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## New WHO report maps out huge differences in mental health services and practice throughout Europe

A report published by WHO Regional Office for Europe and co-funded by the European Commission, provides data not hitherto available on mental health policy and practice across the European Region. It also highlights important information gaps.



*Policies and practices for mental health in Europe* allows for country to country comparisons on indicators such as numbers of psychiatrists, financing, community services, training of workforce, prescription of anti-depressants and representation of users and carers. Data for the 42 Member States involved was obtained from ministries of health. It was launched at an event in London on World Mental Health Day, 10<sup>th</sup> October and EUFAMI's Vice President, Stanislas Filliol, made a presentation at the launch. The report can be viewed or downloaded at [http://www.euro.who.int/mentalhealth/baseline/20080602\\_1](http://www.euro.who.int/mentalhealth/baseline/20080602_1)

## Lack of knowledge of mental illness amongst the young

Great Ormond Street Hospital, London (a well known children's hospital) has recently published a study of school children's knowledge of mental health. Almost half of the school children could not name a single mental illness. Boys between the ages of 12 and 14 were least likely to be able to name one and even those that fared the best - 17 and 18 yr old girls - got most of their knowledge from celebrities discussing their own problems in the media. There is still a lot of work to be done in the field of youth education.

## The Soloist

This film, directed by Joe Wright, is based on a true story of Nathaniel Ayers, a musician who develops schizophrenia and becomes homeless. Jamie Foxx portrays Nathaniel Ayers, and Robert Downey Jr. portrays Steve Lopez, a columnist who discovers Ayers and writes about him in the newspaper. It is due for release in November 2008.



## Dolphin Therapy for Children with Autism



We have been requested by the Secretary General of the Delphus programme, Vincent Réginald Gautier, to include a mention of their work. In collaboration with the Spanish Fundacion Aqualandia Mundomar, the Delphus programme based in Belgium offers every year, free of charge, the possibility for 11 children with autism from Belgium and Luxembourg to follow a complementary therapy with dolphins in Benidorm. Children are selected by a medical committee,

on the basis of objective criteria. A recent study documented the effect of the dolphin therapy on the children's behaviour. There are plans to extend programme and facilities.

## Journey to Recovery – Consensus Meeting

A group of approximately 25 persons, representing psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric nurses, user and family associations came together for a one day meeting in Vienna, Austria on the 6<sup>th</sup> October to discuss and attempt to reach consensus on what was described as a 'Journey to Recovery' (a person's quest to overcome and recover from a mental illness) and to characterise it in such a way that other persons affected by a mental might learn from it and thereby accelerate their own journey towards recovery. Sigrid Steffen, President of EUFAMI, and Kevin Jones, Secretary General, represented EUFAMI at this very interesting and innovative meeting.

## Correction

In the October edition of our @Bulletin, we incorrectly reported that Inger Nilsson represented EUFAMI at the meeting of user and carer organisations in Lille, France in September. She actually was representing her own Swedish association, Schizofreniförbundet. Sorry for the error and we are happy to be able to correct it this time round; we have been so used to Inger representing EUFAMI over the years that it was easy to make the mistake!

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Correction

For more information, please look at the web site [www.eufami.org](http://www.eufami.org) or contact EUFAMI at [info@eufami.org](mailto:info@eufami.org)

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## World Mental Health Day 2008

Today, the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, is World Mental Health Day and on behalf of EUFAMI, I would like to send greetings to all of our members, friends and supporters. The theme of this year's day is 'Making Mental Health a Global priority - Scaling up services through citizen advocacy and action'.



In today's fast moving and changing world, where the numbers of people experiencing mental ill health is increasing at a worrying rate, it is imperative that we continue with our efforts to ensure that mental health issues are treated as a priority item on the agenda of all of our national governments, both European and globally. In this respect EUFAMI continues to be an active agent in working to improve the situation for all persons affected by mental illness – especially to achieve a better quality of life for the people living with mental illness as well as for their families.

We have come through a period in Europe where we have experienced much discussion and debate connected with mental health services in Europe culminating in the release of the EU/WHO backed Pact for Mental Health and well-being. Whilst we welcome this initiative, the key to success lies in its full implementation. Words can be very impressive and appear powerful, but action is even more powerful and is the only real evidence that change is taking place and that mental health and illness is being taken seriously. No one is looking for charity; all we ask is that everyone is treated equally and that human rights are afforded to all.

***We now call on legislators, both at EU and national levels, to fully implement both the contents of this pact as well as the Helsinki Declaration.***

Although we primarily operate at the European level, we recognise that the issues surrounding mental illness transcend borders and that similar issues exist across the globe. We therefore welcome the goal of this year's World Mental Health Day to make mental health a global priority and we are doing our part to achieve this. EUFAMI is an active participant in a global alliance of advocacy groups and is playing its part and we fully support the aims of this day.

May the activities which many of you have organised for this special day be successful and may they receive the attention they deserve!



Sigrid Steffen  
President EUFAMI

Leuven, Belgium  
World Mental Health Day  
10<sup>th</sup> October 2008

For more information, please look at the web site [www.eufami.org](http://www.eufami.org) or contact EUFAMI at [info@eufami.org](mailto:info@eufami.org)

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