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MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I. NEWS FROM MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

My best wishes go out especially to those who experience mental distress. Too often, we believe this issue to be negligible (although it can be worse than physical distress), or shameful.

Most of all I think of those who, beyond this, have to experience poverty, stigmatisation and a socially disadvantaged life that can even lead up to prison or the violation of basic human rights. My best wishes go also out to those who share this on a daily basis, the friends and families.

I also think of those who sacrifice their lives, alleviating the distress, by helping at home with the most ordinary work or by drawing on science like the professionals.

I likewise think of all our partners in the field of mental health and all the non-governmental organisations with which we are working together day by day.

Finally, in presenting my best wishes, I would like to thank the politicians in charge, the Commissioners Kyriakou and Spidla and their colleagues, as well as those who are working in the area of mental health at the level of the European Union, the European Council and the World Health Organisation.

The year began with the "Declaration of Helsinki" following the Ministerial Conference of the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Union.

In October 2005 the European Union launched a "Green Paper on Mental Health" addressing the decisions taken in January.

These two decisions made at the highest level will certainly change national policies and practices, not only in the new Member States but also in the older States of the Union, which are often overdue regarding political projects of the European Union.

It is encouraging to see that the political declarations in the area of health, especially in the area of community living, non-discrimination, dignity of the users and social inclusion correspond to the concerns expressed by Mental Health Europe.

We have to especially mobilise our partners for the purpose of the Open Method of Coordination in order to advance the practices. In every country, we have to take the initiative to interconnect as much user groups, families, professionals in the health and social area, and the different actors in society in favour of inclusion in the city. Through adequate housing with the support of groups that help and act for a society, which is open and less discriminating towards people with mental health problems, this can be realised.

Merry Christmas,
Claude Deutsch, President of MHE-SME

News from MHE staff

Mariantonietta (Mari) Fresu will join the MHE team in January 2006. Mari will replace Roxana Radulescu as project coordinator of the EU project on "Mental Health Economics II", led by the London School of Economics and Social Science.

Mari has a degree in science of education, specialisation in health and social care, and a postgraduate diploma on "The European dimension of health promotion and health strategies in Europe". We warmly welcome her in our team.

EU project "Implementation of Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Policies and Strategies in EU Member States"

The Steering Committee for the EU project on "Implementation of Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Policies and Strategies in EU Member States", met again for the second time in Vienna on 9-10 December 2005. This project is led by the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and Mental Health Europe is one of the 6 main partner organisations.

Most of the first day was spent on receiving the reports of the national workshops that were organised in the participating Member States, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Austria and the Netherlands.

The second day was dedicated to the discussion of a proposed matrix analytic report on the national experiences, with a list of principle and practices to be identified and reported on at the Conference in March. From 22-24 March 2006 a Baseline conference will take place in Budapest. At this conference all the participating countries will be invited to report back on their experiences and identified barriers to the implementation of the national, regional or local plans for mental health promotion and prevention.

For more information: info@mhe-sme.org or Matthias Roos at Roos.Matthias@BAuA.bund.de

Hand in Hand, Gent (Belgium)

Hand in Hand, a Belgian (Flemish) association providing sheltered or protected living facilities for people with mental health problems, has participated in the 1990-ties in a European holiday exchange project for people with mental health problems. Other partners were Penumbra (Scotland), Cooperativa Humanitas (Prato, Italy), Familles Thérapeutiques (Normandy, France).

They are keen to relaunch this project. Are you interested in collaboration?

Please contact Patrick De Smet at Hand in Hand (hand.in.hand@pandora.be) or Josée Van Remoortel at MHE (info@mhe-sme.org).

MHE representation at various meetings

Claude Deutsch, President, and Josée Van Remoortel, Senior Policy Adviser, attended the conference on inclusion and desinstitutionalisation of disabled people, organised in Brussels by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities on 1-2 December 2005.

Mary Van Dievel, Director, participated in the bi-annual meeting between the European Commission and EU Networks active in the Social Inclusion Process organised in Brussels on 6 December 2005. At the end of the meeting she once again expressed her concern about the new EU Programme PROGRESS and the involvement of smaller European NGOs in this programme.

John Henderson, Senior Policy Adviser, participated in the Steering Group meeting for the EU project on Implementation of Mental Health Promotion and Prevention Policies and Strategies in EU Member States (EMIP), organised in Vienna on 9-10 December 2005. (cf page 2)

Elisabeth Muschik, MHE Board member, participated in the meetings of the Social Platform Working Group on Fundamental Rights, the Steering Group meeting and the brainstorming on the Social Platform's strategic plan, organised in Brussels from 12-14 December 2005.

Martine Dutoit, Director of Advocacy Paris, participated in the meeting of the EDF (European Disability Forum) Committee on Human Rights, organised in Brussels on 16 December 2005.

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

Croatian Associations for Mental Health

In the past few years, Osijek (Croatia) was a centre of several outstanding activities promoted by experts, members of different Non Governmental Organisations, media and patients, directed to lessen stigmatization towards mental disorders and to focus on mind-body connection in health and illness.

