

Mental Health Europe News and Policy Work



The MHE Conference in Croatia is just around the corner!

Mental Health Europe is finalizing the last preparations for its 2012 Conference in Split, Croatia, which will take place between June 14-16. MHE has decided to dedicate this Conference to engaging with the social determinants of mental health, in a bid to emphasize the role society plays in both reinforcing and addressing inequalities. The conference, co-organised by MHE and Sto Koluri Split, will bring together experts from all across Europe to present different methods for improving the social environment in schools and workplaces, encouraging

inclusion within the community, and developing strong and supportive networks which can have a positive impact on mental health.

MHE will also host a special satellite symposium for participants from Balkan and Eastern European countries right before the conference. The symposium will address the topic of "Post-traumatic stress disorders and their impact on 2nd and 3rd generations."

For more information, please go to www.mheconference2012.com

Editorial

Dear readers,

I have the impression that the month of May went by very quickly! At the same time, it was filled with events - MHE had the opportunity to deliver presentations at a number of important European conferences, a few of which are summarized in this newsletter.

A lot of resources were also dedicated to the final preparations for the MHE Conference in Split on 14-16 June on the theme of Social Determinants of Mental Health, which will be followed by our General Assembly, where a new Board of Directors will be elected for the three years to come.

Furthermore, MHE lobbying and advocacy work went on successfully this month, as we were able to table amendments to important draft legislations, such as the Health for Growth programme, where we proposed for mental health to be mainstreamed, and the new European statistical programme, where MHE managed to ensure that statistics are disaggregated, in order to have reliable statistics on mental health in a number of areas in the future.

Other fights are still not gained but we will not give up - MHE is joining efforts with a number of European NGOs to ensure that the Structural Funds regulations 2014-2020 will not allow for new large residential institutions to be built with European money.

I look forward to meeting many of you in Croatia!

Maria Nyman, MHE Director

Let's socialize



Highlights

The MHE Conference in Croatia is just around the corner!

MHE presents policy perspective of Dual Diagnoses at EASPD conference

MHE issues recommendations to upcoming Cypriot Presidency



MHE presents policy perspective of Dual Diagnoses at EASPD conference

On May 24-26, the European Organisation of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD), organized an important conference on Dual Diagnosis - persons who live with an intellectual disability but who also have a mental health problem. Attended by some 250 delegates, the conference, which took place in Ljubljana, featured MHE Director Maria Nyman as one of the speakers. Ms Nyman discussed the policy perspective of dual diagnosis.

Held under the patronage of Mr Danilo Turk, President of Slovenia, the event addressed dual diagnoses from various perspectives. The President himself appeared in a video message, stating that Europe needs community-based, user-centered services and support. He also highlighted that fully recognizing mental health as part of health policy is a necessary precondition for effective inclusion in society.

In its presentation, MHE stressed that, on average, one in four persons will experience mental health problems at a certain point in their lives. For persons with intellectual disabilities, however, the number is even higher. There is a link between the lack of adapted support to persons with intellectual disabilities and the high prevalence of mental health

problems in this group. Also the prevalence of prejudices around intellectual disabilities take a high toll on the mental health of this already vulnerable group.

MHE underlined that from a policy perspective, it must be remembered that persons living with dual diagnosis are rights holders, covered under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In particular, equal recognition before the law, including the right to have and exercise legal capacity, the right to choose a place to live and to live independently and included in the community, the right to physical and mental integrity, the right to not be subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment, and to not be deprived of liberty because of a disability are key issues, directly affecting persons with dual diagnosis on a daily basis.

MHE issues recommendations to upcoming Cypriot Presidency

As Cyprus is to assume the Presidency of the Council of the European Union on July 1, 2012, Mental Health Europe (MHE) presented the Cypriot Permanent Representation to the EU and the relevant Cypriot Ministries with our recommendations. During the six months of the Presidency mandate, a number of key policies of relevance to users of mental health

Upcoming events

COFACE Seminar "Reconciling Work and Care Responsibilities: a challenge for family carers."
Brussels, Belgium. June 26, 2012.
For more information, go to http://coface-eu.org/en/upload/09_Events/2012-06-26%20EP%20Event%20programme%20-%20EN.pdf

20th European Social Services Conference "Shaping the Future for Sustainable Social Services: Quality, Performance, Innovation"
Copenhagen, Denmark. June 25-27, 2012.
For more information, go to <http://www.esn-conference.org/programme2-copenhagen>

services and the representative organisations working in the field of mental health will be discussed. Most importantly, the Cypriot Presidency will have a unique opportunity to shape the negotiations around the EU funds for the programming period 2014-2020 – for this reason MHE recommendations focus on a number of funds that have implications to people with mental health problems and organisations working in the field of mental health.

