



## The European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being

### Thematic Conference – Older People's Mental Health and Well-Being

Madrid. 29th - 30th June 2010

Organised by DG SANCO and the Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

#### Objectives

- To raise visibility of the importance of mental health and wellbeing in older people across Member States.
- To enable and encourage an exchange at EU-level on policy activities, good practices by stakeholders and research projects in European Member States, supported by the EU Compass - Commission database;
- To discuss and endorse an implementation framework for the Mental Health Pact in the field of mental health and wellbeing in older people.

#### Sub-themes

- 1) Mental health promotion in old age: healthy ageing and wellbeing
- 2) Older people in vulnerable situations
- 3) Prevention of mental disorders
- 4) Care and treatment systems
- 5) Informal carers

#### Presentations

A variety of presentations from different perspectives were invited, covering policies in Member States and at EU-level; practical experiences from programmes or projects; research activities; and also the point of view of older people themselves.

#### Consultation

The preparations for the conference involved researchers, Member States representatives and relevant stakeholder organisations, guided by DG SANCO and the Spanish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and with consultative support from an Advisory Committee, consisting of major EU-level actors in the field of older people's mental health and well-being.

#### Preparatory work

- *Background document on Older People's Mental Health and Well-being*

The conference built on the Consensus Paper "Mental health in Older People" prepared for the 2008 high-level conference. In consultation with the advisory committee and a maximum of stakeholders and research experts from all relevant sectors, the IMPACT consortium expert prepared a Background Document for the Conference and key messages and



actions for implementation. This consultation was carried out by DG SANCO in cooperation with the Technical Secretariat at Gencat and the Scientific Advisory Committee. The resulting paper drew together the main principles and options for action which can be taken to improve and maintain mental health in older people within the 5 sub-themes of the conference. This “framework” complements the consensus paper by adding the implementation dimension.

- *Database of good practices*

A new section was added to the EU Compass database of good practices and policies, and stakeholders and Member States are invited to submit entries to this as part of an ongoing process in parallel with the thematic event and afterwards.

### Outcomes from the Thematic Conference

- The **aging of population** will have profound consequences in Europe and will require immediate and concrete policy response and actions in Member States to ensure good mental health and wellbeing in this growing age group.
- **Combating ageism** (negative stereotypes and attitudes against ageing and older people) must be addressed, along with a greater public recognition and action to prevent **elder abuse**.
- Older people must be recognised as a widely **heterogeneous and diverse** group in their mental health needs, and interventions should be tailored to these variety.
- **Older women** often face specific risks both as sufferers of mental health problems and care givers. Gender-specific policies and interventions must be strengthened.
- **Promoting social inclusion** and combating **isolation and loneliness** of older people is of special relevance and should be considered as a priority, including initiatives geared towards active ageing.
- The promotion of **active partnerships**, collaboration and exchange networks between health and social actors in the field, and **including older people** themselves in developing plans and practices has an essential role.
- **Dissemination of innovative ideas** and approaches are specially needed in the field. A better visibility of practical relevance and social marketing could help to transfer results into the practice and policy field (e.g. by including powerful national ministries)
- **Mental health promotion research** related to older people should be strengthened, and particularly where the evidence base is weakest, such as resilience factors in old age, the effectiveness of concrete interventions (e.g. ICT, volunteering or one-to-one support measures) or the economic value of supporting informal carers.

More information can be found on the EC mental health pages for this event: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental\\_health/events/ev\\_20100419\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/mental_health/events/ev_20100419_en.htm).