth World European Committee, submitted a Written Declaration in order to mark 17 October, the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. The Intergroup is made up of MEPs (Member of Parliament) from all the major political groups who have joined forces in order to contribute the experiences, opinions and aspirations of

people experiencing poverty and exclusion to the work of the EP.

The Written Declaration called for the eradication of poverty in Europe as a basis of a fairer European social model. Even though the EU has committed to making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty, it still persists in Europe today. A concerted effort is therefore needed on behalf of the EU and the member states to put the policies in place that will effectively fight against this violation of fundamental rights and human dignity.

The Written Declaration is available at [http://www.europarl.eu.int/decladoc/document/2005/P6_DCL\(2005\)0061/P6_DCL\(2005\)0061_EN.doc](http://www.europarl.eu.int/decladoc/document/2005/P6_DCL(2005)0061/P6_DCL(2005)0061_EN.doc)

More information on the website: <http://www.oct17.org>

VII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Open Health Forum, 7-8 November 2005 (Brussels, Belgium)

The European Commission has established the "EU Health Forum" as an information and consultation mechanism to ensure that the aims of the Community's health strategy are made clear to the public and respond to their needs. A key element of the EU Health Forum is the Open Forum as an annual conference and exhibition event.

The objective of the Open Forum is to provide a platform for networking and exchange of ideas and views of different stakeholders of the European health community. Dialogue and consultation with stakeholders for an early stage in shaping health policy is the key to fulfilling the principles of openness and civil society participation.

This year's Open Forum was organised in Brussels on 7-8 November 2005.

Mr Robert Madelin, Director General, European Commission, DG Health and Consumer Protection, 7-8 November 2005 opened the conference and stressed the importance of networking in the health field.

Mr Philippe Brunet represented Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou; he gave an overview of the Commissioners' projects for the coming years.

A plenary session was dedicated to "*Health challenges and future strategy: does Europe matter?*". A panel of different stakeholders gave their view on this issue.

Parallel sessions were devoted to:

- 1) development of the EU Health Strategy
- 2) health products: pharmaceuticals and medical technology
- 3) health services

Mental Health Europe was involved in the organisation of the sessions on Health Strategy.

The aim of this workshop was to gather a range of views on what should be the key building stones of a broad EU Health Strategy which is expected to be published in 2006.

The morning session was dedicated to the appropriate role for the EU in health policy; during the afternoon session it was explored how much consensus can be created to build a shared vision of the European role in health.

In discussing the European Commission Health Strategy for 2003-2013 and the Commission proposal for a Programme of Community action in the field of Health and Consumer Protection 2007-2013, the question

asked and discussed was "Whatever happened to the findings of the Deloitte evaluation of the first Public Health Programme 1996-2002?"

The Conclusions and the Recommendations of the First Programme evaluation are as relevant to the new Strategy and the third Programme, as they were for the second programme.

In particular attention needs to be given to the importance of transversality, the scale effect or critical mass and the additionality effect or that which the EU does that Member States cannot or do not do!

The Public Health programme should distinguish itself by presenting benefits to civil society. The exclusion of small organisations from the programme magnifies the distance of the European Commission from the citizens of Europe.

John Henderson pleaded for more attention towards the mental health of the citizens and mentioned the broad consultation on the Green Paper for Mental Health which was launched by DG Sanco on 24 October.

John Henderson, Brian Howard, Nace Kovac and Mary Van Dievel were present at the Open Health Forum and represented Mental Health Europe.

Thanks to John Henderson and to Mary Van Dievel for their contributions.

More information on "*The Contribution of Health to the Economy of the European Union*" on the European Commission website:

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

New resources for combating discrimination

The Europe-wide information campaign "*For Diversity. Against discrimination*" has launched new national flyers in each of the 25 member states, informing people about anti-discrimination issues specific to their own country and in their own languages.

They contain information on national anti-discrimination legislation, examples of discrimination and contact details for organisations offering support to people subject to discrimination. The flyers were developed by steering groups at national level, including NGOs, social partners and government representatives.

