



2021 Annual Report

GAMIAN-Europe



GAMIAN-Europe

The voice of patients in mental health

www.gamian.eu

ABOUT US

'GAMIAN-Europe, a patient-driven pan-European organisation, represents the interests of persons affected by mental illness and advocates for their rights'. GAMIAN-Europe was established in 1998 as a representative coalition of patient organisations. Putting the patient at the centre of all issues within the EU healthcare debate, the organisation aims to bring together and support the development and policy influencing capacity of local, regional, and national organisations active in the field of mental health.

It is our vision that patients can and should play an effective and complementary role in developing positive and proactive policies and other initiatives with an impact on mental health issues.



CONTENTS

1	FOREWORD	4
2	BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF	5
3	OUR MEMBERSHIP	6
4	INFORMATION, EDUCATION, AND AWARENESS	7
5	ADVOCACY	19
6	COOPERATION	23
7	CAPACITY BUILDING	25
8	ONLINE PRESENCE	28
9	BUDGET	31

FOREWORD BY PRESIDENT HILKKA KÄRKKÄINEN



The year 2021 was very busy for GAMIAN-Europe despite the fact that it was already a second-year living with the Covid 19 pandemic. Most events were implemented virtually and the number of meetings and webinars continued to increase. We have participated in a range of initiatives to continue raising awareness of Mental Health across the Board. In particular, our quality of life campaign for World Mental Health Day and Brain Awareness Week campaigns were very successful. We are also working on other initiatives, for instance, aimed at improving the patient and clinician experience in Schizophrenia, and understanding the impact of covid on mental health patients and services. We continued our efforts with the MEP Alliance for Mental Health to campaign for a European Year for Mental Health, and address mental health in other European Parliament initiatives.

GAMIAN-Europe will continue to strengthen its collaboration with all partners and supporters, with the goal of amplifying the patient voice across Europe. I want to express my gratitude to the membership and the Board for the support in all activities during 2021. The staff and consultants deserve special thanks for their great commitment to their work. I would also like to thank all of our supporters who provide essential support to GAMIAN-Europe activities.

Hilka Kärkkäinen

BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

Board members



Hilikka Kärkkäinen
(Finland)
President



Raluca Nica
(Romania)
Vice President



Yoram Cohen
(Israel)
Immediate Past President



Jacinta Hastings
(Ireland)
Treasurer



Aikaterini Nomidou
(Greece)
Secretary General



Daniel Cernik
(Czech Republic)



Helen Bennett
(Wales)



Matt Muijen
(The Netherlands)



Robert Kristof
(Hungary)



Simone Gynnemo
(Sweden)



Tineke Mollema
(The Netherlands)



Patrick Colemont
(Belgium)

Staff



Nigel Olisa
Executive Director



Erik van der Eycken
EU Research Project
Officer



Christine Marking
MEP Alliance for Mental
Health Coordinator



Daphne Lamirel
Projects and
Communications
Officer



Greta Alliaj
Policy and
Communications
Assistant

OUR MEMBERSHIP

GAMIAN-Europe currently brings together a wide variety of organisations (local, regional and national) from almost all European countries. We have members from 26 European countries and a strong partnership with recognised European-level organisations. Any organisation, operating in the field of mental health who shares our objectives can become a member.

Belgium:

- Ups&Downs
- ADHD Europe
- ADHD, ASC & LD Belgium
- European Men's Health Forum

Croatia:

- Croatian Society for Suicide Prevention
- Duga – Family organisation of Croatia
- Association for protection of Patients rights
- Society for improvement of mental health and quality of life
- Palia Centar
- Association for Protection and Promotion of Mental Health
- Organization for improving mental health and quality of life of patients with psychotic disorders and their families

Cyprus: Advocacy Group for the Mentally Ill

Czech Republic:

- Czech Mental Health Association
- Občanské sdružení KOLUMBUS

Estonia: Estonian Mental Health Association

Finland:

- Finnish Central Association for Mental Health
- Taiteen Sulattamo
- Kukunori
- Mieli Maasta

France:

- France Dépression
- Schizo oui
- Solidarité Santé Mentale
- ARGOS 2001 Help and support for patients with bipolar disorder
- FNAPSY National Federation of User Associations in Psychiatry

Germany: ADHS-Deutschland

Greece:

- SOFPSI N. SERRON Association of Families, caregivers and friends for the Mental Health, Alzheimer's disease and related disorders
- SOPSI Panhellenic Organization of Families for Mental Health
- Anima Anke Psychosocial and rehabilitation Unit
- DYPSA
- Hellenic Bipolar Organisation
- ADHD Hellas

Hungary: Awakenings Foundation

Israel: ENOSH The Israeli Mental Health Association

Ireland:

- Cork Mental Health
- Aware

Italy:

- ARAP
- Arete Onlus Psychology and Development
- URASAM Lombardy

Lithuania: Club13 & Co National Organization of Persons with Mental Disorders and their Friends

Malta: Richmond Foundation

Moldova: SOMATO

Netherlands:

- Plusminus The Association for Manic Depressants and Associates
- ANOIKSIS Association for people with psychosis susceptibility (formerly schizophrenia and schizo-affective disorder)

Norway:

- Hieronimus Forum for anxiety and depression
- Bipolar association of Norway

Poland:

- Association Integration
- Feniks Association

Portugal:

- ADEB Association for the Support of Depressive and Bipolar Patients
- EUTIMIA Aliança Europeia contra a Depressão em Portugal
- Encontrar+se

Romania: Romanian League for Mental Health

Russia:

- Strong In Spirit
- Rainbow soul

Slovakia: ODOS

Slovenia:

- OZARA National association for the quality of life
- MOISTOVI
- ALTRA Social and health care for people with mental health problems

Spain:

- Associacio de Bipolars de Catalunya
- ABDV Association supporting and informing people with mental illness
- ASIEM Defending rights of people with mental illness and their families in Valencia

Sweden:

- Ananke Association Supports people with OCD and related diagnoses
- Riksförbundet Balans Patient and family association for bipolar disorder, depression, fatigue
- ÅSS Swedish Anxiety Disorder Association
- Libra i Skåne The support association for people with depression and bipolar disorder and their close relatives

Turkey:

- Schizophrenia Solidarity Association
- Blue Horse Ankarra

United Kingdom:

