

World Mental Health Day conference:

10 October 2023

AN EU COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH THAT PRIORITISES SOUND MENTAL HEALTH FOR ALL

#WorldMentalHealthDay

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Moderator

Belle de Jong

Belle de Jong is a mental health journalist and patient advocate. Living with bipolar disorder 1, she draws from her personal journey to address crucial topics in mental health and social justice at a European level. Originally from the Netherlands, Belle's formative years in Malta have greatly influenced her, as her exposé of the country's psychiatric hospital ignited her journalism career. Currently based in Brussels, she combines her diverse roles as a freelance journalist, moderator and leading editor at The European Correspondent. With a strong background in communications and social policy, including work at the European Parliament, Belle stands at the nexus of journalism and advocacy, giving voice to impactful stories.



Speakers

Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians

Her Majesty the Queen was born in Uccle on 20 January 1973. She studied speech therapy at the Haute École Léonard de Vinci, earned a Master's in Psychology at the Université Catholique de Louvain in 2002, and worked as a speech therapist from 1995 to 1999. On 4 December 1999, She married His Royal Highness Prince Philippe, Duke of Brabant. The Queen assists His Majesty the King in his duties as Head of State, making frequent visits to institutions and organizations, meeting regularly with members of the public, and attending ceremonies at home and abroad. She takes part in state visits, receives representatives of various civil society groups, and makes numerous field visits. In addition to the activities She engages in alongside His Majesty, the Queen is active in issues close to her heart, such as early childhood, parenting and education, child poverty, intergenerational poverty, the position of women in our society, financial literacy, and with special attention for mental wellbeing. The Queen is Honorary Chair of the King Baudouin Foundation, and regularly takes part in public debates on issues of concern to the people. Her main focus is always on the most vulnerable. As Honorary Chair of the Queen Mathilde Fund, the Queen supports



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initiatives taken by young people for young people. The Queen is Honorary Chair of Child Focus too, a foundation that works to prevent the disappearance and sexual exploitation of children.

Stella Kyriakides

Stella Kyriakides has been Commissioner for Health and Food Safety since December 1, 2019. Prior to that, she was elected to the House of Representatives of the Republic of Cyprus in 2006 in 2011 and 2016 representing the Democratic Rally Party, of which she was the vice-president. She was also the chair of the committee on human rights and equal opportunities for men and women. Previously, she served as president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), after being appointed head of the Cyprus Delegation to the PACE in 2012. At PACE, Kyriakides was also rapporteur of the first report on the optimal care of patients with breast cancer in the Council of Europe, and was the founder of the first breast cancer awareness campaign at the Council of Europe, which is now held yearly.



A passionate advocate of cancer patient rights, she was a founding member of the first breast cancer advocacy organisation in Cyprus, Europa Donna Cyprus, where she served as president from 2000 to 2015. She was also president of the European Breast Cancer Coalition Europa Donna between 2004 and 2006. Kyriakides worked as a clinical psychologist in the mental health services of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Cyprus from 1979 to 2006. She holds degrees in psychology from Reading University and Manchester University in the United Kingdom.

Marc Angel

After obtaining degrees in tourism-economy and translation in Vienna, he started his political career as a local councillor in Luxembourg City in 1994 and remained a member of the Luxembourg City Council until 2020. He was also a long-time member of the Luxembourgish Parliament from 2004 to 2019 and was notably the Chair of the Committee for Foreign and European Affairs for 6 years.

In 2019, Mr Angel entered the European Parliament and was first Vice-Chair of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs. In 2023, his fellow MEP colleagues elected him Vice-President of the European Parliament. He also co-chairs the LGBTI-Intergroup.



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Mr Angel is an UNAIDS Red Ribbon Leader for the 10-10-10 Social Enabler Target and co-founder of the STOP AIDS NOW a.s.b.l. in Luxembourg. Since 2008, he has been an Honorary Consul of the Republic of Cape Verde in Luxembourg.

Dr Hans Henri P Kluge

Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge of Belgium embarked on his role as WHO Regional Director for Europe on February 1, 2020, shortly before COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic. Since then, he and his team have led WHO's response to this health emergency across 53 countries encompassing Europe and Central Asia.

