



MALTESE PRESIDENCY SCORECARD (JANUARY - JUNE 2017)

MENTAL HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS

In order to engage with and analyse the performance of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union, [Mental Health Europe](#) has devised a scorecard system through which we evaluate each Presidency's commitment to and promotion of mental health according to how they performed on the following criteria:

- Promotion of mental health and well-being
- Commitment to the rights of persons with psychosocial disabilities
- The involvement and empowerment of users of mental health services.

With the adoption of the [EU Framework for Action on Mental Health and Well-being](#) last year, we could have expected the beginning of 2017 to be an exciting year for mental health. However, the Council Conclusions under the Maltese Presidency failed to mainstream mental health in EU policy and we noticed an unfortunate lack of involvement and empowerment of users.

Although health was not an integral part of the Maltese Presidency's programme with mental health largely absent, we appreciated that some actions did include a mental health perspective. The Maltese Presidency notably pursued previous Presidencies' work in many fields such as dementia, the Accessibility Act and the Equal Treatment Directive. MHE did have some contacts with the Maltese Presidency, but due to limited capacity, we could not explore these sufficiently. We therefore appreciate the Maltese Presidency's readiness to meet and engage with civil society, including MHE.

SCALE OF APPRECIATION: HOW WAS THE WEATHER DURING THE MALTESE PRESIDENCY?



GOOD



FAIR



AVERAGE



POOR

PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



The top health priority for the Maltese Presidency was childhood obesity which culminated in the adoption of [Council Conclusions on halting the rise in childhood overweight and obesity](#). Although MHE supports this initiative, we note that mental health was not mentioned and believe more could have been done to promote the mental health impacts of childhood overweight and obesity instead of only focusing on physical health components.

The [Council Resolution on the future development of the dialogue with young people post 2018](#) was adopted. This resolution had good recommendations aimed at enhancing youth mental health and well-being such as ensuring that young people have time for activities that help them to build resilience, self-awareness and self-confidence and education on mental health and well-being through formal education as well as in informal environments to break down stigma and raise awareness.

The Maltese Presidency played little or no role in this year's [EU Mental Health Compass](#) meeting, which is the biggest mental health event on the European calendar. They also did not attend the European Governmental Expert Group on mental health although there were important topics on the agenda such as the future of the health programme. This is a pity as engagement in the key mental health meetings on the EU calendar from the Presidencies is crucial to keep mental health on the political agenda.



In its [Progress Report](#), the Maltese Presidency informed that it had devoted seven days of meetings to discussions on the [European Accessibility Act](#). Although all delegations have maintained reservations on the proposal as a whole, the Maltese Presidency made many draft suggestions based on the replies to a questionnaire they circulated. The work done will help the next Presidency to move forward with negotiations on the Accessibility Act. Concerning the [Equal Treatment directive](#), despite some discussions, the Maltese Presidency's [Progress Report](#) noted that little progress was made, as some Member States continue to block progress. The Maltese Presidency has also been actively participating and presenting at the Disability High Level Group and listened to Disabled Persons Organisations.

The [Council Conclusion on sport as a platform for social inclusion through volunteering](#) highlights the right of persons with disabilities to full access to sports activities including by volunteering. It also encourages social inclusion of minorities and people in vulnerable situations such as isolated seniors, young people in difficult situations, persons with disability, migrants and refugees by equipping them with new skills and instilling in them the importance of sport as a vehicle for social inclusion. The recommendation also promotes volunteering in sports by highlighting the benefits to physical and mental health well-being. Although we note that it did not make specific reference to persons with psychosocial disabilities who sometimes face different barriers to inclusion in sport and other volunteering activities to those faced by persons with physical disabilities.

INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF USERS OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



In terms of involvement and empowerment of users, the Maltese Presidency did poorly in comparison to other Presidencies. The events they held mostly involved experts and only a few involved users. As an example, although Maltese Presidency continued the Dutch Presidency's work on dementia by hosting an expert meeting under the theme '[A Dementia-friendly Community](#)' and by the [joint statement on dementia](#) signed by the Trio Presidency, the expert meeting only involved Governmental Experts, which is poor in terms of representation of user voices. We also noticed a lack of transparency about the content of these meetings as minutes were not always made public.

[E-Health Week 2017](#) took place in Malta this year with the theme 'Data for Health: the key to personalised sustainable care' at which one of our members participated as a service user. MHE was pleased that this event highlighting e-health technologies which aimed at supporting user-centred health services and the involvement of users of health services, including mental health services in their own healthcare, was held. However, only a minority of talks were about mental health, which was not mainstreamed throughout the event and MHE noticed once again that most of the speakers were experts and that only a few service users were listed as speakers.

CONCLUSION

MHE is glad that some progress has been made regarding the European Accessibility Act. We were pleased to see mental health mentioned in some Council Conclusions including on the dialogue with youth, however the Maltese Presidency also missed out on some opportunities to mainstream mental health. The Presidency also missed the chance to show its commitment to mental health by engaging more with the EU Mental Health Compass and involving and empowering users of mental health services in its work.



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