



**Mental  
Health  
Europe**

# Mental Health Europe's Manifesto for the 2024 European Elections



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Towards a flourishing future for all in Europe: our call for a long-term comprehensive action plan on mental health

## **Why mental health at the centre of the EU election agenda?**

As the leading, independent European network organisation working on mental health and human rights, Mental Health Europe aims to contribute to a Europe where everyone's mental health and wellbeing flourish across their life course.

In recent years, we have witnessed an increased value given to mental health by individuals, communities and governments. It is now time to match this value with commitment, engagement and investment by all stakeholders, across all sectors. The EC Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health – with its ambition to put mental health at par with physical health and leave nobody behind- is a good step in the right direction. Building on this momentum, the next EU legislature must take a stronger commitment, by delivering a long-term action plan on mental health. This is crucial to ensure that the spotlight on mental health will continue to shine and everybody in Europe will be able to thrive.

## **Who is this Manifesto for?**

The Manifesto is intended to guide the next mandate and agendas of the European Union bodies: from programmes of political groups and works in the European Parliament to the European Commission composition and their priorities, policies and initiatives for the 2024-2029 period.

## What is the legal/policy framework for EU action on mental health?

The EU's role in health - complementary to national policies- has recently become more and more prominent. After the pandemic, a stronger European Health Union was built. With the Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health, a new pillar has been added to the European Health Union. Importantly, as mental health is influenced by and impacts on different aspects of our lives, many more EU instruments can be used as leverage to improve mental health policies in Europe. Moreover, EU and Member States are also bound by international obligations or standards.

<b>Existing legal/policy tools to support action</b>	
EU Charter of Fundamental Rights	Better internet for children strategy
European Pillar of Social Rights	Child Guarantee
European Disability Strategy	EU Strategy on the Rights of the child
European Green Deal	EU Youth Strategy
EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027	Digital Services Act
European Care Strategy	Healthier together – EU non-communicable diseases initiative
The United Nations Convention for the Rights of people with disabilities (UNCRPD)	The UN Sustainable Goals
And many more...	



## Long-term commitment and accountability

It is crucial to keep the spotlight on mental health and ensure that the political commitment is translated into concrete actions, by the EU and Member States.



### A human rights approach

Mental health is a fundamental human right, as it is an integral part of the right to health. It is closely related to and dependent upon the realization of other human rights.



### A psychosocial model of understanding mental health

Mental health is shaped by a variety of life events and transition moments across the life course as well as by wider social, economic, and environmental determinants, which can act as protective or risk factors.



### Recovery oriented integrated services in the community

People with lived experience have the right to lead full and meaningful lives in their communities. Rather than reintegration after recovery, inclusion in the society should be guaranteed in every phase of the recovery journey.



### Co-creation

When developing, implementing and evaluating policies or services in mental health field, it is crucial to enable all relevant stakeholders, including experts by experience, to work together on an equal basis. Co-creation ensures that policies and services better meet real needs.



### Fight stigma

Stigma and discrimination remain prevalent in society when it comes to mental health. Stigma can be internalised by people with lived experience and prevent them from seeking support.

## What are the actions needed?



### **Develop a comprehensive long term action plan on mental health and ensure accountability.**

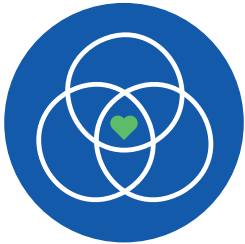
- ✓ Set targets, objectives, budget, timeline and indicators to monitor progress of Member States.
- ✓ Establish a Vice President with a mandate on mental health.
- ✓ Gather data on mental health in EU surveys.

### **Promote and protect the rights of people with mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities.**



- ✓ Maintain the position of a European Commissioner for Equality leading on EU implementation of the UNCRPD.
- ✓ Adopt the “Horizontal Equal Treatment Directive”.
- ✓ Criminalise forced sterilisation of persons with psychosocial disabilities under EU law.
- ✓ Support policies for the transition from systems of substitute decision making to supported decision making and the end of coercion.
- ✓ Lift the ban to vote and stand as candidates for people with psychosocial disabilities, by implementing supported decision making as alternative to deprivation of legal capacity.
- ✓ Promote -including via funding- measures such as supported employment services and reasonable accommodations, to increase access to and retention of employment by persons with psychosocial disabilities.

**Adopt a “mental health in all policies” approach. The focus must be on structural and systemic changes, not just on healthy lifestyles.**



- ✓ Introduce a mental health impact assessment in all EU policies.
- ✓ Support - via EU funds and Technical Support - Member States' action to mainstream mental health in all policies and to address risks and barriers faced by people living in vulnerable situations/experiencing intersectional discrimination.
- ✓ Fund research and innovation in line with a psychosocial model of understanding mental health.
- ✓ Address potential conflict of interest, particularly commercial interests.
- ✓ Hold online platforms accountable for risks of negative mental health impact related to content and design.

**Support the provision of high quality, accessible mental health care and support services in the community. Services need to be person centred, recovery oriented and human rights compliant.**



- ✓ Adopt a European Deinstitutionalisation strategy.
- ✓ Ensure that no EU funds are used for institutional forms of care, by establishing monitoring and redress mechanisms.
- ✓ Adopt Guidelines for Member States on how to build an integrated network of human rights compliant services at community level.



**Meaningfully engage all relevant stakeholders, including people with lived experience, in every stage of policies, programmes and communication activities that have an impact on them.**

- ✓ Co-create political programmes for the European Parliament elections.
- ✓ Adopt a civil society strategy as a tool for continuous co-creation of EU policies, programmes and services.
- ✓ Allocate sustainable financing mechanism to ensure effective participation of people with lived experience and their representative organisations in EU public affairs.



**Reshape the conversation around mental health, by normalising mental health problems as part of the human experience and by raising awareness on mental health and its determinants.**

- ✓ Establish a European Year of Mental Health.
- ✓ Use language in line with the psychosocial model and human rights.
- ✓ Support awareness raising activities such as European Mental Health Week.
- ✓ Start talking about mental health as a positive and as a strength, not as a weakness.

“We are shining a light on mental health like it has never been shone before. This is a light that must never go out.” Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides



**Mental  
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Equal rights.  
Better mental health.  
For all.

For Mental Health Europe's detailed manifesto,  
visit our website: [www.mentalhealtheurope.org](http://www.mentalhealtheurope.org)



**Co-funded by  
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