

Brussels, 25th September 2011

Greece - Augmentation of 40% of rate suicide

The Greek Minister for Health - Andeas Loverdos - reported that suicides in the first 5 months of 2011 may have increased 40% compared to the same period in 2010. The report states that most of these suicides are connected to the financial crisis. According to the same report, the suicide helpline received last year 4 times more telephone calls than previous years most of which had to do with the financial crisis. The region of Athens is highest for suicides followed by Crete.

Already, last July, the BBC reported a study suggesting that the financial crisis "almost certainly" led to an increase in suicides across Europe. The analysis by US and UK researchers found a rise in suicides was recorded among working age people from 2007 to 2009 in nine of the 10 nations studied. The increases varied between 5% and 17% for under 65s after a period of falling suicide rates, The Lancet reported. The report came after a BBC investigation earlier this year found there had been a rise in anti-depressant prescribing during the financial crisis. Prescriptions for drugs such as Prozac rose by more than 40% over the past four years with GPs saying more and more people were coming to them with money worries.

EuroHealthNet director Clive Needle added *"This shows policymakers in EU states and institutions need to act now for mental and physical wellbeing in national and EU policies: starting right at the top with the EU 2020 process. It is not good enough to just go for growth and hope recessions do not recur – they are cyclical and systemic. We know enough now to act to support individual and community resilience – as the example of Austria shows, to make economies work for people not vice versa. We call on the EC to urgently review its core economic and social programmes for this decade to protect and promote wellbeing – the health of people comes before business profits."*

The report of the Social Protection Committee on the social dimension of the EU2020 strategy confirms this consideration when it underlines: "It remains difficult to evaluate the specific impact of the crisis compared to other possible factors or already existing health trends. However, Member States have identified negative impacts of the crisis on citizens' mental health status, notably in the following areas: depression, anxiety, increased alcohol consumption and suicidal behaviours. In some Member States particularly affected by the crisis provisional data show a clear and very worrying increase in suicides.

To access information delivered by the Greek Health Minister, click [here](#).

To access the BBC report, click [here](#).