

Open Letter endorsing the Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health



To whom it may concern,

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/35/21

We, a wide variety of organisations representing people with personal experience of mental health services, professionals and academics, welcome and endorse in the strongest possible terms the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur, Mr. Dainius Pūras, on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

This ground-breaking report is the second important commentary on mental health that has come out of the UN human rights system this year. This challenging report highlights that mental health has been a forgotten issue for far too long, leaving far too many people to suffer human rights abuses within mental health services. This most recent report goes further than the earlier report of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by calling out the 'global burden of obstacles' which are preventing our mental health systems from adopting a human rights-based approach which would guarantee the right to mental health for all.

We agree with the Special Rapporteur that these obstacles include power asymmetries, the prevalence of the biomedical model and biased use of evidence within the mental health system. We therefore also welcome the Special Rapporteur's call for a shift in paradigm away from isolating mental health services which are coercive and medicalised, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to one that is recovery and community-based, promotes social inclusion and offers a range of rights-based treatments and psychosocial support at primary and specialized care levels. He also recognises the human rights imperative to invest in prevention and promotion. We endorse the Special Rapporteur's further comments that: "...a reductive neurobiological paradigm causes more harm than good, undermines the right to health, and must be abandoned.... There is a need of a shift in investments in mental health, from focusing on "chemical imbalances" to focusing on "power imbalances and inequalities."

We are living in a world of astounding - and very welcome - scientific and professional developments, which give great hope in our joint struggles to improve the health and wellbeing of all citizens. But it is also important to recognise that health is also a matter of social justice. Inequalities, poverty and abuse all impact on our physical and mental health, and the solutions are political and social as well as technical. The report rightly identifies a variety of effective practices and alternatives which situate mental health within a human rights and recovery-based paradigm and we agree that these must be scaled up and invested in.

Therefore we particularly welcome the Special Rapporteur's recognition of the fact that mental health problems are; "... strongly linked to early childhood adversities, including toxic stress and sexual, physical and emotional child abuse, as well as to inequalities and violence, including gender based inequalities and gender based violence, and many other adverse conditions which people, especially those in vulnerable situations such as poverty or social exclusion, face when their basic needs are not met and their rights are not protected."

We welcome these positive messages for a global approach to health and psychological wellbeing which ensures the participation of diversity of rights-holders and relevant stakeholders including users and survivors, civil society and communities and empowers them. We agree with the Special Rapporteur

that we need to focus on the primary prevention of suffering and ill-health, as well as the care and recovery of people who experience ill-health or distress. We therefore look forward to a future where we work together to provide a coherent, scientific, but humane and psychological vision; where we offer care rather than coercion, fight for social justice, equity and fundamental human rights, and to establish the social prerequisites for genuine mental health and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely

Mental Health Europe – Sante Mentale Europe
British Psychological Society

Mental Disability Advocacy Centre Horatio (European Psychiatric Nurses) Mental Health Perspectives (Lithuania) Society of Social Psychiatry (Greece)
Critical Mental Health Nurses Network (UK) Asylum Magazine (UK)
Psychosocial Research Organization (Greece) Pro-mente Austria
Ubuntu South Africa Promitheas NPO (Greece) Critical Psychiatry Network (UK)
Association of Families for Mental Health (Greece)
Association of Parent Guardians and Friends of People with Autism Larissa Prefecture (Greece) Social Care Strategic Network for Mental Health
Mad in America
Association for Regional Development and Mental Health (EPAPSY, Greece) Social Cooperatives Activities for Vulnerable Groups (Greece)
Confederacion Salud Mental Espana
Mental Health Interest Forum (PÉF, Hungary)
The European Network of (ex)Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP) European Federation of Psychologists' Associations
Lithuanian Psychological Association Finnish Association for Mental Health International Council of Nurses
The Friendship Bench (Zimbabwe)
Asociación Española de Neuropsiquiatría Fundación (ESMAEN, España) British Association of Social Workers (BASW, UK)
Law Project for Psychiatric Rights
The Social Work Action Network (SWAN) Ireland. Friendship Bench
Hearing Voices Network Cymru
Scottish Recovery Network
Всеукраїнська громадська організація людей з інвалідністю потребителів психіатричної допомоги "ЮЗЕР" - Ukrainian public organization of people with disabilities, consumers of mental health care "users"
Society of Psychosocial Research and Intervention (S.P.R.I; Ioannina, Greece). Finnish Association for Mental Health
Social Cooperative Activities for Vulnerable Groups "EDRA" (Greece)
EPSAMY - ΟΙΚΟΤΡΟΦΕΙΟ ΕΡΑΤΟ (Mental Health Center – Athens, Greece) SOPSY Korydallos (Greece)
Ενωματωμένη εικόνα Promitheas N.P.O. (Greece)
ENUSP - European Network of (ex)users and survivors of psychiatry (ENUSP) Psycho-social Research Organization (E.PSY.ME) Greece
Horatio: The Psychiatric Nurses Association of Ireland
Association des groupes d'intervention en défense des droits en santé mentale du Québec. Society of Georgian Psychiatrists
Bapu Trust for Research on Mind & Discourse
Changes Ahead
Association of Parents Guardians and Friends of People with Autism Larissa Prefecture
National Survivor User Network (NSUN) Psychologist for Social Change
International Society for the Psychosocial Approaches to Psychosis (ISPS) Japan National Group of Mentally Disabled People
Association for Psychosocial Support (Susret) Croatia
Community Housing and Therapy
Advocacy Unlimited (Peer Run Community Organization USA) Intensive Interaction Denmark