Since the World Federation for Mental Health especially dedicated the 2004 activities to mind-body relationship in prevention, diagnostic and treatment of illness, which is in fact a holistic approach to the patient, and, in the same time, connected it with numerous activities in Europe and in the world concerning pain, the organizers joined their efforts to inform the public on what mind-body relationship really meant. Their efforts were especially focused on psychiatric comorbidity in chronic pain patients and pain in psychiatric patients. Their special intention was to point out that treating the pain in any form is one of the basic patient and of course human rights. As a result, the Osijek Declaration on the Rights of Patients with Chronic Pain was proclaimed and also accepted by many experts and NGO's around the world.

Even if the 10th of October, Mental Health Day, is always specially pointed out, the awareness-raising of citizens, administration and professionals is a whole year approach. Therefore, the first public event in 2005 was the Masked-Ball at Opera House Osijek, to point out all the facets of our body and soul lives.

Considering the given 2005 themes of Global Day Against Pain (Pain in Childhood), European Week Against Pain (Pain in the Elderly) and World Mental Health Day (Mental Health Across the Life Span), the activities were focused on mind-body relationship through the life span.

More than two weeks of different and constant presence in the public have resulted with better understanding and increasing interest for such an approach.

Promotional activities for citizens were organised. Stands with pamphlets, leaflets and other educational materials concerning mind-body relationship in chronic pain patients and patients with mental disorders were fairly well visited by passers-by and many of them showed interest in materials as well as in dialogue with present health professionals (doctors, nurses, psychologists, social workers), NGO volunteers and students.

Though relatively new in our community this approach attracted quite many interested people and professionals from different media.

Thanks to Marijana Bräs, from the Psychiatric Clinic, Clinical Hospital Osijek, and to Leo De Graaf, from De Gelderse Roos, for their contribution.

GGZ Nederland

Gehandicaptenzorg Nederland ordered a research on the image that the public at large has about people with mental health problems.

A person with mental health problems is accepted by only 31% of the people as a neighbour. The situation is completely different regarding people with learning disabilities (86%) and people with physical disabilities (92%).

The major reason why the respondents have another opinion when it concerns people with mental health problems is "fear".

GGZ Nederland, the Dutch federation of service providers in the mental health field, stresses that adequate information towards the population at large is of utmost importance.

Thanks to José Van Remoortel for this contribution.

Source: Psy – n°13

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

Social Platform

Call for feedback on the National Reform Programmes on the Lisbon Strategy

Most of the Member States published their 3-year "National Reform Programmes" as part of the new Lisbon Growth and Jobs Strategy. Based on analysis of these, the Commission will adopt in late January a Communication which will form the Commission's contribution to the Spring European Council on 23-24 March.

Social NGOs will have a chance to put forward their reactions to the National Reform Programmes in a conference being organised by the Social Platform, European Environmental Bureau and European Trade

Union Confederation in late February/early March, although to influence the Commission's Communication it will be important to let them know our views even earlier (beginning of January at the latest).

In order to get an idea of what role the Social Platform can play in relation to the preparation for the Spring Summit, the Secretariat would be very interested to know from platform members:

1. What plans, if any, you have in your networks for your national members to analyse their National Reform Programmes?
2. Do you plan to collect information about the involvement of civil society in the different countries in developing the Programmes?

To find information about the National Reform Programmes, except Germany and Poland: http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/nrp_2005_en.pdf

To see the new Social Platform's process tracker on the Lisbon strategy: Social Platform website, http://www.socialplatform.org/module/FileLib/00PROCESSTRACKER_LisbonStrategy.doc

For further queries, contact Kathleen Spencer Chapman:

Kathleen.spencerchapman@socialplatform.org

European Anti Poverty Network

12 criteria for "good activation" in employment

Can activation schemes work for social inclusion? This is the question to which the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) tried to answer in a recent position paper. According to the Network, the answer is "yes" provided that these schemes aim to meet individual person's needs, wishes and priorities.

The development of "activation policies" is a general trend within the European Union. Activation of social spending, after having been applied to unemployment replacement income, is now applied more generally to social benefits, including minimum income. While repeating that employment is a way towards social inclusion, EAPN has already expressed its concerns regarding the way activation is sometimes implemented, which can lead to the reverse effect of increased levels of poverty and social exclusion.

In this debate, EAPN presented its own definition of what "good activation" is, i.e. capable of delivering alleviation of poverty and social exclusion. This definition is based on the expertise of its members, some of them being actively involved in the implementation of social inclusion policies as well as employment policies.

For EAPN "Good activation" means:

1. Improving personal, social and vocational skills and competencies and enabling to further social integration
2. Individualised and flexible offers taking the whole person into consideration and acknowledging diversity of age, experience etc...
3. Relevance of the offer for the individual person's needs, wishes and priorities
4. Aiming to overcome or compensate for the excluding forces in society
5. Wide range networking with relevant actors at local level, such as actors on the labour market, health care services, social services, housing sector, communities etc...

6. Respecting the individual's identity and self-respect
7. Achieving quality compared to ambitious social standards
8. Raising status
9. Building on reciprocity between the individual and the (municipal) agency
10. That the planning, the design and the implementation of activation is carried out in co-operation and interaction between the claimant and the (municipal) agency
11. Involving the resources and strengths of the claimants
12. Using adequate social income, including minimum income, as a positive tool likely to guarantee the security needed for activation. Benefits should be used also as a positive incentive to face the extra costs and risk when resuming a job after unemployment.