Copies are available to download or for order by e-mail from stop-discrimination@media-consulta.com

Besides, a new work plan of activities under the Action Programme to combat discrimination has been agreed for 2006. In addition to continuing a number of existing actions, several new initiatives will also be launched. These include three new studies – on multiple discrimination, socially disadvantaged ethnic minorities, and participation of people with disabilities in society – as well as increased support for national activities to raise awareness.

To download the 2006 work programme: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/prog/planprogbud2006_en.pdf

Furthermore, the European Commission's Network of Legal Experts in non-discrimination has issued a new comparative analysis of anti-discrimination laws in the 25 EU Member States – drawing on the comprehensive country reports it has already produced. The report compares and contrasts the different national laws, identifying trends and common aspects in

implementation of the two Directives. By considering each of the different grounds of discrimination in turn and collectively, it provides a comprehensive overview of national legislation to combat discrimination across the EU.

To download the report (available in English, French and German):

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/legnet/05compan_en.pdf

For further information: the European Commission's website on anti-discrimination, <http://www.stop-discrimination.info/99.0.html>

NB: The European Commission is currently conducting a short survey to find out what users think about its anti-discrimination website. Please take a few moments to fill out the survey, <http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form-antidiscrimination&lang=eng>

Communication on the results of the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003

The European Commission has adopted on 13 October a Communication on the results of the European Year of People with disabilities 2003.

The Communication gives an overview of key actions undertaken at both national and European level, and a first assessment of results.

It underlines positive elements of the methodology taken, and in particular of the involvement of disabled people in the definition of objectives and implementation of the year, and of the decentralised approach taken.

The Communication highlights the active role of EDF as initiator of the year, and in the key European events in 2003.

Finally, some interesting conclusions of the external evaluation report, in particular the need to disseminate good practices and to follow up the most relevant initiatives, are reported.

The European Economic and Social Committee will now prepare an opinion, which will be drafted by Ms. Gunta Anca, also Chair of the Latvian national disability council.

To download the text of the Communication:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/index/7003_en.html

To download the report of the external evaluator:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/disability/year_en.html

Commission reshuffles its Directors General and Deputy Directors General teams

The Commission has adopted a decision on the mobility of its senior management staff occupying functions of Director General, Deputy Director General, Head of Delegation and Hors Class Advisor at grades A*16 and A*15. This is the second mobility package at this level since implementation of the administrative reform. It applies to those officials who have reached five years seniority in 2005 or whose nationality coincides with that of the portfolio Commissioner. The key principle is that senior management staff moves after five years in the same function, although exceptionally they may remain in place up to seven years. Among the decisions taken, Catherine Day will become the new Secretary General, the first woman ever to take this

responsibility. David O'Sullivan, who fulfilled this post for more than five years, will become the Director General for Trade.

Odile Quintin, Director-General for DG EMPL, will be leaving her position at the end of the year. She will exchange places with Klaus Van der Pas, currently Director General of DG Education and Culture, from 1 January 2006

For further information: European Commission website,

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1399&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

José Manuel Barroso presents EU Commission's work programme for 2006

The European Commission adopted its work programme for 2006, setting out its key priorities for the next year. The Commission Legislative and Work Programme (hereafter "Work Programme") for 2006 takes full account of current economic and political trends and where Europe stands on several key strategic dossiers. Progress in these areas will have a key impact on the ability of the European Union to take a real stride towards its goals in 2006.

Jose Manuel Barroso commented: *"This Work Programme allows Europe to pursue competitiveness and social justice, to protect its citizens and promote their freedoms, to work inside Europe and to promote its values in the world beyond. This Work Programme is the best way to convince Europeans that the Union is an essential part of the solution in addressing the problems facing Europe."*

The 2006 Work Programme focuses on the key strategic objectives which the Commission has set out at the start of its mandate: prosperity, solidarity, security and Europe as a world partner.

A mid-term review of the Work Programme in summer 2006 will allow the Commission to take stock and, where appropriate, to amend the priority list.

