



Flash Report
First meeting of the Drafting Group on stigma and discrimination on mental health,
under Public Health Expert Group,
29 November 2023

The first meeting of the drafting group on stigma and discrimination took place under the sub-group on mental health of the Public Health Expert Group (PHEG). DG SANTE chaired the meeting which was attended by representatives of 13 Member States, the Commission services and HaDEA.

Mandate and nomination to chair

DG SANTE noted that the mandate of the drafting group is to develop a document to outline EU guidance on stigma and discrimination. This work is a flagship under the Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health. It was agreed that the group would meet on a quarterly basis until the end of 2024. Finland proposed to co-chair the drafting group with DG SANTE; this was welcomed by the participants.

Stigma and discrimination in the Communication on mental health

DG SANTE highlighted that as a starting point it would be important to map national and EU initiatives tackling stigma and discrimination, and develop jointly EU guidance for Member States to break through stigma and discrimination.

DG SANTE presented the various levels at which stigma and discrimination can be experienced, a definition of stigma based on Mental Health Europe's glossary and indications on the most relevant negative consequences and effects generated by stigma. Finally, DG SANTE presented the best practices and research projects addressing stigma and discrimination at different levels and possible tools to be deployed to tackle this challenge.

The Quality Rights initiative and action on stigma

The World Health Organisation (WHO) presented the initiative, which contributes to the UN Convention on the right of persons with disabilities. WHO also provided the participants with a presentation on the material available for Member States and the Anti-Stigma Toolkit.

Tour de table

Participants expressed support for a comprehensive, strategic approach to stigma and discrimination that encompasses all initiatives promoted by Member States and focuses on identifying joint guidance. Participants presented the ongoing activities at national level to tackle stigma and discrimination. It was agreed that the work carried out by the WHO, the Lancet Commission on Stigma and the Member States will provide a good basis for further work by the drafting group, while ensuring synergies between further projects, initiatives, and international level work.

Conclusion and next steps

The Chair thanked all participants for attending the meeting and for their valuable input to the discussions, informing them that the next meeting of the PHEG is planned for 6 December 2023. The next drafting group meeting will take place in early 2024.