

# GAMIAN-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2016



## Foreword

By President Hilikka Karkainen



2016 was a year of changes and challenges for GAMIAN-Europe. After our previous President, beloved Pedro Montellano passed away in autumn 2015, Yoram Cohen was elected to fulfill the role of the president until September 2016 when I was elected GAMIAN-Europe President in the context of our Annual Convention in Vienna.

In spite of many changes inside the organization, GAMIAN-Europe continued to carry on its active role in the field of Mental Health in Europe and has put into effect its activities successfully as planned. We held our thematic education seminar in Prague in March 2016 on Mental Health and Migration: bringing down the barriers, which resulted in a Written Declaration on the Mental Health of Asylum Seekers.

GAMIAN-Europe organized three Interest group meetings on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders at the European Parliament, bringing together key decision makers and stakeholders in the field of mental health.

This year we organized our Annual Convention in Vienna where also the 29th version of the ECNP Congress took place. GAMIAN-Europe had the opportunity to participate in the Congress during the Patient Session, together with Expert Platform on Mental Health and EUFAMI, bringing the patients' perspective to this notable event.

GAMIAN-Europe actively worked in three EU research projects: Mastermind, Ecompared and Moodfood and has been invited to take part in new research project initiatives.

Likewise, I am happy to inform that we have decided to strengthen our collaboration with European Psychiatric Association (EPA) and European Union of Family Associations (EUFAMI) by signing the Memorandum of Understanding on December 2016.

I would like to thank the board, the staff and the members for their support during this year. Special thanks to Paul Arteel, who has now retired after working for GAMIAN-Europe since 2009. We look forward to working with him on a voluntary basis in the future.

In the present uncertain situation of the European Union, it has become more important than ever that we respect our common values among member states and act accordingly. Mental health concerns us all and GAMIAN-Europe continues to collaborate with health professionals, policy makers, academics and industry.

Considering the work that has been done, we have good reason to look with confidence to the future, representing the interests of persons affected by mental illness and to advocate for their rights.

## Board Composition

In 2016 the Board members were:

### Board of Directors

President: Hilikka Karkainen (Finland)

Immediate Past President:

Yoram Cohen (Israel)

Treasurer: Jacinta Hasting  
(Ireland)

Secretary General: Aikaterini Nomidou  
(Greece)

### Members:

Bert Aben (Netherlands)  
John Bowis (United Kingdom)  
Jacinta Hastings (Ireland)  
Raluca Nica (Romania)  
Dolores Gauci (Malta)  
Hakan Wingren (Sweden)  
Robert Kristof (Hungary)  
Daniel Cernik (Czech Republic)

### Staff:

Nigel Olisa, Executive Director  
Paul Arteel, Senior Policy Advisor  
Christine Marking, EU Policy Advisor  
Erik Vander Eycken, Assistant to the executive director

# THEMATIC SEMINAR PRAGUE (CZECH REPUBLIC)\* 19 - 20 MARCH 2016



The aim of the seminar was to address the impact of the current migration crisis on mental health, with participants reflecting and reporting on the situation in their country how patient advocacy groups are involved good practices in their country.

It represented a great opportunity for GAMIAN-Europe's members and participants to discuss the situation of thousands of migrants from the mental health point of view.

The Seminar had the participation of Tomas Zdechovsky MEP, who expressed his concern and interest in the topic of mental health, most particularly in relation to migrants and refugees.

Marcella Barova from Slovakia presented the situation in this country. She started by presenting her organisation, ODOS, which focuses on themes like stigmatisation of mental health, improving the quality of life of patients and social integration. She made special emphasis on the role of the organization in patient advocacy and education of patients and family members.

Dagmar Breznoščáková, also presented the slovak perspective, he explained the variety of different authorities involved with the migration authority. He mentioned that some psychological assistance was offered to asylum seekers despite some limitations. Likewise, he pointed out some specific project helping asylum seekers exists, with some 7 organisations involved, including the Human Rights Council of which ODOS is a part. In Slovakia, the number of refugees applying for residence is very limited – most want to get to the West.

Dimitrij Marusic presented the situation in Slovenia and his organisation. OZARA Slovenija Nacionalno offers different forms of psychosocial rehabilitation and support to people with mental health problems.

On the other hand, he also presented SLOGA is a platform of non-governmental organisations which are coordinating NGO activities and humanitarian organisations, while Slovene Philanthropy is coordinating the collection of individual's contributions.

Daniel Czernik from Czech Republic presented the situation in his country, where strong voices against refugees can be heard. For instance, a recent demonstration in front of Prague castle brought together some 10 000 people demonstrating against refugees. Daniel attended this demonstration in order to prepare for the GAMIAN-seminar, wanting to hear different opinions about the situation in Czech Republic.

