



MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE



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I. MENTAL HEALTH EUROPE

MHE NEWS AND POLICY WORK

National Focal Points exchange experience in Prague

Mental Health Europe organized a training for National Focal Points from Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Slovenia on 16-17 June in Prague. This was the last regional National Focal Point (NFP) training in 2011. Participants in Prague engaged in a vivid exchange of their experiences regarding the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing in their countries, volunteering in the mental health field and the EU 2020 Strategy's National Reform Programmes. The event was co-organised by Fokus Prague, MHE's new National Focal Point for the Czech Republic.

At the end of the training, the participants visited the office of Fokus Prague, met the community team and visited a creative workshop for people with mental health problems, as well as a new employment support service where (ex-) users of mental health services get help in applying for jobs. Assistance and advice is also available for people with mental health problems in the first couple of months after having found a job.

All material related to all four MHE's National Focal Points trainings in 2011 will be available at: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/publications/reports-from-mhe-seminars-and-other-mhe-events.html>

For information on the training and on MHE's work with its National Focal Points, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org

MHE National Focal Points analyze National Reform Programmes and find disappointing results

According to the European Commission's guidelines for the EU Member States, the promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty should be incorporated into the annual National Reform Programmes which Member State have to submit on a yearly basis to the Commission. Moreover, civil society should be involved in the elaboration of the National Reform Programmes. Mental Health Europe and its National Focal Points have conducted an analysis of the National Reform Programmes, focusing on whether they met these requirements. The results were overwhelmingly disappointing. In a press release published prior to the European Council Meeting on 24 June 2011, where country-specific recommendations were to be adopted, Mental Health Europe urged the European and national leaders to grant equal footing to social inclusion and cohesion in EU policies and to ensure a better involvement of civil society representatives such as social NGOs in the development of the National Reform Programmes.

To read MHE's press release: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases.html>

To read MHE's full analysis on the National Reform Programmes 2011: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>

Link to the country-specific recommendations 2011: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/tools/monitoring/recommendations_2011/index_en.htm

For information on MHE's work with in the area of social inclusion, please contact Astrid Mechel, MHE Social Policy Officer, at astrid.mechel@mhe-sme.org

MHE President works with WHO for new mental health strategy

On May 9-10, MHE President Nace Kovac participated in the first meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO) Working Group on the European Mental Health Strategy, which took place in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

WHO is preparing a new EU mental health strategy, due to be submitted in September 2011, at the request of the regional director. WHO representatives believe that although past documents such as World Health Report recommendations and the Helsinki declaration and action plan were successfully introduced into national mental health policies and legislation, in the last years both the approach to mental health and mental health care have evolved. During the discussion, topics addressing challenges for mental health in the European Region were addressed, along with the possibility of integrating them in the strategy. The conclusions addressed the purpose of the strategy, such as creating a framework for action, the need for a clear monitoring and implementation process, cooperation between different sectors, user involvement and accessibility.

Participants agreed that the vision of the European mental health strategy and its strategic objectives should be coherent with the WHO European Health strategy Health 2020. Working subgroups, discussing specific objectives, agreed to several key principles underpinning the upcoming strategy. Persons with mental health problems being able to act as full citizens whose human rights should be respected and promoted was one of the objectives, along with the availability of safe and effective mental health services for all.

The next meeting of the working group will take place in September/October 2011.

MHE discusses human rights abuses in Russia

Human rights abuses and the appalling conditions in institutions for people with mental health problems in Russia topped the agenda of the "Respect for Human Rights in Closed Establishments of Russia" seminar, organized for members of the Council of Europe Conference of International NGOs in Yekaterinburg.

MHE senior policy adviser Elisabeth Muschik took part in the conference, aimed at improving cooperation between NGOs and public authorities in the Russian Federation in order to strengthen the role of civil society in public life and policy making, creating favourable conditions for NGO initiatives in fields as human rights, democracy, civil society, social cohesion and equality and promoting the participation of Russian civil society representatives in European processes.

The participants discussed problems in human rights protection, the cooperation of human rights organisations and the role of law enforcement in promoting respect for human rights. They also suggested improving public control in closed establishments.

Liubov Vinogradova, the executive director of the "Independent Psychiatric Association of Russia described the very poor conditions in psychiatric establishments, highlighted the lack of medical staff in the overcrowded hospitals and deplored the lack of new legislation.