For further information, please contact Claire Champeix or Vincent Forest: team@eapn.skynet.be, Tel. +32 2 230 44 55, Fax. +32 2 230 97 33, Website: <http://www.eapn.org>

IV. WORLD FEDERATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

WFMH Seeks Participants for International Caregiver Survey

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) is conducting an international survey of caregivers of individuals with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. The survey is taking place in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK.

"Research into schizophrenia and bipolar disorder rarely opens a dialogue with family caregivers about their important role in the day-to-day life of their family loved ones who experience these two illnesses," explains Preston Garrison, Secretary-General and Chief Executive Officer, WFMH. "We believe our survey will provide valuable insight into the effect that schizophrenia and bipolar disorder have on families coping with these conditions."

The survey is being conducted via telephone and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questions are designed to obtain basic information about caregivers' experiences in a manner that does not personally identify them. The survey is made possible by Eli Lilly and Company. All responses will be looked at collectively with individual responses kept confidential.

WFMH is requesting your help in identifying caregiver and family support organizations in Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK, and France that would be interested in assisting in the survey. Please pass this information along to individuals or groups that may be interested in helping.

WFMH will share results from the survey with groups that help with recruitment.

Associations and individuals interested should immediately contact Ahmed Soumahoro, Project Manager at All Global at ahmeds@allglobaltd.com or +44 20 7749 1485.

V. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Landmark study on domestic violence

The first-ever World Health Organization (WHO) study on domestic violence reveals that intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence in women's lives - much more so than assault or rape by strangers or acquaintances. The study reports on the enormous toll physical and sexual violence by husbands and partners has on the health and well-being of women around the world and the extent to which partner violence is still largely hidden.

This study "shows how important it is to shine a spotlight on domestic violence globally and treat it as a major public health issue," said Dr Lee Jong-wook, Director-General of WHO at the study release in Geneva.

The study is based on interviews with more than 24 000 women from rural and urban areas in 10 countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The study finds that one quarter to one half of all women who had been physically assaulted by their partners said that they had suffered physical injuries as a direct result. The abused women were also twice as likely as non-abused women to have poor health and physical and mental problems, even if the violence occurred years before. This includes suicidal thoughts and attempts, mental distress, and physical symptoms like pain, dizziness and vaginal discharge.

Domestic violence is known to affect women's sexual and reproductive health and may contribute to increased risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Women who reported physical or sexual violence by a partner were also more likely to report having had at least one induced abortion or miscarriage than those who did not report violence.

For policy makers, the greatest challenge is that abuse remains hidden. At least 20% of women reporting physical violence in the study had never told anyone before being interviewed.

The report recommends a range of vital interventions to change attitudes and challenge the inequities and social norms that perpetuate abuse. It further recommends integrating violence prevention programming into ongoing initiatives aimed at children, youth, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health. Health service providers should be trained to identify women experiencing violence and to respond appropriately. Prenatal care, family planning or post abortion care are potential entry points to provide care, support, and referral to other services. Schools need to be safe places, support systems for victims must be strengthened and prevention programmes put in place. Raising awareness of the problem among the general public is critical.

WHO's Global Campaign for the Prevention of Violence supports governments to develop comprehensive violence prevention programmes to address domestic violence alongside other types of violence.

For further information: WHO website, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2005/pr68/en/index.html>

The photo essay "Denied citizens: Mental Health and Human Rights" is available at

http://www.who.int/features/2005/mental_health/en/index.html

VI. EUROPEAN UNION

Tenth anniversary of the European Ombudsman

EU citizens, residents, Non Governmental Organizations, enterprises, regional and local authorities, interest groups and the media should be made aware of the right to complain to the European Ombudsman.

This conviction encouraged P. Nikiforos Diamandouros, the Ombudsman, to mark ten years of the institution by holding a press seminar and public workshop entitled "*The European Ombudsman: 10 years, 20,000 complaints - too many? too few?*" These two events focused on how to raise awareness about the right to complain to the Ombudsman and on areas for improvement within the EU administration.

Since 1995, the European Ombudsman has dealt with more than 20,000 complaints and opened more than 2,750 inquiries. This led to a more open and accountable EU administration: greater access to documents, the abolition of age discrimination in recruitment, fewer problems with late payment...

There are areas that still give cause for concern. Over one-fifth of the Ombudsman's inquiries concern a "lack of transparency" in the EU administration. Sometimes, the institutions could go further but choose not to. One example: the Ombudsman recently called on the Council to review its refusal to meet publicly whenever it is acting in its legislative capacity.

More has to be done, therefore: "*And yet many of those potential complaints are not reaching us. While the overall number of complaints increases each year, there is much room for improvement in terms of getting the right information out to the right people.*" argues Mr Diamandouros. More than 70% of complaints received fall outside the Ombudsman's mandate, while many are not aware that it is limited to the EU institutions and bodies.

As the institution embarks upon its second decade, the Ombudsman is determined to raise awareness about what he can do to make a top class European administration a reality.

Info: <http://www.euro-ombudsman.eu.int/10anniversary/en/default.htm>

VII. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The social dimension of globalisation

In May 2004, the European Commission published a communication on "*The Social Dimension of Globalisation*", acknowledging that without an effective system of global governance the current model of globalisation is generating unbalanced outcomes and is not likely to lead to global sustainable development.

