

Betreff: GAMIAN-Europe Newsletter - May/June 2022

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Dear Readers,

GAMIAN-Europe is pleased to announce the fourth edition of its bi-monthly newsletter.

First and foremost we have some very exciting news regarding what came out of European Union State of the Union Address as recounted by our MEP liason Christine Markings.

A EU Year for Mental Health and EU Mental Health Strategy - a time of opportunity!

As reported in earlier newsletters, we have been actively advocating on both these issues for a number of years; preparing a blueprint for a Strategy as early as 2015, developing concrete proposals for a Year, issuing policy statements and organising a variety of meetings with the MEP Alliance on Mental Health on these topics.

Following Commission President Ursula van der Leyen's 'State of the Union' address, presented on 14 September, and in which she announced 'a new initiative on mental health'. The letter of intent, accompanying the State of the Union address', also refers to 'a comprehensive approach to mental health'. Whereas there are no details at this point in time, this announcement is a clear indication of increased Commission attention, and now is the time to make sure that any future initiative will take account of the real priorities and needs in the field of mental health, and will include the involvement of those living with mental ill health and experts by experience.

With regards to specific GAMIAN-Europe news, we had a busy summer. We closed our inaugural art contest **My HeART** in August with all contestants artwork being published via our social media channels and on our website. We launched a new campaign about suicide prevention for young men called **#BreakingSuicideStigma** for World Suicide Prevention Day where we held workshops with young men and also created and disseminated relevant materials as a result . In other news, we are in also currently setting up a **Peer Support Platform** where different types of peer support will be available in an easy to access **virutal resource centre**. Finally, our website is getting a redo! In the next month or so we are overhauling the GAMIAN-Europe website to make it easier for you to **navigate** as well as more **visually pleasing**.

Enjoy your reading!

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FEATURED NEWS



New GAMIAN-Europe President Elected!

We are proud to announce that Péter Kéri has been elected as the new President of GAMIAN-Europe effective immediately.

[Read more here](#)



GAMIAN-Europe launches campaign #BreakingSuicideStigma

On September 10th we launched our video and toolkit for World Suicide Prevention day. This campaign was specifically designed to target...

[Read more here](#)



GAMIAN-Europe to participate at ECNP Congress

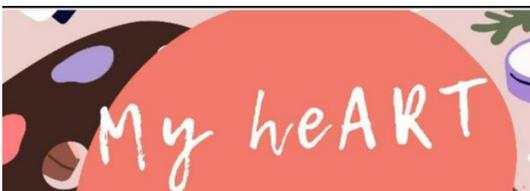
On the 15th of October 2022 we will take part in the ECNP Congress in Vienna, Austria.

[You can register for the event and view our virtual both here](#)



What we are up to

EDUCATING AND RAISING AWARENESS



My heART

We are pleased to announce that the inaugural came to close in August.

A huge congratulations to the three winners: **Kaarin Poppe (Ups & Downs)**, **Muriel Treille (ADHD, ASC & LD Belgium)**



Migraines and Mental Health: Addressing the Challenge

Through this project, GAMIAN-Europe is exploring and **raising awareness** of the link between **migraine and mental health in women** and those who identify as women.

and **Arvide Nilsson (Riksförbundet Balans)**. With over **55 contestants** taking part in the contest it has a huge success!

The contest served to amplify the voice of people with a lived experience of mental ill-health through art.

[Click here](#) to see all the artists' creations on our website



Comorbidities: Cancer and Depression

The aims of this project are:

- Raise awareness that depression is a comorbidity of cancer.
- Gather in-depth patients accounts on the topic.
- Encourage dialogue between patients, clinicians and other stakeholders to help create and put forward recommendations for EU and national policy makers.

There will be an initial focus group on the 26th of October with a further focus group to happen in November (date TBD).

[Check more info here](#)

We look at understanding the **gender-specific challenges** of this co-morbidity and its overall impacts on women's **quality of life and** exploring **current care and treatment experiences**

One of the outcomes of the projects is the development of a **set of recommendations** that will be put forward to **governments, to advocate for better care** of women who suffer from this co-morbidity.

