

The European Parliament Coalition for Mental Health and Wellbeing response to the call for evidence on a comprehensive approach to mental health

February 2023

The [European Parliament Coalition for Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) appreciates and applauds the commitment to bring forward EU policies and actions on mental health. Established in 2012, this Coalition includes MEPs, across political groups, dedicated to ensuring the inclusion and mainstreaming of mental health in all policies. The co-chairs and members of this Coalition recommend the following actions as crucial steps to effectively respond to current mental health needs and challenges, and achieve sustainable impact:

1. Propose an intersectional European Mental Health Strategy, that includes comprehensive objectives with clearly established benchmarks and indicators, as well as an adequate budget allocated for its implementation. The EP Coalition recommends for the mental health initiative to advance the work towards a European Mental Health Strategy;
2. Ensure the comprehensive approach to mental health prioritises mental health support at every stage of life by capturing the mental health continuum. This way, the initiative recognises the rights of persons with mental health problems and psychosocial disabilities and addresses the need for tailored mental health support for those already experiencing mental health problems, while exploring adequate prevention of mental health problems;
3. Adopt a psychosocial model of understanding mental health to address social determinants, structural barriers and provide tailored support. It is important, when identifying possible solutions and ways forward, not to put all the responsibility on individuals (asking them to be more resilient or mentally health literate) but to address the broader structural, socio-economic and environmental factors. The psychosocial model of mental health should be used as a guiding principle to inform the Commission's work on mental health.
4. The psychosocial model should also look at the economic and structural side of mental health in Member states and address shortcomings in this regard. This can be done through the setting up of a Mental Health Fund by the European Commission. This Mental Health Fund shall be introduced hand-in-hand with a list of EU Mental Health Standards which shall serve as conditionalities to the aforementioned Mental Health Fund. Such funds can aid Member States in capping prices for mental health supports in order to make it affordable for everyone in society; in strengthening mental health services offered by Governments; in building of community Mental Health services which are up to EU standards, including human rights standards, and are recovery oriented. Such EU standards for mental health services shall also be introduced by the Commission, reflecting the commitments taken when ratifying the UNCRPD. The fund should also allow for promotion and prevention activities across sectors;
5. Foresee the inclusion of mental health in all policies at EU level, as mental health is a cross cutting issue. In mainstreaming mental health, consider the impacts of different policies on mental health, especially vulnerable groups. This should be integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislative, and financial processes. These policies may include but are not limited to employment law, particularly training afforded to employers when setting up entities or businesses, human resources officials and employees upon being hired and

- the option to allow for mental health days off or burnout/exhaustion leave; education policy concerning mandatory training of educators and staff in education institutions, amongst others.
6. Support EU member states to propel work on mental health, including national action plans on mental health and adopting policies that support the prevention of mental health issues. The EU has a unique role and can engage and strengthen collaboration between member states, but also with national and local actors, to build a better mental health system. This can be encouraged through country-specific research studies in order to render disaggregated data on which such policies and work can be based;
 7. Co-create the initiative alongside people with lived experience, their supporters, affected communities, civil society, and key stakeholders. They should be involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the initiative. Member States should be encouraged to develop any services and policies with meaningful involvement of people with lived experience and in a non-tokenistic manner;
 8. Breaking stigma and changing the narrative around mental health, through mental health literacy. The EU initiative could support increased education on mental health, to make sure people have an accurate and balanced understanding of mental health. It should also support awareness raising campaigns such as the MHE European Mental Health Week – to combat discrimination, promote equity and equality and normalise the conversation around mental health among the general public and in specific sectors (e.g. professionals from health, education, social fields). This initiative should include plans for a dedicated European Year for Mental Health.

The European Parliament Coalition on Mental Health and Wellbeing is dedicated to collaborating with the European Commission and other stakeholders to ensure an initiative is delivered that reflects mental health needs across Europe.

Endorsing MEPs:

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MEP Cyrus Engerer
MEP Maria Walsh
MEP Sara Cerdas
MEP María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos
MEP Tilly Metz
MEP István Ujhelyi
MEP Stelios Kympouropoulos
MEP Alex Agius Saliba
MEP Brando Benifei
MEP Estrella Durá Ferrandis
MEP Kateřina Konečná
MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen
MEP Frances Fitzgerald