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Mental health as a priority

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Helsinki, 18.02.2023

Recognising that:

1. YEPP adopted a resolution at their Congress in July 2021 to put the spotlight on youth mental health.
2. In the first year of the pandemic, depression and anxiety rose by 25% in addition to the already existing 1 billion people suffering of mental disorders;¹
3. In 2019, 14% of the world`s adolescents (aged 10-19 years) lived with a mental disorder;
4. People severe mental health conditions die on average 10 to 20 years earlier than the general population.
5. Bullying, cyber-bullying, eating disorders, learning disorders, addictions (screen, internet, alcohol, illicit drugs) are among the most relevant predisposing factors for mental health disturbances in youth population.² Post-COVID and long COVID can be added as their impact on mental health should not be underestimated.
6. More than 700 000 people around the world die by suicide every year. Suicide thus accounts for the fourth leading cause of death among individuals aged 15 to 29 years.³
7. Global economy loses about US\$ 1 trillion per year in productivity due to depression and anxiety. In the EU, mental health problems display an economic burden of nearly 4% of the GDP, two thirds of which comprising indirect costs related to social security and loss of productivity.⁴

Acknowledging that:

¹ WHO World mental health report – Transforming mental health for all. 2022

² WHO Europe/HSBC. Spotlight on adolescent health and well-being. 2022

³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/mental-health>

⁴ OECD/European Commission. Health at a Glance 2018



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1. WHO stated in a report (2021)⁵ that essential health services were disrupted in 90% of countries due to COVID-19, (135 countries participated). Around 40% of the most affected health services who are disrupted are those for mental neurological and substance use disorders.
2. The importance of assuming mental health as a top public health priority has been highlighted by several institutions such as WHO, EC or OECD. The support should be based on a robust evidence-based diagnostic and ambitious goals.⁶
3. The European Commission supported member states to reform their national mental health systems with more than €28 million under the EU4health programme over the last three years;⁷
4. The European Commission will publish in Q2 2023 a comprehensive approach to mental health.
5. High discrepancies in mental health monitoring remain across EU Member States. Only one quarter of them collects data on young people who are supported by mental health professionals.⁸

YEPP calls on:

1. EPP parties to bring mental health forward as one of their national policy priorities.
2. EPP led governments to make mental health services more visible and consolidate them in one central place to facilitate access and to highlight the different specific point of contacts.
3. EPP parties and EPP led governments to advocate for a national emergency number to provide people in need an easy and quick access to a first aid. After a first care, the different specialised services should provide adapted assistance for the patient. EPP parties should push for a European harmonization of those emergency numbers to allow people in need to get access to help as well abroad. (Example: The emergency telephone number 112 can be dialed free of

⁵ <https://www.who.int/news/item/23-04-2021-covid-19-continues-to-disrupt-essential-health-services-in-90-of-countries>, accessed January 2023.

⁶ EC. European Framework for Action on Mental Health and Wellbeing. 2016

⁷ Euractiv. New mental health strategy must involve everyone, EU Commissioner, accessed January 2023

⁸ WHO. Situation of child and adolescent health in Europe. 2017



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charge in most countries around the world to reach emergency services.) This service should also be accessible for people that are supporting someone facing difficult times and who need mental health support.

4. EPP parties to give more attention to socio-educational professions (e.g.: psychologists, psychiatrists) and to make their jobs more attractive by giving them the social and financial recognition they deserve.
5. EPP parties to support an intensification of collaborative actions to integrate mental health into primary health care.
6. EPP parties to campaign for therapeutic treatment to be fully, or at least partly, reimbursed by health insurances to avoid that mental health becomes a luxury. Mental health should be recognised as a basic need.
7. EPP parties to campaign against societal stigma of mental illness often associated with insane and mad houses.
8. EPP parties to advocate for a better re-integration of people with mental health disorders in their professional environment and job market.
9. EPP to encourage the European Commission to dedicate a European Year of Mental Health in their next mandate 2024-2029.