



GAMIAN–Europe NEWSLETTER

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Dear readers!

We wish that our newsletter serve as a vehicle of ideas, opinions, and information within all people concerned with mental health issues. Its success depends on your involvement. You can make it a very alive document! Please send us news, facts and events in a field of mental health, that took place in your country; your ideas and suggestions; and everything related to the advocacy in mental illness.

We rely on you!



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Dolores Gauci

Dear Members

A new year brings with it new initiatives and the consolidation of old ones.

In our recent Board Meeting which was held in Jerusalem we discussed the initiatives that GAMIAN-Europe will organise for 2008. We also reviewed projects that we had started in 2007 in order to see how to bring these to completion in 2008.

Two major activities which will be organised this year are the Regional Seminar in May, which is being held in Lisbon, Portugal and the 11th Annual Educational Convention in September, which as you know is taking place in Jerusalem, Israel.

The Regional Seminar will target the Mediterranean region. The theme of the seminar is «Early Diagnosis as a tool to Empowerment». The Seminar aims to provide participants with the latest information and so increase knowledge, increase skills regarding the management of mental illness; increase em-

powerment, facilitate sharing of skills by the experts by experience themselves and encourage networking between organisations across the Mediterranean region.

This year's Annual Education Convention promises to be a Convention with a difference from both the theme's perspective as well as the location. The theme of the Convention is the «Impact of Culture and Ethnicity on Mental Health». In a Europe that is becoming increasingly multicultural it stands to reason that there will be an impact on society's mental health and that we need to inform ourselves well in order to ensure that our membership receives the best possible information and knowledge.

We will continue to work on the Stigma Project and I know that many of you who have contributed to the survey are keen to have your national results launched. We will keep you updated. We are collaborating with other organisations working in mental health on a number of initiatives, including the Euro-Gen-Guide Project, Web-based material for patients and carers providing information on the promotion of healthier lifestyles and a Glossary of mental health terminology for the media.

In order to maintain mental health and the patients' voice on the European agenda GAMIAN-Europe continues to be actively represented in a number of organisations including the European Federation of Pharma-ceutical Industries Associations (EFPIA) Think Tank, the Euro-pean Alliance for Access to Safe Medicines, the European Plat-form for Patients' Organisations, Science and Industry (EPPOSI), the European Brain Council and the European Patients Forum.

We shall keep you updated on the work that the Board is carrying out through the newsletter.

In the meantime I would like to appeal to all of you to share with the membership, through the newsletter, the work which you, the membership are carrying out at the national and regional levels. Sharing of information about the projects and activities which you are carrying will help disseminate ideas which could be of help to other members. After all that is what networking in our name implies: «exchanging ideas», «making contacts», «meeting people», and «interacting». So together we can in practice translate our name into action for the benefit of patients every where.

I wish you all good luck in your work.

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

ELEVENTH GAMIAN–Europe Annual Convention



18–21 September, 2008

Moriah Gardens Hotel, Jerusalem, Israel

Theme

«The impact of Culture and Ethnicity on Mental Health»

Details about this event are at the page 15



BREAKING THROUGH BARRIERS



Depression is a common, devastating and complex illness, which is characterized by emotional as well as painful physical symptoms. While most discussions of depression focus on its emotional symptoms, nearly 70 percent of primary care patients with major depression first present with only physical symptoms, such as tiredness, sleeping problems, back pain and headache.

Yoram Cohen, Israel

Yet the Depression Hurts survey found that 72 percent of people with major depression did not believe, prior to their diagnosis, that painful physical symptoms such as unexplained headache, backache, gastrointestinal disturbance and vague aches and pains, were common symptoms of depression.

Depression is more than just feeling 'down' and it is not a sign of personal weakness. It is a common, serious and complex illness that affects on estimated 121 million people worldwide (2005). Yet, nearly 75 percent do not receive treatment, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Although people with depression have mood disorders, such as loss of interest of pleasure, they often describe their symptoms in physical terms. Left untreated, it can cause problems with relationships, including marital and family problems, difficulty in the workplace and a significantly increased risk of suicide.

Findings from an international survey conducted in early 2005 on behalf of the WFMH (World Federation for Mental Health) revealed substantial gaps in patients' and physicians' knowledge about depression, leading to misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis. For example, individuals suffering from

depression, on average, waited more than 11 months to see a doctor and were only diagnosed with depression after five visits to the doctor, further delaying treatment and recovery.

The «Breaking Through Barriers» website (www.breaking-through-barriers.com) is at the centre of a multi-stage campaign designed to improve worldwide standards of care in depression and minimize the associated stigma. Endorsed by international experts and advocates, the international campaign is led by the WFMH (World Federation of Mental Health) and co-sponsored by Eli Lilly & Company and Boehringer Ingelheim.