Lessons learnt from the crisis, along with other key health priorities, are encapsulated in the WHO European Programme of Work, which reflects a dual track approach to health: Preparing better for mounting health emergencies even as countries strengthen essential health systems and services including for non-communicable diseases.

Having qualified in medicine, surgery and obstetrics, Dr Kluge's extensive global experience includes seminal years with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Belgium amid health and humanitarian crises in Liberia and Somalia, as well as serving as the Moscow-based Regional TB Advisor for countries formerly part of the Soviet Union.

He joined WHO in 1999, first as TB/HIV Project Manager at WHO Russia, and then at WHO Myanmar as TB Medical Officer, eventually becoming Team Leader for the HIV, TB and malaria unit.

Dr Kluge moved to the WHO European Regional Office in 2009, and a year later was appointed Director of the Division of Health Systems and Public Health, as well as Special Representative of the Regional Director to Combat Multi/Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis.

In his current role, Dr Kluge advocates all the more strongly with governments and funders for health systems strengthening, prioritizing primary health care as a cornerstone of public health. "For me, universal health coverage is more than a slogan," he says. "Strategic, practical investments, grounded in human rights and propelled by political will, can transform societies and countries – accelerating the achievement of health for all."



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Olena Zelenska

Mrs Olena Zelenska was born on 6 February 1978 in Kryvyi Rih. The social activities of the First Lady of Ukraine before the full-scale invasion had four main directions: 1. the health of future generations (improvement of the school food system and the development of the National Strategy for a safe school environment), 2. the implementation of a barrier-free environment, 3. equal opportunities (fight against domestic and gender-based violence), 4. cultural diplomacy (introduction of audio guides in Ukrainian in museums around the world). On December 3, 2020, the President signed the Decree "On ensuring the creation of a barrier-free space in Ukraine." At the initiative of the First Lady, the National Barrier-Free Strategy - standards of equal opportunities for all population groups - was adopted, as well as the Action Plan for overcoming barriers - a road map for each department - was developed. At the initiative of the First Lady, projects in the field of medicine are being developed: evacuation of children with severe cancer diseases abroad with further treatment there, the search for equipment for children's hospitals, in particular, incubators for newborns. In May 2022, Olena Zelenska initiated the creation of the National Program of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.

The programme is designed to help Ukrainians overcome the consequences of the traumatic events of the war. The development and implementation of the program is coordinated by the Ministry of Health in close cooperation with Ukrainian and international specialists. The initiative is implemented with the support of the World Health Organization. The necessary prerequisites for the start of construction of the kitchen factory in Bucha to provide high-quality fresh food to educational institutions in the region have been obtained. The patron of the project is Howard Buffett, an American philanthropist and businessman. The kitchen factory in Bucha will be operational in 2023. In June 2022, together with the First Lady of Latvia, she opened a joint summer camp for Ukrainian and Latvian schoolchildren on the basis of the Riga Ukrainian Secondary School. And together with the First Lady of Lithuania, she opened the first Ukrainian center in the European Union in Vilnius for citizens who were forced to leave Ukraine. It will become a place of training, career counselling, psychological help,



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recreation for children, youth and adults. It is also a platform for cultural diplomacy between countries.

On November 1, 2022, Ukraine ratified the Istanbul Convention. This became a new stage in the fight against violence. Ratification of the Convention is a long-awaited step in the intensification of work to combat all types of violence. Olena Zelenska Foundation On September 22, Olena Zelenska presented her Foundation during a charity evening in New York during the 77th UN General Assembly. The Foundation's primary goal is to restore Ukraine's human capital so that every Ukrainian feels physically and mentally healthy, protected, and able to exercise their right to education, work, and build a future in Ukraine.