[Read more here](#)



Peer Support: Sharing and Developing Activities

This project aims at **creating a virtual resource centre of best practices of peer support**, activities, methods and training programmes. The key purpose of this resource centre is to **facilitate the work of patients, carers and practitioners** that are interested in setting up a peer support group within their communities.

Through **workshops and focus groups**, external stakeholders and GAMIAN-Europe's experts by experience will **share their experiences and contribute to the project**, which will collect information on peer support in mental health from several EU Member States and beyond.

[Check more info here](#)



DISCOVER OUR PUBLICATIONS

"Things about suicide that young men must know - an easy to access toolkit"

As part of our **#BreakingSuicideStigma** campaign, around suicide prevention in young men, we published an interactive toolkit called "Things about suicide that young men must know".

It is filled with resources such as helplines to call, guidelines to follow, apps you can use and many other assets aimed at aiding young men living with suicidal ideation.

Check out the full publication [here](#)



Check out our latest publications



MEP ALLIANCE



**Advocating for
mental wellbeing**

Upcoming Meeting of the MEP Alliance on Mental Health - Preparing for dedicated EU level action on mental health

On the 25th of October 2022 the MEP Alliance will meet for a hybrid event.

The main topics of discussion focused on will be the potential for EU level action on mental health and how to achieve a comprehensive initiative/strategy on mental health moving forward.

All speakers will be confirmed closer to the event but you can sign up either in person or online [here](#)

Czech EU Presidency will address mental health!

Also, speaking in the meeting, Prof Jiří Horáček (Head of Department of Psychiatry/Medical Psychology, Charles University Prague and Coordinator of Mental Health Agenda, Czech EU Presidency) provided information of the plans of the upcoming Czech Presidency in relation to mental health (which GAMIAN-Europe has actively advocated for).

These plans entail organising a High Level event entitled 'Resilient Mental Health in the EU Amid Covid 19 and Other Challenges', and will take place in Brussels on 11 November 2022.

The inspiration for this happening came from the COVID-19 pandemic, migration, climate change and Ukraine war – all these urgently underline and call for an EU Mental Health Strategy.

The event addressed the following key topics:

- Mental Health Pandemic in Europe: Covid-19 and other upcoming challenges
- Towards EU Strategy on Mental Health
- Mental Health as one of the key EU Initiatives
- Supporting cutting-edge EU research in mental health (Horizon Europe, funding)
- Drawing inspiration from best practices across the globe
- Cooperation with the upcoming Swedish Presidency

Apart from this main event, in which some 100 participants will be present, 2-3 follow-up roundtables will be held in Prague, attended by some 20-40 participants, addressing some of the key issues identified in the main event.

One of outcomes will be a joint memorandum of leading EU scientists and decision-makers on key mental health challenges in EU and impacts these are having on the well-being of the EU citizens, resilience of healthcare systems and public budgets.

Another outcome relates to the formulation of a 'Roadmap for a Coordinated Action in Mental Health in the EU' that is to be shared with the European Commission, the European

Parliament and representatives of Member States, including those responsible for the healthcare agenda of the upcoming Swedish Presidency.

The Czech Presidency will work closely with the European Parliament and relevant stakeholders (including patients).



For this edition of the MEP Alliance for Mental Health Interview series, we talked to **MEP Alex Agius Saliba** about all things mental health. He explains that mental health for him has always been a main priority as it often touches the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. Not only this but it has huge economic consequences as a result of people's quality of life deteriorating. This of course was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He explains how the S&D, his political party, outlined in their position paper, **Towards a European Mental Health Strategy**, why it is paramount for both an EU year to be dedicated to mental health as well as a comprehensive EU mental health strategy. He further discussed the importance of EU institutions being closer to their citizens via raising awareness towards mental health at all levels (school, workplace, university etc).

[Read the interview here](#)



EU DEVELOPMENT

Mental Health Strategy around the corner?

As mentioned previously, the biggest EU development in recent times was the hinting towards an EU strategy by EU Commission President Ursula van der Leyen at the State of Union. While she did not specifically mention it, alluding to a 'mental health initiative', it is certainly a big step forward.