On the occasion of the demonstration, most participants were neo-nazis or came from similar type parties. They want to protect the borders and to protect the state; they are generally against the EU. Participants also strongly criticised Angela Merkel's politics concerning refugees in Europe. The demonstration was broadcasted in four other European states.

\*Full report of the sessions is available in GAMIAN-Europe website.

# MEETINGS OF THE INTEREST GROUP ON MENTAL HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND BRAIN DISORDERS DURING 2016

**During 2016, the Interest Group met three times**  
(Full Reports available on Gamian-Europe website)

## **Mental Health and the Migrants's crisis - May 4th**



The main objective of the Interest Group Meeting was to advocate the development of sound EU policies which contribute to prevention of mental health problems and ensure good services, care and empowerment for those affected by mental health problems.

Mr. Tomas Zdechovsky MEP enjoyed the occasion to express his worries for the lack of awareness of and attention for the mental health risks and challenges faced by asylum seekers: being traumatized by the situation they are fleeing from, the threats and horrors faced on their journey to the destination countries and the rejection and lack of inclusion and opportunities (in many cases) when arriving in their destination countries.

The meeting had the participation of Isabel de la Mata (European Commission, DG Santé) who provided a brief overview of the activities of the European Commission vis-à-vis refugees, while, the second speaker Dr Angelika Kiewel (German Chamber of Psychotherapists) addressed the care needs of mentally ill refugees.

## **Mental Health and Brain Disorders: Ensuring Joint EU and National Level Action - 13th July**



Organized with the support of the European Brain Council (EBC), GAMIAN-Europe organized the second 2016 Interest Group Meeting.

One of the strong reasons for organising a meeting on this topic was the fact that, earlier this year, the European Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being came to an end, resulting in a Framework for Action on mental health across the EU. In order to provide a follow-up to the Joint Action, the Commission has announced the 'stronger involvement' of the EU-Compass for Action on Mental Health and Well-being, which identifies and disseminates European good practices in mental health and organise reports and events.

While GAMIAN-Europe and the EBC warmly welcomed this planned follow up, some critical questions remain as to how the Compass will implement practical change, good policy and practice development. Concrete policies and strategies now need to be put in place at national level for this purpose.

## **Preventing Suicide - The evidence and next steps - 9th November**



Together with Expert Platform on Mental Health -Focus on Depression (EPD)- GAMIAN-Europe organized a round table to discuss one of the most important public health challenges: Suicide.

It is estimated that every year more than 800,000 people around the world commit suicide, with many more attempting it. It leaves behind broken families and damaged communities.

The Interest Group Meeting had the participation of Nessa Children, MEP, Professor Josef Zohar (President of Expert Platform), Hilka Karkkainen (President of GAMIAN-Europe) and Herta Adam (European Commission, DG Santé). Patient and mental health campaigner Jonny Benjamin shared with the participants his own experience through a video.



# GAMIAN-EUROPE 2016 ANNUAL CONVENTION AND 2016 AWARDS



15th to the 16th September 2016

The First Session of the Convention was opened by GAMIAN-Europe Board Member John Bowis, who introduced the topic by sharing his own experience in which he witnessed the refugee crisis during his travel in Africa and the Middle East. However he never imagined to have to witness thousands of people coming to Europe looking for shelter and all the challenges that the difficult situation is bringing.

One of the main challenges is the health of the refugees. GAMIAN-Europe aim of the convention is to discuss the current and on-going situation of the mental health care of the large number of migrants influx to Europe with the aim to advocate and influence European policy-makers.

In this order, GAMIAN-Europe had the pleasure to welcome three key note speakers with a solid background on the current migration issue, Tara Morris from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Diana Karabinova from the Red Cross and Raluca Nica from the Romanian League for Mental Health.



Diana Karabinova from the Red Cross and Tara Morris from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA),



Hakan Wingren, board member of GAMIAN-Europe who presented the Swedish perspective.

## AWARDS CEREMONY 2016



Robert Kristof receiving the **Pedro Montellano Best Practices Award** for the project 'hearing voices' of the Hungarian Mental Health Organization: Awakening Foundation, Hungary



Marianna Bogdan and Vladimir Rotstein from Mental Health Research Center, Russia receiving the **Veteran Certificate** by Yoram Cohen (Former GE President)

## European Personality Award

This year, Dr José Miguel Caldas de Almeida, Professor of Psychiatry and Mental Health was awarded with the GAMIAN-Europe European Personality Award as a reward for his prominent contribution on the field of mental health.