- Rethink Mental Illness
- HAFAL Charity for people with serious mental illness and their carers
- ADDISS The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service



Information, Education, & Awareness



OUR ACTIVITIES

Schizophrenia Companion Guide II - Perspectives of People with Schizophrenia and their Carers

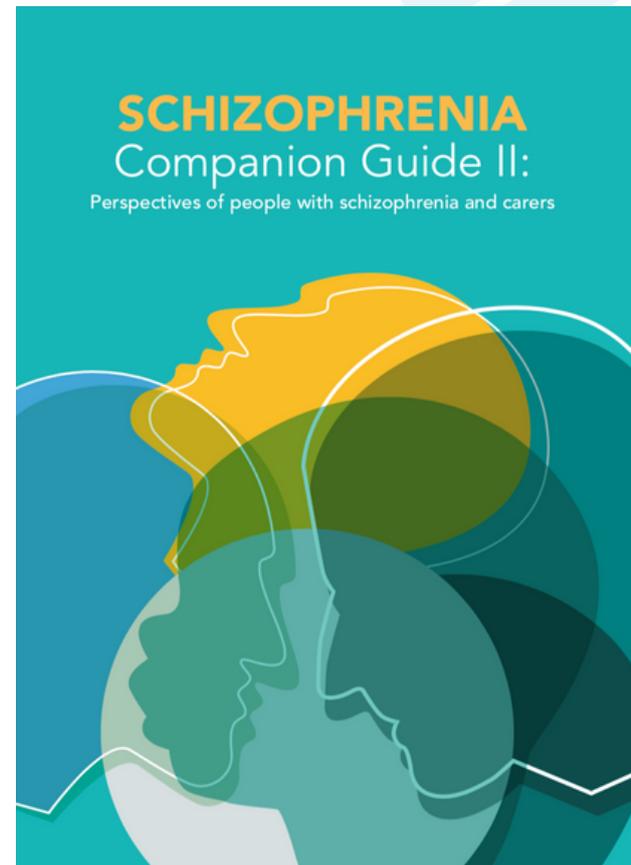
Many guides on schizophrenia are already available in many countries and in many languages, a few developed in partnership with patient organizations. An overview prepared for Otsuka and Lundbeck by Havas Just (April 2018), Schizophrenia and Psychosis Care and Treatment Planning Resource, identifies resources in 5 countries. Many of these identified resources offer excellent information on early signs, symptoms and treatments for patients and carers, treatment guidelines for clinicians, and quality standards for services.

Absent are guides that focus on the broader health consequences of schizophrenia, particularly the potential effects on the physical health of patients. Life expectancy of people with schizophrenia is severely shortened as compared to the general population, by as much as 20 years. The main cause of early death is not the mental disorder, but physical conditions such as cardio-vascular disease, cancers and diabetes. This can be attributed to lifestyle challenges such as high levels of smoking, poor diet, obesity and lack of exercise, interacting with the effects of psycho-tropic medication. Many of these deaths would be preventable by a combination of indicated health promotion and the detection of early symptoms, and the provision of good quality care by the health system, respecting the right to parity of care.

In this context, GAMIAN-Europe produced the Schizophrenia Companion Guide II, designed to provide practical advice to people with schizophrenia, and their caregivers, friends and family. It includes tips at the end of each section on how to manage a variety of situations that commonly arise.

The information used for this companion guide is based entirely on first-hand experiences of people diagnosed with schizophrenia, along with carers, relatives and friends and it describes how they have learned to manage and live with this condition. These experiences were gathered through an online survey carried out in 2020. This guide is a follow on from the first Schizophrenia Companion Guide produced by GAMIAN-Europe in 2016 which provides a comprehensive overview of schizophrenia, including symptoms and treatment.

We launched a social media campaign to promote the guide on all social media platforms. So far, the guide has been viewed 336 times. The twitter posts were highly successful, gathering over 18858 impressions and 1980 engagements.



OUR ACTIVITIES

Quality of Life: Living with a Mental Health Condition

Quality of life is a broad topic that encompasses a range of different areas such as life satisfaction, and multidimensional factors that include physical health, psychological state, level of independence, family, education, wealth, religious beliefs, a sense of optimism, employment, social relationships, and housing and environments. For people diagnosed with a mental health problem, especially those with a severe and enduring condition, quality of life, including what it means and how to achieve it is key to leading a fulfilling life

The main objectives of this project were to understand and raise awareness of:

- the perspective of patients and significant others (e.g. carers, family, friends) and their experience of what impacts and improves their quality of life, including areas such as their physical health and well-being, family, education, wealth, and the environment in which they live or work
- the approaches used by patients regarding self-learning, self-care, self-management and self-healing. This includes what a person found helpful through their own discoveries and which can be shared with other patients and healthcare professionals.

Several 2-hour roundtable discussions were convened with 15-20 individuals with lived experience of a mental health condition. The roundtables focused on specific sub-themes within the area of quality of life, such as relationships, hobbies, self-worth, personal identity and communications with carers.

The information gathered from the workshops served to co-produce a guide entitled: "Top Tips for Managing Quality of Life". This booklet features top tips for those who experience a mental health condition to help improve their quality of life and think about their sense of belonging and place in society. The booklet is designed for any type of mental health condition and is meant to be revisited multiple times over time. The resource was disseminated across our networks and launched as part of a social media campaign for World Mental Health Day. We received very positive feedback, with many of our members finding it very helpful and easy to read.

Finding and achieving
quality of life
beyond a mental health condition:

Top Tips



In order to capture the subjectivity and complexity embedded in the concept of quality of life, GAMIAN-Europe also produced a series of individual stories. These short articles touched upon a wide range of topics such as self-healing, relationships, and socio-economic difficulties. Interviews with experts-by-experience from our member organisations served to inform these stories. A short video, featuring the story of an expert-by-experience, was also released to complement these written stories. These resources were shared together with the booklet as part of a wide social media campaign for World Mental Health Day 2021.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Patient-Clinician Experience in Schizophrenia

Patients and Psychiatrists Working in Partnership

To date, the experience of the patient-clinician relationship based on personal narratives has not been widely explored. When available, such feedback tends to be more anecdotal. Mental health care would thus benefit from a better understanding of successes and frustrations from both the patient and the mental health worker's perspective regarding the care process, and actions that could prevent or reverse such negative experiences.