Social workers in Adult Mental Health, Republic of Ireland
REV France
Recovery Wirral
Social Work Action Network (SWAN)
Mesa Galega da Psicoloxía Clínica (Galician Bureau of Clinical Psychology)
AGAPIR Asociación Galega de Psicólogos Internos Residentes (Galician Association of Psychological Residents)
Psicología Clínica de España - Outsiders (Clinical Psychology of Spain - Outsiders)
ISPS- US (International Society Psychological and Social Approaches to Psychosis, US Chapter) Nederlands
Comité voor de Rechten van de Mens (NCRM)
Southern California Against Forced Treatment Advocacy Group for the Mentally Ill (AGMI) (Cyprus) Association
of Mental Health Providers
European Community Mental Health Service providers network
Bundesverband Psychiatrie Erfahrener e.V., Federal Organization of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry
(Germany) ISPS Israel
The Norwegian Psychological Association
Nordic Psychologists Association

Alva Finn (Policy Manager; Mental Health Europe – Santé Mentale Europe) Maria Nyman (Director; Mental
Health Europe – Santé Mentale Europe)
Professor Peter Kinderman (Clinical Psychologist, University of Liverpool, UK, Vice-President, British
Psychological Society)
Akiko Hart (Mind in Camden, UK)
Dr. Lucy Johnstone (Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Independent Trainer, Bristol, UK) Kate Allsopp
(University of Liverpool, UK)
Anne Cooke (Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK) Professor Pat
Bracken (Consultant Psychiatrist, Ireland)
Dr. John Cromby (Clinical Psychologist, University of Leicester, UK)
Mary Boyle (Professor Emeritus of Clinical Psychology, University of East London, UK) Paul Wilson (Head of
Mental Health Services, Bath and North East Somerset, UK)
Dr. Kirshen Rundle, MBACP, (Accred.) (Psychotherapist, Norwich, UK) Dr. Alec Grant
Stuart Guy (Senior Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing, University of Wolverhampton, UK) Judith Haire
Steve Flatt (Liverpool, UK)
Alfonso Serrano Movilla (España)
Dr. Joanna Wilde (Clinical Psychologist, Aston, UK)
Dr. Jim Probert (Psychologist, University of Florida Counseling and Wellness Center, USA) Dr. Cian Aherne
(Clinical Psychologist, Ireland)
Dr Kate Danvers (Clinical and Community Psychologist) Bobby Baker (Artistic Director Daily Life Ltd, Activist)
Kate Mc Grath (Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of Liverpool, UK) Wendy Micklewright
Edel Mc Glanaghy (Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of Edinburgh, UK)
Julia Cheah (Clinical Psychology PhD Candidate, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia) Dr Ché Rosebert
(Consultant Clinical Psychologist, London, UK)
Dr Christina Richards (Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, UK) Misbah Gladwyn-Khan (Trainee
Clinical Psychologist)
Judy Gayton (Canada)
William Nicholas Gomes (Human Rights Defender and Freelance Journalist, York, UK)
Prof. Martin Milton (Professor of Counselling Psychology, Regents University London, UK) Dr Alison Tierney
(social anthropologist and family carer, Bristol, UK)
Nicky Hayward (Independent Commentator, Activist and Blogger, UK)
Dr Steve Mayers (Clinical Psychologist, Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, UK) Bernard
Kat (Director, Psynapse (Psychological Services) Ltd, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK)
Annie Mitchell (Associate Professor and Clinical Psychologist, University of Plymouth, UK) Dr Ruth Allen, (CEO,
BASW)
Helen Williams (Clinical Psychologist, Leeds, UK)
Scott Bartle (Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of East London, UK) Dr. T. R. Moss (Emeritus Consultant
Physician)
Louise King

