

Breaking the Link between Mental Health and Labour Exclusion in Europe:

Towards an EU-Wide Action Plan



Wednesday 16th May 2012

The Silken Berlaymont Hotel,
Brussels

"An International Symposium for gathering knowledge, discussing the latest challenges and sharing best practices in the field of mental health in Europe."

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Overview

Mental ill-health accounts for almost 20% of illnesses in Europe and mental health problems affect one in four people at some point in their life. Nine of the ten countries with the highest rates of suicide in the world are in the European region. Mental illnesses are a major cause of death, disability and economic burden worldwide and the World Health Organisation predicts that by 2020, depression will be the second leading contributor to the global burden of disease across all ages. People suffering from mental health problems face various challenges related to unemployment and social exclusion as a result of their mental state.

Furthermore, mental health problems have become one of the leading causes of work absenteeism and early retirement across the European Region with a recent OECD report stating that one in five people of working age suffers from a mental disorder. The current economic recession and its effects on the job market are likely to add to the problems in employment and quality of life experienced by people with mental health problems and their families. The workplace plays a central role in the social inclusion of people with mental health problems.

Mental health has increasingly become recognised as an issue that impacts the whole of society, and not just those suffering from the effects. As such, EU policies have aimed to address mental health and well-being in terms of public health and social inclusion. The **European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being** in 2008 prioritised mental well-being as a major issue by acknowledging its benefits for the EU, Member States and citizens. The economic repercussions of mental health problems are significant for the society as a whole with individuals having to rely on social care services. This has a wider impact when mental ill health leads to work absenteeism or the inability to find employment.

It is necessary to raise awareness of the stigma and discrimination that are attached to mental health problems as in many cases individuals with such problems are considered disabled. This prevents and limits the understanding of society to such issues and the needs of people with mental health problems.

This International Symposium provides an invaluable opportunity to highlight the link between mental ill-health, social exclusion and exclusion from the labour market. Much is now known about what works in mental health promotion, prevention, care and treatment but the challenge now lies in implementing this knowledge. It is essential to raise awareness of mental health and well-being in order to prevent immense social and economic losses and provide recommendations for future policy actions.

The Symposium will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate with local and regional practitioners and policymakers at EU level.

“ Work is fundamental to improving the quality of life of people with mental health problems. However, such people need to be able to work without fear of stigma, discrimination or prejudice. This means that everyone should be aware of their legal rights. Avoidable risks and causes of stress need to be reduced in order to create healthier workplaces that also offer flexible work arrangements.

Among other things, the final study report suggests that training, advice and support services – including a helpline – are offered to employers, human resource managers and line managers to assist them in dealing with employees who have mental health problems. The report also recommends that those with mental health problems are offered individual coaching and are supported at work”

- Eurofound, Impact Assessment of Mental Health on Employment, 2011

Venue and Accommodation

**The Silken Berlaymont Hotel,
11-19, Boulevard Charlemagne
1000 Brussels - Belgium**

Through our partnership with the Silken Berlaymont Hotel we are pleased to be able to offer our delegates specially negotiated accommodation rates. These discounted room rates are subject to availability and are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.



Why Attend?

- ✓ Discuss existing approaches to mental health and social inclusion
- ✓ Delineate a consistent EU-wide action plan that is conducive to the needs of people with mental health problems in Europe
- ✓ Explore how to tackle discrimination against people with mental health problems and ensure equal opportunities in the workplace
- ✓ Analyse and exchange effective programmes to meet mental health needs of employees

Who Should Attend?

- HR Professionals
- Occupational Health Professionals
- Organisational Development Professionals
- Central Government Departments/Agencies
- Health and Safety Managers
- Training Managers
- Recruitment Professionals
- Employment Agencies
- Employment Training/Skills Organisations
- Equal Opportunities Officers
- Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Practitioners
- Disability Practitioners
- Employee Relations Advisers
- Legal Advisers
- Campaigning Organisations
- Local Authority Officers and Councillors
- Private Sectors Employers
- Public Sector Employers
- Small Business Owners
- Regulatory Bodies
- Citizen's Advice
- Third Sector Practitioners
- Trade Union Representatives
- Mental Health Practitioners
- Mental Health Commissions
- Mental Health Centres
- Psychiatric Organisations
- Institutes of Psychiatry and Neurology
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Welfare Rights Organisations
- Academics and Researchers

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Programme

09:15	Registration and Morning Refreshments
10:00	Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks Prof. Lennart Levi , MD, PhD, Emeritus Professor of Psychosocial Medicine, Stockholm University (confirmed)
10:10	Tackling the Root Causes of Low Employment Rates among People with Mental Health Problems <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating Equal Working Standards for All in Europe• Access to an Inclusive Labour Market – Challenges and Opportunities• The Role of Employment in Ensuring Mental Health and Well-being• Existing Programmes and Good Practices• Recommendations
10:35	First Round of Discussions
11:05	Morning Coffee Break
11:25	Tackling Misconceptions of People with Mental Ill-Health <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing Categorisations of Individuals with Mental Health Disorders• Understanding Real Experiences and Needs of People with Mental Ill-Health• Existing Discrimination Practices and Other Barriers to Employment• Recommendations
11:50	Second Round of Discussions
12:20	Networking Lunch
13:20	New Approaches Towards Social Inclusion and Cohesion for Individuals with Mental Health Problems <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estimating Existing Multi-Level Cooperation in Europe• Boosting Bottom-up Approaches towards Social Inclusion and Cohesion• What Have We Learned so Far?• Recommendations
14:00	Third Round of Discussions
14:30	Afternoon Coffee Break
14:45	Evidence-based Programmes Promoting Employment and Well-being at Work <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moving Away from a Problem-Oriented Approach to the Promotion of Well-being at Work• Existing Employment Mechanisms for People with Mental Health Problems – Challenges and Opportunities• Best Practices and Community Intervention Programmes• Recommendations
15:25	Fourth Round of Discussions
15:55	Chairman's Summary and Closing Comments
16:00	Networking Reception
16:30	Close

Event Details

Date: Wednesday 16th May 2012
Time: 10:00am – 4:00pm
Venue: The Silken Berlaymont Hotel, Brussels



Speakers include

- ✓ **Mr. Marc De Greef**, European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (tbc)
- ✓ **Prof. Marina Economou**, MD, PhD, Assoc. Professor of Psychiatry, University Mental Health Research Institute, University of Athens (confirmed)
- ✓ **Mr. Johan ten Geuzendam**, Head of Unit, DG EMPL, European Commission (confirmed)
- ✓ **Prof. Lennart Levi, MD, PhD**, Emeritus Professor of Psychosocial Medicine, Stockholm University (confirmed)
- ✓ **Representative**, OSHA, Spain (tbc)

“ **One important challenge is the increase in mental disorders. Estimates have it that some 50 million people in the EU are affected by mental health problems. A 2010 Eurobarometer survey revealed that, within the space of one year, 15 percent of the citizens surveyed had sought professional assistance for a psychological or emotional problem – two percentage points higher than the findings four years earlier.**

The impact on the quality of life of those affected, the health care costs generated by these diseases, as well as the social and economic losses they bring – including reduced productivity in the workplace – are high.

With the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being, EU Member States and nongovernmental stakeholders included as partners have committed to the objectives of an approach which involves society as a whole in promoting mental health. As a result, there is consensus that the workplace constitutes a key area for health promotion and the prevention of mental disorders.”

- German Federal Ministry of Health, 2011

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