For this reason, GAMIAN-Europe teamed up with EPA to explore patient-clinician interactions within schizophrenia, through qualitative research.



So far, we have identified 2 treatment centres in 4 European countries: Germany, Hungary, Poland and Italy. Each treatment centre has identified 4 patients and 4 psychiatrists, giving us a total of 62 participants in this study. The study will use semi-standardised questionnaires. Patients will be asked about their initial expectations of care, experiences of their care, their activities, what went hopes and fears, good and bad right and what went wrong, and how they believe it could have been improved at each of the stages of the care process. Psychiatrists will be interviewed about their personal experiences of the treatment and care process, their intent, hopes and frustrations, why they think successes or failures resulted and how the system could be improved

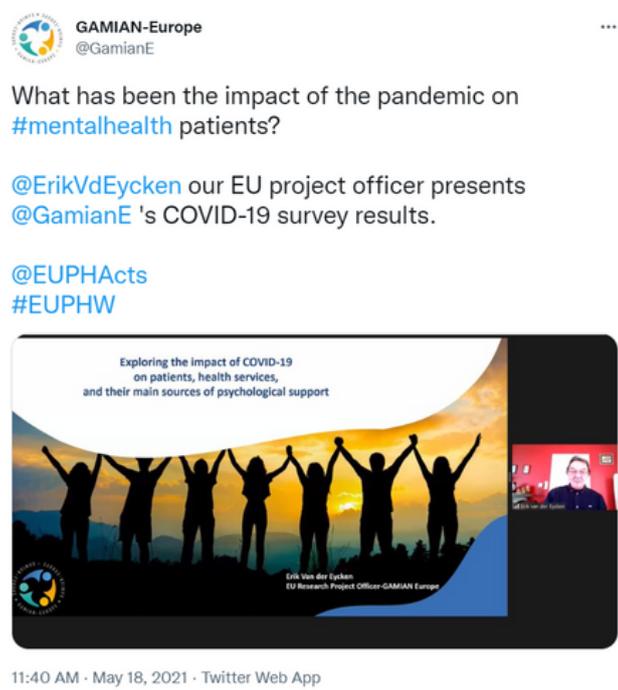
The carer's perspective will also be brought into the analysis at the final stage of the project, and the findings will be summarised in a report, together with recommendations for care.

OUR ACTIVITIES

COVID19 and Mental Health Surveys

In 2021, GAMIAN-Europe took the initiative to carry out a survey to explore the challenges faced by pre-existing mental health patients during the COVID-19 crisis. The survey was translated into 13 languages and gathered over 500 respondents. GAMIAN-Europe produced a report of findings together with recommendations for governments. We were invited to present the findings of the survey report during the European Public Health Week and at the High-Level Commission Event on Mental Health, in 2021. The report was also widely disseminated amongst our network via our members' network and social media campaigns.

GAMIAN-Europe launched another survey, in collaboration with EPA, in which we seek to understand how mental health services are coping in a pandemic context, both from the patient and clinician's perspectives. This survey was launched in November 2021 and is available in 11 European languages.



2021

GAMIAN-Europe Covid-19 Survey Report



ARE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS BEING MET BY SERVICES?

PERSPECTIVES OF PATIENTS AND CLINICIANS

TAKE OUR SURVEY NOW!



OUR ACTIVITIES

Brain Awareness Week 2021 Campaign

GAMIAN-Europe believes that brain science is essential to understanding how we can better help people with mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia.

For Brain Awareness Week 2021, GAMIAN-Europe called for more research on and awareness of the link between the brain and mental health.

We produced an infographic outlining this link and presenting simple tips anyone can follow to enjoy better brain health.

The infographic was displayed on our website and viewed 190 times. We conducted a successful Twitter campaign to disseminate the infographic to a larger audience. The campaign achieved over 26800 engagements and 178 015 impressions. We also disseminated the infographic on Facebook and LinkedIn and via email to our member organisations, who also shared it amongst their networks.



THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD BRAIN HEALTH

Like any organ in the body, the brain has to be **looked after**.

It controls many things:

- learning
- memory
- emotion
- mood
- the senses
- hearing
- sight
- smell
- taste
- touch

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS have multiple causes that affect the brain.

BIOLOGICAL SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTAL

HEALTHY BODY HEALTHY BRAIN

A healthy brain and body is important to **GOOD MENTAL HEALTH**.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD BRAIN HEALTH

There is a **strong need** for further research on the **BRAIN**.

There is still much to learn about treating mental health conditions and how the brain works. More research on brain functioning is an important part of gaining this knowledge.

Understanding the different chemical and structural processes of the brain, for example, can help with the search for more effective treatments and ways to help people with mental health conditions live well.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION has been shown to increase the risk of mental health conditions like anxiety and depression. Lack of sleep also negatively impacts a person's thinking (or cognitive) abilities and emotional state. People who do not sleep enough find that their decision-making abilities and creativity may be compromised.

EXERCISE has a positive impact on many parts of the brain linked to mental health. Studies have shown exercise can help improve the symptoms of many mental health conditions including depression and anxiety. It also:

- REDUCES STRESS
- BOOSTS MOOD
- AIDS BETTER SLEEP
- IMPROVES MEMORY

NUTRITION The brain consumes about 20% of the body's energy. A healthy diet reduces risk of depression by 25% to 35%. Research studies show that people who eat a healthy diet have a 25% to 35% lower risk of depression compared to those who consume less fruit and vegetables and more saturated fat.

References

- Biopsychosocial model. (1997). *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 154(5), 1028-1029. doi: 10.1176/ajp.154.5.1028
- Ljungberg, T., Ronda, E., & Lethin, C. (2015). Evidence of the Importance of Dietary Intake Regarding Depressive Symptoms and Depression. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 12(5), 1016. doi: 10.3390/ijerph12051016
- National Institutes of Health (NIH). Biological Sciences Curriculum Study. *NH Curriculum Supplement Series*. [Internet]. Information about Mental Illness and the Brain. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2306/>
- Raichle, M., & Guzman, D. (2002). Appraising the brain's energy budget. *Proceedings of The National Academy of Sciences*, 99(16), 10237-10241. doi: 10.1073/pnas.122994999
- Stanton, R., & Hoppell, B. (2013). Exercise for mental illness: A systematic review of inpatient studies. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 23(3), 230-242. doi: 10.1016/j.inm.2014.05.001
- Zhai, L., Zhang, H., & Zhang, D. (2015). SLEEP DURATION AND DEPRESSION AMONG ADULTS: A META-ANALYSIS OF PROSPECTIVE STUDIES. *Depression and Anxiety*, 32(5), 464-470. doi: 10.1002/da.22396



OUR ACTIVITIES

Mind@Work project

In 2021, GAMIAN-Europe joined the Mind@Work Project, a non-profit initiative focusing on mental health at work for young adults. Other collaborators in this project include Finnish mental health organisations MIELI Mental Health Finland and Taiteen Sulattamo, Balans from Sweden, as well as the University of Turku. Helsinki-based audio producer Artlab. GAMIAN-Europe also nominated six youth representatives, who have been helping shape the project since its early stages.