To download the Commission Legislative and Work Programme 2006:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm

VIII. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Report on freedom of association:

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers recently released its report on freedom of association. The report consists of three volumes:

- the first volume gives an overview of the work undertaken by the Council of Europe in the field of freedom of association;
- the second volume deals with freedom of association in political and work spheres (political parties and trade unions) and civil society (NGOs and foundations), and highlights the good examples and problems existing in the legal framework and practice of the Council of Europe member states on the matter;
- the third volume presents the conclusions and the decisions on further action adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in the field of freedom of association.

In one of these decisions, the Committee of Ministers "instructed the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ), in consultation with the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organizations enjoying participatory status with the Council of Europe, to pursue its examination of the proposal to elaborate a non-binding legal instrument in the form of a Recommendation on NGOs, taking into account the "Fundamental Principles on the Status of NGOs in Europe" and the present thematic report on "freedom of association".

To download the report: webpage of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe,
http://www.coe.int/T/CM/Home_en.asp

IX. VARIOUS

Hamlet trust new partnership with Mental Health Foundation

Hamlet Trust has entered into a strategic partnership with the Mental Health Foundation, a major NGO working in the areas of research, developing services, training, influencing policy and raising public awareness within the UK.

Hamlet and the Foundation will work together on innovative projects such as taking forward article 12 of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Action Plan for mental health, which relates to user empowerment, agreed at the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health in Helsinki in January 2005. They will be conducting research and working with local partners to draw up national strategies for user involvement for Member States of the WHO European Region.

In the coming months Hamlet Trust will also be continuing with its current projects, which include:

- early intervention and support for young people in Estonia experiencing first episodes of mental health problems;
- developing a state-supported forum in Georgia to carry out the revision and implementation of mental health legislation;
- supporting the development of the newly-launched local Policy Forum in Tirana, Albania, part of the Pathways to Policy programme;
- advocacy projects in hospitals in Romania aimed at protecting patients' human rights, with the projects run by ex-service users trained as advocates.

Thanks to Peter Barham, office@hamlet-trust.org.uk & www.hamlet-trust.org.uk

European Observatory and Health Monitor combine activities

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, which supports and promotes evidence-based health policy-making through comprehensive and rigorous analysis of the dynamics of health care systems in Europe, and the Health Policy Monitor (HPM), a project initiated by the Bertelsmann Foundation which provides up-to-date information on health policy developments in 20 industrialized countries from around the world, have begun to combine their activities.

As their work is complementary and synergistic, they have linked their websites, www.euro.who.int/observatory and www.healthpolicymonitor.org, to facilitate and encourage visitors to make use of the information, resources, and tools offered on both sites.

Users of both websites will find country-specific links from one site to the other. The country information pages of the European Observatory (www.euro.who.int/observatory/ctryinfo/ctryinfo), which presents links to HiT profiles, health organizations, health-related documents and Observatory publications, will be supplemented by half-yearly policy analyses of reforms provided by the HPM.

A closer cooperation between the expert team of both groups is also foreseen.

For more information please contact Ines Galla, Ines.Galla@Bertelsmann.de

Latest policy position paper by the Centre for Reflection on Mental Health Policy

The Centre for Reflection on Mental Health Policy, managed by the InterAction secretariat, has issued its latest position paper. The paper is the second in a series looking at the role of the grassroots in the development of mental health policy at all levels.

This particular paper looks at the issue of national mental health policy. The case study of the development of the national policy forum in Romania has been used as a model for learning and for exploring the possibilities of dissemination and replication of lessons.

InterAction exists to support grassroots activists, local communities and people with a personal experience of mental health to engage effectively in the process of developing mental health policy at a local, national and international level.

InterAction has been busy over the last few months working with grassroots stakeholders and user activists across Europe, India and the UK.

More information on InterAction's website: www.interaction.uk.net

X. WEBSITES/ ONLINE INFORMATION

Slovak Disability Council

The Slovak Disability Council recently launched the English version of its website.

This website can be directly accessed at: <http://www.nrozp.sk/en/>

European Observatory on Health Systems and policies' web site

The Observatory web site provides resources on health systems for countries in the European regions, concerning: health care systems in transition (HiT) profiles and summaries; links to ministries of health, national public health institutes, and centres for health policy, public health and health economics; recent health-related documents; observatory publications.