Ms. Muschik was asked to speak especially about the development of psychiatric reform programmes and share experiences of civil society actors being able to change the situation in psychiatric clinics. She described the situation in psychiatric hospitals in Austria, especially in Vienna after the 2nd world-war and the 1960s. She spoke about the structures and the establishment of public mental health-care institutions and NGOs and the relationship between public and community care institutions. Ms Muschik described the cooperation between local, regional, national and European level.

At the end of the conference the participants developed a memorandum, whose main points were forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow on the next day.

MHE helps prepare first national user conference in Portugal

Mental Health Europe Board member Vicente Ibañez-Rojo represented MHE at the preliminary meeting of the First National Conference of Users and Carers, on June 3 in Lisbon. The conference, planned for the last semester of 2011, is organized by the Advisory Commission for the Participation of Users and Carers (CCPUC), a body of (ex-) users of mental health services, and carer representatives. The CCPUC provides support and advice in the field of user, carer and community participation, development of NGO's, self-help networks and advocacy.

During the meeting, Marta Ferraz, the CCPUC Coordinator, presented the Portuguese National Mental Health Plan, the situation of mental health resources and deinstitutionalization in the country, along with a proposed plan for the Conference. Both ENUSP Board member Debra Shulkes and Mr. Rojo gave valuable input on the conference topics and proposed new ideas and speakers. The Conference will address the recovery process for people with mental health problems, advocacy and human rights, alternative models for community care and social participation, user involvement in mental health services and the UN Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities.

MHE gives key recommendations for Polish EU Presidency

On July 1, 2011, Poland will take up the rotating Presidency of the European Union for the next six months. Mental Health Europe provided the Presidency with key policy recommendations, urging the Polish leaders to remember EU's most vulnerable citizens and to take charge in further shaping social policy. In view of the upcoming EU Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being, Mental Health Europe encouraged the Polish Presidency to use this momentum to improve the lives of the most excluded groups in society, such as people with mental health problems.

To read MHE's press release on the Polish Presidency, go to: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases.html>

The full MHE recommendation paper for the Polish Presidency is available at: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>

MHE Consults with UN Rapporteur on violence against women

MHE participated in a Regional Consultation meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms. Rashida Manjoo, who presented her mandate and gathered information from EU NGOs about violence against women in Europe.

The meeting, organised by the European Women's Lobby and UN Women, was an opportunity for 27 EU organisations to meet and discuss the issue of violence against women at European level, and provide information about the regional situation to the UN Rapporteur. Participants had the opportunity to express the main challenges they identified at European level, where MHE raised the need to translate policy and law into concrete action and the need of a framework to ensure that there is law enforcement.

Ms Manjoo reiterated that all forms of violence against women are human rights violations, which are not negotiable, even in time of crisis, and that all governments have an obligation to

take reasonable action to prevent, protect against, prosecute, punish and provide redress for violence against women.

The Special Rapporteur presented the 2011 Report "Violence against women, its causes and consequences" which examines intersecting forms of discrimination in the context of violence against women, and provides a conceptual framework. It also considers inter-gender and intra-gender differences, arguing that the one-size-fits-all programmatic approach is insufficient for combating gender-based violence. Even though all women are at risk of experiencing violence, not all women are equally susceptible to acts of violence. The report proposed a holistic approach to conceptualizing and addressing the issue by considering human rights as universal, interdependent and indivisible, situating violence against women as a continuum, acknowledging the structural aspects and factors of discrimination and analyzing social and/or economic hierarchies between women and men and also among women.

Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women (May 2011)
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A-HRC-17-26.pdf>

For more information on MHE's work on gender issues, please contact MHE Daphne Project Coordinator Karina Huberman at karina.huberman@mhe-sme.org

MHE representative tackles mental health in the workplace

MHE Senior Policy Adviser Elisabeth Muschik gave a thought-provoking presentation at the "Health, Well-being and Safety in the Workplace: Raising the Bar Across Europe" conference, organized by the Centre for Parliamentary Studies on May 25. The participants, mostly from northern-European countries came together to exchange experiences and to discuss health and well-being-issues at work. They presented the outcomes of different evaluation studies addressing themes such as "The potential Impact on Health of the Most Common Occupational Illnesses in the EU" and "Aspects of the Ageing Population and the Impact of Extending Working Life."