Since the start of the project:

- The initiative has collected over 100 stories from young adults in Finland and Europe both online and via street interviews about the mental health challenges they have faced at work and what has helped.
- The stories are used for societal research and have been analysed using qualitative research methodology to identify the key themes arising in them and to compare these to previous research. An article on the research is to be sent for peer review.
- The stories have also served to create a longer audio documentary that dives into the mental landscape of young adults in modern work environments.

**WHAT SCARES,
EXHAUSTS, OR
STRAINS YOU IN
WORK LIFE?**

**AND WHAT HELPS
YOU MANAGE AND
ENJOY YOUR WORK?**

Help create a healthier work culture of the future

SHARE YOUR STORY
mindatworkproject.org

Balans SULATTAMO mieli UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

OUR ACTIVITIES



COVID-19 Resource Platform for Patients

At the start of the pandemic, we took on the role of providing reliable and helpful information to our members about COVID-19 and its mental health impacts.

This included posting guidance on ways to seek help, as well as helpful resources with regards to self-help and on the evolution of the covid-19 pandemic. We also disseminated covid-19 -related resources produced by our member organisations

International and National Resources or Guidelines



[International Resources](#)

[European Commission](#)

[Country Resources](#)

[United Nations](#)



COVID-19 Helplines and Services



[Youth Helplines and Services](#)

[COVID-19 Helplines and Services](#)

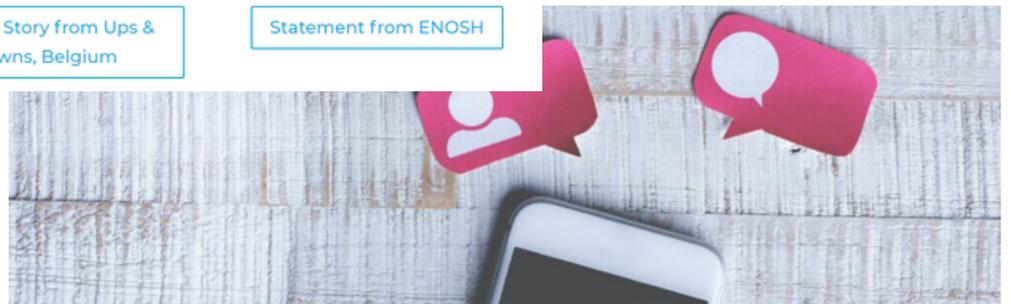
Resources and Input from our Members



[Guidelines from ADHD Europe](#)

[Patient Story from Ups & Downs, Belgium](#)

[Statement from ENOSH](#)



[International Alliance of Patients' Organizations](#)

[The Royal Society of Medicine](#)

[Euro Youth Mental Health \(EYMH\)](#)

OUR ACTIVITIES

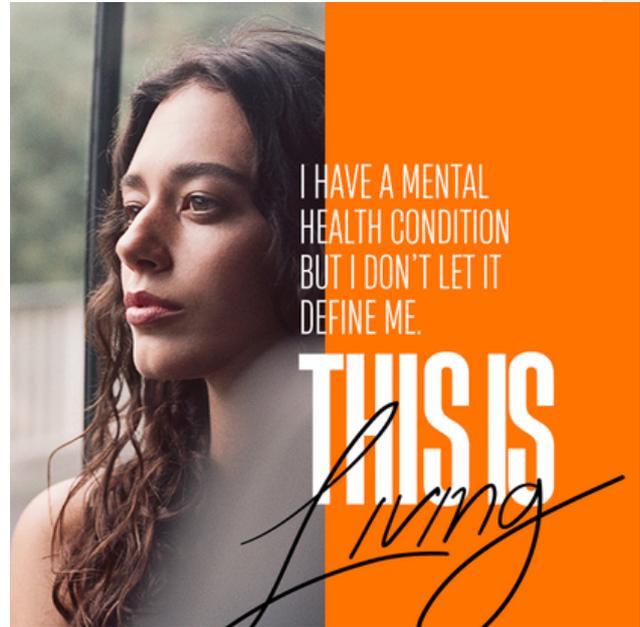
This Is Living Campaign

In 2021 GAMIAN-Europe joined forces with a coalition of patient organisations from around the world for the This is Living Campaign.

This is Living is a campaign led by Boehringer Ingelheim, which aims to empower individuals with a chronic illness and motivate them to take action towards managing of their conditions, for instance through self-care strategies or reaching out to their healthcare provider.

GAMIAN-Europe joined a series of co-creation meetings, providing the perspective of the mental health patient community. We made sure that the assets were appropriate, non-stigmatising and effective for leveraging behaviour change in people affected by chronic health conditions.

Since the launch of the campaign, we have been actively involved in disseminating the campaign messages and material to our networks.



Hearing Loss Campaign

Hearing loss is an important, albeit less known, modifiable risk factor for mental health conditions. In light of this challenge, GAMIAN-Europe decided to join the Listen Up campaign led by Hearing Health Forum EU to raise awareness of the link between hearing loss and brain health conditions. We provided insight into the messaging and design of the campaign, and subsequently helped spread impactful social media messages to our networks

#ListenUp

Untreated hearing loss can lead to severe mental illness including anxiety, depression, and stress.



Of people living **with** hearing loss experience psychological distress.



Of people living **without** hearing loss experience psychological distress.

#ListenUp

The combined cost of hearing loss and mental health on Europe's economy is significant. We can prevent incidence of mental ill-health through treatment of hearing loss.



Hearing loss costs Europe €213 billion a year. Mental ill-health costs Europe €600 billion a year.