Rozina Spinnoy

Rozina Spinnoy is a Design Strategist and Social Entrepreneur, Owner/Founder of her NGO BIDs Belgium and Design SME's based in Brussels and working internationally. A community partner of the New European Bauhaus, with her NGO BIDs Belgium. She is also the Founder of the international/community initiative of Empowering Women, Public Space and Climate Change. Rozina is also sits on a variety of Advisory Councils. Rozina champions a variety of causes, projects, ranging from gender equality, urban place-making, inclusion and diversity. A keen advocate for more mental health awareness as a Mother and an active member of Mental Health Europe. She promotes working towards more inclusive communities and co-designing processes in her wide range of diverse projects.



Jose Minones

José Manuel Miñones Conde, born on July 17, 1972, in Santiago de Compostela, is a Spanish politician affiliated with the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) and a distinguished university professor. As of 2023, he holds the position of Minister of Health in Spain. Before embarking on his political career, José Manuel Miñones Conde followed in his father's footsteps by pursuing a degree in pharmacy at the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC), successfully graduating in 1997. His dedication to academia led him to earn his



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doctorate cum laude in 2001, receiving an Extraordinary Mention for his exceptional research contributions. He has since become a respected professor of Physical Chemistry at the USC School of Pharmacy and an active researcher, notably participating in the Galician Isidro Parga Pondal program.

His political journey began in 2007 when he was elected as a councilor in the municipality of Ames (La Coruña) during the Spanish local elections. During his tenure, he held various portfolios, including Administrative Reform, Administration Quality, New Technologies, and Health. In March 2021, Miñones Conde's career took a significant turn when he was appointed as the Government Delegate in the Galicia region by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. His most recent achievement came on March 27, 2023, when he was announced as the Minister of Health. José Manuel Miñones Conde's extensive background in pharmacy and his experience in local government make him a notable figure in Spain's political and healthcare landscape.

Sara Cerdas

Sara Cerdas is a Portuguese medical doctor and, since July of 2019, a Member of the European Parliament. She is a member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI), the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) and S&D coordinator of the Sub-Committee on Public Health (SANT). She was also vice-president of the Special Committee on Beating Cancer (BECA) and S&D coordinator of the Special Committee on COVID-19 (COVI). Currently, MEP Cerdas is shadow rapporteur of the proposal for Regulation for the European Health Data Space and main rapporteur of the INI report on Mental Health.

She holds a master's degree in Medicine from the University of Lisbon, a postgraduate degree in traveler's medicine from NOVA University Lisbon and a master's degree in Public Health from the Umeå University.



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Catherine Brogan

Currently, President of Mental Health Europe & Deputy CEO with Mental Health Ireland. Catherine has 18 years mental health senior management experience in both the statutory & voluntary sectors. Included in her portfolio are qualifications in nursing, project management, events management, Executive & Mental Health & Well Being coaching, Performance Management, QQI in Training, Delivery and Evaluation and Charity Law. In a voluntary capacity Catherine in 2001 co-founded and co-ordinates Turas Le Cheile bereavement support services. Catherine is also a Director of Alcohol Action Ireland & H.U.G.G. (Healing Untold Grief Groups) and the NGO representative on the Connecting for Life Cross Sectoral Interdepartmental Steering Group on Suicide Prevention. Catherine lives in Kilcock Co Kildare. Married with 3 grown children and is a Grandmother to 5 beautiful Grandchildren.



Natalia Kallio

Natalia Kallio, is a human rights trainer, author and Board member of the [European Youth Forum](#), which is the largest organisation representing young people in the world. The European Youth Forum is the democratic representation for over 100 international youth organisations and national youth council across Europe. In Europe, the European Youth Forum found that, through the pandemic, nearly 2 out of 3 all young people may be affected by mental health and wellbeing issues and highlighted the strong links between mental health and young people' socio-economic environment. Against the background of the European Year of Youth 2022, the European Youth Forum committed to raising awareness and flagging the complex and persisting mental health challenges which too many young people continue to face in Europe.



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Bertrand Bainvel

Mr. Bertrand Bainvel, a French national, is the UNICEF Representative to the European Union Institutions and the Director of UNICEF Partnerships Office in Brussels since 13 February 2023. Previously, Mr. Bainvel was the Deputy Regional Director, and the Acting Regional Director, for UNICEF Middle East and North Africa.