For example, MHE asked the Presidency to ensure that the proposal to ring-fence 20% of the funds towards combating poverty and exclusion will be upheld in the European Social Fund. You can read more about this in our article "Access for people with mental health problems to the European Social Fund still in question."

The full text of our recommendations to the Cyprus Presidency is available at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/MHE%20Recommendations%20to%20Cypriot%20Presidency.pdf>

Slovenia and Belgium train police officers on mental health and domestic violence

As part of the implementation of the pilot trainings developed by the MHE-led Daphne Project "Train, Improve, Reduce" Slovenia and Belgium took their turn in hosting the workshops during the month of May. The

training sessions, covering domestic violence and mental health, were organised by the project partners SENT (Slovenia) and CAW Artevelde (Belgium), and presented an opportunity for police staff to gain a better understanding of the mental health consequences of domestic violence. For many participants, this was the first opportunity to learn about the link between mental health problems and intimate-partner violence. The trainings addressed not only the mental health impact of domestic violence, but also the need for police staff to understand the cycle of domestic violence, in order to both avoid their own frustration when dealing with such cases, and to mitigate the psychological impact they may face when aiding victims of domestic violence.

Access for people with mental health problems to the European Social Fund still in question

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the main EU tool for investment in human capital. During the 2007-2013 programming period, approximately €75 billion will have been distributed among the EU Member states and regions to help millions of Europeans to access employment, acquire new skills to adapt to changing economy and find better jobs. Yet, people furthest away from the labour market, including people with mental health problems, seldom enjoy access to programmes funded by the ESF. Instead, most of the programmes are used by groups that can relatively easily re-enter the labour market.

To solve this problem, the European Commission came up with a proposal in the regulation on the ESF for the new programming period 2014-2020 – to earmark 20% of the funds towards fighting poverty and exclusion, in order to make it easier for excluded

groups to access programmes under the ESF.

Yet, many Member States are against this provision, as they prefer to have more freedom when they agree on priorities for money allocation with the European Commission (this happens on a one-to-one basis in each country). Moreover, many Member States prefer to reduce the overall funding towards the European Social Fund.

Most European-level social NGOs take action to safeguard these proposals, and ensure that they pass as legally binding regulations for the ESF 2014-2020. The European Anti-Poverty Network launched a campaign, which MHE supports, and asks each and single European to sign a petition – also you can do this today by going to [this](#) webpage. At the same time we are involved in actions with relation to the ex-ante conditionalities, which also affect the ESF.

Mental Health Europe lobbies European governments for better use of EU funds

Following the unsatisfactory decision of the Council of the EU which changed the draft regulation on Structural Funds for the 2014+ period and removed assurances that would support deinstitutionalization, Mental Health Europe started lobbying both the European Council and European governments. MHE published a statement, along with other NGOs, in which we asked the Council of the EU to uphold the ex-ante conditionalities relevant to the Structural Funds' support of community-based alternatives to institutional care for children, persons with disabilities and mental health problems. You can read the statement here: <http://www.mhe-sme.org/home.html> Furthermore, MHE sent a letter to all 27 European governments' Permanent Representations to the EU, asking for their support

Website updates

MHE Position Papers - The Mental Health Europe recommendations to the Cypriot Presidency are available at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/MHE%20Recommendations%20to%20Cypriot%20Presidency.pdf>

The Mental Health Europe reaction to the Staff Working Document 'The partnership principle in the implementation of the Common Strategic Framework Funds - elements for a European Code of Conduct on Partnership' can be found at <http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/publications/MHE%20response%20to%20Staff%20Working%20Document%20on%20ECCP.pdf>

and reminding them their legal obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The letter pointed out that "since its ratification the CRPD is legally binding for the EU, including the actions taken in the area of Cohesion Policies. Any retrogressive measures threatening existing rights are not allowed under this convention. Therefore, the new Structural Funds regulations must be at least as ambitious as the regulations for the previous programming period."

MHE National Focal Points in all EU member states were also asked to send the above-mentioned communications to their respective government bodies.

New important materials on community living and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Recently, both the United Nations and Open Society Foundations published reports on the right to community-based living and its relevance in the European Union's regional policies.

The report by the Open Society Foundations features legal

analyses from Queen's Counsel Richard Gordon and examines how the use of Structural Funds to renovate or build institutions is contrary to EU law. Topics discussed in the report include the role of Structural Funds in moving from institutionalization to community living, principles of the UN CRPD, the legal framework for EU Structural Funds and EU obligations with regards to community living. You can find the publication [here](#).