Our activities

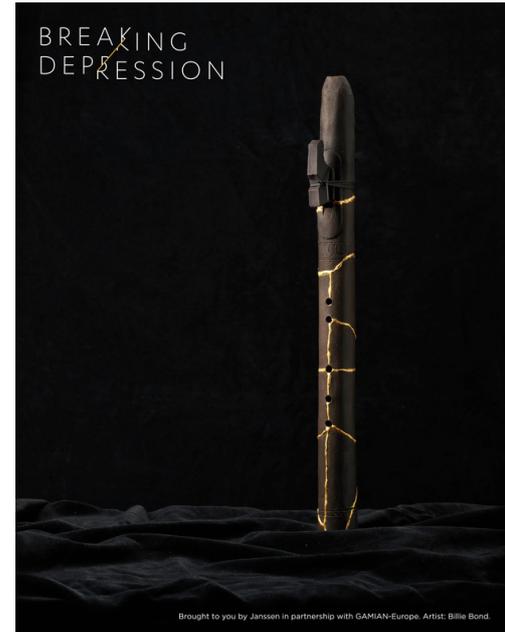
Breaking Depression

Breaking Depression is a pan-European mental health awareness campaign, initiated by Janssen in partnership with GAMIAN-Europe, aiming to raise awareness of the challenges of living with depression. By fusing art and science, this project put the spotlight on the experience of people affected by major depressive disorder (MDD). Artists communicated patient stories using the ancient Japanese art of kintsugi (meaning 'golden joinery') which involves repairing broken objects with gold lacquer. Rather than hiding the cracks and the signs of repair, kintsugi incorporates them into the object's history. This powerful metaphor reminds society that, with time, care and patience, people with MDD can begin to heal.

The Breaking Depression project was awarded the 2021 Connection Healthcare Award. An independent expert jury evaluated 62 high-quality projects from across Europe, rewarding those that demonstrated the power of partnership in finding innovative solutions that address the needs of patients. Our project was selected among the 4 winners.

The little book of small conversations

Open and honest conversations about depression are an important step toward ensuring that people get the support they need. For this reason, we have collaborated with Janssen and EUFAMI to develop The Little Book of Big Conversations, as part of the Breaking Depression project. This digital book is full of pieces of practical advice to help make those big conversations about depression a little bit easier.



EU RESEARCH PROJECTS

Our work on EU research projects continued throughout the whole of 2021. In projects such as CAPICE, SYNCHROS, PSY PGX, IT4ANXIETY, InALMH and IMPLEMENTALL, we strive to make research information easily accessible and widely available to patient communities and other relevant stakeholders. GAMIAN-Europe also ensured the involvement of patients within these projects. For instance, we set up patient advisory boards involved at various stages of the research process and helped co-develop digital tools with users.



CAPICE (Childhood and Adolescence Psychopathology: unravelling the complex etiology by a large Interdisciplinary Collaboration in Europe). GAMIAN-Europe supported with dissemination of the findings in layman's language.



SYNCHROS (SYnergies for Cohorts in Health: integrating the ROle of all Stakeholders) is a three-year European project funded under the Research Programme Horizon 2020, whose aim is to coordinate and support the synchronisation of cohorts and population surveys in Europe and worldwide. SYNCHROS has set out to map the cohort landscape in Europe and large international initiatives, and identify the best methods for integrating cohort data.

GAMIAN-Europe's role in this project was to guarantee that all project information was easily understandable, accessible, and disseminated to all relevant stakeholders.



IT4Anxiety (funded by Interreg Europe) aims to support the implementation of innovative, digital solutions to reduce the anxiety of patients with mental health conditions. The IT4Anxiety project was born bringing together mental health professionals, start-ups, universities, research centres, higher education establishments and public authorities.

GAMIAN-Europe has contributed to various aspects of this project. from social media promotion to participating in Hackathon juries, and providing insights and disseminating questionnaires.



ImpleMentAll

ImpleMentAll is a European collaboration which aims to identify how evidence-based eHealth interventions can be implemented faster and more effectively. GAMIAN-Europe disseminated the project's findings to its network of patients and other relevant stakeholders.

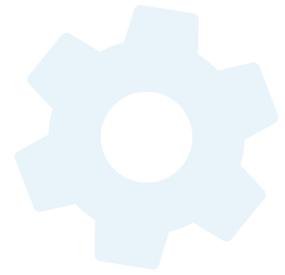


The European Brain Research Area (EBRA) project works to foster alignment and better coordination of research strategies across European and global brain initiatives; facilitate the emergence of research projects in specific areas in active clusters, and provide them with support for effective collaboration.

GAMIAN-Europe brings in the patient perspective in several of these clusters, such as the BRAINFOOD cluster. We also disseminated all EBRA updates and findings to our patient community.



PSY-PGx



The Inter-Active Living for Mental Health (InALMH)

project aims to contribute towards the development of an upgraded Policy Framework in the form of Recommendations for EU Guidelines for the use of Sport/PE (=Physical Exercises) on Mental Health and to create an Interactive Platform (IP) for the collection, the organisation and the dissemination of information concerning the PE Practices providing free access to all interested parties and individuals together with the enhancement for the development of new practices. GAMIAN-Europe supported with the communication of project findings to the public.

The effectiveness of medication for treating mental health conditions is heavily dependent on individual variations, such as different genetic makeups. **PSY-PGx** is the first initiative to propose a large-scale non-industry-sponsored clinical study that demonstrates the benefits of investigating the interaction between genes and psychotropic medications, to improve the mental health outcomes of psychiatric patients.

GAMIAN-Europe's participation consists of representing the 'patients voice' in a patient advisory board. This board is in charge of defining the protocol design and the patient information sheet and will provide other input at the various stages of the research. GAMIAN-Europe also held focus groups with experts-by-experience, to gather feedback on the usability of an app (BeHapp), used as part of the study to monitor participant symptoms.



Advocacy

MEP ALLIANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The MEP Alliance for Mental Health

Many of our advocacy activities are carried out via the MEP Alliance for Mental Health, which GAMIAN-Europe coordinates.

The MEP Alliance for Mental Health brings together MEPs and relevant stakeholders to advocate for the development of sound EU policies which contribute to the prevention of mental ill-health and ensure appropriate and high-quality services and person-centred care, empowering those affected. Since its inception in 2009, over 40 meetings have taken place, underlining the crucial need for EU-level policymakers to take mental health into account in the widest possible variety of policy areas and initiatives.