To access Professor Almeida full biography please visit our Website

## PATIENT ADVISORY BOARD



During the Annual Convention, GAMIAN-Europe members gather to discuss about the needs and requirements for the patient's acceptance of technology enabled mental health services. The session was focused on the barriers

and success factor with respect to the large scale implementation of the use of ICT services in different political, social, economic and technical health care contexts.

Erick Van der Eycken from GAMIAN-Europe conducted the session

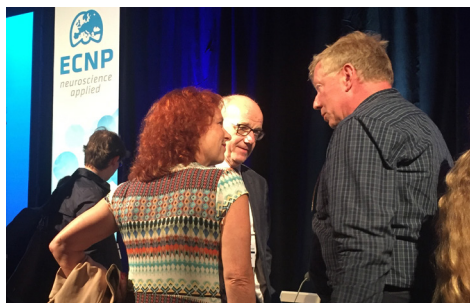
# GAMIAN-EUROPE AT THE 29TH ECNP CONGRESS VIENNA 2016

GAMIAN-Europe members had the chance to attend the Patient Session of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP) Congress that took place in Vienna from the 17th to the 20th September 2016. Click [here](#) to access full report

## PATIENT'S SESSION



GE board member Bert Aben shared his experience of living with a mental health condition.



Bert Aben, Professor Joseph Zohar (Expert Platform) Yoram Cohen (GAMIAN-Europe) and Aagje Leven (EUFAMI)

## ECNP EXHIBITION HALL



GAMIAN-Europe booth



Former President Yoram Cohen and GE Executive director Nigel Olisa

## GAMIAN-EUROPE'S INVOLVEMENT WITH EU RESEARCH

**MasterMind** (Management of mental health disorders through advanced technology and services – telehealth for the MIND)

- Three issues of the MasterMind newsletters were issued and can be found here on our website.
- Two meetings of the Patient Advisory Board took place in 2015
- GAMIAN-Europe attended two Consortium meetings in 2015: the 4th Consortium meeting on 29 April 2015 (Brussels) and the fifth on 20 October 2015 (Odense, DK)

**MooDFOOD** (Multi-country collaborative project on the role of Diet, Food-related behaviour, and Obesity in the prevention of Depression)

- Three issues of the MooDFOOD newsletters were issued and can be found here on our website
- Two meetings of the Patient Advisory Board took place

**E-COMPARED** (European-COMPARative Effectiveness research on online Depression)

- Three issues of the E-COMPARED newsletters were issued and can be found here on our website.
- Two meetings of the Patient Advisory Board took place in 2015
- GAMIAN-Europe attended the third project Consortium meeting, held in Porto on 12 October 2015

**CAPICE:** Childhood and Adolescence Psychopathology: unravelling the complex etiology by a large Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Europe

**ImpleMentalAll:** Toolkit for tailored implementation strategies that is expected to make implementation trajectories more efficient.

**Final Conference of the Joint Action – Mental Health and Wellbeing** held in Brussels (21-22 January) attended by Yoram Cohen

**EPA – 24th European Congress of Psychiatry** in Madrid Spain (12-15 March)  
GAMIAN-Europe was represented by Yoram Cohen and by Hikka Karkkainen

**Interest Group Meeting on Mental Health and Migrant's crisis** (4th May) GAMIAN-Europe project assistant Erik Van der Eycken presents patients view.

**Lundbeck – Global Patient Advocacy Summit**, Copenhagen Denmark, 27-28 June (Yoram Cohen and Christine Marking)

**Interest Group Meeting on Mental Health and Brain Disorders: Ensuring Joint EU and National Level Action** (13th July)  
GAMIAN-Europe board member Raluca Nica participated as a key speaker.

**WFMH – International Conference**, October 2016, Cairns Australia (Yoram Cohen)

**Interest Group Meeting on Preventing Suicide (9th November)** Hilikka Karkkainen presented the patients perspective.

**ECNP Congress - Patient Session** (29th Vienna Austria, 17-20 September)  
GAMIAN-Member Yoram Cohen opened the Session while Bert Aben shared his experience as a mental health patient.

**Expert Platform on mental health – Focus on Depression**, Brussels Belgium, 27 September 2016

**5th International Forum on Schizophrenia** Madrid (23th -25th November) GE Board member Hikka Karkkainen presented the CIBERSAM.

**ENCONTRAR – 10th Anniversary relating Dignity in mental health**, Porto Portugal, (24-26 November 2016) Yoram Cohen

**European Brain Council Board Meeting** (29th November, 1st December)  
Pauld Arteel attended EBC board meeting on behalf of GAMIAN-Europe

**European Patient Forum (EPA) Event: From policy to practice - From practice: Creating synergies for better health in Europe** (9th December) GE President Hilikka Karkkainen spoke about patient empowerment in Chronic Disease management.

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