Risk-assessment frameworks and accident-prevention at work, were also on the agenda, along with ways to improve safety and health standards in Europe.

Ms. Muschik's presentation focused on the basic needs of individuals, and how these needs can be fulfilled through "measurable criteria," particularly in workplace settings. She pointed out that mental health is an important indicator of the quality of work and the quality of social cohesion in Europe.

Workshop on the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing

The European Commission has identified active and healthy ageing as a societal challenge common to all European countries, and an area which presents considerable potential for Europe to lead the world in providing effective and innovative responses.

After setting up a steering group, three workshops aiming at specific issues regarding active and healthy aging were prepared. MHE, represented by Senior Policy Adviser Stijn Jannes, was invited to the workshop dealing with Independent living, Active and Healthy Ageing, which took place on June 15.

The objective of the workshop was to bring together a maximum number of 30 stakeholders, including demand and supply side actors such as health and care professionals, patient organisations, industry, older people organisations, academia, and policy-makers from local to regional to national level to come up with concrete suggestions that could be taken up by the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing.

The workshop was meant to be very operational, leading to a limited number of concrete actions supported by specific objectives. The actions would later be submitted to the Steering Group in order to help them prepare the Partnership's Strategic Implementation Plan.

The European Commission will analyse the strategic implementation plan, and will present its views and proposals in a Communication to Council and Parliament before the end of 2011.

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

MHE supports universal voting rights

Human rights organizations and people with mental health problems want to fully participate in political decision-making and do not accept their voting rights to be restricted, said European NGOs in a meeting organized by the Mental Disability Advocacy Center in Venice on June 15. The message was aimed at the Venice Commission, the advisory body of the Council of Europe on constitutional matters. The coalition of NGOs participating at the event included European Disability Forum, International Disability Alliance, Inclusion-Europe and MHE. The

NGOs released a joint statement which was sent to the members of the Venice Commission, and was also presented by MDAC director Oliver Lewis at the meeting of the commission on Jun 18.

The joint statement can be read on MHE website at http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/political_participation.pdf

For more information about the meeting, please contact MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri at gabor.petri@mhe-sme.org

HELPS final project meeting

MHE staff member Yves Brand participated in the final meeting of the HELPS Project on June 26-28 in Germany. The project, which started in January 2008, culminated with the presentation of its newly-developed toolkit.

Studies from several countries have shown that residents in psychiatric and social care facilities for people with mental health problems, compared with the general population, have a higher prevalence of obesity, hypertension, poor dental health status, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, diabetes and other metabolic disorders as well as several types of cancer. This increases their risk of premature death due to physical illness. At present, there are no specific policies to improve the health status of residents in such facilities.

The HELPS project is a multi-disciplinary European network which addresses these issues, and seeks to gather information and form cost-effective intervention strategies to improve the health status of patients in psychiatric care.

The project brought together researchers, stakeholders, professionals, networks, practitioners and relevant organizations and developed a "physical health promotion toolkit", which is suitable for application in a wide range of mental health care facilities across Europe. The HELPS toolkit intends to empower residents and staff to identify the most relevant risk factors and to define health promotion interventions.

For more information or questions on the HELPS project, please contact MHE Network Development Officer Yves Brand at yves.brand@mhe-sme.org

MHE newsletter summary now in Dutch

The summary of our newsletter will now be available for our Dutch readers as well, due to the great work of one of our volunteers. The summary will be posted on the website along with our German, Spanish and French versions.

For more information on the MHE Newsletter, please contact MHE Information and Communications Officer Silvana Enculescu at silvana.enculescu@mhe-sme.org

UPDATE ON NEW ITEMS ON MHE WEBSITE

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

- Home page - The new poster for 2012 Conference is now online <http://www.mhe-sme.org/>
- Press releases – MHE Published several press releases during the month of June, on the news WHO World Report on Disability, on the Joint Action for Mental Health and Well-being, on the National Reform Programmes and on our Priorities for the Polish Presidency. They are all available at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/mhe-press-releases.html>
- Capacity-building - All the presentations from our capacity-building are now available at http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/capacity_building_2011.html
- MHE Position Papers – The analysis developed by MHE and its National Focal Points regarding the National Reform Programmes, along with the MHE Priorities for the Polish Presidency can be found at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/publications/mhe-position-papers.html>
- Our newsletter summary in Dutch is now available at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/news-and-events/monthly-newsletter.html>

MHE REPRESENTATION AT VARIOUS MEETINGS

On June 1, MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri participated in the Deinstitutionalization Expert Group and Structural Funds Task force, organized in Brussels.