One of the Alliance's current priorities relates to ensuring the development and implementation of a comprehensive EU Mental Health Strategy. A blueprint for such a Strategy was already prepared in 2017.

This campaign was strengthened by the Finnish Presidency Council Conclusions (October 2019), as well as the Conclusions of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council (December 2019), which called on the Commission to come forward with such a Strategy. However, until now, the Commission has not acted on this request. It has merely stated its intention to address mental health as part of the Beating Cancer Plan and has ensured a dedicated space for mental health as part of the work of the EU Health Policy Platform – mainly focusing on the mental health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the actions taken by the Alliance, therefore, was to issue an action statement, calling on the Commission, to respond to the Finnish Presidency and EPSCO Council conclusions. The Alliance has also tabled a number of amendments to the Commission report to strengthen their mental health dimension as well as Written Questions Alliance meetings.



MEP ALLIANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Campaigning for a European Year for Mental Health and Mental health Strategy

In 2020, the MEP Alliance for Mental Health, with the support of GAMIAN-Europe, has launched a campaign to ensure that one of the future European Years will be dedicated to Mental Health. European Years are EU-wide awareness campaigns aimed at raising awareness amongst European citizens and attracting the attention of Member States' policy makers to a particular issue, in order to change attitudes and behaviours at both the national and EU level. A dedicated European Year of Mental Health could function as a tangible and coordinated initiative to raise awareness, provide a platform for good practice exchange and knowledge sharing, promote and facilitate discussion and contribute towards improving mental health across the board. It could also function as the stepping stone towards a comprehensive EU Strategy on Mental Health, as called for by Member States in 2019.

In 2021, action was taken to bring other EU and national mental health-related organisations on board and urge the European Commission to agree to a Year. In particular, GAMIAN-Europe and the MEP Alliance for Mental Health organised a large stakeholder meeting in March in which the aims, themes and content of the European Year for Mental Health were discussed. Over 120 stakeholders from the mental health field and beyond, as well as 40 MEPs, voiced their support for such a Year in a [statement](#) which was subsequently addressed to the European Commission.

GAMIAN-Europe also developed and released a [Discussion Paper](#), presenting the reasons behind the urgent need for a Year, and outlining what aims, priorities, themes and activities such a Year could cover.

Supported by GAMIAN-Europe, the 5 co-chairs of the MEP Alliance also published an [article in Parliament Magazine](#) highlighting the urgent need for a European Year for Mental Health.

Also supported by GAMIAN-Europe, 2021 saw the tabling of Written Questions to the Commission by the co-chairs of the MEP Alliance, addressing the following topics:

- the urgent need for a EU Mental Health Strategy, as called for by the Finnish Presidency and November 2019 EPSCO Council.
- the need for a designated European Year for Mental Health
- mental health in all policies

Until now, the European Commission has not yet come forward with a proposal for a Year or a Strategy. Therefore efforts have been deployed to start stepping up the campaign and addressing relevant policymakers at the national level.



*Campaigning for a European Year and Strategy
for Mental Health*

MEP ALLIANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health in the Digital World of Work

In September 2021, the [MEP Alliance for Mental Health](#) and the [Coalition for Mental Health and Wellbeing](#), took part in a virtual expert meeting aiming at gathering experts' opinions on the issues that should be addressed by a European Parliament Own Initiative of the [Committee on Employment and Social Affairs](#) entitled "**Mental health in the digital world of work**".

The meeting, attended by six high-level experts, was chaired by MEP and Rapporteur Maria Welsh. This report is the first-ever dedicated Parliament report on mental health and is an important element in the campaign towards a European Year and EU Strategy.

On the basis of a series of guiding questions for the discussion, participants highlighted what they saw as the most important challenges affecting mental health in the workplace, particularly following the process of digitalisation and the major changes that have taken place in recent years. An initial [summary report](#) was released following the meeting.