These sentiments were reflected in the report by Slovenian Member of Parliament (MEP) Mihael Brejc, member of the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.

The key message of this report is that to contribute significantly to the ongoing debate of how to counteract the negative effects of globalisation

worldwide, the European Union needs to act in a coherent way through its internal and external policies. Certain actions of good practice could serve as an example to other parts of the world; other EU policies have to be reformed to be compatible with the development policy.

The Parliament is convinced that globalisation must be a process with a strong social dimension, based on universally shared values, respect for human rights and individual dignity. This process must be fair, inclusive and democratically governed; it must provide opportunities and tangible benefits for all countries and people and be linked to the Millennium development Goals.

MEPs also support the Commissions' efforts to raise awareness among multinational companies of their social responsibility: the social and environmental responsibilities of multinationals should be clearly established and EU action in this area should be stepped up.

The report on "The social dimension of globalisation" by MEP Mihael Brejc is available at: <http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2005-0308+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=3&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>

More information on the European Parliament's website: <http://www.europarl.eu.int/>

VIII. EUROPEAN COMMISSION

European Day of People with Disabilities' Conference

More than 200 participants, disabled people, government representatives, service providers and EU officials gathered in Brussels on 2 December 2005 for the European Day of Disabled People Conference, entitled "All included in society".

For the first time a constructive debate on the inclusion and de-institutionalisation of disabled persons took place at EU level.

"The European Commission wants to be very active in the field of inclusion of disabled people in society and to further push for mainstreaming of disability", stated the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Vladimir Spidla.

This objective makes integral part of the priorities 2006-2007 of the EU disability action plan running from 2004-2010 and presented by the Commission in a new Communication. The plan also focuses on providing access for quality support and care services for disabled people, fostering accessibility for all and ensuring disabled persons' independence, social and occupational integration and participation in the life of the community. The Structural Funds, the Social Fund, the research programme and the directive on goods and services are all EU tools to fund and find alternatives to institutions.

Commissioner Spidla also called public authorities to respond to the needs of its citizens, including persons living in institutions and particularly those with complex dependency needs. He furthermore urged the media to make this issue visible in order to raise the public awareness of the urgent need for a change. Finally, Commissioner Spidla expressed his commitment "to give all citizens a real chance and to allow everyone to live in a society fully respecting their human rights".

Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum, welcomed the European Commission's public support to the organization of an annual EU interministerial conference on disability, an initiative of the UK Presidency that will require the active involvement of disabled people.

In his speech, Jan Anderssen, Chair of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee of the European Parliament called for further EU legislation for an effective protection and inclusion of disabled people in society. Erzebet Szöllözi, Executive Member of the European Disability Forum strongly supported Anderssens' words: "The dignity of disabled people depends on political will. It is unacceptable that disabled people are still unprotected by law and that thousands of disabled people are forced to live in institutions without having been given any choice and given the possibility to lead a self-determined life like anybody else".

Contact: Helena González-Sancho Boderó, Tel + 32 2 282 46 04, E-mail communication@edf-feph.org
For further Information: EDF website, <http://www.edf-feph.org/>

Training manual on EU discrimination directives for NGOs

A training manual for Non Governmental Organizations on EU discrimination was published in the framework of an EU funded project entitled: "Mapping capacity of civil society dealing with anti-discrimination in New Member States and Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey", carried out by human European consultancy in partnership with the Migration Policy Group and a local partner in each of the 13 countries.

It was drafted in connection with the EU funded project "Capacity building Civil Society dealing with Anti-Discrimination".

The purpose of this project (November 2004 – October 2005) was to improve NGOs knowledge on EU policies in the non-discrimination field and enhance the role of civil society. The project focused on building capacity for NGOs to support the implementation of the two anti-discrimination directives (2000/43 and 2000/78) dealing with five grounds of discrimination (race and ethnicity, religion and belief, age, disability and sexual orientation), to be a key interlocutor of the national authorities and to assist the victims of discrimination.

The training manuals for the 13 countries that participated in the initial project all contain national-specific information about the transposition of the directives into national law.

The European Commission plans to extend and continue the project next year to include the 15 "old" Member States next year.

The training manual is available for download at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/civil/trainman_en.pdf
Specific country versions are also available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/civil/civ_en.htm#map

Communication on the Modernising of Education and Training

The European Commission adopted on 10 November a Communication "Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in

Europe” as its contribution to the 2006 Joint Progress Report on the implementation of the “*Education and Training 2010*” work programme to be jointly agreed with the Council in February 2006.

The “*Education and Training 2010*” work programme is the education and training strand of the Lisbon strategy; it aims to modernise Europe’s education and training systems.

The Communication concludes that Member States must accelerate the reform in their education and training systems, or large proportions of the next generation will face social exclusion. The matter is urgent: despite the important efforts made by all Member States, there is too little progress against the European “benchmarks” fixed for improving young people’s qualifications and competences.

This has serious consequences for all citizens, especially for disadvantaged groups, and the 80 million or so low-skilled workers across Europe, and for the wider economy as a whole in terms of competitiveness and job creation.

