

## EU Policy and Practice

### *Mental health promotion moving up the agenda*

This is a time of significant policy developments in mental health promotion within the EC, WHO Europe and individual countries (WHO 2004a; WHO 2004b; Jane Llopis and Anderson 2006). Mental health promotion now has a much higher status on the policy agenda and colleagues in many countries are using European commitment to 'mental health for all' to develop or strengthen national policy and action to promote mental well-being.

World Health Organization. (2004a). *Prevention of mental disorders: Effective interventions and policy options, Summary Report*. A report of the World Health Organization, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in collaboration with the Prevention Research Centre of the Universities of Nijmegen and Maastricht. Geneva: World Health Organization  
[http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/evidence/en/prevention\\_of\\_mental\\_disorders\\_sr.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/prevention_of_mental_disorders_sr.pdf)

World Health Organization, (2004b). *Promoting mental health: Concepts, emerging evidence, practice :summary report*. A Report from the World Health Organization, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in collaboration with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and The University of Melbourne. Geneva, WHO  
[http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/evidence/en/promoting\\_mhh.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/evidence/en/promoting_mhh.pdf)

### *WHO European Declaration and Action Plan*

<http://www.euro.who.int/document/mnh/edoc07.pdf>  
<http://www.euro.who.int/document/mnh/edoc06.pdf>

The WHO European ministerial conference on mental health, in Helsinki, brought together all 52 countries in the European region of the WHO. Organised in partnership with the European Union and the Council of Europe, the conference's declaration and action plan will drive the policy agenda on mental health for the coming years. (WHO 2005)

The action plan sets out the details of commitments and responsibilities of both the WHO and national governments. It has 12 priority areas, with a strong public mental health focus, including:

- promotion of mental wellbeing
- incorporation of mental health as a vital part of public health policy
- reduction of stigma and discrimination
- prevention of mental ill health and suicide
- access to good primary health care.

It stresses the need for "mental health activities capable of improving the well-being of the whole population, preventing mental health problems and enhancing the inclusion and functioning of people experiencing mental health problems."

## EC Social Agenda and Green Paper

The European Commission's new Social Agenda, part of the revamped Lisbon Strategy, focuses mainly on jobs and growth, with two key priorities: prosperity and solidarity.

While the Council of Europe's *European Convention on Human Rights*

(<http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/COE-EuropeanHumanRightsConvention.pdf>) has

been crucial in addressing abuses in mental health services, it is the EC's economic growth agenda that is influencing new trends in mental health policy.<sup>1</sup> This is evident in

the weight attached to economic arguments: *the mental health of the European*

*population is a resource ... to put Europe back on the path to long-term prosperity*

European Commission (2005) Communication from the Commission on the Social

Agenda

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/social\\_policy\\_agenda/social\\_pol\\_ag\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/social_policy_agenda/social_pol_ag_en.html)

European Commission (2005) *Green Paper: Improving the mental health of the*

*population. Towards a strategy on mental health for the EU* Brussels: Health and

Consumer Protection Directorate General

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/mental/green\\_paper/mental\\_gp\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/green_paper/mental_gp_en.pdf)

The Commission will publish the results of the consultation together with - if appropriate - its proposal for a strategy on mental health for the EU. This is expected by the end of 2006. The consultation process closes on 31 May 2005, and responses to the Green Paper should be sent to [mental-health@cec.eu.int](mailto:mental-health@cec.eu.int).

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## EC funded projects

The EC funds a wide range of projects specifically concerned with mental health promotion and/or prevention, largely through activities under the EU Public Health Programme 2003-2008<sup>2</sup> within the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection

European Commission/Stakes (2004) Action for Mental Health Activities co-funded fr

European Community Public Health Programmes 1997-2004 Luxembourg: European Commiss

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/mental/docs/action\\_1997\\_2004\\_en.f](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/docs/action_1997_2004_en.f)

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<sup>1</sup> The Council of Europe is a law based body with 46 members, including all 25 EU countries.

<sup>2</sup> Decision No 1786/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 adopting a programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008). Official Journal L 271, 09.10.2002