The study of United Nations, developed by the University of Galway, Ireland, analyzes the current proposals for Structural Fund Regulations which will apply during the period 2014-2020. It assesses their compliance with the EU's legal obligations under the UN CRPD and specifically in the context of Article 19 on the right to living independently in the community. The study also reflects on the role the EU Structural Funds played in the past and how the EU should respect its international obligations under the UN CRPD in the post-2014 period. The report can be available at http://www.nuigalway.ie/cdlp/projects/eu_structural_funds.html

MHE provides amendments for the Health for Growth Programme 2014-2020

The draft of the EU Health for Growth Programme 2014-2020, which was released by the European Commission and needs to be adopted by the European Parliament and Council of the European Union, completely disregards mental health, which is a serious financial and political mistake. Mental health is an indispensable factor in achieving adequate health for growth, as the economic consequences of mental health problems are estimated at an average of 3-4% of EU's gross national product. Moreover, mental health problems account for almost 40% of years lived with disability, one in four

Europeans experiencing mental health problems at a certain point in their lives.

Therefore, MHE has raised this issue at the European Parliament and provided amendments to the new proposal in order to ensure that mental health will be emphasized in the proposal that will be the framework for EU health policies for the next seven years.

A legislative proposal for a new Health for Growth Programme has been adopted by the European Commission. This new programme will be the follow up of the previous programme that will end in 2013. The programme will run from 2014-2020 with a proposed budget of €446 million. Currently the proposal of the Commission is discussed by the Council and the European Parliament.

In light of the current economic and financial crisis the new programme focuses on supporting the EU member states in their efforts to reform their health systems by making healthcare services more sustainable and encourage innovation in health, improving public health and by providing protection from cross border health threats.

The MHE amendments especially focus on the recognition that stress and anxiety are important key risk factors to health and well-being; that service provisions for persons with mental health problems are often inadequate and that not including mental health in the programme would ensure that the economic targets set by the Commission will not be reached.

The discussion and voting on the health for growth programme by the Council and Parliament are planned for June.

Join MHE!

Mental Health Europe is a quickly-expanding network of more than 80 organizations operating in the

field of mental health in Europe. Mental Health Europe:

- promotes and supports its member organisations with their developments and their efforts to achieve greater acknowledgement and funding through information, exchange and consultation
- lobbies the European institutions to raise the profile of mental health
- develops recommendations for policies and strategies on mental health issues
- initiates European projects in which member organisations can become involved
- is a forum for exchange of information on health and social policies relevant to the field of mental health and well-being
- offers support in finding partner organisations for collaboration, exchange of knowledge and expertise, and dissemination of good practices
- increases awareness of mental health and mental well-being, and campaigns for important mental health issues
- organizes meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences
- publishes a newsletter and produces briefings and reports
- provides up-to-date information on mental health issues on its website

MHE members have joined our network:

- to find and maintain contacts with other associations involved in mental health
- to have access to information that is regularly updated by a Brussels-based network
- to ensure opportunities to participate in policymaking at the European level
- to exchange examples of good practice, policy and legislation
- To afford consultation as a partner in European projects

If you would like to take advantage of the many benefits of becoming an MHE member, please write MHE at secretariat@mhe-sme.org

Czech Republic condemned for using cage beds in psychiatric hospitals

The Committee against Torture (a body of the United Nations established under the Convention Against Torture which monitors its implementation) has issued its concluding observations about Czech Republic, following the Committee's last meeting in May 2012. The Committee has called on the Czech Republic to prohibit the use of cage and net beds. It also

requires the Czech Republic to speed up de-institutionalisation, make "free and informed consent" the basis for all treatment and "institutionalisation", and to establish independent monitoring, complaints mechanisms, training and investigations into deaths. Prior to the meeting of the Committee, European Network of (ex)-Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and European Disability Forum sent a report to the Committee about the deaths and torture of people in Czech

psychiatric institutions. ENUSP also sent two psychiatric torture survivors to testify before the Committee in Geneva.

The Czech Republic has one year in which to implement the measures required by the Committee. It must report back to the Committee in June 2013.

For more information, read the concluding observations at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/cats48.htm> or contact Gabor Petri, MHE Human Rights Officer, at gabor.petri@mhe-sme.org.

Do you wish to share information, make an announcement or contribute to the MHE Newsletter? Do you have thoughts on the content or the layout of our publication? We would love to hear from you!

Please send your opinions or contributions to silvana.enculescu@mhe-sme.org