

Joint Statement. Brussels, 10th October 2024

World Mental Health Day

## Deliver on promises and honour commitments on mental health

*On World Mental Health Day 2024, 32 European organisations call for substantive actions to shape a Europe where everyone's mental health thrives across their life course.*

President Ursula von der Leyen, in her [Political Guidelines 2024-2029](#), emphasised the urgent need to 'step up our work on preventive health, in particular for mental health'. She stressed that it is essential to respond to the real and legitimate concerns of Europeans about the instabilities and insecurities they face - including the cost of living, housing and energy, the wars- and recognised the impact of these changes and crises on the quality of life of the population<sup>1</sup>. She placed a special focus on the mental health of children and young people, especially online, and promised actions to tackle what she calls 'the greatest challenge in this decade'.

These promises by the European Commission President build on commitments made over recent years by several EU institutions<sup>2</sup>, including the Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health. However, as the EU and all member states are reckoning with the inability of our current mental health systems to address increased needs of the population<sup>3</sup>, these initiatives should be considered as a starting point, and further actions are urgently required to prioritise mental health across Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Eurobarometer (2023), 62% of European Union citizens think that recent world events (the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the climate crisis, unemployment, and the food and energy costs) affected their mental health.

<sup>2</sup> See Mental Health Europe's [briefing on political developments here](#).

<sup>3</sup> More than half of respondents to the last EU Barometer survey experiencing a mental health problem have not received help from a professional.

The undersigned organisations welcome European Commission President's renewed ambition and call on all stakeholders to work together to translate this ambition into concrete actions.

Europe faces a clear choice. To address the concerns of the population or further contribute to persisting challenges. The second option will come with a cost, for our societies, economies, and democracies.

On this World Mental Health Day, the undersigned organisations call:

## On the European Commission

To develop a comprehensive **European strategy on mental health**, with a clear timeline and adequate budget, as well as indicators to monitor and coordinate progress at the European and Member State levels.

The **European strategy on mental health** should:

- Adopt a **'mental health in all policies'** approach, by addressing the socio-economic and environmental determinants of mental health, in different policy areas within and beyond health and with a strong focus on prevention.
- Ensure that **nobody is left behind**, by recognising that some groups of people are particularly at risk of experiencing poor mental health and less likely to have access to tailored mental health support, because they live in **vulnerable situations, experience structural marginalisation**, or due to of **intersectional discrimination**.
- **Fight against mental health stigma and discrimination**, by promoting initiatives to support mental health and communication campaigns in the EU through a **European year of mental health**.
- Ensure that the **digital transformation** puts human rights at its centre and **supports children and all people to thrive through their life course**. It is crucial not to place the responsibility for better mental health outcomes **exclusively on the individuals or families** but to address structural issues, such as the business model and design of digital services and products and the related power imbalances.
- Propose a **legislative initiative**, in consultation with the social partners, on the management of **psychosocial risks and well-being at work**, with special attention to the health and care workforces.

- Ensure the transition to community based, accessible, affordable, and human rights based mental health care, and contribute to deinstitutionalisation.
- Put forward a comprehensive and holistic approach to promote good mental health for children and young people - online and offline - building on the commitments under the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the EU Child Guarantee and the EU Youth Strategy. Strengthen preventative measures and early intervention programs.
- Adopt a co-creation approach when developing policies or practices related to mental health. Special efforts should be made to reach out to the groups structurally excluded from decision making processes.
- Fund research and innovation in line with a psychosocial model of mental health.
- Facilitate the identification, collation, routine reporting, and use of core mental health data disaggregated by race, gender, sex, age, disabilities, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, gender identity and other grounds to properly capture intersectionality issues.

## On Member States

- To elaborate action plans or strategies in coordination with the EU level action, with a cross-sectoral approach to mental health, addressing not only health, but also employment, education, digitalisation and AI, culture, environment, and climate factors, among others, as recommended in the [European Council Conclusions on Mental Health](#).
- To develop community based, recovery oriented mental health services in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the European Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## On the European Parliament

- To establish an Intergroup on mental health, ensuring a formal structure to foster exchanges on mental health across different political groups and to strengthen collaboration between Members and civil society.

## Signatories:



ADHD Europe  
aisbl



Alliance for  
Childhood



Autism Europe



Coface Families  
Europe



EMDR Europe  
Association



EPSA  
(European  
Pharmaceutic  
al Students'  
Association)



EUPHA -  
European  
Public Health  
Association



EUREGHA –  
European  
Regional and  
Local Health  
Authorities



EUROCADRES



EUROCARERS  
– European  
Association  
Working with  
and for  
Informal Carers



Eurochild



Eurodiaconia



EuroHealthNet



European AIDS  
Treatment  
Group (EATG)



European  
Association of  
Service  
providers for  
Persons with  
Disabilities  
(EASPD)



European  
Disability  
Forum



European  
Federation of  
National  
Organisations  
Working with  
the Homeless  
(FEANTSA)



European  
Federation of  
Psychology  
Students'  
Associations (EFP  
SA)



European  
Medical  
Students'  
Association  
(EMSA)



European  
Network of  
(Ex)Users and  
Survivors of  
Psychiatry



European  
Public Health  
Alliance



European  
Youth Forum



5Rights  
Foundation



Gamian Europe



ILGA-Europe



Inclusion  
Europe



Learning for  
Well-being  
Foundation



Make Mothers  
Matter



Mental Health  
Europe



Standing  
Committee of  
European  
Doctors (CPME)



The European  
Alcohol Policy  
Alliance  
(Eurocare)



Volonteurope