

## I

(Information)

## COUNCIL

## COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

of 2 June 2003

**on combating stigma and discrimination in relation to mental illness**

(2003/C 141/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLING the Council Resolution of 18 November 1999 on the promotion of mental health<sup>(1)</sup>, which, *inter alia*, invited the Commission to consider incorporating activities on the theme of mental health in future action programmes for public health, the Council Resolution of 29 June 2000 on action on health determinants<sup>(2)</sup>, the Council Conclusions of 5 June 2001 on a Community strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm<sup>(3)</sup> which, *inter alia*, underline the close link between alcohol abuse, social exclusion and mental illness, and the Council Conclusions of 15 November 2001 on combating stress and depression-related problems<sup>(4)</sup>, which, *inter alia*, invited Member States to take actions to improve knowledge on the promotion of mental health in primary care and other health services as well as in social services;
2. RECALLING that the Community action programme to combat discrimination (2001 to 2006)<sup>(5)</sup> emphasises, *inter alia*, the particular needs of people with disabilities and the need for a combination of measures, particularly concerning legislation and practical action designed to be mutually reinforcing;
3. RECALLING that the programme of Community action to encourage cooperation between Member States to combat social exclusion<sup>(6)</sup> emphasises that measures to combat social exclusion should aim at enabling everyone to support himself or herself, by gainful employment or otherwise, and to integrate into society;
4. RECALLING that the programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008)<sup>(7)</sup> is intended to contribute, *inter alia*, to ensuring a high level of human health protection in the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities, through the promotion of an integrated and intersectoral health strategy, and to tackling inequalities in health;
5. WELCOMES the European Conference on 'Mental illness and stigma in Europe: facing up to the challenges of social inclusion and equity' held in Athens from 27 to 29 March 2003, which highlighted the importance of combating stigma to improve mental health;
6. WELCOMES the Resolution of the 55th World Health Assembly WHA55.10 endorsed by all Member States recognising that the toll of mental health problems is very high and rising worldwide, that such problems cause significant disability, heighten the risk of social exclusion, and increase mortality, that stigmatisation and discrimination are major problems obstructing the path to care, and that the human and economic costs are staggering;
7. RECOGNISES that stigma in relation to mental illness contributes negatively to equality and social inclusion, and therefore has implications for health protection;
8. UNDERLINES the existence of evidence on the deleterious effect of stigma and discrimination on the course and outcome of mental illness, and on the standard of living and quality of life of those persons affected and their families;
9. RECOGNISES the importance of promoting effective actions across all relevant policies to increase social inclusion and equity and to combat discrimination and stigma;

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 86, 24.3.2000, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 218, 31.7.2000, p. 8.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 175, 20.6.2001, p. 1.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 6, 9.1.2002, p. 1.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 23.

<sup>(6)</sup> OJ L 10, 12.1.2002, p. 1.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 1.

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10. CONSIDERS that there is a need to enhance the visibility and public awareness of, on the one hand, the importance of mental health to everybody and, on the other hand, the problems associated with stigma and discrimination in relation to mental illness;
11. RECOGNISES the importance of access to appropriate and effective treatment, access to the labour market, education and other public services in order to facilitate the integration and reintegration of people with mental illness into society;
12. INVITES the Member States to
- give specific attention to the impact of stigma and discrimination related problems due to mental illness in all age groups, and ensure that these problems are recognised, in this context giving special attention to the reduction of risks of social exclusion,
  - collect good quality data on health, economic and social consequences of stigma due to mental illness,
- undertake action to combat stigma and promote social inclusion in active partnership and dialogue with all the stakeholders to encourage an integrated and coordinated approach;
13. INVITES the Commission to
- give specific attention to active collaboration in all relevant Community policies and actions, and in particular in activities relating to employment, non-discrimination, social protection, education and health, in order to reduce stigma and discrimination in relation to mental illness,
  - undertake activities to facilitate exchange of information and mutual learning in the context of national policies to ensure health protection for people with mental health problems, giving special attention to combating stigma and discrimination, and to promoting social inclusion for people with mental illness.
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