

EU Action on Mental Health: A Journey

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European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being

INDEX

- EU Action on Mental Health...The Story So Far
- Green Paper on Mental Health and consultation
- EU High-Level Conference "Together for Mental Health and Well-being", 13 June 2008
- The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being

The EU and Mental Health...The Story So Far

- Public Health has always been a competence of the European Union
- Discrimination, equality and human rights are also key areas of EU activity
- Many of the EU's plans and objectives utilise the themes of mental health promotion (e.g. competences for lifelong learning, Sustainable Development Strategy and Lisbon Strategy)
- Mental health has appeared on the agendas of several Presidencies, including the UK, Finland, and Portugal

The EU and Mental Health...The Story So Far

The EU has funded actions directly or indirectly related to mental health in a range of policy areas:

- **3 Public Health Programmes**
- **5th, 6th and now 7th Research Frameworks**
- **Social Inclusion and Social Protection (TNE/PROGRESS)**
- **EQUAL and ESF**
- **DAPHNE (Protection of women and children from violence)**
- **Environment**
- **Even Fisheries!**

The SUPPORT project is producing a database of EU funded mental health projects.

The Green Paper on Mental Health



Green Paper

Improving the mental health of the population:
Towards a strategy on mental health for the
European Union



- Launched in Oct 2005
- Aimed at drawing together EU level actions on mental health
- The EU response to the WHO Declaration and Action Plan for Mental Health
- Aimed to build on CoE activities and Public Health Programme outcomes

The Green Paper on Mental Health

PRIORITIES

- 1. To promote mental health and address mental ill health by preventive measures**
- 2. To prevent the major mental disorders and support vulnerable groups**
- 3. To promote the social inclusion of people with mental health problems and protect their fundamental rights and dignity**
- 4. To improve the mental health information and knowledge system for the EU**

The Green Paper on Mental Health

CONSULTATION PROCESS

European Commission consultation on the Green Paper on mental health (October 2005 - May 2006):

a) OPEN CONSULTATION: European institutions, Governments, health professionals, stakeholders in other sectors, civil society and the research community

a) STRUCTURED CONSULTATION

→ **3 consultation bodies were set up:**

- A forum for a dialogue with Member States
- An interface between relevant stakeholders with expertise in policy and research
- A Platform involving a variety of actors to promote cross-sectoral cooperation and consensus

→ **and took part in 3 thematic consultation meetings** to discuss the Green Paper:

- 1) Mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention
- 2) Social inclusion and fundamental rights
- 3) Information, data and knowledge

The Green Paper on Mental Health

KEY CHALLENGES

Serious challenges were identified on the **EU level**:

- **The mental health of the EU population is not as good as it should be:** e.g. high suicide rates in some Member States, increased conduct disorders in children and young people, mental ill health is increasingly often the reason for work absenteeism
- People with mental health problems experience **stigma and discrimination**; their **fundamental rights and dignity** are not always respected
- It is not always easy for the EU or member states to quantify the added value of mental health, particularly **positive mental health**

A difficult period...

The challenges were almost too much...

- Development of the proposed Mental Health Strategy in the Green Paper was delayed...
- There was no political will from member states for a legislative instrument or white paper...
- Member states appeared to be concerned about 'interference' in national health policies...
- The proposed stakeholder platform has not yet been implemented...

However...

With a combination of resilience and determination a new way forward has been found....one that member states and other stakeholder groups can support

The EU Pact on Mental Health and Well-being

- A **statement of intent** to work together on mental health and well-being at an EU level
- Previously a Youth Pact and Pact on Cancer
- **A true cross-policy EU initiative** (Health, Education and Culture, Employment, Research, Justice)
- **A route in** for stakeholders of all kinds
- **Complementary to WHO, OECD and CoE** activity
- **Calls for action** on five themes, with cross-cutting horizontal issues
- **A start, and not an end**

Themes of the Pact

- **Mental Health in Youth and Education**
- **Mental Health in Older People**
- **Mental Health in Workplace Settings**
- Prevention of Depression and Suicide
- Addressing Stigma and Social Exclusion

For each:

- **Prevention, Promotion**, Support, Knowledge

Preparation of the Pact

- Wide ranging Green Paper consultation inputs
- Member state consultation and involvement
- High Level Conference (June 08)
- EC Mental Health Process Consortium:
 - Prepared four consensus papers with expert input discussing policy context, examples and potential actions in each theme
 - Produced policy briefs for each theme
 - Coordinating examples of policy and practice from member states
 - High level conference reports
- SUPPORT Project (Papers, Project Database)
- WHO Europe Baseline Study

In each area, the Pact invites policy makers and stakeholders to take action in the following areas...