The Communication notes that, although lifelong learning is gaining ground in Europe, too few adults are participating in lifelong learning and national strategies should urgently be implemented in all countries. The EU benchmark on increasing the number of maths, science and technology graduates has been achieved, but we are still a long way from achieving those targets related most closely to social inclusion and the knowledge-based society. Also, better use of the structural funds should also be made in relation to investment in human capital.

In parallel to the Communication, the European Commission also approved a proposal to establish a European Framework for Key Competences – a practical reference tool to support Member States’ efforts - which sets out what are considered to be the essential skills, knowledge and attitudes that every European should have to prosper in a knowledge-based society and economy.

For further information: European Commission website, http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

Peer Review in the Field of Social Inclusion Policies

Under the Community Action Programme to increase co-operation in combating social exclusion, the European Commission has launched a Peer Review Programme. The Peer Review Programme is a voluntary mutual learning process involving the scrutiny of specific policies, programmes or institutional arrangements presented as good practice in the various National Action Plans/inclusion. The programme consists of a series of peer review sessions, in which the experience of the host country is confronted with the comments and critical analysis of peer countries. The programme started in 2004 and is expected to continue until 2006. It is foreseen to have a maximum of eight reviews per year.

The aim of the peer review programme is to encourage the dissemination of good practice across Member States by assessing the effectiveness of key policies or institutions. It can serve as a useful tool to Member States to help them in the design and implementation of more effective policies. It should also contribute to the dialogue with stakeholders such as social partners

and Non Governmental Organizations and where appropriate, people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

In 2005 the following peer review sessions have taken place:

- on 20-21 May 2005, in Prague (Czech Republic): “*Field social programmes in neighbourhoods threatened by social exclusion*”;
- on 27-28 June 2005, in Miskolc (Hungary): “*Peer review meeting on the provision of basic social services in rural areas*”;
- on 12-13 September 2005, in Portugal: “*Programme for socio-community development – Mobilising all relevant bodies and promoting the participation of people suffering social exclusion*”
- on 6-7 October 2005, in Greece: “*Pathways to social integration for people with mental health problems – the establishment of social co-operatives*”;
- on 7-8 November 2005, in Belgium: “*Minimum income and social integration – Institutional Arrangements*”.

All reports and documents related to peer review seminars are available on the Peer Review website:

<http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net/peer/en/index.html>

For further information, see the Peer Review Newsletter:

http://www.peer-review-social-inclusion.net/peer/en/Newsletter/doc/PRSI_news_05-2_en_051005.pdf

IX. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

50th anniversary of the European flag

Nowadays it flies throughout our continent, the blue flag bearing twelve golden stars which has reached the age of 50.

The circle of twelve golden stars against a blue background symbolises the people of Europe, with the circle representing their union. The number of stars never changes - it is always twelve, symbolising the ideals of unity and harmony and bringing to mind the months of the year and the twelve signs of the zodiac. For half a century, it has been symbolic of Europe’s ambition and its reality.

Ever since being adopted by the Council of Europe and its then 14 member states in 1955, the European flag has been an expression of the will of a growing number of states and peoples to work together to build peace and prosperity in a continent where the common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law prevail and where full advantage is taken of diversity.

In 1986, the European Communities (now the European Union) also adopted the same flag, as they used their own political and institutional methods to pursue the same fundamental aim.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the European flag a ceremony was held on 16 November, on the forecourt outside the Council of Europe, in the presence of the Heads of the Organisation, the President of the European Parliament, Josep Borell, and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso.

Info: <http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Events/2005-12-drapeau/>

X. UNITED NATIONS

NGO Committee on Mental Health

The Non Governmental Organization Committee on Mental Health has completed its call for Nominations for the 2005-2007 Executive Committee.

It received one nomination for each available elected position. There were no contested positions.

Therefore, it was recommended that the nominated candidates be accepted by acclamation from the voting membership rather than by a formal balloting process.

The final results of the elections were announced at the December General Meeting on Thursday, 8 December 2005. The newly elected Executive Committee will assume their positions immediately.

The nominated candidates were:

- Chairperson: Janice Wood Wetzel, International Association of Schools of Social Work
- Vice-Chairperson: Isaac Tylim, International Psychoanalytical Association
- Recording Secretary: Lorraine Walla, World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation
- Corresponding Secretary: Marcia Wallace, International Federation of Social Workers
- Treasurer: Joseph A. De Meyer, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
- Members-at-Large: Celia Brown, Support Coalition International; Judy Kuriansky, International Association of Applied Psychology, World Council for Psychotherapy; Carolyn Themm, Soroptimist International.

The precedent Chairperson was Nancy E. Wallace, World Federation for Mental Health.

Questions regarding the elections of the Executive Committee of the NGO Committee on Mental Health may be directed to: mentalhealthngo@earthlink.net

Many children with disabilities still "written off"

A UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund) report found that, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the numbers of children with disabilities in Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and Baltic States (CEE/CIS) have dramatically increased.

According to the UNICEF *"Innocenti Insight, Children and Disability in Transition in CEE/CIS and Baltic States"*, the total number of children registered as disabled across the region's 27 countries has tripled from about 500,000 in 1990 to 1.5 million in 2000. An additional one million children are thought to go unregistered. Most of these children continue to face their lives in segregated institutions, suffering from stigma and discrimination.

