



MENTAL HEALTH  
KEEP TALKING ABOUT IT

## Newsletter GAMIAN-Europe

January 2017

ISSUE 2017 - 1

Dear reader,

It goes without saying that GAMIAN-Europe members fully experience the important role of mental health for their well-being and quality of life, in addition to physical conditions. To be happy at a personal level and successful in professional activities is not always that easy when suffering from mental health problems. Therefore, we at GAMIAN-Europe will do whatever we can to continue our efforts to raise awareness of mental health and its impact, advocate for patients' rights and combat the stigma attached to mental health problems.

**We wish you and your family a "Healthy New Year".**

*The editorial committee.*



### Foreword by Hilikka Kärkkäinen (President)

*2016 was filled with changes and challenges for GAMIAN-Europe:*



- In January Yoram Cohen was elected as President following the unexpected passing of Pedro Montellano in October 2015.
- Paul Arteel, our Executive Director since 2009, retired and continued as Senior Advisor until the end of 2016, assisting the new Executive Director, Nigel Olisa, to take on this role.
- In September, I was elected as the new President, on the occasion of our Annual Convention in Vienna.

Despite these internal changes, GAMIAN-Europe has continued to play an active role in the field of mental health in Europe and has successfully carried out its planned activities. We held our thematic educational seminar in Prague in March 2016, addressing 'Mental Health and Migration : bringing.

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down the barriers'; this resulted in a European Parliament Written Declaration on the Mental Health of Asylum Seekers.

We organised four meetings of the European Parliament Interest group meetings on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders, bringing together key decision makers and stakeholders in the field of mental health.

We held our Annual Convention in Vienna in September, in connection with the ECNP conference, working with the Expert Platform on Mental Health and EUFAMI.



GAMIAN-Europe has also actively worked as a partner in three EU-funded research projects - MasterMind, E-COMPARED and MoodFOOD - and has been invited to take part in new research project initiatives. We have also strengthened our collaboration with other key mental health stakeholders, notably the European Psychiatric Association (EPA) and EUFAMI, by means of a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

I would like to thank the Board, the Staff and the Members for their support during 2016. A special thanks should go 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.

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### Call for membership renewal

Dear Member,

Thank you for your support and contribution to GAMIAN-Europe and its activities. The past year has proven quite successful as the organisation continues to grow and advocate for patients and their rights and needs. As we have started the new year, we urge you to please pay your membership fees as soon as possible.

It is important for us to collect the membership fees in the first quarter of 2017 between January and April.

**(150 € before 1st April 2017 or 175 € if paid after 1st April 2017).**

Please do let us know if you require an invoice for accounting purposes'.

**ING Bank, Marnixlaan 24, 1000 Brussels, Belgium**  
**IBAN CODE BE 59 3900 4438 4326**  
**BIC CODE BBRUBEBB**

*Advantages of full membership includes:*

- *Information on all GAMIAN-Europe activities, Newsletter (4 x year) and newsflashes on the GAMIAN-Europe Twitter and Facebook accounts;*
- *Voting right in the General Assembly;*
- *Invitation for the bi-annual convention (free accommodation-3 nights- and reimbursement of travel expenses up to 350 €);*

In the present uncertain situation, the European Union has become more important than ever and it is crucial for member states to respect our common values and act accordingly. Mental health concerns us all and GAMIAN-Europe will continue to collaborate with health professionals, policy makers, academics and industry. Considering the work that has been done, we have good reason to look to the future with confidence, representing the interests of persons affected by mental illness and to advocate for their rights.

*Hilkka Kärkkäinen*

*President of GAMIAN-Europe*

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- *Possibility to participate in regional seminars (for full members of the region concerned);*
  - *Active involvement in GAMIAN-Europe (research) projects and surveys;*
  - *Participation (eligibility) in GAMIAN-Europe Pedro Montellano Good Practices Award*

***If there are any changes in your contact data, please let us know by means of the form on our website***

***<http://gamian.eu/update-contact-details/>***

***Many thanks in advance!***

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### Survey: GAMIAN-Europe needs your support

GAMIAN-Europe has launched a survey that seeks to gather information on the links **between sexual health and mental well-being**. We have translated the questionnaire into 13 languages for dissemination.