The project's primary aim is to provide free, accurate, helpful

information and to address popular misconceptions, such as the notion that depression only presents with psychological — rather than physical — symptoms. As Patt Franciosi, PhD, past chairman of the WFMH puts it, «*the gap between high prevalence and low awareness of painful physical symptoms among people with depression is significant*», adding that «*this is one of several common misconceptions about depression we hope to address through the 'Breaking Through Barriers' website and future campaign initiatives. By helping to educate patients and families and eventually medical students and healthcare professionals, we hope to improve the lives of those who are suffering from the illness*».





«Breaking Through Barriers» was developed to help people suffering from depression as well as their families and friends learn about depression's possible causes, symptoms, effects and treatment options — and to empower them to work with a healthcare provider to break through the barriers to recovery.

By educating those who suffer from depression, as well as their caregivers and physicians, and by improving patient-physician communication, «Breaking Through Barriers» aims to ensure that people with depression are diagnosed and treated as effectively as possible without the feelings of shame that so often accompany this disease.

The «Breaking Through Barriers» website features completely up-to-date patient — and family-friendly sections, including:

- 🌐 Understanding depression
- 🌐 Symptoms checklist
- 🌐 How to talk to your doctor
- 🌐 Treatment options
- 🌐 Patient testimonials
- 🌐 Getting and giving support

🌐 The road to recovery

🌐 Useful links and resources to patient and advocacy groups

An advocacy summit organized by the WFMH with the support of Eli-Lilly & Company, Boehringer Ingelheim and Weber-Shandwik took place in Barcelona from December 11-13, 2006 (this was the second advocacy summit — the first took place in Lisbon in June 2006).

The summit focused on a project aiming to increase the scope of information currently available in Europe on Depressive Disorder. The project consists of a user-friendly website, CDs and printed material providing information on Depression and options for intervention. The project's successful implementation in Brazil will serve as a model for the European implementation.

At the Barcelona summit, several GAMIAN-Europe (GE) members were present, among them Yoram Cohen, Vice President of GE and the chairman of Enosh, the Israel Mental Health Association. Mr. Cohen proposed that Enosh would attempt the project's implemen-

tation in Israel. He was encouraged by Mrs. Dina Shachnovich, Eli-Lilly & Company's Israeli representative at the summit.

Enosh is proud to announce the project's implementation in Israel, helping those who suffer from depression get free, clear and up-to-date information and guidance about depression in three local languages: Hebrew, Arabic and Russian (adding to the website's original languages of English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Portuguese). Information can be acquired both from the website — which contains a hyperlink (depression.co.il) redirecting to the «Breaking Through Barriers» website — as well as from published material related to the campaign.

Outstanding cooperation with Eli-Lilly prevailed throughout Israel's implementation of the project. Enosh extends its deepest gratitude to the project's organizers and to all those who collaborated on making the project's implementation a success. Special thanks goes out to the WFMH, Eli-Lilly & Company and Boehringer Ingelheim.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE SUCCESS of GAMIAN–Europe collaboration



Hilkka Kärkkäinen, Finland

Advocacy training day 'Developing Successful Communications Programmes' was

held on 13th November 2007 in Frankfurt. The organisers of the day were GAMIAN-Europe and EUFAMI with support from Pfizer. There were 6 participants from each organisation plus organisers and trainers attending the

meeting. Pfizer affiliates from each country represented at the meeting were also invited to attend.

The meeting was extremely valuable and equipped us with the skills and confidence needed to effectively

interact with the media.

At the end of the day the participants and the Pfizer affiliates came up with projects to work on especially with regards to the development of media campaigns to raise the awareness and importance of physical



wellbeing of people with mental illness. Thus the results of the day were transformed and planned to contin-

ue on national level in different countries.

I have had the first meeting with the Pfizer Finnish affiliate at the

end of January here in Helsinki and we decided to start working together to raise awareness of the meaning of physical wellbeing among those suffering from depression and bipolar disorder here in Finland.

The Frankfurt Media Training Day is a very



successful example of collaboration of GAMAN-Europe and EUFAMI together with Pfizer.



MOSCOW FORUM



Vladimir Rotstein, «Public Initiatives on Psychiatry», Moscow, Russia

lops: although it is a slow, contradictory, and hard process, it is advancing steadily. About 20 years ago it was absolutely impossible even to imagine such a forum.

Working together in a mature way

Another important aspect is that the idea to organize the forum is the evidence of intention of hitherto small and uncoordinated public organisations to unite their endeavours. All history of public movement proves that it is a typical way, which almost all countries moved through: some of them earlier, others — later. As a rule, such an intention for integration is a sign of a definite maturity of public movement. The fact that representatives of the local authorities and psychiatric science expressed their willingness to participate in the forum and to carry on a dialogue supports this idea.