For decades, vast numbers of children with disabilities have been placed in institutions and this practice has continued during the post-Soviet transition period. By 2002, some 317,000 children with disabilities were living in residential institutions. Cut off from their families and community from an early age, often segregated in large facilities and special schools, the prospect for these children is to graduate to an institution for adults and to face a pattern of denial of human rights.

"Although children with disabilities have become more visible since the beginning of transition and attitudes

towards them and their families are changing, many of them remain simply "written off" from society" said Marta Santos Pais, Director of UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (IRC).

The report found that poverty and disability go hand in hand, each fuelling the other. Families with children with disabilities tend to be poorer than other families.

"Deep poverty and a chronic lack of alternatives combine with outdated medical approaches neglecting the child's best interests and explain high rates of child abandonment and placement in institutions" added Marta Santos Pais.

The report called for an immediate end to the common practice of placing children with disabilities in institutions and segregated schools.

The report acknowledged that the region has made some progress on protecting the rights of children with disabilities. There are signs that attitudes towards disability are changing - most countries now have legislation to address the reality of these children and more children are being integrated into society. But, according to UNICEF, there is still a long way to go.

To read the report: http://www.unicef-icdc.org/cgi-bin/unicef/presscentre/download_insert.sql?ProductID=43&DownloadAddress=/presscentre/presskit/disrep/ii_12_dr_eng.pdf

XI. VARIOUS

Call for information on inhuman and degrading treatment

In 2006, as part of its programme of regular "periodic" visits, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), a body established by the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, intends to examine the treatment of people deprived of their liberty in the following ten countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Monaco, Romania, Slovenia, and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia".

Other visits that appear to the CPT to be required in the circumstances will also be organized during the year.

The Committee has the right to visit, at any time, any place where persons are deprived of their liberty by a public authority. It also has the right to interview in private detained persons, and to enter into contact with anyone else who may be able to provide relevant information. CPT, among other places, regularly visits psychiatric institutions.

After each visit, the CPT sends a confidential report containing its conclusions and recommendations to the State concerned. This constitutes the basis for a dialogue between the CPT and the national authorities in order to strengthen the protection of detained persons from ill-treatment.

NGOs are encouraged to consult the CPT prior to these visits, informing them on up-to-date information on inhuman and degrading treatment, recommending particular places to

visit, providing contact information of victims, etc...

The Budapest-based Mental Disability Advocacy Centre (MDAC), an international non-governmental organization based in Budapest that promotes and protects the human rights of people with mental health problems and intellectual disabilities across Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, is particularly interested in receiving relevant and reliable information on inhuman and degrading treatment in psychiatry in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. MDAC has participatory status at the Council of Europe and is willing to advise the CPT. If your NGO or organization would like help in providing information about such abuses to the CPT, please contact MDAC's Advocacy Director, Gabor Gombos, at ggombos@mdac.info, or Advocacy Program Assistant, Sarah Enright at senright@mdac.info. For more details about the CPT or to contact it, consult the following website: www.cpt.coe.int

Abolishment of the Office of Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men (Poland)

In a letter sent to the Prime Minister of Poland, Mr Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz, Mental Health Europe expressed its deep concern with the declaration made by the new Polish government concerning the abolishment of the Office of Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men – a central administration body responsible for the delivery of basic policies counteracting discrimination, supporting gender equality and offering equal opportunities for marginalized groups.

The Office of Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of Women and Men has been in activity since four years and has been active in the field of counteracting discrimination, contributing to changes in Polish legislation and introducing the issue of equality into the public discourse.

MHE reminded Mr Marcinkiewicz that Poland must comply with European legislation and International legislation on Equal Treatment, which provide for the creation of an independent body counteracting discrimination. Such bodies have already been created in all EU Member States, successfully enforcing the rules of gender equality and counteracting unequal treatment of minority groups.

First university course for mental health service user students (UK)

The first university course specifically for mental health service user students has been launched in United Kingdom. The course is entitled "*Leadership and Empowerment in mental health*", and is promoted by organisers as a means for service users to gain a qualification enabling them to play a part in improving mental health services.

The Certificate in professional developments is run by Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU), in partnership with the Five Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust Learning Foundation and the government's National Institute for Mental Health. Topics studied include the history of mental health, mental health social policy, and theories of leadership and empowerment.

LJMU Programme Leader Malcolm Kinney said: "To our knowledge this is the first fully accredited higher education course specifically for mental health service users. The course is based upon principles of empowerment, offering students the chance to have a greater say and stake in services."

Source: *Openmind 134* – November/December

XII. WEBSITES/ ONLINE INFORMATION

WHO Atlas, "Global concerns and implications for the future"

The World Health Organization's (WHO) Headquarters recently published, as part of the Atlas initiative led by Dr Shekhar Saxena, a publication on Child and Adolescence Mental Health Resources: "*Global concerns and implications for the future*".

The document can be accessed at: http://www.who.int/mental_health/resources/Child_and_atlas.pdf

Well Scotland's new website

The National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being (Scotland, UK) officially launched its new website on 19 December 2005.

Each month its e-bulletin will keep you up-to-date with what's new on the website. If you wish to receive a monthly update on all the National Programme activities you can subscribe to the e-bulletin at <http://www.wellscotland.info/news/subscribe.html>

Please note that if you have previously subscribed to wellontheweb.net you will need to re-subscribe to the new site using the online subscribe form.

