



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Launch of the European Alliance for Mental Health in all Policies to promote mental well-being in the workplace

**Today, AEIP, AIM, EPHA, GGZ Nederland and MHE have launched the European Alliance for Mental Health in all Policies. The Alliance aims at promoting mental well-being in the workplace and the implementation of existing guidelines.**

Mental health is an asset for our economy, instead of a burden on Member States' budgets. Although overwhelming evidence about the impact of ill mental health is now widely available, a comprehensive and inspiring plan of action to improve mental health policies and practices in Europe is still lacking.

Therefore, AEIP, AIM, EPHA, GGZ Nederland and MHE, all partners of the European Alliance for Mental Health in all Policies, are committed to promote and improve mental health in Europe by jointly promoting a European Implementation Program for Mental Health in all Policies.

Persons with positive mental health are in better physical health, are more productive and innovative, earn higher incomes on average and hence have a higher socioeconomic status. The EU indicates that the total costs of work-related mental health diseases and conditions in the EU27 are nearly € 610 billion per year. Apart from persons with mental ill health themselves, various sectors have reasons to see this situation improve:

- the employers due to absenteeism and presenteeism (€ 270 billion)
- the economy in terms of lost output (€ 240 billion)
- the healthcare systems due to treatment costs (€ 60 billion)
- the social welfare systems due to disability benefit payments (€ 40 billion)

By ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the EU has committed to respect the rights under this convention in all its policies, including promoting professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes. Evidence-based interventions in the workplace to promote mental health alone could save each year EUR 135 billion, according to the European Commission's Social Investment Package. An accessible, affordable and recovery-focused mental health care of good quality plays an important – though unfortunately neglected – role in the recovery of the European economy.

To improve the current situation all Alliance partners call on policy and decision makers to:

- Ensure that persons with mental health problems have the right to access quality, recovery-focused mental health care across the European Union, fully respecting the EU Cross-border healthcare Directive;

- Support projects aiming at prevention, detection of and treatment of 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;
- Structure and consolidate information and evidence about the societal and economic benefits of mental health care in the health technology assessment of mental healthcare interventions;
- And make the impact of national policies on mental health part of the European Semester.

The launch event of the Alliance gathered more than 60 guests, including representatives of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, (OECD), the European Commission and Parliament, academia and multinational corporations. Discussions touched upon an array of topics related to mental health and wellbeing at workplaces with conclusion providing with the reflection floor on future challenges. Christopher Prinz (OECD), a key speaker said: “The Alliance is head-on by expanding beyond the traditional domain.”

### **About the Alliance on Mental health in all Policies**

The European Alliance for Mental Health in all Policies is an informal co-operation of the partners on the specific issue of economical impacts of mental health and the role it plays to raise labour productivity as a possible exit strategy for the economic crisis. Its aim is to raise awareness for this issue and to stimulate policy development on an EU level in this domain. All partners recognize its importance and try to incorporate it in their own, broader (health) policy agendas. Today, the Alliance partners are:

- **AEIP (the European Association of Paritarian Institutions)** represents the social protection institutions jointly managed by social partners (paritarian institutions) and aims to promote the paritarian management of social protection at the EU-level. AEIP joined the Alliance in order to promote the paritarian approach in the management of mental health risks in workplaces and to develop a framework for cooperation between major stakeholders.
- **AIM (International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies)** is the umbrella organisation of health mutuals and health insurance funds in Europe and in the world. Through its 59 members from 27 countries, AIM provides health coverage to 160 million in Europe through compulsory and/or complementary health insurance and managing health and social facilities. AIM has joined the Alliance to promote and improve mental health in Europe and to call on Member States and decision-makers to develop a common framework for action.
- **EPHA (European Public Health Alliance)** is Europe’s leading NGO advocating for better health for all and reducing health inequalities. It is a member-led organisation, made up of pan- European, national and local public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals and disease groups working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe. Dissatisfied by the lack of urgency and coherent concerted commitment in the EU as a whole, EPHA decided to join the Alliance to give mental health due and timely priority at all levels of policy and decision-making in Europe.
- **GGZ Nederland (Dutch Association of Mental Health and Addiction Care)** is the sector organisation for specialist mental health and addiction care in the Netherlands and initiator of the Alliance. GGZ

Nederland initiated the Alliance with the aim to make mental health a priority on the European agenda, to prevent a further deterioration of mental health (care) and to strengthen mental health (care) through coordinated European efforts.

- **MHE (Mental Health Europe)** represents associations, organisations and individuals active in the field of mental health and well-being in Europe, including (ex)users of mental health services, volunteers, professionals and service providers. As such, MHE bridges the gap between its members and European institutions, and keeps its members informed and involved in any developments at European Union level. MHE joined the Alliance to more systematically support the integration of mental health considerations in EU policy making.

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NOTE FOR THE PRESS, NOT FOR PUBLICATION:

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