Range of speakers — Information essential

The speakers (representatives of different organisations) talked about the issues most important from their point of



A forum with a difference — the first of it's kind

On Friday, January 25, 2008, a forum of local public organisations, operating in a field of mental health, took place in Moscow. There were more than 100 people present, representing more than 20 organisations of patients, their relatives, and professionals. Among the latter was Russian society of psychiatrists in the person of its chair professor Valery Krasnov. It is hard to overestimate significance of this event as it reflects simultaneously two fundamental facts. The first one is a tremendous progress in psychiatry, because success in the treatment of mental disorders have made possible for patients to participate in the forum on a basis of not formal, but a real partnership. The second fact is that Russian civil society deve-

view: protected housing, employment for disabled persons, necessity to enlarge and to make more available rehabilitation programs. One of the speakers suggested reorganizing Moscow out-patient psychiatric clinics in order to change them from merely patient care institutions to centres of patients' social-psychological rehabilitation. Many speakers complained about the lack of information for patients and their relatives that causes their ignorance in psychiatric law, regulations in provision with medicines, places where it is possible to receive community support.

The interaction on the day will not be lost as all requirements of the audience were recorded and the final version of the document will be published and forwarded to Moscow and Russian Federation authorities.



Europe Patients Forum 4th Autumn Seminar «How to Advocate at EU Level»



Guadalupe Morales Cano, Spain

Brussels. 26-28 November 2007

When I received in Madrid an invitation to assist to the Autumn Conference of European Patients Forum to be held in Brussels, I never imagined that I would go to one of the best events of those that I attended before. Everything that was said in the invitation has been fulfilled.

Brussels is usually a gloomy place for me but due to the nice atmosphere and the perfect organisation of the event (thanks to the members of EPF), these days have been memorable to me.

The contents and the quality of the presentations were excellent.

The good knowledge of the complex world of the European organisations is essential for us, the umbrella organisations. We have been trained very well by different experts from different points of view.

All the presentations were interesting, relevant and very didactic, despite of the fact that some of the issues could have been boring because of their complexity (for example, the internal way of work of United States organisations, or legislative process). But they were not boring at all, because every exponent had lived his own experience, all of them knew what they were talking about and taught. They did it with the passion of those who liked their jobs, knew how to communicate and how to organize their knowledge in a way to expose to their audience in a pleasant way and at good timing. The exponents didn't just theorized, they gave testimony in a very amusing way.



The three of those presentations attracted me the most, because I supposed them very important for the majority of our members:

1) **Joan Roussouliere-Azzam**, European Commission: «How the EU works: a first glance at the global framework»

Full text of this presentation is available here:

<http://www.eu-patient.eu/ seminar2007/ presentations/Joan%20Roseallaere-Azzam,%20071126%20How%20EU%20works.pdf>

2) **Walter Baer**, Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection European Commission: «The European health policy: strategies and goals»

The main points of this presentation were:

- 🌐 Role of Community on health
- 🌐 Current and future health challenges
- 🌐 About EU Health strategy:
 - * Structure
 - * Implementation
 - * NGOs and stakeholders
 - * Health Services initiative
 - * Public Health Programme

Full text of this presentation is available here:

<http://www.eu-patient.eu/ seminar2007/presentations/Walter%20Baer,%20PP-present-EPF-Brussels-11-2007.pdf>

3) **Natasa Hace**, Slovenian EU Affairs Service: «The Role of the Council in relation to the Slovenian presidency»





Full text of this presentation is available here:
<http://www.eu-patient.eu/seminar2007/presentations/Natasa-Hace,-Slovenia.pdf>

Virpi Koykka, ENVI Secretariat, explained us step by step, how they were able to make a law approved (it was like a tale!). It was really extremely complex process, in which luck also played role.

In all, we learned a lot. I met old friends — very nice ladies from EUFAMI, and got acquainted with other people. The group was small and we had enough time to talk and exchange points of view; to know more about each other's organizations and — what is also very important — about each other as persons. We have known more



about our countries, our cities, and specific health problems. That is what has made this meeting so fruitful and assisted us in returning home richer.

NEWS FROM CYPRUS

Elise Torossian, President of the «KIPRODIPSA/A.G.M.I.»

With the initiative of our organisation KIPRODIPSA/AGMI in cooperation with Mental Health Services (M.H.S.) of Famagusta District an event lecture/lunch was organized.

The event was dedicated to World Mental Health Day (October, 10, 2007) with Theme — Transcultural Mental Health and in Raising awareness and disseminating info on project, on-line database of good practices and good practices directory of Mental Health Europe's E Project — Good practices in combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems 2005-2007, partner of project KIPRODIPSA/AGMI.

Lecture/Lunch — Tuesday 23 October 2007 at Nissi Beach Hotel, Nissi Tavern, Agia Napa 1.p.m.

Programme

KIPRODIPSA /AGMI — Elise Torossian -President Welcome/ Disseminating info on Mental Health Europe's (MHE) transnational exchange project Good practices in combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems disseminate info on website/ Mental health in a changing world.

Guest speaker —

Eleni H' Kyprianou — Psychiatrist — (M.H.S.)

Title —

Transcultural Mental Health — Stigma and Prejudice (M.H.S.)

Coordinator —

Costas Constantinou — Senior Psychiatric Nurse (M.H.S.)

