CAMPAIGNING FOR
A EUROPEAN YEAR FOR MENTAL HEALTH:
PROPOSED NEXT STEPS

What is a European Year?

European Years serve as **EU-wide awareness campaigns** to inform and educate European citizens and focus the attention of Member States' governments and policymakers on a particular issue, to change attitudes, behaviours, policy, and practice, both at EU as well as at national level. Since 1983, there have been many such European Years, each with a different theme, e.g. People with Disabilities, Active Ageing, and many more.

Why a European Year for <u>Mental Health</u>?

The urgent need for better and wider awareness and understanding of mental health and for effective action to prevent and address mental ill-health has increasingly been recognised in recent years. The COVID19 pandemic has highlighted this crucial need.

A dedicated European Year of Mental Health would be a tangible and coordinated initiative to **raise awareness of mental health** and its importance. It would contribute to better visibility and understanding of the need for mental health in general, of the situation and needs of people living with mental ill-health as well as those of specific groups at risk of stigma (e.g., LGBTQ, disabled people...). It would provide a platform for cross-country and cross-sector stakeholders to cooperate and exchange experience and good practice, promote, and facilitate discussion and contribute towards improving mental health across the board.

Most importantly, it would help prepare the ground for sustainable policy solutions.

Who is leading this campaign?

The MEP Alliance for Mental Health, in cooperation with GAMIAN-Europe, will work during 2021 to advocate for the Commission to designate one of the coming years as the European Year for Mental Health.

Provisional title for the Year: 'Making Mental Health Everybody's Business'.

What are the next steps in the campaign?

Several actions have already been taken, such as two meetings of the MEP Alliance for Mental Health, a statement calling on the European Commission to designate a Year, Written Questions tabled by MEPs, and the development of a background paper. Below a list of further potential action is provided.

Actions related to policymakers and stakeholders:
- A Manifesto/statement on the Year, signed by all endorsers and supporters, has been prepared and sent to the European Commission, signed by over a 100 supporting organisations/individuals and MEPs.
- The same will now be done regarding the EPSCO Council and Trio Presidency.
- This will also be sent to all MEPs (beyond the Alliance for Mental Health and the Coalition for Mental Health and Well-being) to garner EP-wide support, signed by all supporting organisations and MEPs as well as sponsors; individual endorsers will also be invited to send individual letters to MEPs.
- Stakeholders' members at national level can be invited to address their MPs and relevant decision-makers.
- Meetings of the MEP Alliance for Mental Health will be organised (at least one more this year).
- Members of the EP Alliance for Mental Health/Coalition for Mental health and Well-being will be asked to speak out in meetings of other EP interest groups, conferences, and events.

Actions related to social media and communication:
- Social media campaigns, targeting/tagging relevant policy makers.
- A blog hosted on the GAMIAN-Europe website (also on Twitter, to be retweeted by supporting organisations) for supporting organisations why they support the Year.
- Preparation of short video clips of supporters' statements of support, for websites and social media campaigns.
- Preparation of an infographic on what a Year could do and look like.
- Development of logo 'campaign supporter' + banner in email signature for MEPs and other relevant stakeholders.
- Podcasts featuring the meaning of the EYMH with MEPs and/or other stakeholders on website/ social media channels.
- Animation video (in line with infographic visuals) explaining the importance of European Year for Mental Health EU Mental Health Strategy.
- Encouragement of organisations/individuals to post or change their profile pictures on Instagram and Facebook ,to include the banner (stating they support an EYMH).
- Start an online petition, EU wide via social media to get all stakeholders signed to push forward the EYMH.