Unfortunately for now this is all that has been 'hinted' at. However, hopefully in the near

future we will see some concrete policy action to back up this statement.



EU Research Project

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND THE REAL WORD



PSY-PGx

The project team is preparing for the consortium meeting and AGM that will take place on 15 October in Vienna during the ECNP congress.

Almost 20 months have passed since the kick off of the PSY-PGx project and many activities have progressed to set up study trials at the different sites in 6 European countries.

GAMIAN Europe has significantly contributed in these tasks with the support of the Patient Advisory Board and the 'BEHAPP' team. The co-creation of the informed consent form, the input of users' perspective in the BEHAPP application and the feedback on the Patient Fact sheet are only a few of these.

These achievements will be presented at the AGM in Vienna.

[Read more here](#)



SYNCHROS

As mentioned in previous edition of this newsletter, the project has officially finished in June 2022. And now, as usual last reporting, activities and financial, to EU is on-going.

[Read more here](#)



EBRA

The project is also coming to an end in a few weeks. An EBRA deliverable, report on patient involvement best practice, has been finished and will be available for the public very soon.

In the run-up to the final conference that will take place in Brussels on 11 October, the cluster BRAINFOOD has organised an event (22 September) to discuss the results in their area and the PSMD cluster (Prevention of Severe Mental Disorders) focussed on Implementing precision and preventive psychiatry in Europe -(21 September).

The final conference is scheduled for 11 October, in Brussels.

[Read more here](#)



IT4Anxiety

On 11 October, GAMIAN -Europe's and other patient representatives will participate in the Midterm Conference in Lille, France. Theme of the conference : How to manage anxiety with new technology ?

Three round table discussions will take place during the conference, discussing the following:

- The needs and the use of digital tools for anxiety management: Crossing
- Testimonies of 4 startups involved in the IT4Anxiety project: Difficulties, achievements and Learning
- The e-health referent in healthcare services: Role and perspectives

Patient representatives will be sitting in the discussion panel of the first mentioned round table.

[Read more here](#)



MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT



CZECH REPUBLIC

Association KOLUMBUS

One of our major project is the Computer Room. In this project we teach patients how to use a computer. How to switch the computer on, how to switch it off, how to switch on and off monitors, how to use a mouse etc. We also teach them, how to use the internet, how to create email accounts, how to send emails, how to answer them, how to delete them. As well as how to use applications like Facebook, Word, Excel or Powerpoint. We also help with how to edit a photo, how to search on Google.

This project was founded in 2007 by patients from our association. The first teacher was Milan Jíša, who is now a director of our all-republic organization. The project is funded by the Czech Government. Every year we have to raise money for it. The Computer Room is based in our office in Prague. We teach on one computer, or sometimes to be more discreet, on two. The teacher has 8 students per month. The student has a lesson lasting one hour. They do not have to pay for it or do some tests or examinations. Sometimes teachers teach via Skype or phone.

During the Covid period, we taught via Skype. When students have some other more major problems we contact our patient trustees or our lawyer. We recruit students via announcements in hospitals. We have to note, that students are mentally ill. We use lessons and computers as forms of therapy

[Read more here](#)



ADHD, ASC & LD Belgium

SUPPORT | COURSES | WORKSHOPS

BELGIUM

ADHD, ASC & LD Belgium

Our new website <https://adhd-edu.be/> has lots of information about ADHD, autism, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyslexia, dyspraxia (developmental coordination disorder), Tourette Syndrome, our Events and lots of Resources)

[Read more here](#)



TURKEY

Izmir Schizophrenia Solidarity Association

With the aim of raising awareness of schizophrenia and fighting stigma the Izmir

Schizophrenia Solidarity Association organised its first festival on 3-4 June.

Supported by student groups, patients and their relatives, the festival included a “festival walk”, fairs, concerts and an art competition, which was held on the first day.

On the second day, the association organised lectures, panels and forums about the life of schizophrenia patients to educate the public about this mental health condition.

