

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2008/2209(INI)	Procedure completed
Mental health		
Subject	4.20 Public health	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Environment, Public Health and Food Safety		26/08/2008
		PSE TZAMPAZI Evangelia	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Health and Food Safety	VASSILIOU Androulla	

Key events			
23/09/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
22/01/2009	Vote in committee		Summary
28/01/2009	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0034/2009	
18/02/2009	Debate in Parliament		
19/02/2009	Results of vote in Parliament		
19/02/2009	Decision by Parliament	T6-0063/2009	Summary
19/02/2009	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2008/2209(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54-p4; Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/6/65497

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE414.223	16/10/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE415.227	12/11/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0034/2009	28/01/2009	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0063/2009	19/02/2009	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2009)2154	26/06/2009	EC	

Mental health

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted a report drafted by Evangelia TZAMPAZI (PES, EL) on Mental Health. It noted that mental health problems are widespread in Europe with 1 in 4 people experiencing mental health problems at least once in their lives, while many more are indirectly affected. The standard of mental health care varies considerably between different Member States, especially between the old and some of the new Member States. The report also noted that suicide remains a significant cause of premature death in Europe, with over 50,000 deaths a year in the EU. In 9 out of 10 cases, it is preceded by the development of mental disorders, frequently depression. Moreover, the rate of suicide and attempted suicide among people who are in prison or in detention is higher than among the general population.

The committee welcomed the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-Being, established in June 2008 and the recognition of mental health and well-being as a basic priority for action.

The report contains a number of general recommendations to promote the mental health and well-being of the population, to combat stigma, discrimination and social exclusion, to strengthen preventive action and self-help and to provide support and adequate treatment for people with mental health problems, their families and carers. It also contains specific recommendations in the five priority areas identified by the European Pact. These areas are: prevention of suicide and depression; mental health in youth and education; mental health in workplace settings; mental health of older people; and combating stigma and social exclusion.

In order to promote the mental health and well-being of the population, the committee:

- calls for cooperation between the EU institutions, Member States, local and regional bodies and the social partners in the five priority areas referred to in the European Pact;
- proposes the adoption of an EU Platform on Mental Health and Well-being, to monitor and coordinate measures to implement the Pact and calls on the Commission to present the conclusions of the conferences to be held in the context of implementing the Pact;
- stresses the need for a 'European Action Plan on the Mental Health and Well-Being of Citizens and Medical Research ' and the need to produce appropriate mental health indicators with a view to improving the assessment of needs at national and European level;
- calls for optimum use of the available Community and national resources to promote mental health through the funding of research into prevention, new structures for decent care and effective treatment of mental illnesses, and labour market integration programmes;
- stresses the need to provide high-quality, accessible, effective and universal mental health services;
- calls for emphasis to be placed on the training of everyone in key positions relating to mental health;
- calls for access to appropriate education, training and employment for people with mental health problems and the creation of a supportive and favourable environment throughout life, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable groups.

Mental health

The European Parliament adopted by 609 votes to 33, with 14 abstentions, a resolution on mental health.

The resolution notes that one in four people experiences mental health problems at least once in their lives and that each year there are over 50 000 cases of suicide, 90% of which are preceded by the development of mental disorders. The Parliament recalls that the rates of mental ill-health are higher among vulnerable and marginalised groups (such as the unemployed, immigrants, persons with disabilities, users of psychotropic substances, etc.) and that the rate of suicide and attempted suicide among people who are in prison or in detention is higher than among the general population.

In the light of these alarming observations, the Parliament firmly supports the invitation to cooperate and foster action between the EU institutions, the Member States, the regional and local authorities and the social partners in this area.

Although the Parliament welcomes the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-Being, established at the EU high level conference 'Together for Mental Health and Well-Being' (held in Brussels on 12-13 June 2008), and the recognition of mental health and well-being as a basic priority for action, it provides its own approach for measures to be taken and makes a series of recommendation in this respect. These recommendations aim at combating stigma and social exclusion, strengthening preventive action and self-help and providing support and adequate treatment to people with mental health problems and to their families and carers.

The Parliament stresses, in particular, the right to equal, full and appropriate access to therapeutic treatment and to education, training and employment, in accordance with the principles of lifelong learning, in order to ensure that the persons concerned receive adequate support for their needs.

A series of more specific recommendations have also been proposed in relation to the five priority areas established by the European Pact on Mental Health and Well-Being. These areas are as follows:

1. Prevention of depression and suicide;
2. Mental health in youth and education;
3. Mental health in workplace settings;

4. Mental health of older people;
5. Combating stigma and social exclusion.

In order to promote the mental health and well-being of the population, both at European and national level, the Parliament proposes a series of measures that can be summarised as follows:

- cooperation between the EU institutions, Member States, local and regional bodies and the social partners in the five priority areas referred to above;
- the adoption of a Consultative Platform to monitor and coordinate measures to implement the Pact. In this respect, the Commission should present the conclusions of the conferences to be held in the context of implementing the Pact;
- the need for a 'European Action Plan on the Mental Health and Well-Being of Citizens' and the need to produce appropriate mental health indicators with a view to improving the assessment of needs at national and European level;
- optimum use of the available Community and national resources to promote mental health through the funding of research into prevention, new structures for decent care and effective treatment of mental illnesses, and labour market integration programmes;
- the need to provide high-quality, accessible, effective and universal mental health services.

The resolution also insists on the following points: i) the need to give priority to vulnerable persons and preventing suicide (in particular, in vulnerable groups, with particular reference to minors); ii) the need to promote mental health of older people (in particular neurodegenerative disorders and other age-related mental illnesses); iii) the need to make use of existing financing instruments (Seventh Framework Programme, European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund); iv) the need to improve cooperation between healthcare professionals; v) the need to promote mental health in workplace settings (stress, especially in women)