



June 2009



EUFAMI delegates meet to attend Board and General Meetings in Bled



For more information, please look at the web site www.eufami.org or contact EUFAMI at info@eufami.org

EUFAMI
Diestsevest 100
B-3000 Leuven
Belgium

Tel +32 16 74 50 40
Fax +32 16 74 50 49

June 2009 – EUFAMI delegates meet to attend Board and General Meetings

Bled in Slovenia was the location for the recent Board of Directors and General Meetings of EUFAMI. EUFAMI's local member associations in Slovenia - HUMANA, OZARA and ŠENT – were hosts for the meetings and everyone agreed that they were excellent hosts. (Congratulations to all concerned for a job well done).

Delegates to the Board meeting were welcomed by EUFAMI's current President, Sigrid Steffen, who earlier in the day had attended a press briefing in Ljubljana along with representatives of the local organisations. The press briefing had been arranged to coincide with the EUFAMI meetings and to highlight the situation of mental health services in Slovenia.

Mr Ivan Eržen, General Secretary of the Slovenia Ministry of Health, had been scheduled to attend the meeting to officially open it but he was unavoidably detained due to an unscheduled meeting being arranged for the same time. He sent his apologies and also sent a written welcome address to the delegates.

Delegates were thoroughly briefed of the plans for the major conference which EUFAMI is organising in collaboration with LSPŽGB in Lithuania in November (*The Forgotten Children*) and all delegates were requested to help with publicity for the conference in their home countries.

The findings from the major physical health survey which EUFAMI undertook in 11 countries in Europe were released. This was one of the most comprehensive studies undertaken by EUFAMI in recent years and will provide its members with a lot of useful insight and detail on the subject of physical health amongst those who are affected by severe mental illness. A separate bulletin will be published in the very near future with the findings and results.

Dr Evgeny Lubov gave a very interesting presentation on the results of a programme which was carried out in Russia by EUFAMI's member association, New Choices, about supported employment for people with mental disabilities.

The Board formally admitted the Pan-Hellenic Federation of Associations of Families for Mental Health (POSOPSI) and SOPSI Patras as new members of EUFAMI.

Three new members were elected to the Executive committee of EUFAMI – Bert Johnson (UK), Joy Ladurner (Austria) and Alessandro Svettoni (Italy). The vacancies on the Executive were as a result of Reina van Mourik (Executive Secretary) and Stanislas Filliol (Vice President) coming to the end of their terms of office and also an earlier vacancy from 2008. The President, Sigrid Steffen, thanked both Reina and Stanislas for the major time and effort which they had given to EUFAMI over the years.



A presentation on the findings of a Slovenian study on suicide was made by Associate Professor Mojca Dernovšek Ph.D, and Ms Nuša Konec Juricic, dr. med. This presentation resulted in a very interesting and informative discussion amongst the delegates.

Two new draft EUFAMI Position Papers were on the agenda for debate and review by the delegates. The two new papers, when approved, will reflect EUFAMI's position on **Suicide** and on the urgent need for a uniform and **Comprehensive Mental Health Care Service** across all of the countries in Europe. A lively discussion took place on the need for proper attainable health care across all countries for persons affected by mental illness and it was agreed to issue a separate release on this matter. When approved, these position papers will be published and will join EUFAMI's already existing position papers.



During their time in Bled, delegates made visits to the psychiatric hospital in Begunje and also the ŠENT day-care centre in Radovljica. These visits were followed by presentations from Edo Belak and Bogdan Dobnik from ŠENT and OZARA respectively about the services which their associations offered to their members.

A civic reception, hosted by Mr Janez Fajfar, Mayor of Bled, was held for the delegates at Bled Castle. Local artists also performed a number of traditional songs and dance. It was a most enjoyable and hospitable event and allowed the delegates to mingle and reacquaint themselves with old friends and make new ones.

