



PRESS RELEASE

A window of opportunity for a fair, social and supportive European Union

Brussels, 13 September 2017 Earlier today, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered [his annual State of the European Union](#) (EU) address before the Members of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, taking stock of achievements over the past year and presenting his priorities for the Future of Europe.

President Juncker gave a hopeful speech, proposing a positive agenda to help create a “Europe that protects, empowers and defends”. Mental Health Europe was pleased to hear that the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) will be an inherent part of the Future of Europe, and hope that EU Member States have heard loud and clear President Juncker’s call to agree on the European Pillar of Social Rights as soon as possible.

“We are happy to give the EU the recognition it deserves on staying the course and the resulting recovery but we want EU Member States to acknowledge that the Future of Europe needs social standards for all” said Nigel Henderson, President of Mental Health Europe.

If the focus is now on the Future of Europe and reforms, MHE urges the European Commission not to cut spending and to present an ambitious future European Budget as suggested by Juncker. The EU Commission must ensure that sufficient funding is invested in the transition from institutions to community-based care and that the upcoming health programme will support promotion and prevention to improve the lives of millions of persons with disabilities and experiencing mental ill-health.

[We know that health is important to Europeans.](#) We regret that beyond the mention of the need to ensure vaccination for children in all member States, there was no mention of health or the well-being of people living in Europe more broadly.

MHE appreciates that the migration question was not used as a means to focus purely on security and borders but that President Juncker recognised the need for European solidarity in accepting refugees and that the current reception conditions are not acceptable. We look forward to new proposals for legal pathways to Europe and hope that the deteriorating situation and mental health of refugees in European reception centres will be addressed.

MHE supports President Juncker’s hopes for the Union of 27 that stands up for common values as well as a strong agreement on the Social Pillar at the upcoming EU Commission Social Summit in Gothenburg.

MHE is committed to support the European Commission in achieving a European Union of Social Standards where there are no second-class citizens.

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About Mental Health Europe

Mental Health Europe is a European non-governmental network organisation committed to the promotion of positive mental health, the prevention of mental distress, the improvement of care, advocacy for social inclusion and the protection of the rights of (ex)users of mental health services, persons with psychosocial disabilities, their families and carers. Find further information about us:

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