

Second Annual EU Compass Forum on Mental Health and Well-being

The Second EU Compass Forum on Mental Health and Well-being took place in Luxembourg on the 8th and 9th of June 2017. This year's Forum focused on three thematic areas: Mental Health in Schools, Mental Health at Work, and Suicide Prevention. The Forum provides an opportunity for Member States, representatives from EU agencies, and key stakeholders from governmental and non-governmental organizations to learn from each other, to explore new programs and ways of working in mental health, and to understand the need for action and improvement as related to the Forum themes. These three themes are vital areas of mental health in need of better, more comprehensive, and evidence-based interventions and strategies.

A mentally healthy workplace benefits all employees and their employers, as well as the community in general. Workplace mental health and wellbeing programs have increasingly been implemented in Europe, however more tailored interventions and programs need to become available to support capacity to participate and remain in the labour market.

Promotion of mental health and addressing risk factors for mental health problems in schools such as bullying and cyber-bullying have been addressed by many countries in Europe. Schools serve as an important platform for mental health promotion activities and mental health among children and adolescents is increasingly seen as an important consideration for policy makers and service providers in Europe.

Suicide remains a problem throughout the European Union. As a result, many Member States recognise suicide prevention as a priority and have addressed this through the development of national suicide prevention programs, expertise on suicide prevention, or through providing crisis services for those at risk. Preventing suicide benefits the individual, families, and the population as a whole.

At the Forum, these themes were further explored through keynote presentations by leading experts. Break-out sessions followed the presentations to allow for more in-depth discussions, and expert panels highlighted evidence-based interventions for at-risk youth or programs to improve mental health at work.

Countries across the European Union are in different stages of developing their mental health systems. Some countries have achieved significant progress in the past year in the implementation of mental health policies and services, while other countries have scope for further improving their mental health systems. As part of the core tasks of the EU Compass on Mental Health and Well-being, a compilation of this progress was presented at the Forum through the 2017 Progress report of activities in mental health across Member States and by key stakeholders.

Background:

The Forum has been established as the important EU event on mental health and well-being and is an important activity within the EU Compass for Action on Mental Health and Well-being. The EU Compass is a mechanism commissioned by the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) and the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) to collect, exchange, and analyse information on policy and activities by Member States and non-governmental stakeholders in mental health. The EU Compass is implemented by a consortium led by the Trimbos Institute in cooperation with the NOVA University of Lisbon, the Finnish Association for Mental Health and EuroHealthNet and is funded by the EU Health Programme.