Before his role in the MENA region, he served as UNICEF Representative in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Mr. Bainvel served as UNICEF Head of the Partnership Office in Moscow, and Representative to the Russian Federation, and UNICEF Representative in Jamaica.



Dr Lydia Abela

In 2002, Lydia graduated as a lawyer from the University of Malta, and later graduated with a master's degree in Maritime Law. Throughout her legal career, she specialised in Family law, Constitutional law and Environmental law. In 2010, Dr Lydia Abela was appointed as the Executive Secretary of the Partit Laburista. Whilst occupying this role, she steered an increase in the participation of women and youths in politics.

She has also led an active role in the Maltese general elections since 2013. Moreover, Dr Abela worked in the voluntary sector for a number of years. She is inspired by women from all walks of life, who are truly committed to improve the lives of others. She believes these women make a real difference through their voluntary work in both the public service and private entities. Dr Lydia Abela was appointed as the President of Special Olympics Malta in March 2021. In May 2022, Malta hosted the Special Olympics Invitational Games in which Dr Abela played a crucial role in ensuring the Games were a success.



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Gilmour Borg

Gilmour Borg is a 21-year-old Special Olympics Malta Athlete, who opened up and spoke about how he was bullied since his early years at school. "Bullying is no joke, it happened every day and because of this, I had bad thoughts going through my mind and often asked myself if I should end all of this." Gilmour, who has dyslexia and ADHD, said his life turned around when he joined Special Olympics Malta. "Before joining Special Olympics Malta, my life was difficult," Gilmour said. "I had very dark moments and I passed through dark stages in my life, I was refused, left, neglected by friends. I was a victim of people who wanted to destroy me."



Judit Bidló

Dr. Judit Bidló has been serving as the Deputy State Secretary for the Professional Management of Health at the Ministry of the Interior since March 1, 2023. She is a pharmacist, economist, and infobionics engineer. She is a founding member of the Hungarian Health Economics Society. She gained her experience in the pharmaceutical industry at Novartis and the Association of Innovative Pharmaceutical Manufacturers of which she was director for 4 years between 2005-2009. Since 2009, she worked at the National Health Insurance Fund, in the area of pricing and reimbursement. She was the deputy general director of the National Health Insurance Fund from November 1, 2018 until the end of February 2023. At NHIF, she was responsible for the operation and financing of the outpatient drug supply, the financing of medical devices and itemized based reimbursement technologies, as well as for procurement and orphan pharmaceutical products financing. She still participates in the work of the National Molecular Oncoteam. Currently, she considers her main task to be the creation of outcome-based drug financing and the adaptation of financing systems to the telemedicine systems that are coming to the fore due to the COVID pandemic. In addition, she is a committed supporter of the development of data-driven healthcare decision-making.



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Ledia Lazeri

Dr Ledia Lazeri is the Regional Adviser for Mental Health at the WHO Regional Office for Europe. A native of Albania, she trained and worked as a psychiatrist in her home country, having contributed to education of medical students and later to the national reform of mental health policy and services. Having joined WHO in 2000, Dr Lazeri expanded her scope of work larger in the Balkans region through the Mental Health Project of the Stability Pact in the South Eastern Europe and later in Turkey where she led a large EU funded WHO project on Improving Services for People with Disabilities. She took up duties as Regional Adviser in May 2021 after a few assignments as WHO Representative to various European countries, where she led the WHO technical cooperation with the country. In her function as Regional Adviser Dr Lazeri leads a team that brings together expertise in various areas: policy and services, rights and advocacy, communication and promotion in mental health, tasked, among others, with implementing the WHO European Framework for Action in Mental Health 2021-2025 and with supporting the pan-European Mental Health Coalition.



Francesca Colombo

Francesca Colombo, M.Sc., leads OECD work on health, which aims at providing internationally comparable data on health and health systems and applying economic analysis to health policies, advising policy makers, stakeholders and citizens on how to respond to demands for more and better health care and make health systems more resilient and people centered. Major activities of the OECD Health Division cover the response to the COVID-19 crisis and solutions to make health systems more resilient; trends in health spending; measuring of health care outcomes, activities and inputs; health care quality policies; assessing health system efficiency and value for money; health workforce; long-term care systems and ageing; the economics of public health; pharmaceutical policies, new technologies, big data and Artificial Intelligence in health.