Information available at <http://www.euro.who.int/observatory/ctryinfo/ctryinfo>

EUR-Lex: a comprehensive source for European Legislation

The site offers a single access point for the most extensive data base of documents relating to EU laws and is available in all the official languages. Consultation is free of charge. You can use it to follow European legislation from day to day through the Official Journal, as the site provides access to the two series, L (Legislation) and C (Information and Notices). It also allows you to consult all the treaties and the texts that amended the basic treaties.

This website can be directly accessed at:
<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex>

EU Bookshop, a new online access to publications on the EU

The Publications Office, the official house of the Europeans Institutions, is the prime source of information on European affairs.

Reflecting a drive for simplification and transparency, this new online service offers the advantage of a single entry point for accessing publications concerning the European Union. Ultimately, EU Bookshop aims to bring together all publications on European affairs dating back to the beginnings of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952, thus providing a comprehensive archive.

This website can be directly accessed at:
<http://bookshop.eu.int>

XI. PUBLICATIONS

Study on cultural policies and programmes

The European Commission released a thematic study using transnational comparisons to analyse and identify cultural policies and programmes in many Member States that contribute to preventing and reducing poverty and social exclusion.

This document draws on existing research and data and compares and contrasts policy approaches and outcomes in a representative sample of at least six different Member States in the area of access to culture as well as taking account of international studies and experience in this area and the views of those experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

The aim of this study is to assist the development of more coherent and integrated policies in relation to access to culture as part of the further development of Member States' National Action Plans on social Inclusion (NAPs/incl).

To download this study: European Commission website,
http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_inclusion/studies_en.htm

Comparative tables of social protection systems in 13 member states of the Council of Europe, Australia, Canada and New-Zealand - 12th edition

These comparative tables of social protection systems are issued by the Mutual Information System on Social Protection of the Council of Europe (MISSCEO).

They summarise the situation of the legislation on 1 January 2004 in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, "the former

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey and Ukraine as well as Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The aim is to provide concise, up-to-date and factual information, which is objective and comparable, valuable both for those concerned with social policy and as a tool for academic research. This book is an essential complement to the comparative tables of social protection systems in the European Union member states.

To place an order directly:

http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/redirect.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=1881 (Price: 69 €/104 \$+ 10% postage)

More information on the Council of Europe online bookshop:

http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=1881

Issue 23 of HSC News International

Issue 23 of HSC News International has been recently published. It contains the findings of a new global survey of campaigner's attitudes to electronic medical records (EMRs) – or electronic health records, as they are sometimes known. Governments worldwide are making huge commitments to implement EMR technology.

An accompanying *Appendix* contains the data and figures generated by the survey, analysed according to respondents' geographic location and speciality, plus all comments received from respondents.

To subscribe to HSC News International, e-mail your request at info@patient-view.com

For further information: see Patient View website,
<http://www.patient-view.com/news05.htm>

New thinking about Mental Health and Employment

Until recently it has been assumed that people who experience severe and enduring mental health problems are unable to work, unless or until they recover. That assumption is now being challenged by international research demonstrating that, with the right support people can succeed in finding and keeping a job, even when they continue to need support from mental health services.

New thinking about Mental Health and Employment draws together the research undertaken to date and combines it with health service users' perspectives on the workplace to validate key points.

Vital reading at both policy and practitioner levels, this book will be of great value to mental health nurses, social workers, general practitioners, psychiatrist and occupational therapists. It will also be of interest to employment advisors, government departments, commissioners, and policy makers and shapers.

To order a copy: orders@radcliffemed.com, Tel (44) (0)1235 528 820, Fax (44) (0)1235 528 830

More information on the Radcliffe Publishing Ltd website: www.radcliffe-oxford.com

FEANTSA overview of progress in homeless policy-making over the last five years

In the framework of the EU social inclusion strategy, the 25 countries of the EU have been asked to report on the implementation of social inclusion policies in their respective countries.

Social inclusion covers a wide range of societal problems which require effective monitoring and solutions - and homelessness is one of these.

The FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) Shadow implementation Report provides an overview of progress in homeless policy-making over the last 5 years (2001-2005) examining the different approaches used in EU25 (namely the following approaches: evidence-based, comprehensive, multi-dimensional, rights-based, participatory, statutory, sustainable, needs-based, pragmatic, and bottom-up approach).

To download this report:

http://www.feantsa.org/files/social_inclusion/NAPs/A%20Shadow%20Implementation%20Report_final.pdf

For further information, please contact Liz Gosme: Tel: (32) 2 534 46 81, Fax: (32) 2 539 41 74,

liz.gosme@feantsa.org

XII. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NEW!! 8 December 2005

Alliance for Health & the Future Colloquium "Do health and Longevity Create Wealth?"

This colloquium is proposed by The Alliance for Health & the Future, a division of the International Longevity Centres (France, USA, and UK), and the International Council for Global Health Progress, in partnership with the 21st Century Talks and the Division of Foresight, Philosophy and Human Sciences at UNESCO.

The colloquium is meant to provide discussion on hot current issues. Actually many policy makers and researchers fear that population ageing and increasing longevity could result in unsustainable expenditures on pensions and health care.

However recent studies in economics and public health suggest that increased longevity, if coupled with good health, may lead to increase in productivity and growth of Gross Domestic Product.

For further information, please contact Suzanne Mathieu: Suzanne.mathieu@edelman.com, Tel +33 (0) 1 56 69 73 83, Fax +33 (0) 1 56 69 75 75

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!! 12 December 2005

Colloquium "Life, Autism and Dignity" (Paris, France)

The colloquium, organised by Mutualité Fonction Publique and Mutualité Générale de l'Éducation Nationale, will gather several participants from various horizons (politicians, practitioners, autists' relatives...) to foster a discussion on autism. 4 roundtables will be dedicated respectively to: "What is autism?", "Actions of the authorities", "Families' Experience", "Achievements and Networks".

Contact: MFP (Mutualité Fonction Publique)- Communication de Réseaux, fax (33) 1 40 77 54 56

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 *Imagé 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

10-13 May 2005

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/>

NEW!! 5th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference, 15-17 June 2006 (Esbjerg, Denmark)

Health promotion is effective if it is comprehensive, community-based, and driven by empirical research founded in an appropriate theoretical base. However, in virtually all reviews of the effectiveness of health promotion interventions attention is drawn to the void

in our knowledge when it comes to the interplay between intervention types in such comprehensive actions.

The call for health impact assessments, for cost-effectiveness analysis, for legal perspectives, and for policy research has become urgent in our field. This urgency will only increase in times where resources for the health care system are even more critically appraised and where at the same time communities are better equipped to voice concerns regarding health and quality of life issues.

The 5th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference, on "Health and Institutional Change", will attempt to address these challenges. Health promotion researchers, health economists, legal and political analysts, health impact assessors and others with a research interest in health and institutional change are invited to come to Denmark to exchange and share their insights.

Conference office e-mail: 5NHPRC@health.sdu.dk

For further information on the conference: <http://www.5nhprc.sdu.dk/>

NEW!! 6th CIVICUS World Assembly - "Acting Together For A Just World", 21-25 June 2006 (Glasgow, Scotland)

The CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation) World Assembly is a leading event for hundreds of civil society practitioners, researchers, activists, concerned business leaders and government representatives to discuss the important victories they have achieved in strengthening citizen engagement and civil society world-wide, and the critical challenges they and their societies are facing.

Building on and continuing the success of past CIVICUS World Assembly events, the overall theme for the CIVICUS World Assembly 2006 is "Acting Together for a Just World". This overall theme will be explored through 4 sub-themes: Civic Justice; Political Justice; Economic justice; Social Justice.

CIVICUS is an international alliance aimed at nurturing the foundation growth and protection of citizen action throughout the world, especially in areas where participatory democracy and citizen's freedom of association are threatened.

All enquiries to civicassembly@scvo.org.uk

More information on CIVICUS website: www.civicus.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:

Mental Health Europe
Santé Mentale Europe
Boulevard Clovis 7, B – 1000 Brussels
Fax: +32-2-280 16 04
E-mail: info@mhe-sme.org