[Read more here](#)



ISRAEL

ENOSH: The Israeli Mental Health Association

The Navigate program is a comprehensive program designed to provide early and effective treatment in the community to individuals ages 15-40 who have experienced the first episode of psychosis and their families.

The Need: Research shows that early treatment of psychosis can deliver a higher recovery rate, achieve the best short and long-term outcomes possible, lower the risk of relapse and reduce the need for hospitalization. Thus, early intervention can help to support future mental wellbeing, discourage risky behavior such as substance abuse, build up social and emotional skills, reduce the burden on caregivers, overcome treatment setbacks, and more. The program focuses on early intervention in the community rather than long-term institutionalization and is geared toward reducing dependency on welfare and public health services.

Program Description: Subsequently, inspired by the successful Navigate Program in North America, Enosh –the Israeli Mental Health Association has launched Navigate program in Israel with the support of the Laszlo N. Tauber Family Foundation. Individuals enrolled in the program get guidance and support from a multifaceted team who works closely to pursue preventative and effective treatment and provide participants and their families access to mental health services.

[Read more here](#)

UPS & DOWNS

BELGIUM

Ups & Downs vzw

Ups & Downs' annual conference in Leuven on 8 October 2022

Ups & Downs, member organisation of GAMIAN and a Belgian association for people with bipolar disorder or depression and their loved ones, organises its 16th annual conference on 8 October 2022, during the week of Mental Health.

Last year, Ups and Downs celebrated its 25th anniversary during a hybrid edition, in-person and live streaming. The theme "Spreken is zilver, luisteren is goud" (Talking is silver and listening is gold!) was intensely experienced in many aspects last year. This year's theme is 'schaamte doodt' ('Shame kills'), which is of course self-explanatory in relation to mental health. The conference is aiming at persons with bipolar disorder or depression, their partners, family, community and to a certain social and health care workers.

[Read more here](#)



BELGIUM

ADHD Europe

European City of Science 2022 in Leiden or Online - 15 October 2022 ADHD Europe, Impuls & Wortblind and the University of Leiden invite you to either join the conference in Leiden in person for a small fee or you can register to join online (at no cost – for free).

Visit our website for more information about the 15th October 2022 [here](#) The link to register for physical or online for the event can be found [here](#)

ADHD Awareness Month #TalkingThursdays on Youtube These 4 webinars will be about sharing their best practices and experiences about Diagnosis/Treatment/ADHD in Women (Relationships, Workplace, Empowerment and 'Hey what Happened' which will focus on children and behaviour.

For more information about #TakingThursdays, click [here](#)

ADHD Women Project Members of ADHD Europe will be sharing their experiences on a newly created Youtube channel for 'Adult Men and Women' who will help raise awareness!

[Read more here](#)



SLOVAKIA

Open the doors, Open our hearts

In Slovakia, we started the hot summer quite actively – with sport. Our organisation planned a sport event in which people with experience participated alongside with their family members and professionals from our team. The two teams named Hope and Joy did not compete for the win, but for the fun.

Continuing our sport journey we decided to give bowling a shot. Our bowling spree was met with a lot of joy, laughter, fun and excitement. It was really a strike! Embracing this year's sporty spirit, in October we plan a reconditioning stay at our famous slovak mountains – High Tatras.

And last but not least, our traditional yearly newspaper „The Other Side“ – Mental Health Forum will be available in second edition October this year.

[Read more here](#)



WATCH THIS SPACE!

World Mental Health Day

To celebrate World Mental Health Day (October 10th), GAMIAN-Europe is releasing a video that gathers European stakeholders' views on how the EU should support mental health patients. Join the international campaign to raise awareness of mental health.

Stay tuned!

Psych-STRATA

We are happy about the kick-off of Psych-STRATA, a 5-year project European project funded under the Horizon Europe programme that bring together 26 institutions from Europe, Israel and Australia. GAMIAN-Europe will travel to Muster this month to meet for the first time the partners in the project.

Is mental health important for you?

Would you like to be part of the biggest network of mental health patient in Europe?

Join us!



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GAMIAN Europe is a patient-driven pan-European organisation that represents the interests of more than 60 organisations from Europe and beyond. [Read more.](#)

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