Berit Bryn-Jensen (Norway)
Dr. Alex Thornton (Clinical Psychologist, London, UK) Dr. Lynne Patience (Clinical Psychologist, UK)
Kim Serjeant
Joan Rapaport (Social Worker (retired), UK)
Margaret Turner (Mental Health Social Worker (retired), UK)
Jim Gottstien (President; Law Project for Psychiatric Rights, Alaska, USA) Mirabai Swingler (NHS Chaplain, UK)
Michelle Colder Carras (Postdoctoral Fellow, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA). Professor
Andrew Samuels, (University of Essex, UK. Former chair UK Council for Psychotherapy) Kerry Cuskelly, Mental
Health Social Worker, Ireland.
Rowland Urey
Debra Joy Williams (Dawlish, Devon, UK)
Alison M Clark (Trainee Counselling Psychologist, City, University of London) Joachim Schnackenberg
Alice Fiorica
Avril Bellinger
Cath Roper (The University of Melbourne, Australia)
Abdelkhalig E.A.Mohammed (psychiatry specialist, Alamal complex for mental health, Madina, Saudia Arabia).
S. Randolph Kretchmar
Katie Mottram (Co- Founder, The International Spiritual Emergence Network and #EmergingProud campaign)
Sue Irwin
Nicholas Morgan (Director: Euro Youth Mental Health Ltd)
Hanne Conn (mental health professional and user of mental health services) Yasmin Miller
Dr. Kirshen Rundle, (Psychotherapist) Hannah Dornin
Professor John Read (University of East London, UK)
Eka Chkonia (Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Tbilisi State Medical University, Ukraine) Dr. Piers Gooding
(University of Melbourne, Australia)
Peter Coleman (family carer)
Billy Alan Palmer Jr.,(University of Florida, USA) Valentina Alexa (Psychologist, Romania)
Simon Porter
Robert Theoret
Dr. Piers Gooding (University of Melbourne, Australia) David Pilgrim
Dr. Noel Hunter (Clinical Psychologist, New York, USA) Jens N. Roved
Yasmin Ishaq, service Lead Kent Open Dialogue Service
Satu Beverley (Carer, Open Dialogue advocate, Retired Psychologist, Australia) Judi Burstyner (Australia)
Dr. Gillian Proctor (Clinical Psychologist, University of Leeds, UK) Dr. Jan Olav Johannessen (M.D., Ph.D. Chair,
ISPS)
Dr Anne Felton (Associate Professor, Mental Health Nursing, University of Nottingham, UK) Dr Nick Hartley,
Clinical Psychologist, Newcastle upon Tyne
Dr Lucinda Brabbins
Agnes Higgins (Professor in Mental Health, Trinity College Dublin) Dr. Emma Evans (Clinical Psychologist,
Liverpool, UK)
Dr Alison Summers
Dr Andre Bolster (Clinical Psychologist, Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust, NHS, UK) Beverley Satu
Linda Steen (Consultant Clinical Psychologist, University of Manchester, UK) Dr. Rochelle Burgess (Fellow, Firoz
Lalji Centre for Africa, LSE, UK)
Kenneth Blatt (Psychiatrist, USA)
Camilla Staunsbrink (Psychologist, Copenhagen, Denmark) Ditte Rose Andersen (Licensed Psychologist,
Denmark)
Dr Poul Rohleder (Clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, University of East London, UK) Annette de la Cour
(Independent Mental Health Social Worker)
Isabel Clarke (Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Southampton UK)
Dr Helena F Loughton, (Principal Counselling Psychologist, Bucks Early Intervention Service) Dr Sally Zlotowitz
(Clinical and Community Psychologist)
Christopher Jones (Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of East London, UK) Anna Carroll (Hon Sec, Social
workers in Adult Mental Health, Republic of Ireland) Magali Molinié (REV France)
Dr Sam Roberts
Dr Lorna Hobbs (Trainee Clinical Psychologist, University of East London, UK)

Martha Griffin (Expert by Experience - Lecturer in Mental Health, Dublin City University) Derry Hunter
Alissa De Luca-Ruane (deputy national convenor - SWAN) Jill Domoney
Jijian Voronka (University of Windsor, Canada) Dan Warrender
Jessica Arenella (PhD)
Dr Tamar Lavy (MD, ABIHM, Psychiatrist, New York City, NY) Rodrigo Llanillo Melgosa, Psicólogo Clínico (Spain)
Junior (Jay) Campbell Deborah Liversage Janice Gurney
Ray Gurney
Dr Karen Newbigging, Senior Lecturer, School of Social Policy, University of Birmingham
Dr. Kathryn Gibb
Aguila Bono del Trigo, Sociologist, Andalusian School of Public Health, Spain
Fatma Zengin, Counsellor and Human Rights Activist Ingvild Myklebust, Psychologist, Trondheim, Norway Juliet
Dwek, Integrative Psychotherapist, UKCP reg Lesley Smith
Lozarta Veizaj
Dr Rich Moth (Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Liverpool Hope University, UK) and Bea Miller
(Psychotherapists and Counsellors for Social Responsibility, UK).