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RESOLUTION ON PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH

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Motion Text

Each year, 58.000 people die from suicide in the European Union - more than from traffic accidents. As the generation with the most common reason of death being suicide, we feel the need to urge every member of the nations parliaments, the European parliament and the European Commission. Mental health is a European topic, we finally have to work on a European solution for this crisis! Actually, in 2005 the European Commission signed the «Mental Health Declaration for Europe», which included mental health as a priority in the European agenda, but since then nothing has really changed! This has to stop: we want a European Union that focuses on the people who live in it and not just on the economy. European solidarity also means European health policy.

A greatest focus must be set up on mental health issue for young people. First off, the goal of tackling mental health should not start after people are diagnosed with mental illnesses, but it should start mainly in mental health promotion, for example taking action in our education. Actually, during adolescence, youth people are especially vulnerable. Nowadays, schools have been not only a place of knowledge but also a place where discrimination, bullying, competition are key elements on a young adult life. School is not anymore, a shelter but has become an anxious place, especially for young adults whom was identified as different from day one. Therefore, as it is important to have support in these moments, schools should have professionals who take care of the emotional health of children and young people, especially those with less resources.

Improving the mental health of the young population requires action in our social environments. Consequently, mental health strategy must be taken in the «local arena», as it is necessary to be able to keep in mind the differential needs of each region, city and neighborhood, as well as the diverse inequities regarding mental health.

We should find ways to shift our society's conception of mental health from being a topic that is highly stigmatized into a topic which is openly talked about, it should be accepted and enhanced, just like physical health is.

We urgently appeal to our elected representatives to start investing in an education that includes the subject mental health, but also that values mental health. Therefore we demand a right to stay at home when you are having mental issues, just like you are allowed to when you are physically sick. Moreover, we need to start investing in health promotion in the neighbourhood level, with interventions focus on promoting mental health wellness, specially on young people.

Especially during the corona crisis, we have learned how fragile Mental Health can be and how underfunded and abandoned has been by our governments -in all the levels. For our society to have a support system to lean on in such hard times, we need to invest more into Public Health systems, with a prevention attitude, and ensure equity in Mental Health services.

In doing this, we also have to realize, how deeply traumatizing it is for refugees to try to enter fortress Europe. We take their chance of starting a better life in Europe by forcing them into inhumane camps with bad infrastructure and weak psychological support. If they are granted to stay in Europe, they have to get used to the everyday life and no mental illnesses are accepted. We have to change this

urgently. This is why we demand psychological support for every refugee - in refugee camps and after getting a residency permit.

We need more European data on mental health in marginalized groups of our society to make sure, no one is left behind - minority stress is a serious topic as we are experiencing more hate against queer people than we have experienced in the last decade and more hate crimes towards refugees since 2015. This is why we strongly recommend the European Commission to commission a study which focuses on this exact topic. We also advise the European Commission to revise EUR/04/5047810/7, the mental health action plan for Europe from 2005 and to put a new commissioner in place - a European commissioner on mental health and well-being. We also demand a regular convention of experts and representatives to work on subtopics and craft solutions for the crisis we have been living in for decades now - the mental health crisis, which is getting worse and worse every day we ignore it.

To conclude, we demand the following steps to be followed as soon as possible:

- We have to increase psychotherapy slots as well as funding for other mental health services in order to provide adequate and affordable care for every European citizen who is experiencing mental health problems (expectedly 25% of the population) independent of their economic or social background;
- medication, therapy, and lifestyle management are all equally important approaches to care for mental health. Doctors should work with patients and prescribe treatments that are best suited for each individual patient, not based on assumptions or a rushed diagnosis. Simultaneously, wellness programmes with a focus on mental and physical health should be provided to all members of society to help address rising mental health conditions in society;
- include mental health and suicide prevention in every educational plan Europe-wide;
- national governments and the European Union should set up extensive mental health awareness campaigns on social media, in an attempt to reach specifically young people. These campaigns should aim to destigmatize speaking up about mental health, this will save lives;
- a study to be commissioned which focuses on mental health and minorities and marginalized groups;
- initiatives that specifically target loneliness and social isolation of specific groups such as the elderly and disabled people are essential;
- to effectively prioritize mental health in our societies, all levels of politics should be included. While national governments have the ability to organise large scale campaigns and decide the budget of health services, we should examine the needs of local communities to effectively avert the mental health crisis;
- fund interventions in community health programs focused on promoting mental health, and increasing the resilience of neighborhoods to withstand social attacks.