



**Subject: Stakeholder webinar on mental health, 2 March 2023**

## **Flash Report**

DG SANTE hosted a webinar with the mental health stakeholder community, chaired by the Deputy Director-General for Health for more than 150 participants.

### **Opening message from Commissioner Kyriakides**

Ms Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, expressed strong support for a more comprehensive approach to mental health. She underlined the importance of addressing vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and the need for people with mental health issues to have timely access for support. She pledged enhanced support at EU level for mental health as an important crosscutting topic that touched the lives of all citizens; and stressed that the Commission was keen to work hand-in-hand with stakeholders to improve mental health support for all.

### **Update on the mental health initiative by the Commission**

DG SANTE presented an update of the ongoing preparations and consultations on the mental health initiative with Member States, stakeholders, citizens and other Commission services. As announced in the 2022 State of the Union speech by President von der Leyen, the new comprehensive, prevention-oriented approach to mental health seeks to address all policies and socioeconomic and environmental determinants that affect mental health. Current and planned actions on mental health under the EU4Health work programmes and the “Healthier Together” initiative were outlined. A specific sub-group on mental health under the Public Health Expert Group has been set up to advise the Commission on mental health actions and promote coordination at EU and individual Member State levels. Over €18 million has been earmarked under the 2023 work programme to support various mental health projects and initiatives.

### **Preliminary analysis of the call for evidence on the mental health initiative by the Commission**

The preliminary results of the call for evidence were presented. The inputs received so far focus primarily on promotion of good mental health and prevention of mental health problems, with stakeholders emphasizing the need for a multidisciplinary approach, support for local and regional initiatives, investment in social cohesion, and mental wellbeing for all EU citizens. Suicide prevention, and early childhood and young adult mental health were also cited as areas of specific attention. The feedback from stakeholders will be analysed and presented in a report that will support the preparation of the Commission Communication.

### **Thematic Network on Mental Health in All Policies**

Mental Health Europe presented the thematic network “Mental health in all policies”, an advocacy platform of 140 members working to promote a comprehensive understanding of mental health and its determinants. The network’s goals include sharing knowledge

and promising practices in mental health, reinforcing cooperation between key civil society organisations that work on the socio-economic and environmental determinants of mental health, and providing policy recommendations. The network will issue a Joint Statement in April 2023 to provide policy recommendations and suggest possible courses of action to address mental health in all relevant European Union, national and regional policies.

## **Discussion**

Stakeholders were invited to share their views on priorities for action, best practices and innovative approaches in the field of mental health. The stakeholders overwhelmingly welcomed and expressed their support for the Commission's initiative on mental health and the proposed promoting a comprehensive mental health in all policies approach.

They highlighted key mental health challenges as increased levels of suicide and depression, issues of stigmatization and discrimination, the need for greater education and funding, the lack of qualified staff and ongoing need for training; the need for integrated care, and extended waiting times to access care. They considered that stakeholders could best contribute to the mental health initiative through raising awareness, providing training, capacity building, research and dissemination of data, and sharing of best practices, among other actions. The need for a holistic and integrated approach bringing together distinct but interrelated themes under the broader issue of mental health was emphasised, as was better data collection and evidence-based research to inform mental health policies. The need for capacity-building as well as improved early detection and screening of mental health problems, was also highlighted.

## **Next Steps**

The Chair thanked all participants for their valuable input and invited interested parties to make concrete proposals and share ideas in advance of the next stakeholder meeting for the mental health community which would take place on 21 April 2023.