On June 7, MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri took part in the Open Meeting of the Deinstitutionalization Expert Group with the European Commission, Brussels

On June 9, Yves Brand, MHE Network Development Officer, participated in the European Public Health Alliance, Policy Coordination meeting, which took place in Brussels.

On June 9, Yves Brand, MHE Network Development Officer, participated in the European Public Health Alliance Mental Health Working Group, in Brussels.

On June 9-10, MHE Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel attended the Social Platform Networking Visit in Warsaw, Poland.

On June 14, Yves Brand, MHE Network Development Officer, participated in a European Parliament Interest Group on Carers meeting, organized in Brussels.

On June 14, MHE Daphne project Coordinator Karina Huberman attended the Zero tolerance on Domestic Violence: Towards a comprehensive EU-Wide Policy Conference at the Centre for Parliamentary Studies in Brussels.

On June 15, MHE Senior Policy Adviser Stijn Jannes participated in an European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing workshop, which took place in Brussels.

On June 15, MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri took part in a meeting on voting rights of people with "limited mental capacity," organized by the Mental Disability Advocacy Centre, in Venice, Italy.

On June 16, MHE Information and Communications Officer Silvana Enculescu participated in a EurActiv Workshop on Communication Techniques for EU Federations, organized in Brussels.

On June 15-17, MHE Director Mary Van Dievel and Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel organized the National Focal Points Training in Prague, Czech Republic. MHE Senior Policy Advisor Elisabeth Muschik supported them as a moderator.

On June 17, MHE Daphne project Coordinator Karina Huberman participated in the UN Regional consultation meeting with UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Ms Rashida Manjoo, organized in Brussels.

On June 17 MHE Human Rights Officer Gabor Petri took part in a meeting of the Deinstitutionalization Expert Group, organized in Brussels.

On June 18, MHE Daphne project Coordinator Karina Huberman participated in the European Women's Lobby Annual Conference, which took place in Brussels.

On June 22, Yves Brand, MHE Network Development Officer, participated in a Developers Network Lunch Meeting, held at the Social Platform, in Brussels.

On June 22 MHE Director Mary Van Dievel participated in a European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion Stakeholders Dialogue, organized in Brussels.

On June 23-25, MHE Senior Policy Adviser Stijn Jannes attended the 19th International ENMESH conference on "Mental health care in Europe – Learning from differences" in Ulm, Germany and gave a keynote presentation on "Seclusion and forced treatment: how to deal with it from a human rights perspective."

On June 26 – 28, Yves Brand, MHE Network Development Officer, participated in the HELPS project final meeting, which took place in Günzburg, Germany.

On June 28, MHE Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel attended the Disability Intergroup Meeting in the European Parliament in Brussels.

On June 28 MHE Information and Communications Officer Silvana Enculescu participated in the presentation of two reports on deinstitutionalization - "Forgotten Europeans – Forgotten Rights" published by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and "At Home or in a Home – Formal care and adoption of children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia," published by UNICEF – organized in Brussels.

On June 28, MHE Director Mary Van Dievel attended the presentation of the ALCOVE project (Alzheimer Cooperative Vauation in Europe), which took place in Brussels.

On June 28, MHE Director Mary Van Dievel attended the Bi-annual meeting of Social Platform members with Laszlo Andor, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Social Inclusion, organized in Brussels.

On June 29, MHE Senior Policy Adviser Josée Van Remoortel participated in the open meeting of the Deinstitutionalisation Group Task Force, which took place in Brussels.

On June 30 MHE Daphne project Coordinator Karina Huberman took part in a lunch debate on sexual and gender based violence in armed conflicts three years after UN Security Council Resolution 1820, organized by Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in Brussels.

NEWS FROM MHE MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Sto Koluri involves kids in peer assistance programme

In January 2008 Sto Koluri started an ambitious project aimed at integrating children and youth in inter-peer assistance programmes. The participants, mostly secondary school or high-school students, were taught how to work with other children with behavioral disorders or developmental disabilities. As some participants were previously in rehabilitation treatment themselves, the peer assistance programmes helped them reintegrate in the community. Before they started working, the program participants were given trainings on specific mental health programs such as dyslexia, ADHD/ADD, depression or anxiety. They also learned about their rights and were shown how to talk about mental health issues, and how to promote tolerance, while acting against violence, prejudices, and social exclusion.

