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## PRESS RELEASE

### World Mental Health Day, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2023, is celebrated under the slogan "Mental health is a universal human right"

Mental health is a basic human right for all people. This includes the right to be protected from mental health risks, the right to available, accessible, acceptable, and good quality care, and the right to liberty, independence and inclusion in the community.

On the occasion of World Mental Health Day 2023, the European Commission hosted a half-day high-level conference in Brussels on 10 October 2023, hosted by **Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety**, building on the [new comprehensive approach to mental health](#), presented by the Commission in June 2023, which focuses on prevention, access to quality and affordable care, and reintegration into society after recovery.

The Commissioner stated in her addressing speech: "There is no health without mental health. The fact that almost half of Europeans have experienced mental health difficulties, and that more than half of those citizens have not received any professional help, is truly alarming. We have to put our citizens well-being at the centre - focussing on prevention and access to quality care and treatment. We, the governments, public health authorities, EU institutions, stakeholders and citizens, need to join our forces in a collective effort to prioritise good mental health and help those in need of support. That's what a strong European Health Union is all about." The full speech is available: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech\\_23\\_4864](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_23_4864)

The event was attended by **Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians, Marc Angel, Vice-President of the European Parliament, Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, José Miñones, Spanish Minister of Health, Bertrand Bainvel, UNICEF Representative to the European Institutions, Dr. Péter Takács, Hungarian Minister of State for Health and Frank Vandenbroucke, Belgian Minister of Social Affairs**. The event brought together hundreds of representatives from the EU institutions, national governments, international organisations and other interested partners to raise awareness of the new approach, to hear from experts and those with lived experience, to exchange on good practices and to present the EU's new comprehensive approach to mental health

Complementing the High-Level Conference on mental health, on 10 October, **HaDEA also organised a showcase event on synergies between EU-funded projects on mental health managed by the Agency in the afternoon of 9th October, 2023 in Brussels.**

The European Commission supports Member States in improving their mental health services transferring best practices on mental health systems reforms and implement new pilots on suicide prevention by providing funds from EU4Health/Third health and Horizon Europe/H2020 programmes. The goal of this event was to highlight how EU-funded projects on mental health can provide a tangible contribution to the Communication on 'A Comprehensive Approach to Mental Health'.

**Joint Action JA ImpleMENTAL was invited to present its main goals and so far achievements at the event.**

**Vasileia Konte, coordinator of the JA on behalf of the consortium leader, the Greek National Public Health organization**, presented the synergies at Member State level on implementation of best practices in mental health, giving an overview of JA ImpleMENTAL's Network, the current process of the implementation and the strategy behind it.

JA ImpleMENTAL team was also represented by Laura Shields-Zeeman, Felix Bolinski from Trimbos Institute, as well as by Corinne Salinas HaDEA Project Advisor for the JA ImpleMENTAL.

Ms. Konte informed the audience that JA ImpleMENTAL Network includes 39 organisations from 21 countries, more than 200 persons working together in synergies. This is the strength of JA ImpleMENTAL the core critical mass of dedicated and motivated personnel that works together in the Network sharing knowledge and experience for Improving mental health A team effort and synergies across member states and their key stakeholders. In the framework of JA ImpleMENTAL 25 pilots are taking place across 20 countries. 17 new or renewed suicide prevention plans across Europe will be formulated and 14 countries are piloting and implementing changes in their community mental health services. She then stressed major challenges reported by country teams, including resistance to change, missing of necessary data, and listed positive outcomes such as the improvement of the collaboration with stakeholders, major gains including sharing of experiences, knowledge increase and building out a strong network that can create the climate for the necessary changes.

The event was a great opportunity for exchanging views on policy recommendations on mental health, and to underline the importance of prevention and continuous information exchange, equal access to care and sharing good practices already in place.

Vasileia Konte, JA impleMENTAL Coordinator's speech is downloadable from: [here](#)

### Large majority of Europeans consider mental health promotion as important as physical health promotion

The new **Eurobarometer** on mental health published on the eve of World Mental Health Day. The report confirms that recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the climate crisis, and other societal and economic pressures, have exacerbated the already poor levels of mental health in Europe. Nine in ten respondents (89%) consider that mental health promotion is as important as physical health promotion. At the same time, less than half of respondents agree that people with mental health issues receive the same level of care as those with a physical condition. Moreover, almost half of respondents (46%) experienced an emotional or psychosocial problem, such as feeling depressed or anxious, in the past twelve months. More than half of these respondents (54%) with a mental health issue have not received help from a professional, according to the survey. These results show that it is crucial to continue working on mental health at EU level.

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#### About JA ImpleMENTAL

The Joint Action involves 39 participating organisations from competent authorities in 21 EU/EEA countries and supports them to establish local networks for mental health and to strengthen community-based provision of preventive care services across sectors in order to improve access to a sustainable quality of care. JA ImpleMENTAL is focusing on the transfer and implementation of two best practices: (1) mental health reform in Belgium based on the principle of deinstitutionalization, the transition from primarily institutional care to community-based care in order to improve mental health outcomes and quality of life and avoid unnecessary hospitalizations, and (2) Suicide Prevention Austria (SUPRA), a multi-level suicide prevention strategy that integrates universal, selective and indicated prevention interventions, based on the local implementation context and building upon existing resources and initiatives. The activities of the JA ImpleMENTAL strongly support the new Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health, which aims to put mental health on par with physical health and to ensure a cross-sectorial approach to mental health issues.

JA ImpleMENTAL is committed to improve the quality of life of people living with mental problems and illnesses with the involvement of all parties concerned.

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For further information on JA ImpleMENTAL project: <https://ja-imental.eu/>

[Eurobarometer](#)

[Mental health \(europa.eu\)](#)

[A comprehensive approach to mental health \(europa.eu\)](#)