



MEP ALLIANCE
FOR MENTAL
HEALTH

STATEMENT

The supporters of the MEP Alliance for Mental Health,
the supporters of the European Parliament
Coalition for Mental Health and Wellbeing
and concerned stakeholders

call on the European Commission
to designate 2023
as the European Year for Mental Health.

Making mental health everybody's business

Mental ill health affects **more than one in six people** across the European Union in any given year, with **a total cost of over EUR 600 billion** - or more than 4% of GDP - across the 28 EU countries. (1)

It can affect persons of any age and in a **variety of forms** and has **costs and consequences** that impact individuals, families and carers, health and social systems, employers, communities and the economy.

Poor mental health is consistently associated with unemployment, social and economic **inequality**, low income or standard of living, poor physical health challenging life events, poor quality of life and stigma.

Mental health conditions are the **fastest growing current health burden**: long-term mental health problems are responsible for 1/3 of all disabilities, for 15% of inpatient costs and for a quarter of all medicine costs.

Now is the time to take action!

Given the above, mental health should be a **policy priority**. However, mental health and related policies have been accorded relatively low priority across the EU. The EU-level itself is no longer taking specific initiatives on mental health.

NOW is the time to take action: the **COVID-19 pandemic has truly put the spotlight on mental health and its importance**. (2) Rates of anxiety, depression and loneliness and addiction, already increasing as a **consequence of the pandemic** and related measures taken, will only increase further as a result of the **predicted economic and employment uncertainty**. Moreover, the pandemic has revealed systemic problems in the way society addresses and supports mental health, as services have not been able to keep up with growing demand.

These issues are prominent at this point - and will become even more so in a post-COVID future, posing further challenges.

We recognise the limited remit in the field of mental health at EU level. However, the EU should make use of the tools that it does have at its disposal; designating a European Year is one of those tools.

The undersigned would welcome the opportunity to discuss this initiative further with the European Commission.

(1) Health at a Glance report 2018

(2) Health at a Glance report 2020.

A European Year for Mental Health could be a tangible initiative to raise awareness, provide a platform for sharing good practice and facilitate stakeholder cooperation.

It could contribute towards improving mental health and well-being across the board, would resonate well with European citizens - and ultimately help to save resources.

Please endorse the statement [here](#).

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