

Representatives of 21 countries shared experiences and examples of good practices in Copenhagen, Denmark from March 6 to March 7, 2024.



Approximately 50 participants from 21 countries and 39 organizations participated in the two-day hybrid event that took place from March 6 to March 7, 2024, in UN City, Copenhagen, Denmark, organized by the NPHO (Greek National Public Health Organization) in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) European Region with the involvement of JA ImpleMENTAL's Member State Policy Committee (MSPC) members.

The objective of the meeting was to bring everyone on board and demonstrate the collaboration between MSPC members and JA ImpleMENTAL Country Coordinators, which is key to further enable the successful transfer and pilot implementation of the targeted best practices in the area of Mental Health.

The first day of the event was devoted to provide an overview of current JA ImpleMENTAL status, highlighting some of the activities to the Member State Policy Committee (MSPC) members, and showcase examples of strong collaboration between JA ImpleMENTAL's MSPC members and Country Coordinators.

After the introductory speeches by Ledia Lazeri, regional advisor Mental Health Foundation (MHF) and Vasileia Konte, coordinator of JA ImpleMENTAL, NPHO Greece, numerous examples of good practices, visions, arguments, and implementation cases were presented, in order to further engage MSPC members in dialogues on how the activities of JA ImpleMENTAL can be sustained and embedded in national strategies. Semmelweis University from Hungary elaborated a guide on how to organize Policy Dialogue sessions for sustainability that was presented in the form of an interactive exercise.

During the first day participants also had the opportunity of visiting the WHO European Region Office. Then best practice experiences- gained from implementing SUPRA Suicide Prevention Austria- were shared by Iceland and Estonia, whereas Spain and Malta presented their key lessons learnt from adapting Mental Health Reform in Belgium. These best practice presentations were followed by discussions with MSPC members, which focused on how best

practices could be embedded into national strategies and could enhance sustainability of stakeholder networks.

The second day morning carried on sharing good practices for sustaining capacities of mental health networks. Participants learned about the Swedish good practice on inter-sectoral collaboration for sustainable mental health and suicide prevention policy, then the Danish example, the successful integration of people with lived experience into sustainable mental health policy and service delivery, was introduced.

This was followed by a workshop exercise to discuss how a campaign could be organised and build up with the involvement of persons with lived experience (as well as involving experts) in policy making, service delivery, training, and research roles.

Ledia Lazeri, regional advisor and Elena Shevkun, technical officer, from MHF WHO Regional Office for Europe, presented an example of a mental health coalition, then the meeting moved on to the presentation of Antonis Kousoulis, director of the Global Health Action Network, who spoke about the importance of awareness, advocacy, and communication for mental health.

Melita Murko, technical officer, and Jason Maurer, communication focal point both from MHF WHO Regional Office for Europe, opened an interesting topic to discuss – how to hold policymakers accountable, and a workshop was held on the importance of lived experience – as the missing link for accountable policy-making.

The meeting was underscored by the words of Vasileia Konte who said that the JA ImpleMENTAL network's strength lies in working together to create change through sharing experiences and ideas with other policy committee members. *„At this two-day event, we updated member states on the significant progress of our mental health project and the activities we are working on, particularly in developing new services for suicide prevention. We have learned a lot from our member states' successes and challenges, and we are using this knowledge to transform services. Our achievements form a solid foundation for future interventions and influence national permanent progress strategies. We are determined to prepare thoroughly and follow all the necessary administrative steps, even though it is a big challenge for longer-term projects. We are eagerly anticipating the results we have been waiting for, and we must continue to work on other actions and activities to ensure the sustainability and growth of the project. We will continue to work on the project with dedication, we will further devote ourselves to these topics, as well as continue our work at the next meeting in Athens.“* – said Vasileia Konte.

The event in Copenhagen resulted in many fruitful discussions and engaged MSPC members across Europe in dialogues on how the activities of JA ImpleMENTAL can be sustained and embedded in national strategies, which will enhance countries with their process of implementing best practices.

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.

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

JA ImpleMENTAL is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed in the article are however those of the author(s) only, and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.