The new site can be directly accessed at <http://www.wellscotland.info/>

XIII. PUBLICATIONS

Placement and Treatment of Mentally Disordered Offenders – Legislation and Practice in the European Union

The placement and treatment of mentally disordered offenders is a most controversial issue within the mental health care field and the criminal justice systems of western societies.

During the past there has been only limited international research conducted on these complex and interdependent issues. For the first time a study has been funded in the European Commission Health Programme of Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO) during the years 2003-2005.

The final report of this study provides a structured description and cross-boundary comparison of

- legal forensic frameworks
- underlying key concepts
- assessment, court and discharge procedures
- routine practices in placing and treating mentally ill offenders
- human rights and patients' rights
- forensic service provision
- outcome of legal procedures and forensic care (epidemiology)

in the fifteen Member States included in the European Union before the extension in May 2004.

The book contains essential information for anyone involved into the placement or treatment of mentally disordered offenders or interested in the topic.

To order a copy of the report (price: 25€), send an e-mail at pabst.publishers@t-online.de

More information on Pabst Science Publishers' website: http://www.pabst-science-publishers.com/index.php?32&backPID=32&begin_at=20

Short guide to the European Convention on Human Rights (3rd edition)

This book provides a concise overview of the basic rights guaranteed by the Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights, and the case-law relating to these rights, the procedures followed by the European Court of Human Rights when handling applications under the Convention, and the role of the Committee of Ministers as a supervisory organ in giving force to the judgments of the Court. This third edition of the Short Guide, which covers developments to the end of 2003, will be an excellent guide for students, international and human rights lawyers, non-governmental organisations and all those who are trying to know and understand the European Convention on Human Rights.

To place an order directly http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/redirect.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=1919 (Price: 17 €)

More information on the Council of Europe Publishing's website: <http://book.coe.int/>

Reconciling labour flexibility with social cohesion - Facing the challenge.

This volume on labour flexibility invites readers to question the effects of labour market institutional and organisational reforms on social cohesion. The Council of Europe suggests reconciling social cohesion with the inevitable changes wrought by globalisation, namely the reorganisation of the parameters governing competition. This reconciliation should take into account the essential political value of democratic security, to be found firstly in employment; the high social and societal cost of precariousness attests to this. However, security should not imply rigidity. It should rather translate into societal recognition of a "right to transition" which calls for co-responsibility on the part of all social actors and stakeholders. Reconciliation is more than a political duty, it is a prerequisite for the stability necessary for social sustainability. It should therefore raise awareness of the need to find new ways of fairly sharing the costs and benefits such transitions create.

To place an order directly (Price: 35 €) http://book.coe.int/sysmodules/RBS_page/admin/redirect.php?id=36&lang=EN&produit_aliasid=1983

More information on the Council of Europe Publishing's website: <http://book.coe.int>

XIV. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NEW!! 2-3 February 2006

Eucomed Homecare Conference, "Enhancing efficiency and quality of life - the case of homecare", Brussels (Belgium)

In view of the increasing importance of the homecare sector, Eucomed is organising a 2-day conference, the main aim of which will be to put forward the debate surrounding homecare: how much of it is needed considering demographics and the general trend towards de-hospitalisation; and how much of it is affordable given the scarcity of resources. This will open the discussion on the future of homecare in Europe and on how investing in homecare can be made worthwhile bearing in mind that resources are limited and we would need to make the most of them. Speakers include experts as well as representatives of some major stakeholders in healthcare, including patients, healthcare professionals, insurance companies and industry.

For more information: Marco Cortopassi, Tel +32 2 775 9226, E-mail marco.cortopassi@eucomed.be and Eucomed's website <http://www.eucomed.org/?x=2&y=50&z=233>

NEW!! 9-11 February 2006

Digital Inequality and New Spaces of Informal Education for Young People International Conference, Bielefeld (Germany)

Today, the internet is regarded as a central resource for knowledge and information. Associated with this, the idea is that everyone is able and even expected to serve himself or herself according to his or her own needs via this medium. Nevertheless internet use for everyone is not as easy as assumed. New results of empirical and theoretical research indicate the rise of a social divide in this context.

Due to that inequality in use, the international conference focuses the capacity of the virtual space in terms of participatory opportunities and democratic potentials and raises concerns of major relevance with respect to social and educational policy. New ways for a future-oriented practice are requested thereby and are discussed in empirical as well as in theoretical ways from the perspective of different disciplines. The main focus of the conference is the question: "What implications does unequal internet use according to social inequalities have in terms of education and participation in society and which challenges are politics, science and practical work facing in this context?"

For further information and registration: Dr. Nadia Kutscher, Tel +49 (0)521 106 3297, Fax +49 (0)521 106 8047, E-mail: kib.conference@uni-bielefeld.de
Conference Website: www.kib-bielefeld.de/tagung/engl/

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>

NEW!! 2-3 March 2006

2nd International Conference on Prison Healthcare, "Principles and Practice to meet current needs", London (UK)

This conference, organised by MA Healthcare Limited, is coming at a time when governments worldwide are becoming increasingly aware of the need to address the health of prisoners, both from the point of view of human rights, and also of the impact of the health of prisoners on the health of the public.

