

Designation of 2014 as the European Year of Mental Health and the Brain Brain diseases and mental health problems affect more than a quarter of the European population, and pose a significant burden on society as well as on those affected. A recent report shows that, in Europe, the total annual cost of brain diseases and mental illness is 798 billion Euros. Mood disorders – including depression and bipolar disorder – represent the highest cost, estimated at just over 113 billion, followed by dementia at 105 billion. Given the fact that people live longer, the total cost is only likely to increase. This poses considerable challenges, not only to health systems, society and the economy, but, more importantly to those affected by brain diseases and mental illness and their carers and families. This is why we, as co-chairs of the European Parliament Interest Group support the idea – as already stated in the recent Parliament report on Alzheimer’s Disease – to designate 2014 as as the European Year of Mental health and the Brain, with the ultimate aim to improve both neurological as well as mental health. Such a Year would have the potential to increase awareness of all brain diseases and mental health problems across the EU. It could underline the need for more research, stimulate efforts to educate, inform and advise all those affected and their carers and help improve their quality of life. It could also stimulate the development and implementation of (local, national, regional and European level) action plans and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and good practice.

*Considering the above, can the Commission provide its views on designation of 2014 as European Year of Mental Health and the Brain and indicate whether a proposal to do so is forthcoming?*

*Signature(s): Date: 09/02/2011*