TOWARDS A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPORT

**'MENTAL HEALTH
IN THE DIGITAL WORLD OF WORK'**

Report





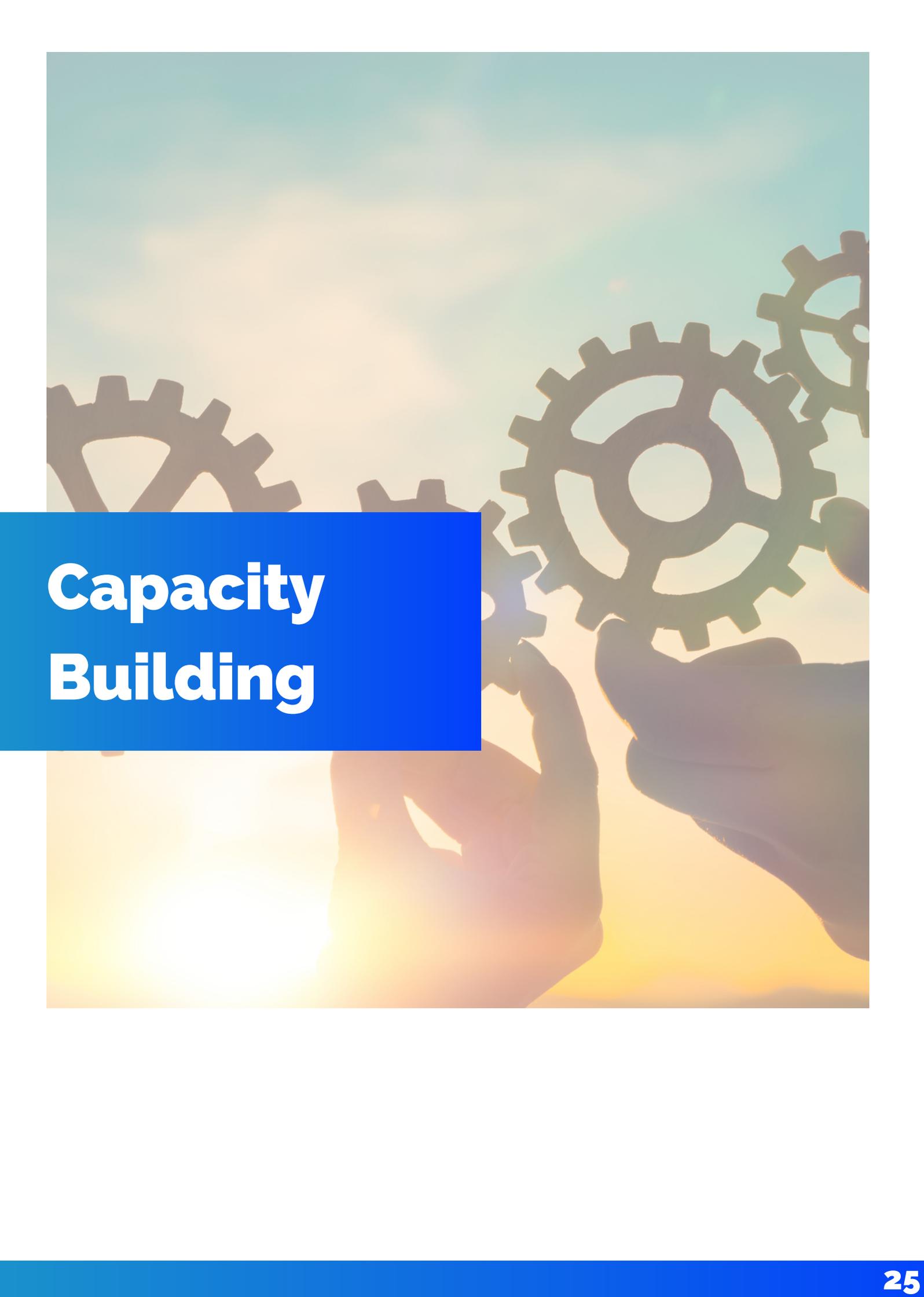
Cooperation

WHO WE COOPERATE WITH

We cooperated with many other relevant stakeholders in the field of mental health, such as:

- the European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness (EUFAMI)
- the European Brain Council (EBC)
- the European Psychiatric Association (EPA)
- the European Patients' Forum (EPF)
- the European Union Medical Specialists (UEMS)
- the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations (IAPO)
- the European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA)
- the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP)
- the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries (EFPIA)
- the European Medicines Agency (EMA)
- the Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) Stakeholders Group
- Euro Youth for Mental Health
- the European Public Health Association
- the Federation of European Academies of Medicine



The image features a background of silhouetted hands holding several interlocking gears. The scene is set against a warm, golden sunset sky with a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a lens flare effect. The gears are of various sizes and are positioned in a way that suggests they are being assembled or held together. A solid blue rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text 'Capacity Building' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Capacity Building

CAPACITY BUILDING

We held an online AGM in June 2021. In this meeting, GAMIAN-Europe discussed completed, current and upcoming activities. Our AGMs also serve to foster dialogue with our members and better understand how we can support them.

Aside from the AGM, we maintained regular online contact with members, sending them monthly updates and involving them in workshops on timely topics such as treatment-resistant depression and alternative treatments including cannabidiol.

We have also been actively involved in disseminating information about our members' activities, including new projects, art competitions and policy statements



CONFERENCES

GAMIAN-Europe was delighted to be able to attend in-person conferences again in 2021. We held booths at the ECNP Conference in Lisbon and the Brain Innovation Days Conference in Brussels (October 2021). We also held a virtual booth at the EPF and EPA online congresses.



A graphic with a teal background featuring a grid of glowing shopping cart icons and a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. A blue banner is overlaid on the left side.

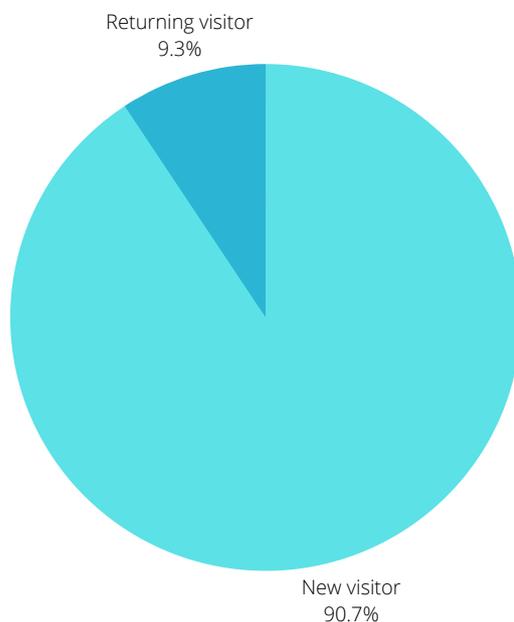
Online Presence

GAMIAN-Europe's online presence



GAMIAN-Europe has been actively growing its social media channels. In particular, we have strongly grown our audience on Twitter, accumulating around 500 additional followers this year (giving us a total of nearly 4000). We've also increased our connections on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Our website has also seen growth in the last year. Sessions have increased by 41.1% (bringing us an additional 14K sessions in the past year) and our number of users has grown by 43.7% (an additional 10k users in the past year). Below is information on new and returning visitors and users' locations.



Country	Users	% Users
1. United States	2,277	16.72%
2. United Kingdom	1,336	9.81%
3. Germany	1,040	7.64%
4. China	921	6.76%
5. Belgium	913	6.70%
6. Netherlands	548	4.02%
7. Finland	500	3.67%
8. Indonesia	436	3.20%
9. France	432	3.17%
10. Italy	357	2.62%

GAMIAN-Europe's online presence



Top tweets of 2021

The first tweet was part of the dissemination process for our second **Covid-19 survey** addressed at patients and carers.

The second tweet was part of our social media campaign used for the promotion of our **Quality of Life** individual stories.

The third Top Tweet was published during **Brain Awareness Week** and featured an infographic exploring the link between brain and mental health.

Top Tweet earned 5,183 impressions

👤❤️ “I didn’t plan to make my illness my career, but it’s very nice that I can now help other people through my experience”

Find out more about [@_FanniLaura's](#) journey with depression, poetry, self-acceptance and much more! 🗨️

gamian.eu/i-made-a-caree...