The aims of the conference are:

- to provide an opportunity for those engaged in prison health care to meet together and learn from their mutual experiences;
- to examine reform processes taking place across the world;
- to examine some of the more prevalent health problems encountered in prison populations and their management;
- to examine the problem of maintaining high ethical standards within the prison setting, particularly equivalence of care.

Contact: conferences@markallengroup.com, Tel +44 20 7738 5454

For further information: MA Healthcare website, www.mahealthcareevents.co.uk

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 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/>

NEW!! 24-26 May 2006

14th International Conference on HPH, "Integrating health promotion, prevention, treatment and care for chronic diseases across the health system", Palanga (Lithuania)

The conference will be hosted by the Lithuanian Network of Health Promoting Hospitals (HPH).

The main topics of the conference will be:

1. the need for action on chronic diseases
2. integrating treatment, care, prevention and health promotion for chronic diseases within

hospital services in order to achieve an optimum outcome

3. integrating health care interventions on chronic diseases across levels of services
4. integrating action on wider determinants of chronic diseases across settings.

The Scientific Committee invites abstracts for parallel paper and poster sessions on all topics named above, but also on:

- health promoting psychiatric health care services
- health promotion for children and adolescents in hospitals
- migrant friendly and culturally competent hospitals
- health promotion for staff suffering from chronic diseases
- mental health promotion in the health care system
- monitoring, evaluation and reporting on HPH interventions
- smoke-free Hospitals.

Abstracts can be submitted online at <http://www.univie.ac.at/hph/palanga2006>; the deadline for submission is January 31, 2006.

Contact person: Gabriele Bocek, hph.soc-gruwi@univie.ac.at, Tel +43 1 4277 48282

15-17 June 2006

5th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference (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!! 19-21 June 2006

14th European Social Services Conference in Vienna (Austria)

The overall theme of the conference, prepared by the European Social Network, will be "Young and Old in a Changing Europe: the Demographic Challenge to Social Care and Health".

Workshops will be an important part of the meeting, which will emphasize practical, "hands-on" work and research projects that will be of direct interest to others employed in delivering services.

There will be four workshop sessions with six workshops running concurrently in each session.

The stress will be put on workshops that highlight differences between countries and that involve cross-country research or collaboration.

Contact person: Sarah Wellburn, Tel +44 (0)1273 549817, Fax +44 (0)1273 549317, e-mail sarah.wellburn@socialeurope.com

21-25 June 2006

6th CIVICUS World Assembly – "Acting Together for a just World" (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

NEW!! 18-24 September 2006

«Voile en tête 2006», between Marseille, La Ciotat, Les îles du Frioul, Martigues, Les Calanques... (France)

"Voile en tête" is a water sporting event of European standing, organised under the aegis of "Sport en tête", the Union of Mental Health Sport group. The purpose of this event is to bring between twenty to twenty five sailing boats together each one representing a psychiatric hospital or social-medical institution. The crew members selected amongst patients, nursing teams, and instructors, will be brought round to exchange and meet during the sporting events stretching along the week long cruise.

Even if the sporting vocation of the event is obvious, the regatta is only a pretext for a human adventure opened to the sea world, a new space likely to have a therapeutic interest.

Nowadays Marseille displays a well known image of a city opened to the sailing world and the mediterranean sea so it's quite natural that an important establishment specializing in mental health like Edouard Toulouse Hospital should organize the 15th edition of "Voile en tête" in 2006.

If interested, application forms will be available from 15 January 2006.

For more information: http://www.sportez-vous-bien.com/v06_gb.html

NEW!! 11-13 October 2006

Fourth World Conference on the promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioural Disorders, "Developing Resilience and Strength across the Life Span", Oslo (Norway)

The aim of this conference is to support professionals, scientists, advocates, user organizations and policy makers worldwide, in their collective effort to promote mental health and to prevent mental disorders in their communities and countries. Effective promotion and prevention in mental health requires the bringing together of good science, good policy, good practice and learning experience.

The conference is designed to incorporate contributions from a wide series of disciplines, cultures and backgrounds. Its success depends upon multi-dimensional presentation and debate.

Potential presenters at the conference are invited to submit abstracts of their proposed papers for consideration by the Program Committee. The length should be no more than 400 words and the abstracts must arrive no later than the 31st March 2006.

For more information: <http://www.worldconference2006.no/>

NEW!! 22-25 October 2006

ISQua's 23rd International Conference, "Improving Healthcare: The Challenge of Continuous Change" (London, UK)

The international society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) invites abstract proposals for brief paper and poster presentations for ISQua's 23rd International Conference on Quality in Health Care.

With the theme of "Improving Healthcare: the Challenge of Continuous Change", this multi-disciplinary quality healthcare program will be of value to all health policy makers, planners, professionals, providers, patients and their representatives.

The focus is to learn together with strong emphasis on delegate exchange and debate, and also on networking together.

Four focal areas have been identified as tracks for the scientific program:

1. Patients
2. Healthcare workforce
3. Improving healthcare
4. Systems.

The Conference language will be English and all abstracts papers are to be provided and presented in English.

Enquiries only by e-mail: isqua@isqua.org, Tel +61 3 9417 6971, Fax +61 3 9417 6851

For further information: ISQua's website: www.isqua.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.

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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
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