For this event the 4 District's Mayors were invited together with 6 Community Represen-

tatives and all other authorities, as such the District Officer, Police Department, Social Welfare Service, District Bishop, President of the District Court, Professionals of Mental Health Services, etc, patients and their families, people living in homes, also from District of Larnaca Day Care Centre clients, the Federation of the Disabled etc

The messages and dialogue concentrated on the issues above and in creating opportunities for future collaborations and alliances at local level and in adapting good practices combating social exclusion of people with mental health problems and other vulnerable groups as such migrants, etc.

The event had the support of local community.

THE DAY CENTER OF S.O.P.S.I.

Alexia Vernicos, Psychologist, S.O.P.S.I., Greece

The Day Center of S.O.P.S.I. has been operating for almost two years, offering a great range of activi-

ties, covering the diverse needs of its members, and aiming in their social rehabilitation. Members include

over 50 adults with severe chronic mental illness, including schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

On Wednesday, December 19th, 2007 the Day Center of S.O.P.S.I. opened its doors and hosted its second annu-



al Christmas party with great success!

The Christmas Party was awaited with great anticipation as members had been preparing for the past few months. On that day, the Center was full of friends and families, members of the Board of Directors of S.O.P.S.I., mental health professionals and volunteers. The atmosphere was festive and joyful, as everyone welcomed the night's «protagonists».

The evening started with a welcoming note by the president of S.O.P.S.I. Mr. Petros Andronikos, followed by Mr. Vassilis Xiromeritis, member of the Board and Dr. Marina Economou who has the scientific responsibility of S.O.P.S.I. The first part of the program included Christmas carols, which were sang by everyone, members and guests, in a spirit of joy and gratitude. The carols were followed by a dance performance of

the members of the «dance» group and the «dance therapy» group.

Although two completely different presentations, they both combined effort and grace and moved the audience.

The final part of the evening included songs by Fransesco Logo, the singer of «OP SIS», an Italian group that has joined forces with S.O.P.S.I. in helping the mentally ill and fighting stigma and discrimination against them. Audience and members spontaneously joined

in; with one member taking the guitar and performing live!

Throughout the evening patients, mental health professionals, family and friends shared stories, sang songs, and exchanged wishes for the new year, in a spirit of warmth and hope.

The evening ended with the sound of applauds and with promises of commitment that all parties involved will keep on trying to ameliorate the lives of S.O.P.S.I. members.



SOME PROGRESS IN STOCKHOLM – REPORT FROM FORENINGEN BALANS

Laila Gentzel and Andreas Holmbeck, Sweden

Foreningen Balans has become involved in some very interesting projects during the last years, and the cooperation with Northern Stockholm Psychiatry (NSP), covering about 13 thousand patients a year is growing. There is a strong intention from the management of NSP that patients and their families need to be involved in the individual care as a complement to the professional perspective. We are very happy about this.

There are specially these projects going on:

Patients as consultants in psychiatry

This work started in November 2005, and it has grown since Spring 2007. Originally we got money (500 000 SEK) from «National

Psychiatry Coordination», a governmental three year project created for better cooperation and coordination between communes and the state level within psychiatry, and between patients organisations and psychiatry. The reason was that the government had come to a limit

with the acts of violence performed by voice hearers, among other our foreign minister Anna Lindh in 2003. The reason for this was that the government had reached their limit of endurance because of acts of violence caused by people from hearing voices.



Torsten Kindstrom, Balans and a psychiatric «care developer», Sonia Nilsson, designed the organisation plan. From the beginning we were seven patients with experience from bipolarity or psychoses, and who had recovered pretty well and had a certain distance to our illnesses. It was very inspiring for us to be allowed to use our healthy sides and our educations and talents (most of us are academics), and to get a reasonable payment per hour for our work.

The project was a success, and we made a careful written report on how we had done. This report is spread in Sweden now, and in combination with other activities it nourishes the importance of cooperation with patients and their families.

We were organised by a psychiatric nurse and I, Laila, worked part time as an assistant. We also had another psychiatric nurse as a mentor with whom we met once a week. We had five «dialogue meetings» with members of staff from seven wards, both in — and open ones. We told our story from our own patient perspective, and we informed about things the staff actually knew very little about: That patient organisations exist, what they do, how our experiences can facilitate the work for the professionals. It was a bit sad though that the doctors not so often took as priority to join our dialogue meetings as they were too busy. It would be good if all levels of staff would share the same basic values, and also the families. And that they would be shared also by patients. We will continue to work on that, it is a huge piece of work but it feels very meaningful to contribute to creating a better understanding and a recovery belief.

Coaching

This is also a cooperation project between NSP and Foreningen Balans, and I, Andreas, is the project leader. Patients who have made progress in their recovery can coach patients who have recently fallen ill. And they get paid per hour for their work by NSP. Also this work is seen as an important complement to the professional work. To meet somebody who has had similar problems as oneself but has come to terms with them gives hope and knowledge about what might help.

Lecturing

Individual members of Balans have lectured for a long time at courses for doctors and nurses, and this is growing along with the insight that patients who have very important things to say about what might make them ill and what might help to make them better.

Patients and management Forum

Since 2004 there is a Forum with NSP with patients and management representatives meet once a month. The goal is to develop and stimulate cooperation from the point of needs of patients and families.