#QualityofLife

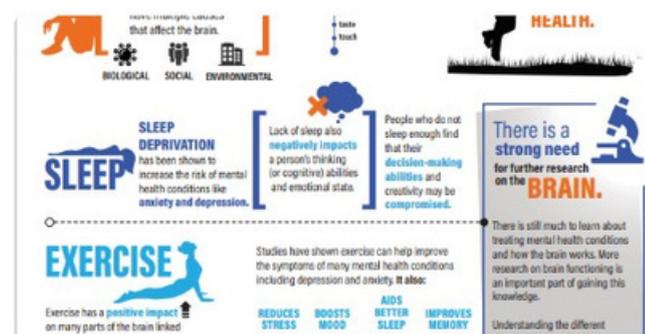
👤 4 🔄 106 ❤️ 1727

In order to improve **#mentalhealth** and move towards reaching **#SDG3**, we need better awareness and understanding of the link between brain and mental health.

Discover more in our brand-new infographic! bit.ly/3qMZ6Y0

#brainweek #BrainAwarenessWeek2021

🗨️ pic.twitter.com/0VcspjBpN



Top Tweet earned 2,376 impressions

🗨️ If you are an individual with lived experience, or a mental health professional, this survey is for you! 🗨️

Together with [@Euro_Psychiatry](#), we are investigating the impact of the pandemic on mental health needs and services.

Take the survey at:
gamian.eu/activities/oth...

👤 6 🔄 50 ❤️ 1509

[View Tweet activity](#)

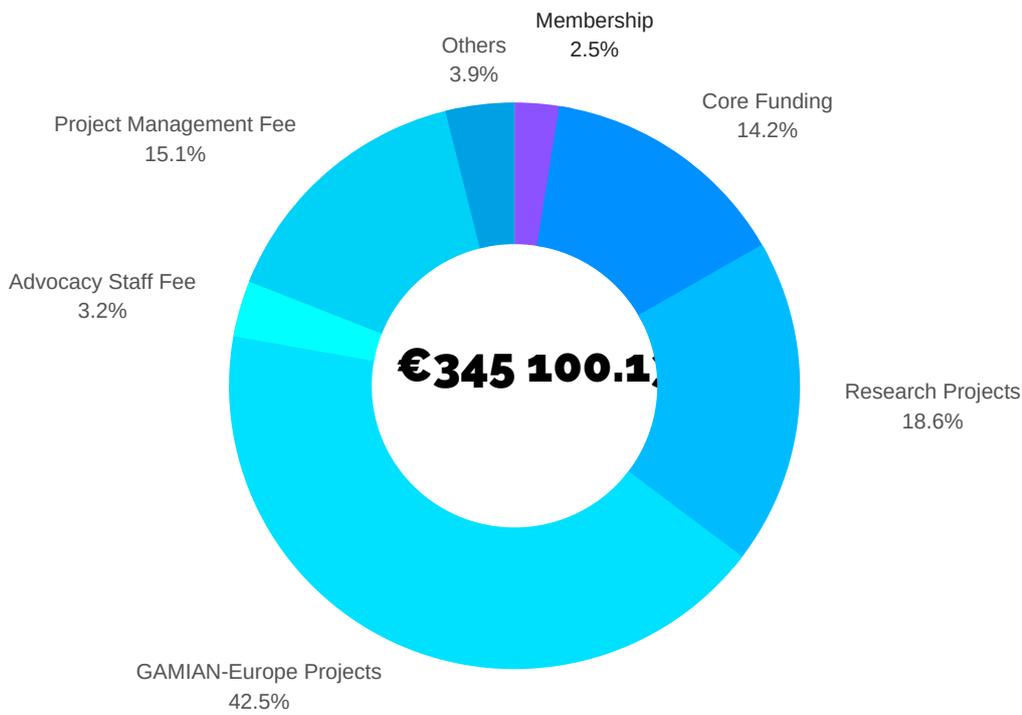
[View all Tweet activity](#)



Budget

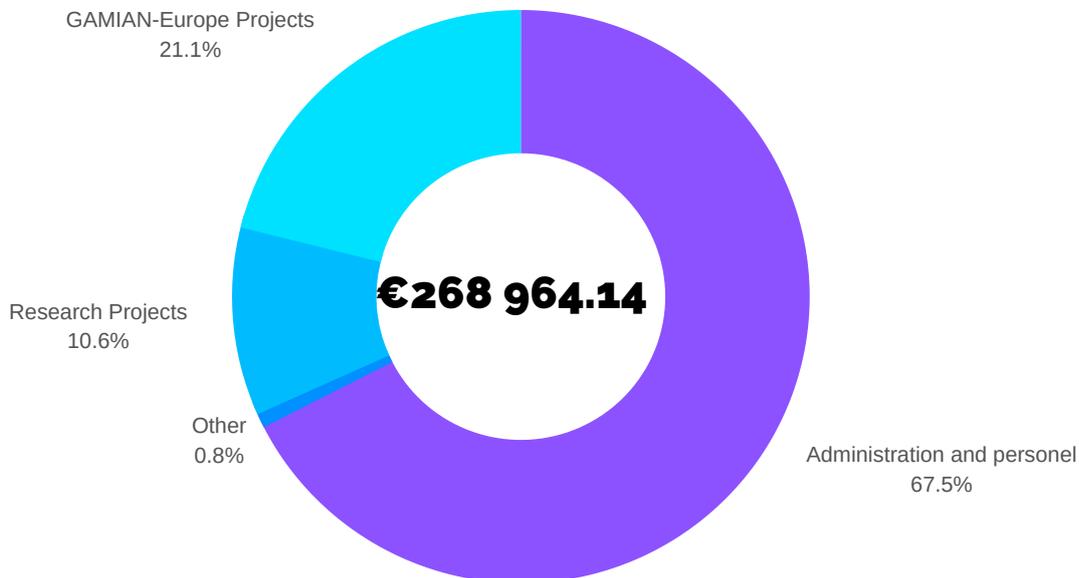
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Operating Income



€76 145.99 accrued to 2022 for continued projects

Operating charges



OUR SUPPORTERS

GAMIAN-Europe activities are multi-sponsored and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organisations that offered us their invaluable financial or in-kind support. Without your support, GAMIAN-Europe activities would not have been possible. We appreciate your commitment to our work and we look forward to continuing our collaboration in the future.

Lundbeck
Janssen
Boehringer Ingelheim
Servier
Compass Pathways
the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ECNP)
Teva
the European Psychiatric Association (EPA)
The European Patients' Forum (EPF)
the World Psychiatric Association (WPA)
Angelini





GAMIAN-Europe
The Voice of Patients in Mental Health
www.gamian.eu
Rue du Trone 60
1050
Ixelles
Belgium