The motto of the programme is that the earlier one starts talking about mental health problems, inclusion, deinstitutionalization and prejudices, the less problems we will have in the future. The project prompted participants to get involved in remedial teaching, talk about relationships with teachers or families, participate in workshops, to do advocacy and even to edit the first educational website for children. They also took part in several international conferences devoted to children and youth with disabilities.

The programme also had great results promoting mental health among parents. Six months after starting the programme, a large number of parents wanted to find out more about mental health problems and volunteering in the mental health field.

For more information, please contact Maja Sočo at direktorica@stokoluri.org

Institut Wallon questions Internet addiction

MHE member Institut Wallon pour la Sante Mentale has conducted a very important and timely research on problematic uses of the Internet and video games. The published report on the topic consists of two main parts - the first puts information and communication technology (ICT) in its socio-historical context, and the second considers the relationship between ICT and mental health, especially regarding issues of dependency and violence.

The report acknowledges the often misuse of the term "cyberdependence" as a "drug metaphor" because the mechanisms involved in online dependence are not equivalent to the consumption of psychotropic substances. Moreover, the research reveals a problem in defining a clear boundary between what is and what is not "normal" as well as the risk of turning normal social changes into pathology.

The report (in French) is available at: http://www.iwsm.be/pdf_dir/UPTIC.pdf

Advocacy France fights new seclusion law

Mental Health Europe member Advocacy France, together with a great number of other French NGOs have organized a protest on June 15 to refuse the proposal for a new law on seclusion in France. The demonstration was also prompted by a new report issued by the French General Inspection for Social Affairs, which gives a disturbing overview of the situation of French mental hospitals. The report states that more than 10,000 secluded persons ran away from their units in 2010, and that 19 homicides were carried out by secluded patients in the last 5 years. Proposed recommendations for improving the lives of secluded patients included introducing access badges for all staff members in psychiatric hospitals, having separate wards for men and women, and offering women the possibility to lock their rooms. The report also

mentioned a lack of services for children with complex dependency needs, who are hospitalized in wards for adults.

Annual conference of German Dachverband Gemeindepsychiatrie in Leipzig

The German Dachverband Gemeindepsychiatrie will organize its annual conference on September 29-30 in Leipzig, Germany. The conference will be dedicated to the topic "Ambulant instead of stationary – community-based psychiatry shapes the future". Great opportunities still exist for the further development of regional, needs-oriented community-based care, but challenges, such as a menacing increase in prices due to profit-oriented service providers, still need to be tackled. MHE's Senior Policy Advisor Josée Van Remoortel will speak at the conference about community-based psychiatry from a European perspective.

For further information (in German), please contact the Dachverband by e-mail at : dachverband@psychiatrie.dev or visit: http://www.psychiatrie.de/termine/date/29.9._jahrestagung_dvg.html

GGZ Netherlands plans actions against Dutch government budget cuts

The organization GGZ Netherland is planning several actions, including petitions, and a demonstration in The Hague on the June 29 in response to the proposed health budget cuts that are severely targeted at mental health services.

As of June 27 a stop on the admission of new patients will requested. This means that each mental health organization will refuse new patients for 24 hours. People in crisis will be referred to other organizations in the neighborhood. Paul van Rooij, director of GGZ Netherlands, said that "the GGZ does not see any other possibilities other then these hard actions, such as an admission stop." He added that "these actions clarify just how valuable and necessary the mental health care is."

The actions are primarily focused against the increasing costs of mental health care. Moreover, the mental health organizations themselves suffer budget cuts, which prompt them to need to cut down on services and staff. The mental health care sector provides around 10% of the total health care, but now accounts for 35% of the total health budget cuts.

The GGZ emphasized that there are alternative ways to reduce spending in the mental health care sector other than plain budget cuts. Further development of ambulant care, more stimulation of prevention via e-health and less bureaucracy all lead to the same reduction in costs.