Coordinators for empowerment of patients and families

Two persons are employed on this new kind of function to promote the questions of influence for patients and families: One psychiatric nurse and one patient share one full time employment and work closely together.

Patients are employed in NSP as staff

Three patients from Foreningen Balans are employed as project leaders and

teachers at the research and development department if NSP. Our mental ill health is seen as a good complement to our professional education.

We who have worked for a long time in Foreningen Balans feel proud and happy that we are so well met as employees and «patient ambassadors» from our local psychiatry, and it gives us inspiration and courage to continue our work for «love and glory» instead of stigma and exclusion.

These are the good things which we have experienced during the last year, and as Carin Aissa, a journalist who has suffered for ten year of manic-depression and over-medication, said in Balans' 10-year-magazine, which was her definite come back as a healthy and competent person:

«Love, friendship and something meaningful to do are corner stones for being healthy and happy.

We in Foreningen Balans keep on working for a human, loving and respectful approach to all people involved in situations of mental ill health, and we hope that the government will come to a better understanding of how to deal with people in distress and their needs.





Results from a French survey

What makes people decide who to turn to when faced with a mental health problem?

Abstract of the article, posted 10/05/2007 (<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/563591>)

Viviane Kovess-Masfety; Delphine Saragoussi; Christine Sevilla-Dedieu; Fabien Gilbert; Agnieszka Suchocka; Nathalie Arveiller; Isabelle Gasquet; Nadia Younes; Marie-Christine Hardy-Bayle

The objective of this study is to explore the determinants of help-seeking intentions for mental health problems and which factors influence treatment opinions and the reliance on and compliance with health professionals' advice.

441 adults aged 18 to 70 were randomly selected from the general population of two suburban districts near Paris and agreed to participate in the study (response rate = 60.4%). The sample was constituted through telephone numbers randomly taken from the phone directories in two counties in the Paris suburbs (Yvelines and Essonne). The 412 respondents with no mental health problems based on the CIDI-SF and the CAGE, who had not consulted for a mental health problem in the previous year, were asked in detail about their intentions to seek help in case of a psychological disorder and about their opinion of mental health treatments. The links between the respondents' characteristics and intentions and opinions were explored.

This study shows that the majority of a French sample from the Paris suburbs intends to consult a GP first for a mental health problem and would comply with their GP's advice if they suggest that a visit to a mental health care provider is necessary. Psychiatrists and psychologists are mentioned equally.

Psychotherapies are considered as a necessity and almost half of the respondents distrust pharmaceutical drugs or are not sure if they will take them if prescribed. Age, gender, educational level and social network also have some influence on the intentions stated.

Our survey shows that people who report their intention to consult a GP initially, as well as for follow-up are older (at least 50 years old) and less educated. Psychiatrists were chosen more often by those with a higher level of education (university level versus secondary only). This trend has been described in previous studies on attitudes and intentions in the United States and the Netherlands] as well as in Germany. Access to a psychiatrist may therefore depend on a certain level of education and age, since for older and less educated people, psychiatrists are linked more to mental illness and the stigma behind it.

Being a man or a woman seems to have a high impact on whether or not a GP's advice to consult a mental health care provider is complied with. Women are two times more likely to follow this advice compared to men. In addition, women are more inclined to visit a psychologist and men more inclined to see a psychiatrist. This may be explained by a higher propensity of women to talk about their problems, whereas men may

prefer what they see as a more medical approach, such as a visit to a psychiatrist. Based on this hypothesis, women are slightly more in favor of psychotherapy than men ($p = 0.08$). Compared to women, men more frequently mentioned their family and friends versus any provider and this may reflect reluctance to accept a mental health care approach. Social support has been found to play a key role in the choice of a provider. Respondents with a low level of social support clearly favor psychologists versus GPs, but also psychologists versus psychiatrists.

Just as in other countries, French people would rather engage in psychotherapy than take psychotropic drugs. People believe that psychiatric drugs are addictive, useless or solely useful for symptoms. In France, this marked preference for non-pharmaceutical treatment over psychotropic drugs, however, is in contrast to the very high level of psychotropic drug consumption.

It is also noteworthy that in general, people do not favor psychiatrists (whose fees are paid for by public health insurance) over psychologists (whose fees are not reimbursed in the majority of cases). Barriers to seeking help from mental health care professionals seem to be more dependent on knowledge, beliefs and stigma than on financial resources.



WE ARE THE SAME PEOPLE...



Monika Nemanyte, Club 13&Co., Lithuania

That was the title of the Conference the Club 13&Co. organized in Vilnius, Lithuania, on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day.

This Conference was the part of the Club's project ***Mental patients against their stigmatization and discrimination in 2007.*** Stigma and discrimination has become the key issue for our Club several years. In 2007 the Club's members have performed GAMIAN-Europe Stigma Survey in Lithuania, participated at some European conferences and workshops, as well as the Club celebrated the 5th anniversary of the Patients Advocacy Group, which activities are mainly dedicated to reveal stigma and discrimination cases.

