

EuroHealthNet Technical Working Group (TWIG)

Mental Health

I. MH-TWIG Purpose and objectives

The Technical Working Group on Mental Health (MH-TWIG) has been established by EuroHealthNet to support its members' and partners' work in the area of mental health and well-being through active communication and exchange on national, regional, local and EU policies and projects. The MH-TWIG will provide an opportunity for experts working in EuroHealthNet member and partner organisations to discuss their work and specific initiatives in the areas of mental health, including the links with physical health and social inequalities. The discussions will focus on EU-level policy developments in these areas and how partners can benefit from, and contribute to, a wide range of European initiatives.

By joining this TWIG, experts will have access to:

1. Specific updates from EuroHealthNet's news and information gathering service on developments in EU or WHO Europe policies, programmes and events;
2. Opportunities to inform and advise EuroHealthNet inputs into relevant EU policy, legislation and programmes;
3. Networking and sharing information on what works for implementing steps towards improving mental health in Europe;
4. Opportunities to publicise and promote work being done in their countries, communities and regions or to request help to meet needs or build capacities.

At the 2015 EuroHealthNet General Council and Annual Meeting, the following topics were suggested for TWIG discussions and exchanges:

1. Issues of mental health in specific groups, such as women, immigrants, LGBT, single parents or persons with eating disorders;
2. The elaboration of comprehensive health promotion strategies in which mental health is not excluded from other non-communicable diseases;
3. Mental health prevention programmes and interventions that have been methodologically tested and evaluated.

The mental Health TWIG can be an opportunity to exchange information, to use the expertise of EuroHealthNet partners on tackling mental health issues and, in particular, capture learning from innovative policy approaches.

The Mental Health TWIG has been established to support:

1. *The EU Compass for Action on Mental Health and Well-being, a tool for sharing information on mental health situations and activities across the EU, and the DG SANTE consortium, of which EuroHealthNet is a member, which is in charge of improving it and taking it forward;*
2. *The WHO Europe Mental Health Action Plan, endorsed by all European member states but not fully implemented by all;*
3. *The EU pact for mental health and well-being, focusing on the thematic areas of mental health in workplace settings, combating stigma and social exclusion, mental health in older people, prevention of depression and suicide, mental health in youth and education;*
4. *The EU strategy for Health and Safety at work 2014-2020, particularly in implementing the recommendation of identifying and disseminating good practice on preventing mental health problems at work;*
5. *The Joint Action on Mental Health and Well Being;*
6. *The EU-OSHA campaign on mental health in the workplace. Earlier this year, EuroHealthNet organised a roundtable on mental health in the workplace. A summary of this roundtable and the presentations that were given are available [here](#).*

II. **MH-TWIG Next Steps in 2015**

TWIG participants will soon be contacted to discuss the European Alliance for Mental Health in all Policies and to involve experts in the work of the EU Mental Health Compass.

For further information, please contact Claudia Marinetti: c.marinetti@eurohealthnet.eu

III. Terms of Reference

1. Establishment

A Technical Working Group (TWIG) on Mental Health has been established by the EuroHealthNet Executive Board (EB) with the following objectives:

- (a) To encourage and support thematic collaborations by participants of EuroHealthNet;
- (b) To exchange evidence-based content which may be used for policy, advocacy, project and events purposes;
- (c) To exchange experiences and collect good practices by members and partners and highlight these at EU level;
- (d) To increase awareness and analyse specific European developments in more detail, identify opportunities for collective action and work together on common positions and activities.

2. Accountability

Performance of all TWIGs shall be reviewed annually by the EB. Activities of every TWIG shall be reported to the annual meeting of the General Council, which is responsible for all final decisions on the Annual Work Programme and may vote to continue, redefine the mandate or terminate any TWIG.

3. Participation

Any member or partner body of EuroHealthNet may apply to be part of any TWIG if it wishes. This is voluntary, not compulsory. All members and partners shall be informed of the establishment of all TWIGs upon joining the partnership and annually. The lead contact person for each EuroHealthNet member or partner will be asked to suggest qualified experts in his/her institution who wish to participate. This shall be done separately for each TWIG. More than one expert from each institution in the EuroHealthNet partnership may participate in a group, but it is suggested that a maximum of five people from any one institution should be in any one TWIG. This may include the institution's lead contact person.

Contact details (name, position, organisation, telephone number and email address) shall be provided to the EuroHealthNet office. Any participant may leave the TWIG(s) at any time by providing a written (email) resignation.

4. Rights and benefits

All participants will receive occasional updates from the secretariat on matters relevant to the specific theme of the TWIG. All participants will be included in an online Mental Health

TWIG mailing list and may share and discuss issues with other participants or request information from them.

Requests will be circulated for comments and inputs on matters for which EuroHealthNet may wish to provide evidence or to generate inputs, for example for EU or WHO consultations, in publications and documents, or for project preparations.

Comments may be provided directly to the secretariat, without public attribution if necessary, and may be shared with other participants or used publicly. Please note that EuroHealthNet habitually uses a standard disclaimer on collective submissions, which clarifies that any member body may choose to vary its own submission.

Online discussions, telephone and video conferences or webinars may be organised by the office or in collaboration with TWIG participants. The Executive Board shall consider requests for convening an annual TWIG meeting with a specific agenda as part of the EuroHealthNet annual meeting or in other events, subject to available resources.

Participants may submit suggestions for topics for joint consideration, or to inform the group of sectoral or geographical initiatives, changes, needs or opportunities.

Participants may initiate the consideration of subjects or items, but may not mandate work by the office or commit resources beyond what has been agreed by the Managing Director and Executive Board as part of the work programme.

5. Commitment and roles

Initially, each TWIG will gather and share information on its subject as set out above. However the aim is to develop towards groups of collective expertise which will proactively develop position statements, anticipate needs and opportunities, be a reliable source of content input and contribute towards achievement of the EuroHealthNet Business Plan and its Strategic Development plan to 2020.

Once critical mass is achieved in an individual TWIG, with at least ten participants from at least five different states, the EB may call for a Convenor to be nominated and elected by TWIG participants to lead the setting of agendas and chairing discussions. The Convenor will also be able to make public statements on behalf of the collectively-agreed positions of the TWIG, but only when a majority of all participants is achieved. The Convenor would be invited to meetings of the EB where the specific TWIG remit and activities are considered and to the Annual Meeting of EuroHealthNet. The secretariat and convenors will remain accountable to the EB and General Council as above.