More information regarding these action plans can obtained by logging on the webpage of the GGZ Netherlands (dutch version): <http://www.ggznederland.nl/> or by contacting MHE Network Development Officer Yves Brand at yves.brand@mhe-sme.org

Former Director of Swedish Association for Mental Health passed away

Sad news from Sweden - we were informed that Birgitta Nordelius, former Director of the Swedish Association for Mental Health and former Board member of Mental Health Europe, passed away on May 11, 2011. We will remember her as a very committed "European" citizen with a strong interest in mental health matters, during and after her retirement from the Swedish association.

Birgitta was an active member and participated in all MHE's conferences and congresses. She was also very concerned about women's' rights and as such was member of our committee on women's' mental health. She organized a European conference on "Grieve,

bereavement and mental health" in June 1994, which was attended by more than 300 participants from all over Europe.

Birgitta participated in our conference and 25th anniversary celebration last October; she was very happy to be invited and to see some of the "old" Mental Health Europe friends again. As representative of the Swedish Association for Mental Health, she also participated in the National Focal Point session organized in Stockholm in May 2010.

Birgitta was also very interested in travelling, art and culture. She was a member of a high level "Swedish readers club" and art was her second passion.

We would like to send our sincere condolences to her family and friends in Stockholm.

Romanian MHE member Fundatia ESTUAR changes leadership

Ms Amedeea Viorica Enache has been appointed as the new Executive Director at Estuar. Ms Enache has already been working for Estuar as Financial Director for many years. We would like to congratulate her for this appointment. Moreover, Ms Mihaela Mohorea has been appointed the Director for Development and Evaluation. MHE wishes them both the best in their new positions.

II. EU INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER BODIES

New OECD report on long-term care

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD has published a report entitled "Help Wanted? Providing and Paying for Long-term Care." The publication presents the result of a project assessing the role of family carers, care markets and the growing demands for long-term care in the context of ageing societies. The report also discusses the issue of private responsibility and public support in care-giving.

The full report can be obtained via the following link:

http://www.oecd.org/document/23/0,3746,en_2649_37407_47659479_1_1_1_37407,00.html

Council of Europe adopts legal framework on violence against women

On April 7, the Council of Europe adopted its Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which leaves the possibility for EU ratification.

This is the first legally binding instrument in Europe creating a comprehensive legal framework to protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence.

The Convention would apply to all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, both in times of peace and in situations of armed conflict.

The Council Convention defines violence against women as a violation of human rights, and states that culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called "honour" will not be regarded as justification of any act of violence covered by the scope of the Convention.

Should the EU join the Convention, all provisions of the Convention for which the EU has a competence would become EU law.

The Convention is opened for signature since May 2011. It will enter into force after ten ratifications are received, including eight Member States.

For more information, go to:

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/HTML/DomesticViolence.htm>

Fundamental Rights Agency releases Annual Report – useful chapters on mental health issues

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) has issued its flagship annual report „*Fundamental rights: challenges and achievements in 2010*“. The report examines the progress of the EU and Member States in fulfilling their obligations under the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. The document also provides valuable information on EU-members' legislative work and practices in two areas which are particularly important in the mental health field:

- Equality and non-discrimination, found in Chapter 5
- The Participation of EU citizens in the Union's democratic functioning, described in Chapter 7

The whole report can be downloaded from the FRA website:

http://www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/research/publications/publications_per_year/pub-annual-report-2011_en.htm The summary of the report is also available in English, German, French, Hungarian and Polish.

Study on violence against older women reveals most perpetrators were spouses

The AVOW study gathered up-to-date information about violence and abuse in the home setting from five countries - Austria, Belgium, Finland, Lithuania and Portugal. The study included women aged between 60 and 97 years who were living in private households, and only perpetrators who were in the women's close circles were considered.

According to the study, 28,1% of older women had experienced some kind of violence or abuse. Generally, emotional abuse was the most common form of violence experienced (23,6%) followed by financial abuse (8,8%) violation of rights (6,4%) and neglect (5,4%). Sexual abuse (3,1%) and physical violence (2,5%) were the least reported forms.

In most cases, perpetrators were the women's partners or spouses, excepting cases of neglect, where in most cases they were abused by their adult children or children-in-law. The most common effects of violence and abuse were tension, anger, and feelings of powerlessness.