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Florian Prutsch

Florian Prutsch is 31 and graduated nursing school in 2023 and started to work in the emergency department of a 400-bed hospital in Vienna, Austria. Since he was young, mental health was always an interest of his because hospitality and nursing are both professions, who are mentally and physically challenging. Therefore he always had to look about his mental health as well as supporting others to do so. As Vice-President of the European Nursing Student Association (ENSA) and President of the Nursing Students Association in Austria (BAG Junge Pflege des ÖGKV) mental health is one of the most important topic they are working on. Nursing Students and early career nurses are on the frontline of both - treating patients with mental health issues as well as dealing with their own mental health because of the job.



Nicola Unterecker

Nicola Unterecker is a 29-year-old living in Stuttgart, Germany. She is proud to call herself a cancer survivor, and it has been an incredible journey that has shaped the person she is today. Since 2019, she has been actively involved as a Patient Advocate with Youth Cancer Europe, using her personal experience to support and empower young cancer patients across the continent. It is truly a privilege for her to be able to make a positive impact in the lives of others going through similar challenges. In 2023, she took on the role of Ambassador for the EU-CAYAS NET, which allows her to raise awareness and advocate for childhood and adolescent cancer. It is her mission to ensure that these young patients have a voice and access to the resources and support they need.



She is also proud to serve as a member of the strong-AYA Patient Advisory Board, where she provides valuable insights and perspectives to the medical community. By sharing her experiences, she hopes to contribute to the improvement of healthcare services and support systems for cancer patients. Being a cancer survivor has been both a challenging and transformative experience. It has fueled her determination to make a difference and support others on their own cancer journeys. She is committed to fighting for a brighter future for all those affected by cancer.

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Frank Vandenbroucke

Prof. Frank Vandenbroucke is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Social Affairs and Public Health. He previously took on academic positions at the University of Antwerp (part-time Professor at the Herman Deleeck Centre for Social Policy, 2012-2020), the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (professor full-time 2012-2015), and the University of Amsterdam (professor full-time 2015-2020). He served as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (1994-1995), Minister for Social Affairs and Pensions (1999-2003) and Minister for Employment and Pensions (2003-2004) in the Belgian Government. He was also Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish Government, Flemish Minister for Employment, Education and Training (2004-2009). He received a D.Phil. from the Faculty of Social Studies, Oxford University.



Irena Bezic

Irena Bezic is a gestalt therapist, supervisor and teacher in psychotherapy education; working in private practice since 1994 leading gestalt therapy education in Croatia since 1996. PhD in clinical psychology and PHD in social politics/social work. Since 2005 she is the delegate of Croatian umbrella organisation for psychotherapy in EAP, chairing Ethical guidance committee of EAP since 2014 and National umbrella organisations committee in EAP since 2019. From this year she is holding the position of EAP president.



Panu Saaristo

Mr. Panu Saaristo is an experienced leader in the fields of Global Health, Emergency Management, and Crisis Response. His expertise is underscored by his commitment to fostering sustainable solutions, innovative strategies, and impactful programs designed to address pressing health needs and challenges within humanitarian settings.



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In his role as Regional Health Manager for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in the Europe Region, Mr. Saaristo executes a comprehensive and strategic oversight of health initiatives. He coordinates efforts and facilitates collaborative dialogues and partnerships across 54 National Societies in Europe and Central Asia to advance the overall mission of the IFRC.

Kathleen Coppens

Kathleen Coppens is a clinical psychologist. After a couple of years of research on the mental health and the reintegration process of child soldiers in Northern Uganda, she started working in Brussels. She has been doing research on the mental health of homeless people and been working as a mediator in several residential mental health services. She is coordinator of [Bru-Stars](#), a mental health network for children and youngsters in Brussels, since its start in 2015.