10th October 2007, a day before the Conference, the Club 13&Co. has successfully opened an exposition of mental patients' paintings at the Lithuanian Medical Library. This exhibition, named ***Old good paintings***, exposed 18 paintings of our Club members and their friends. The exhibition is traditionally organized at this library each year the sixth time. The exhibi-

tion was widely described in the media.

The Conference ***We Are the Same People...*** on 11th October 2007 was the most important event of such extent organized by the Club13&Co. itself in near 15 years period of its existence. The Conference was held in the *Best Western Vilnius Hotel* for more than 100 people.

There were invited several important people to congratulate the opening of the Conference: Secretary of Ministry of Health, Ombudsman of Equal Opportunities at the Parliament, director of the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Lithuania, director of Republican Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital, etc.

The Conference moderators were: our Club Board member Edmundas and the psychiatrist N. Gostautaite Midttun from NGO Mental Health Initiative. We were honored to host Urve Randmaa from Estonia as a special guest representing

GAMIAN-Europe Board. Urve Randmaa has congratulated the event and also made a brief speech about GAMIAN-Europe organization and its activities.

R.Petkevicius, the director of the World Health Organization (WHO) office in Lithuania, told us some good and some bad news about the mental health. One of the bad news is that mental illnesses in the world are expected to be the third cause of morbidity (after cancer and cardiovascular diseases) in 2020, and one of the good news was the decreasing rate of the suicides in our country: from 46,6 suicides in 2000 to 30,9 suicides in 2006 per 100,000 people. So, Lithuania is not any longer in the first place according the highest suicide rates in Europe.

The director of Republican Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital

V.Maciulis mentioned in his speech that mental patients in Lithuania are treated with the same medication as in a whole Europe and the doctors are highly qualified. However, according the social aspect the environment for mental patients is unfriendly and negative. According the last international survey of Euro-barometer, 68 percents of people (three quarters of the population!) think that mentally ill are dangerous people. It is a biggest rate in the Europe (for example in Germany, this rate doesn't exceed 25 %).

The Conference has started with the presentation ***Difference-Attitude-Stigma-Discrimination*** by A.Bagdonas, Professor of Psychology at Vilnius University. Prof. A.Bagdonas underlined that the tolerance should be educated starting at the schools and universi-





ties because it is very problematic to change attitudes and stereotypes of the adult people. The most discriminated people in our society are people with mental and intellectual disabilities. After them, according the rates of the different surveys, are disabled people with physical deficiencies, elderly people and people of Roma nationality. Homosexuals, women, other ethnic minorities and young people experience an average discrimination.

R.Navickiene, the State Inspector of Medical Audit, made the presentation on patients' safety. Last year we both participated at workshop on patients' safety in Dublin. She highlighted: patients' safety is a vital patient right to receive safe services. We recognized it is very important but it's still not a reality. Mrs. R.Navickiene repeated the data mentioned in Dublin about number of health system's victims: a chance of air-

plane accident is 1 from 3 millions, while a chance of health risk in the hospital is 1 from 3 hundreds.

The third presentation before the coffee break was by D.Jankauskiene, the associated professor from the Vilnius Law University. She spoke about patients' right to make a complaint, legal regulations and practical problems of those issues.

All participants were impatiently waiting for the second part of the Conference **Patients - experts of their own experience**, made by the four patients themselves.

Monika, the Board member of Club 13&Co., as well as GAMIAN - Europe Board member, made the key presentation on behalf of the patients. Monika shared her impressions after the international meeting in Nice **Overcome discrimination in mental health** (12-15 June, 2007): she spoke about many exciting and effective anti-discrimi-

nation initiatives which take place in Europe. She has also introduced GAMIAN-Europe International Stigma Survey with some very first basic demographic results. One part of the presentation consisted of some basic facts of the Survey (as who, when and where has performed the Survey, how many patients participated in Lithuanian survey, what are their education, housing situation, occupation and employment opportunities, personal networks, diagnosis, etc.).

Zina, the coordinator of the Patients Advocacy Group, made the presentation **Experience of stigma takes its start within the hospital** and presented some results of the Club's investigation on patient's rights in Lithuanian hospitals and mental care homes since 2002. Zina shared to the audience her personal impressions about her last hospitalization in psychiatric hospital some years ago and her first hospi-

talization 15 years ago, which was really shocking and terrifying. Edmundas mostly spoke about his personal experience in every day life as a mental patient and also as a husband, father, student and citizen. His presentation was named **Normal and abnormal**. The last intervention of Lina, the psychiatric survivor, called **I am the alien among owns and the alien among the aliens**. She has paraphrased a saying of the ex-patient Wilma Boevink from Holland (Not alien, just human). Lina presented the opposite facts and myths concerning the attitudes in society towards the mental patients and healthy people. For example, she is convinced the mental people used to be less aggressive and criminal than the rest of the people.

