We are pleased to give You answers on Your questions assigned in Green paper “Improving the mental health of the population. Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union”.

How relevant is the mental health of the population for the EU’s strategic policy objectives, as detailed in section 1?

Overall in section 1 prescribed strategic targets are essential and important. There are different activities in the field of mental health in different EU countries carried out. There are no common activities, and each country has its own interests and perception of the problem. During last years there have been several events organized together with EU and WHO, in order to make a common understanding about mental health questions and development of mental health services. Until now EU has not developed important political documents in mental health field binding all member states. The exception are human rights questions, which are included in EC Convention on Human Rights.

It is important to realize common and co-ordinate action throughout sectors and include mental health questions in other sector policies (social, education, economic).

In Latvia a new and progressive tendency has started. We involve in mental health field and patient treatment process not only psychiatrists, but also professionals from other fields, such as social workers, psychologists, service users, family members and NGO’s.
Would the development of a comprehensive EU-strategy on mental health add value to the existing and envisaged actions and does section 5 propose adequate priorities?

Common EU strategy on mental health would be a good way how to carry out common activities in member states and to develop a common monitoring system for comparable statistical data. Mental health is one of the priorities in all EU member states. This field is very sensitive because of patients’ inability to advocate themselves.

In Latvia we have developed our national policy document on mental health “Improving people's mental health from the year 2006 till the year 2016”. This document contains a plan for establishing a community based mental health service in order to help persons with mental illness return to society, labour market and their previous lives.

Priorities assigned in section 5 are important and acceptable for Latvia.

Are the initiatives proposed in sections 6 and 7 appropriate to support the coordination between Member States, to promote the integration of mental health into the health and non-health policies and stakeholder action, and to better liaise research and policy on mental health aspects?

Activities assigned in section 6. and 7. will help to reach the targets of the document. We believe that risk groups are chosen accurately – nurslings, children, teenagers, old people, persons in depression, alcohol and drug dependent persons.

EU mental health platform will improve realization of different activities in mental health field, observation of human rights and social inclusion of mental illness patients.

Sincerely Yours,

Deputy State Secretary

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