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DRAFT REPORT

on mental health
(2023/2074(INI))

Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Rapporteur: Sara Cerdas

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on mental health (2023/2074(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 7 June 2023 on a comprehensive approach to mental health (COM(2023)0298),
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (A9-0000/2023),
- A. whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as ‘a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community’¹;
- B. whereas mental health is a basic human right and is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development; whereas the WHO has estimated that over 150 million people in Europe live with a mental health condition²;
- C. whereas socio-economic characteristics are among the most significant factors influencing an individual’s mental health status;

Addressing mental health determinants

Preventing mental health conditions and promoting mental health among vulnerable groups in society

1. Highlights that, at any point in their life, any person can become more susceptible to poorer mental health and thus become part of a vulnerable group in society; stresses that addressing mental health conditions requires a thorough understanding of the different determinants of mental health and that an intersectional approach is necessary to prevent and mitigate the impacts on individuals, communities and societies;
2. Highlights that mental health conditions are the leading cause of years of healthy life loss due to disability in the EU and that people who are diagnosed with severe mental health conditions are more likely to die prematurely;
3. Stresses the importance of social policies that tackle social exclusion, poverty, homelessness, substance-related disorders, unemployment and economic vulnerabilities

¹ WHO, [Mental health](#), 17 June 2022.

² WHO, [The Pan-European Mental Health Coalition](#), 2023.

in order to prevent mental health conditions and address their root causes; underlines the need to provide better instruments to help people cope with problems;

Surveillance

4. Considers mental health information systems to be an important tool to collect data and measure the effectiveness of mental health interventions, and calls for them to be systematically improved and updated;
5. Calls on the Commission to assist the Member States in collecting and spreading best practice, via the EU Best Practice Portal, with regard to targeted campaigns to support vulnerable groups;

Mental health stigma

6. Is deeply concerned that, despite progress in some countries, people with mental health conditions frequently experience discrimination and stigma and often do not have access to adequate healthcare, which can lead to severe human rights violations;
7. Calls for the EU and the Member States to raise awareness of the importance of mental health in a coordinated and timely manner, through a mental-health-in-all-policies approach;

Strengthening mental health systems

Accessibility of mental health services

8. Is deeply concerned by the poor availability of mental healthcare services in the Member States, as exemplified by the alarmingly long waiting lists for appointments with psychiatrists and psychologists and the limited options for therapeutic treatment, as well as for in- and outpatient clinic treatment; considers that the shortage in staff in this specific sector and the lack of funding aggravate the issue;
9. Considers that universal health coverage is a pillar of the European health union and that mental health services are an integral, essential and structural part of Member States' national health systems;

Early diagnosis and intervention

10. Considers that mental health conditions are underdiagnosed in the EU;
11. Underlines the importance of early diagnosis and intervention for mental health conditions;

Person-centred approach

12. Highlights the essential role of a multidisciplinary health workforce and the clinical, financial and organisational benefits of community-based healthcare;

Treatment

13. Calls on the Member States to improve access to treatment and support for mental health conditions by implementing multidisciplinary care;
14. Acknowledges that social prescribing is a useful, practical, holistic and effective approach that can be integrated into the primary care setting within a national health service, as pointed out by the WHO in its toolkit on how to implement social prescribing³;
15. Calls on the Commission to promote policies around best practice in social prescribing in the Member States;

Integration and acceptance

16. Urges the Member States to ensure that people on medical leave because of mental health conditions do not face discrimination; urges the Member States to implement national plans that promote the integration of people with mental health conditions into the labour market, in order to reduce inequities and tackle social determinants;

Research and innovation

17. Invites the Commission and the Member States to invest in further research on mental health;
18. Calls on the Member States to develop new social prescribing interventions for people with mental health conditions or who will benefit from such interventions; calls on the Commission to promote discussions with Member States on best practice in social prescribing;

Global mental health

19. Calls for the EU and the Member States to urgently develop psychosocial mental health support structures aimed specifically at victims of natural, climate, humanitarian, geopolitical and conflict-related disasters, asylum seekers and migrants from all backgrounds;
20. Welcomes the inclusion of mental health in the EU Global Health Strategy⁴ as a rising challenge to be prioritised, with a focus on strengthening the availability of mental health services in primary healthcare;

Mental health in the EU

Legacy

21. Invites the Commission to further develop its Mental Health Strategy and draw up concrete targets and goals for the future, including more in-depth initiatives, from a bottom-up perspective;

³ WHO, [A toolkit on how to implement social prescribing](#), 2022.

⁴ European Commission, [EU Global Health Strategy – Better Health For All in a Changing World](#), 2022.

Financial support

22. Welcomes the EUR 765 million funding made available through the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe⁵ programmes to support research and innovation projects on mental health;
23. Considers the EU to lack a direct fund for mental health research and innovation and invites the Commission to create a mission on mental health under the Horizon Europe programme and the future programme in the 2028-2035 multiannual financial framework;
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24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

⁵ According to the [Horizon Europe](#) research and innovation funding programme.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being, and like other aspects of health, can be affected by a range of socio-economic and environmental factors that need to be addressed by comprehensive strategies. Societies are continually evolving, facing frequent crises, and the impact of stress factors such as health crisis, natural disasters, climate issues, humanitarian crises, geopolitical conflicts, digitalisation, discrimination, violence, socioeconomic inequalities, harmful substances and isolation cannot be ignored.

On June 7, 2023, the European Commission published a Communication with a comprehensive approach to mental health, setting out various initiatives to alleviate mental health stress and conditions in the EU. The rapporteur welcomes this important initiative, and presents this report with the aim of drawing insights and recommendations for mental health promotion, prevention of mental health conditions and accessibility, early diagnosis, treatment, and integration of all individuals in a mental-health-in-all-policies approach.

This own-initiative report on mental health seeks to create positive change in the lives of millions of EU citizens. It is of note that mental health conditions affect 150 million citizens and are the leading cause of years lived with disability in the European Union.

A core principle underlying this report is that any person, at any stage of life, can become more susceptible to poorer mental health and become part of a vulnerable group in society. Thus, the identification of such groups and the development of targeted public health policies is of utmost importance. The recent unprecedented crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war against Ukraine, and subsequent socio-economic challenges, along with the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, have further impacted individuals' mental health. The full consequences of these crises on mental health are yet to be fully understood. However, even before the pandemic, mental health conditions already amounted to a cost of 4% of the GDP, with significant inequities among different population groups.

The rapporteur emphasises that the time has come for the European Parliament to deliver a mental health report that addresses the long-awaited needs of European citizens and leaves a lasting legacy for Europe. A mental-health-in-all-policies approach, accompanied by specific and appropriate funding, as well as the establishment of a European Year on Mental Health, is not only relevant but also urgently required to address this pressing public health issue. By taking decisive action, we can foster a more inclusive, supportive and mentally healthy society for all.