During the discussions at the Conference the audience could see video-projected photos with the most important events and activi-





ties of our Club: visits of the Patients Advocacy Group at psychiatric hospitals and mental care homes, participation at local and international conferences, meetings with interesting and inspiring people, excursions, exhibitions, fairs, art therapy sessions and so on.

The Conference' participants were extremely pleased with the content and organization of the event. According the received comments, our Club has successfully carried out a new stage in its activities. It motivated us to organize some

important conferences or workshops next year.

We recognize that the theme of the stigma and discrimination is extremely complicated and inexhaustible, it is related not only to the rights but also to the responsibilities and duties of the people. But an important question is arising to us: activities of the organization are visibly surpassing its finances and human resources, so what will be our future if we expect better achievements and results?

After the Conference the organizers and

speakers have received diplomas giving special thanks for their work and devotion. We are very thankful to the partners who have significantly contributed in planning, organizing and financing the Conference and have also provided an impor-

tant support: GAMIAN-Europe, Ministry of Health of Lithuania, NGO Mental Health Initiative and Republican Vilnius Psychiatric Hospital.

The Conference material will be published as a separate book.



THE SECRET LIFE OF THE MANIC DEPRESSIVE

The Emmy Awards recognize excellence within various areas of the television industry. The awards are a symbol of peer recognition from over 13,000 members of the Academy. Each member casts a ballot for the category of competition in their field of expertise.

*And much-loved actor and broadcaster Stephen Fry won the best documentary award for his revealing *The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive*, the two-part documentary that investigates the reality of living with bipolar disorder, also known as manic depression*

Comedian, actor, author and film-maker Stephen Fry meets celebrities and members of the public who talk frankly about the impact the condition has on their lives.

During the two programmes, Stephen Fry talks in detail about his own experience of having bipolar disorder. He recounts his suicide attempt after walking out of the West End play *Cellmates* in 1995, and the continuing severe mood swings he has to endure.

Stephen interviews other celebrities with bipolar, including Star Wars actress Carrie Fisher, Hollywood star Richard Dreyfus and British comedians Tony Slattery and Jo Brand.

He also meets ordinary people and their families coping with the condition and talks to

them about some of the possible triggers. They all speak candidly about how bipolar disorder has affected their day-to-day lives.

At a recent seminar on bipolar disorder at St Andrew's University, Stephen was asked by an audience of psychiatric students and practitioners about his reasons for making the programme.

Q: *Why did you make the programme?*

Stephen: *I'm in a rare and privileged position of being able to help address the whole business of stigma, and why it is that the rest of society finds it so easy*



It's rather splendid to think of all those great men and women who appear to have presented symptoms that allow us to describe them as bipolar, whether it's Hemingway, Van Gogh, Robert Schumann has been mentioned ... Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath ... some of them with rather grim ends.

to wrinkle their noses, cross over, or block their ears when confronted with an illness of the mind and of the mood — especially when we reach out with such sympathy towards diseases of the liver or other organs that don't affect who we are and how we feel in quite such devastating complexity.

Q: What's your own experience of having bipolar disorder?

Stephen: I approach it from the point of view of one who suffers, according to a psychiatrist at least, from cyclothymia which is sometimes called 'bipolar light'.

I take that to mean I have most of the benefits of hypomania, a slightly less psychotic form of energy, vitality and exuberance and some, one hopes, creativity. There are certainly spending sprees but happily very little promiscuity. That's just my

good fortune in this regard.

Q: Do you take medication?

Stephen: I'm fortunate enough not to be medicated or, so far as I can tell, need medication. But the idea that once you start on medication and each time you go off it you seem to get worse is a very grim one. It really is a very serious condition.

Q: What's covered in the programmes?

Stephen: We've tried to approach the condition from all kinds of angles. We've looked at the issue of self-medication. How so many people try and do the one thing they can in our culture that allows them to control their moods, however detrimentally in the end, with street drugs and alcohol.

We've looked at the whole aspect of sectioning and visited hospitals in some of the most

deprived areas in Europe, such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets.

One of the most important things we've discovered is just how common a condition it is, and how it seems to affect everyone throughout our society, both here and in the US.

Research into bipolar

During the documentary Stephen Fry participates in a bipolar mood disorder study. He talks to Professor Craddock and his research team at the universities of Cardiff and Birmingham. It's the largest study of individuals with bipolar disorder in the world. You can find out more about the research and how to take part on the Cardiff University website.

You may also be interested in the National Bipolar Twin Study being carried out at the Institute of Psychiatry, King's College, London. This research is looking at the genetic and environmental factors that influence bipolar disorder. It's currently looking for more twin volunteers to take part.

The source of this article: http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/tv_and_radio/secretlife_documentary.shtml
http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/tv_and_radio/secretlife_index.shtml

THE LOUNGE



it turns out that Carlos is able to breed not only rare cows, but also a lot of fantastic vegetables. Thank you, Carlos!



