

Mental health

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The European Parliament adopted by 609 votes to 33, with 14 abstentions, a resolution on mental health.

The resolution notes that one in four people experiences mental health problems at least once in their lives and that each year there are over 50 000 cases of suicide, 90% of which are preceded by the development of mental disorders. The Parliament recalls that the rates of mental ill-health are higher among vulnerable and marginalised groups (such as the unemployed, immigrants, persons with disabilities, users of psychotropic substances, etc.) and that the rate of suicide and attempted suicide among people who are in prison or in detention is higher than among the general population.

In the light of these alarming observations, the Parliament firmly supports the invitation to **cooperate and foster action** between the EU institutions, the Member States, the regional and local authorities and the social partners in this area.

Although the Parliament welcomes the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-Being, established at the EU high level conference 'Together for Mental Health and Well-Being' (held in Brussels on 12-13 June 2008), and the recognition of mental health and well-being as a basic priority for action, it provides its own approach for measures to be taken and makes a series of recommendations in this respect. These recommendations aim at combating stigma and social exclusion, strengthening preventive action and self-help and providing support and adequate treatment to people with mental health problems and to their families and carers.

The Parliament stresses, in particular, the right to equal, full and appropriate access to therapeutic treatment and to education, training and employment, in accordance with the principles of lifelong learning, in order to ensure that the persons concerned receive adequate support for their needs.

A series of more specific recommendations have also been proposed in relation to the **five priority areas established by the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-Being**. These areas are as follows:

1. Prevention of depression and suicide;
2. Mental health in youth and education;
3. Mental health in workplace settings;
4. Mental health of older people;
5. Combating stigma and social exclusion.

In order to promote the mental health and well-being of the population, both at European and national level, the Parliament proposes a series of measures that can be summarised as follows:

- cooperation between the EU institutions, Member States, local and regional bodies and the social partners in the five priority areas referred to above;
- the adoption of a Consultative Platform to monitor and coordinate measures to implement the Pact. In this respect, the Commission should present the conclusions of the conferences to be held in the context of implementing the Pact;
- the need for a **'European Action Plan on the Mental Health and Well-Being of Citizens'** and the need to produce appropriate mental health indicators with a view to improving the assessment of needs at national and European level;

- optimum use of the available Community and national resources to promote mental health through the funding of research into prevention, new structures for decent care and effective treatment of mental illnesses, and labour market integration programmes;
- the need to provide high-quality, accessible, effective and universal mental health services.

The resolution also insists on the following points: i) the need to give priority to vulnerable persons and preventing suicide (in particular, in vulnerable groups, with particular reference to minors); ii) the need to promote mental health of older people (in particular neurodegenerative disorders and other age-related mental illnesses); iii) the need to make use of existing financing instruments (Seventh Framework Programme, European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund); iv) the need to improve cooperation between healthcare professionals; v) the need to promote mental health in workplace settings (stress, especially in women)