



ESTONIAN PRESIDENCY SCORECARD (JULY-DECEMBER 2017) MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS

In order to engage with and analyse the performance of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union, [Mental Health Europe](#) has devised a scorecard system through which we evaluate each Presidency's commitment to and promotion of mental health according to how they performed on the following criteria:

- Promotion of mental health and well-being,
- Commitment to the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities,
- The involvement and empowerment of users of mental health services.

The Estonian Presidency notably prioritised de-institutionalisation during 2017 with a dedicated conference and the adoption of Council Conclusions. Although mental health was not specifically mainstreamed in the Conclusions, MHE welcomed the resulting discussions and that Estonian government put human rights and de-institutionalisation front and centre during their presidency. They also pursued the work of previous Presidencies in many fields such as the European Accessibility Act and eHealth, although they could have improved their performance on empowering mental health services users and promoting mental health and well-being.

MHE also appreciated the Estonian Presidency's openness to dialogue with a representative attending MHE's General Assembly as well as consultation with the European Expert Group on de-institutionalisation throughout the dialogue on de-institutionalisation.

SCALE OF APPRECIATION: HOW WAS THE WEATHER DURING THE ESTONIAN PRESIDENCY?



GOOD



FAIR



AVERAGE



POOR

PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



[Council Conclusions on the Future of Work: Making it e-Easy](#) were adopted on 7th December. The Conclusions encourage the acknowledgement of new forms of employment, while ensuring decent working conditions, adequate social protection and equal opportunities for all, particularly for people in vulnerable situations. Additionally, they also mention the need to provide decent working conditions to protect workers and ensure equal opportunities, which would have the potential to enable parents and other people with caring responsibilities to better balance their work and family lives. However, the Council Conclusions fail to specifically mention the importance of guaranteeing the well-being of all workers and investing in mental health promotion and prevention.

The Estonian Presidency led the debate on the reconciliation of work and family life through the discussions on the proposal for a [Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers](#). A progress report was presented as a result of the Council work during the Estonian presidency. While proposing suggestions to move forward negotiations and overcome Member States' reservations, the progress report fails to mention lack of attention paid to mental health and psychosocial disability.

COMMITMENT TO THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL DISABILITIES



The outcomes of the conference on [Dignity + Independent living = DI](#) fed into the [Council Conclusions on Enhancing Community-Based Support and Care for Independent Living](#). This shows a clear commitment from EU Member States to continue investing in community-based care and support, and MHE welcomes the Estonian Presidency's initiative to put independent living high on its agenda. We regret to see that the Council Conclusions do not mention people with psychosocial disabilities and people with mental health problems, as well as the inclusion of language that could be understood to mean that independent living in the community may not be possible for everyone. We would like to remind the Council that [Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (UN CRPD) recognises the equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community regardless of age, race, religion, gender, civil, family or carer situation etc. (for a full list see the [General Comment on Article 19](#)). Despite these issues, it is positive and promising to have concrete actions and recommendations to commit to a greater dialogue at EU level on the transition from institutional to community-based services.

The Estonian Presidency led the discussion on the European Accessibility Act which resulted in the Council adopting a position ('[the General Approach](#)'). However, the position unfortunately failed to include any provisions on ensuring accessibility of the built environment and accessibility requirements in the spending of EU money. Nonetheless, with the approval of a position from the Council, this has paved the way for final negotiations and hopefully a final agreement between the Council, European Parliament, and Commission on the European Accessibility Act.

INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF USERS OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



On 8th December, the Council Conclusions on Health in the [Digital Society- making progress in data-driven innovation in the field of health](#) were adopted with the aim of promoting e-health technologies supporting user-centred health services and the involvement of users of health services. However, the Conclusions do not mention mental health promotion and prevention nor the specific involvement of users of mental health services.

Earlier in October, the Estonian presidency organised a high-level conference on e-health '[Health in the digital society: The digital society for health](#)' to address how digital technologies and the increasing use of health data are changing our lives and also how we perceive healthcare. During the conference, the [Digital Health Society](#) Declaration was opened for signatures with the aim of recognising the important of eHealth and digital opportunities. Health services users organisations were represented as speakers, yet issues and concerns related to mental health were not included in the conference programme, nor were mental health users represented.

During the conference in October on Dignity + Independent living = DI users of mental health services and disabled people's organisations were represented as speakers. The European Expert Group on de-institutionalisation was consulted before the conference to provide feedback on its topics and speakers. MHE particularly appreciated the willingness of the Estonian presidency to involve users and their representative organisations in preparing and during the conference.

CONCLUSION

The Estonian Presidency performed best when it came to the rights of person with disabilities in terms of community-based services and the right to live independently with the adoption of long overdue Council Conclusions. MHE also appreciated the important progress made regarding the future of work and the European Accessibility Act. However, the Estonian Presidency missed out on some key opportunities to mainstream mental health and to empower the voice of e-mental health users during its conference on digital health.



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