The report is available at

http://www.thl.fi/en_US/web/en/research/projects/avow/outcomes

News from other ENGO's

Mad Pride comes to Brussels in October

Brussels will host this year's European Mad Pride, a peaceful march co-organized by Belgian NGOs UilenSpiegel and Psytoyens, along with the European Network for Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP). Aimed at fighting against the stereotypes associated with mental

health problems, Mad Pride will take place on Saturday, October 8, and will start at 1.30 pm at the Brussels North railway station.

For more information, please email rafael@uilenspiegel.net

Social Platform Networking Visit in Warsaw

The Social Platform, the umbrella organization of European social NGOs, has organized a networking visit and conference in Warsaw, Poland, on June 9-10. European networks and Polish NGO representatives including from several mental health organizations attended the conference. Mental Health Europe was represented by Social Policy Officer Astrid Mechel, who introduced MHE and the organization's mission and vision to the participants. In the plenary session, Jolanta Fedak, the Polish Minister of Labour and Social Affairs presented the Polish EU Presidency priorities related to employment and social affairs and a representative from the Health Ministry outlined the health-related Presidency priorities. Apart from general remarks about disadvantaged groups in the labour market, the mental health aspect was generally neglected. MHE has therefore appealed to the Polish Presidency to take better consideration of these policy fields during their Presidency.

A site visit to the Warsaw Fountain House, an day-center initiative by MHE member Polish Coalition for Mental Health, was also organized. The Clubhouse has an employment and education unit where members search for suitable job offers or training openings. The Clubhouse members can decide themselves how much time they would like to devote to the Clubhouse, and how often they go there. Every Tuesday evening, a social activity is organized, such as music, film, literature or art evenings.

For more information on the Warsaw Clubhouse visit: www.wdpf.org.pl

Wealth, Inequality and Social Polarization in the EU

EAPN has published its new Explainer on the key issue of wealth, inequality and social polarization.

The publication aims to explain what wealth is and how social polarization is currently growing in the EU and worldwide, providing a whole range of statistics on these issues. This is the 3rd in a series of EAPN booklets called Explainers, which set out to "explain" key issues and debates, which are priorities within the EU poverty discourse, in understandable, everyday language.

The Explainers are primarily aimed at people working in civil society organizations, but also at anyone concerned with how to make progress on reducing poverty and social exclusion in the EU.

For more information on the Explainer, please contact sian.jones@eapn.eu

III. EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING 2011

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

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

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

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

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

Stakeholder Conference "The Rights of the Volunteer"

The European Youth Forum (YFJ) will organize a Stakeholder Conference entitled "The Rights of the Volunteer," which will take place in the frame of the Youth Convention on Volunteering, in September. The conference, held in the European Parliament, aims to ensure that the voices of volunteers, their organisations and institutional partners are heard. The conference will conclude with the development of a Declaration on the Rights of the Volunteer. This declaration will be a political call for action, recognizing the need for a volunteering charter and the value of a rights based approach towards volunteering.

For more information, please contact Magdalena Kurz, YFJ Policy Officer for Participation magdalena.kurz@youthforum.org

IV. CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

21st Alzheimer Europe Conference – "European Solidarity without borders" – Warsaw, Poland. October 6-8.

For more information, go to <http://www.alzheimer-europe.org/index.php/EN/Conferences/Warsaw-2011/Detailed-Programme-and-abstracts>

XXVth Congress of the Spanish Association in Neuropsychiatry. Tenerife, Spain. June 6-12, 2012

For more information, please contact Teresa Ibáñez at tibanez@ultramarevents.com

European Youth Forum Stakeholder Conference "The Rights of the Volunteer." Brussels, Belgium. September 7-8

For more information, please contact Magdalena Kurz, YFJ Policy Officer at magdalena.kurz@youthforum.org

2011 World Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health. Cape Town, South Africa. October 17-21

For more information, go to www.wmhc2011.com

Dachverband Gemeindepsychiatrie Annual Conference - "Ambulant instead of stationary – community-based psychiatry shapes the future". Leipzig, Germany. September 29-30.

For further information (in German), please contact the Dachverband by e-mail at : dachverband@psychiatrie.de or visit: http://www.psychiatrie.de/termine/date/29.9._jahrestagung_dvg.html

Horatio (European Psychiatric Nurses) Festival 2012. Stockholm, Sweden. September 20-23, 2012

More information can be found at psykriks.se

All the Conferences and Events announced in the previous issues are available on the MHE website at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/en/news-and-events/forthcoming-events.htm>

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

Please send your contributions to info@mhe-sme.org