ELEVENTH GAMIAN–Europe Annual Convention

Theme «The impact of Culture and Ethnicity on Mental Health»

18–21 September, 2008

Moriah Gardens Hotel, Jerusalem, Israel

1) ART WORK EXHIBITION

With the occasion of the eleventh annual educational convention GAMIAN-Europe invites your organisation to present a piece of art work (paintings, crafts, hand-made objects, posters) or any item that you consider as being representative for your organization. A short explanation about what makes the piece of art special for your organization should be attached in the object. Art objects' size should not exceed 1mt x1.5mt.

2) TRAVEL AND HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS

GAMIAN-Europe will cover the travel and hotel costs for 3 days for one delegate from each European Organisation that has paid its 2008 membership fee.

Additional delegates will have to pay their own accommodation and travel costs.

Lunches and dinners will be covered by GAMIAN-Europe for all participants.

However, each accompanying person present at the convention will have to pay an additional 50 EUR for meals and tours by nights to Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv (18th and 19th of September).

Please make your travel arrangements now in order to obtain the cheapest price, as this is the only price that will be reimbursed by GAMIAN-Europe.

Every plane ticket that exceeds the value of 400 Euro must obtain the Board's prior approval before the buying is made.

We are giving you an opportunity to compare prices of flights between your travel agent and Diesenhaus Ramat Hasharon. Afterwards you can make your own decision.

Diesenhaus offer special prices for arrivals in cooperation with El-Al and Austrian Airlines.

They can offer competitive prices with other airlines as well.

For further information, please contact at any time Mrs. Sarah Gafni

Direct Tel: **+972 3 5400067**

or: **+972 3 5488111**

Mobile: **+972 52 3315879**

Fax: **+972 3 5473531**

E-mail: saraga@d-u.co.il

3) REGISTRATION FORM

The registration form is attached. Please complete it fully in block capital letters or by typing and send the form back to **Loredana Tascu** and **Michal Levy** by the **1st of June 2008**.

4) REGISTRATION FEE

Each participant shall pay a registration fee of 25 EUR.

For late registrations, after the 1st of June 2008, the registration fee will raise to 70 EUR/participant.

5) PRE-CONVENTION TOUR

This year, GAMIAN-Europe will organize a Pre-Convention tour between 15-18 September 2008.

For registration, please fill in the Pre-convention tour section of the registration form.

The cost of the tour is 200 EUR/participant in double room and 270 EUR/participant if a single room is required. The price covers: 3 nights accommodation at Moriah Gardens Hotel in Jerusalem, all meals, guidance, sites admissions and others.

Please take note that it is essential to register early for the pre-convention tour, as the first bus is for a group of 45 persons only. A second bus will be available only if there are at least 30 more participants registered for the tour.

The tour schedule is as follows:

September 15 - Monday, **Arrival to Moriah Gardens Hotel in Jerusalem**

September 16 - Tuesday, **North of Israel- Nazareth & Sea of Galilee.**

September 17 - Wednesday, **Dead Sea, Masada & Bethlehem**

September 18 - Thursday, **Free day in Jerusalem, convention in the evening**

Please consider the deadlines so that we will be able to make arrangements.

Looking forward to seeing you!

With my best personal wishes,

Dolores GAUCI, President.

For more information please contact:

Loredana TASCAU,

*Information and Communication Officer
GAMIAN-Europe*

E-mail: gamian-europe@clicknet.ro

Tel: 0040 21 252 08 66;

Fax: 0040 21 252 60 11



Forthcoming events

«Happy family» (Croatia) makes the first announcement about the INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

June 27, 2008, Popovaca, Croatia

The topics are:

Stigma of mental illness in Croatia

Results of GAMIAN-Europe stigma survey

«Patients for patients' safety» activities in mental health in Croatia

Invited lecturers: prof. dr. sc. Norman Sartorius and Rodney Elgie, dipl. iur.

After the conference there will be the 4th Annual meeting of NGO «Happy family» and introduction and presentation of the 4th edition of psychoeducational book of the NGO project «Accept differences, defeat prejudices»

mr. sc. dr. Ema N. Gruber

00 385 91 522 4058, emagruber2000@yahoo.com

www.geocities.com/sretnaobitelj2004/baza.html

ISAD 4th Biennial Conference «Integrative approaches to Affective Disorders

14-17 March 2008, Cape Town, South Africa

www.isad.elsevier.com

«Reflections and Ideas for an Innovation Psychiatry Conference»

Fiuggi, Italy April 16-20, 2008

gspinetti@libero.it

«Conflict, Mental Health and Making the Peace»

London, England, May 12-13, 2008

nd.minton@btopenworld.com

WPA Thematic Conference on Depression and Relevant Psychiatric Condition in Primary Care

Granada, Spain, June 19-21, 2008

ftorres@ugr.es; patricia@fase20.com

www.WPA2008granada.org

21st ECNP Congress Barcelona, Spain,

30 August-3 September 2008

http://www.ecnp.eu/emc.asp?pageId=963

XIV World Congress of Psychiatry

Prague, Czech Republic, September 20-25, 2008

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Support GAMIAN-Europe!

Thank you for your donation. Please contact the secretariat:

gamian-europe@clicknet.ro

or FORTIS Bank S.A. 1040 Brussels, Belgium