In Youth and Education

- Ensure schemes for **early intervention** throughout the educational system;
- Provide programmes to **promote parenting skills**;
- Promote **training of professionals** involved in the health, education, youth and other relevant sectors in mental health and well-being;
- Promote **the integration of socio-emotional learning** into the curricular and extracurricular activities and the cultures of pre-schools and schools;
- Programmes to **prevent abuse, bullying, violence against young people and their exposure to social exclusion**;
- Promote the **participation of young people** in education, culture, sport and employment.

For Mental Health in Older People:

- Promote the **active participation** of older people in community life, including the **promotion of their physical activity and educational opportunities**;
- Develop **flexible retirement schemes** which allow older people to remain at work longer on a full-time or part-time basis;
- Provide measures to promote **mental health and well-being among older people receiving care** (medical and/or social) in both community and institutional settings.

In Workplace Settings:

- Improve **work organisation, organisational cultures and leadership practices** to promote mental well-being at work, including **the reconciliation of work and family life**;
- Implement mental health and well-being programmes with **risk assessment and prevention programmes** for situations that can cause adverse effects on the mental health of workers (stress, abusive behaviour such as violence or harassment at work, alcohol, drugs) and early intervention schemes at workplaces;
- Provide measures to **support the recruitment, retention or return to work of people with mental health problems or disorders**.

In Prevention of Suicide and Depression:

- Improve the **training of health professionals and gatekeepers** ;
- **Restrict access to potential means** for suicide;
- Take measures **to raise mental health awareness in the general public**, among health professionals and other relevant sectors;
- **Take measures to reduce risk factors** for suicide such as excessive drinking, drug abuse and social exclusion, depression and stress;
- Provide **support mechanisms** after suicide attempts and for those bereaved by suicide.

In Addressing Stigma:

- **Support anti-stigma campaigns** and activities such as in media, schools and at the workplace to promote the integration of people with mental disorders;
- Develop mental health services which are **well integrated in society**, put the individual at the centre and operate in a way which avoids stigmatisation and exclusion;
- Promote **active inclusion** of people with mental health problems in society, including access to appropriate employment, training and educational opportunities;
- **Involve people with mental health problems and their families and carers** in relevant policy and decision making processes.



This project is supported through the Research for policy support heading of the European Union's FP6 - Contract No.: 44406



Language: English [EN]



Promoting and Protecting Mental Health - Supporting Policy through Integration of Research, Current Approaches and Practices.

- About
- News
- Ethical Vision
- Background
- Resources
- Settings
- Field Trials
- Toolkit
- Events
- Newsletter
- Contact
- FAQ

Home > Toolkit

- ProMenPol Toolkit
- ProMenPol Database

Search

The ProMenPol Database and Toolkit

Welcome to the **ProMenPol Database and Toolkit**. Within this section of the ProMenPol Website you can access the ProMenPol Toolkit and the ProMenPol Database. The difference between the two is explained below.

[The ProMenPol Database](#)

Future Action at the EU Level

- Thematic conferences for each priority area over next two years
- Potential link to next presidencies (France, Sweden, Czech Republic, Spain)
- Potential for a Council Recommendation in 09/10
- Coordination and exchange on practice and policy in mental health and related areas

Taking Forward the Pact...at all levels

- Demonstrating added value of good mental health
- Identify non-health initiatives with mental health outcomes
- Facilitate new partnership opportunities
- Bring together stakeholders to share information and identify gaps for action
- Improve the knowledge base: comparability, quality, trends and progress

For Pact Documents, and Further Details



SUPPORT project
www.supportproject.eu



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