

European Alliance on Mental Health in All Policies

Action plan 2015 - 2016

Introduction

In 2013, a few organisations started an initiative to set the mental health of the working population on the European agenda. Two years later, the initiative has led to a dynamic of joint interests and actions in a European Alliance for Mental Health in all Policies. Partners in the Alliance emphasize the value of good mental health for the society, economy and individuals and have the ambition to incorporate these insights in their own policies and actions. The partners now focus on mental health at schools, the workplace and in relation to employability as these are areas in which still much progress needs to be made.

To improve the current situation on mental health in Europe, there is amongst others a need to:

- Ensure the right on access to mental health care across the European Union.
- Prevent, detect and treat psychosocial problems in an early stage, e.g. through regular screening of schoolchildren and employees on mental resilience and mental health problems.
- Scale up successful innovative approaches to mental health promotion at work, labour market retention and (re-)integration of people with mental health problems to competitive work.
- Build cross-sectorial alliances in the spirit of “Health in All Policies” to develop and to implement effective long-term mental health strategies and to influence socio-economic determinants to keep people living in European communities healthy, active and productive as long as possible.

Alliance actions

For the next two years, the Alliance partners will work together on the actions below to address the needs above.

Implementation programme

The case is clear. Using existing evidence- and practice-based knowledge alone would add enormous value to the European economy and to people living in Europe. The European Implementation Program for Mental Health weighs the existing fragmented knowledge and evidence, breaks it down and makes it accessible, suitable and useful for mental healthcare professionals and policy developers.

This programme should include:

- an inventory of available information and evidence of the benefits of mental health prevention, promotion and care, including the business cases for enterprises of all sizes.
- a shared ambition on mental health management, including prevention, detection and treatment of psychosocial and mental disorders;
- a specific mission for (mental health) care professionals, social partners (employers, employees) and decision makers in national, regional and local authorities.

In 2015, the Alliance will make a first draft of the programme and consult other European stakeholders. The next step is to secure funding for the execution of this programme as of 2016.

To avoid any duplication and to strengthen similar initiatives, the Alliance will cooperate as close as possible with DG Santé, the project leaders of the European Compass on Mental Health and other on-going European projects in the field of mental health at the workplace.

To become a reference in terms of mental health in Europe, the Alliance will work closely with the European Institutions, OECD, EU-OSHA, and Eurofound.

Societal benefits of mental health

Already, several European and national studies have emphasized the economic burden of ill mental health. As there is no need to duplicate this research, the Alliance will only concentrate the efforts to bring these results under the attention of all relevant stakeholders.

European semester

Partners will lobby in Europe and Member States to make mental health prevention and promotion and accessible, affordable community based mental health care of good quality part of the country specific recommendations in the European semester.

Consultations

In order to influence the European agenda and the European policies on mental health in general and mental well-being under the working population in particular, the partners of the alliance coordinate their inputs to consultations and policy proposals as relevant.

Publicity

The Alliance will present itself for the first time to a selected group of stakeholders on the European level at the meeting of the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being (Helsinki, May 12th 2015). For a wider audience, the Alliance will organize a launch event at the 10th EPHA Annual Conference on September 3rd 2015.

In between, members of the Alliance will participate in and contribute to various events and meetings to reach out to stakeholders.

Expanding the network

To be effective, the Alliance should expand beyond the traditional health domain. The Alliance will build partnerships with European representatives of social partners (employers, employees), social and housing services, banking, insurances and income providers (employee and disability benefits) and research institutes and research funders in mental health and any other stakeholder that could benefit from and be of benefit to the Alliance.

Efforts of individual Alliance members

The Alliance will not only act as a group of organisations. In addition, every partner will organise own activities on mental health in all policies or incorporate a mental health perspective in its policies.

AEIP will address mental health in its upcoming working groups.

- The Taskforce Employment discussed employability for people with mental disorders on the 25th of March 2015. *MHE* and *GGZ Nederland* contributed to this meeting.
- The Taskforce Healthcare of June 17th 2015 will discuss data protection as a barrier for prevention and promotion strategies in (mental) health. This in collaboration with *EPHA*.
- Where the Construction sector working group emphasizes the physical health and safety of construction workers, it will link physical and mental health in the meeting in October 2015. *AIEP* will draw on projects done by members of *AIM* in this field.
- A roundtable on Mental Health of the *AEIP* Annual Conference of 2015.

Mental health is a major topic of the working group on prevention and disease management of *AIM*. One of the ideas is to create 3 to 4 pilot projects in various regions in Europe. In these regions, mutual health insurers work together with other stakeholders (local governments, employers) to:

- identify practical problems to mental health in all policies from a payers point of view;
- assess the impact on value and costs of mental health and physical health (care);
- clarify if these barriers are system-dependent or not and to identify solutions in both cases;
- enable members to make a business case for prevention and promotion/disease management.

Together, *AEIP* and *AIM* published a position paper on mental health from an insurers' point of view on May 5th 2015.

EPHA will emphasize the equality of physical and mental health in its policies and positions on health systems, equity and lifestyles. An example is *EPHA*'s report on the impact of the economic crisis on mental health of the child and adolescent population in Europe. *EPHA* will also develop a project to integrate mental health prevention and promotion into the European Semester process of 2016.

MHE will continue to focus its core work on mental health, and strive towards its mainstreaming into all relevant EU policies. The implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a key priority this year, as the CRPD committee currently reviews the EU. An empowerment seminar for users will be carried out. *MHE* will continue to contribute to multi-stakeholder dialogue, ensuring that mental health is fully part of the discussions and policy initiatives within the European Platform Against Poverty, the Joint Action on Mental Health and the Group of Governmental Experts on MH and that the social model is respected in this sense. *MHE* will also organise several learning and knowledge exchange opportunities for European mental health leaders.

GGZ Nederland will continue its existing efforts on mental health in policies.

- The covenant with the National Employee Benefits Agency (UWV) aims to develop a working relationship between regional agencies of the UWV and mental health care providers to help clients as much as possible with job retention or to promote an optimal reintegration process.
- *GGZ Nederland* also joined EuroHealthNet's Phase Network. In this network, *GGZ Nederland* will share knowledge and experiences on (public) mental health with other members of EuroHealthNet (national public health organisations).

In general, the partners will strengthen each other on the mental health issues that are within the scope of the Alliance. They will share knowledge, experiences and networks with partners and consult partners on these topics.

More information

For more information on the alliance and its activities, please contact one of the spokespersons of the participating organisations:

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