We call on you for support as the success of this project depends on the outreach to and feedback from patients and we believe your contributions (both individual as well as from your organization level) will have a useful and important contribution to the outcome and impact of the survey.

We would like to ask you to disseminate this survey to your members, contacts and / or by uploading the survey on your website and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Your support would not only boost the awareness of this particular survey, but would also help create visibility of



the views of patients with mental health conditions across Europe.

You can download or respond to the survey by clicking [here](#)

**Sexual Health**

**FELLOW FRIENDS: GAMIAN-EUROPE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT**

Do you advocate for mental or sexual health or work within a health organization?  
Are you a patient or have a mental health condition?  
Do you know anyone who suffers from mental health?

If you answer **'YES'** to any of these questions **GOOD NEWS!** You can help other people by completing this **SURVEY**

**WHAT SURVEY?**  
GAMIAN-Europe (Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks-Europe), a patient-driven pan-European organization launched a survey on sexual and mental health with the aim to promote better policies for patients.

**HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?**  
Your time is precious to us, only **20 MINUTES**

**UNTIL WHEN CAN I COMPLETE THE SURVEY?**  
As soon as possible, the survey was launched few weeks ago and the collection of answers is ongoing.

**WHAT ELSE CAN I DO TO HELP?**  
You can share this survey on your social media, Twitter or Facebook. You can also post the survey on your website or send it to your contacts, members and friends.

GAMIAN-Europe will be producing a final report to share the findings of the survey. We are happy to mention the support of your organization in the report and other documents and activities related to the survey.

FIND THE SURVEY LINK IN YOUR LANGUAGE [HERE](#):  
<http://www.gamian.eu/gamian-europe-pan-european-survey-mental-sexual-mental-health/>

Follow us @GamianE, Visit us [www.gamian.eu](http://www.gamian.eu)

*Believe you can help!*

If you have further questions as to how you or your organisation can assist, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Nigel Olisa, [executive.director@gamian.eu](mailto:executive.director@gamian.eu)

## GAMIAN-Europe's activities (2<sup>nd</sup> half 2016)

### GAMIAN-Europe's Annual Convention and General Assembly

*Vienna (Austria)*  
*15 – 16 September 2016*



**GAMIAN-Europe** held its Convention and General Assembly on 15 and 16 September 2016.

On 15 September, GAMIAN-Europe members came together to discuss **Migration, Mental Health and the European Impact** with experts from **The European Union Agency (FRA)** and **The International Red Cross**. The input from GAMIAN-Europe members was very important as they had the opportunity to shed light on their individual experiences and views on how national governments could restructure their migration strategy. Some GAMIAN-Europe board members gave presentations on the current migration and mental health situation in Romania, Sweden, Greece and Finland.

To download the full Report and PowerPoint Presentations of the sessions, please click [here](#)

During the dinner, GAMIAN-Europe enjoyed the opportunity to announce the winners of the Pedro Montellano Good Practice Award (\*), i.e. **Awakening Foundation, Hungary**, (details [here](#)) and the GAMIAN-Europe European Personality Award and Veteran Certificate, i.e. **José Miguel Caldas de Almeida** (details [here](#)).

On 16 September, the General Assembly took place. GAMIAN-Europe Board member John Bowis moderated the discussions about GAMIAN-Europe's present and the future activities.

The elections for the new Board took place; you can find information on the new Board members by clicking [here](#)

On the same day, the Patient Advisory Board on EU research projects related to mental health was held. It consisted of two parts:

1. Presentation of the EU Research projects where GAMIAN-Europe participates as a member of the Consortium (E-COMPARED, MoodFOOD and MasterMind).
2. Open discussion regarding the overall acceptance of patients using technology enabled mental health services that are the subject of the research work taking place as part of MasterMind and E-COMPARED.

For details on these discussions, click [here](#)

(\* ) From 2016, the GAMIAN-Europe Good Practice Award has been renamed 'The Pedro Montellano Good Practice Award', in memory of our former President, colleague, friend and patient advocate, who died 2 October, 2015.

### EU News

by Christine Marking  
(GAMIAN-Europe EU Liaison)



### First annual EU Mental Health Compass Forum

*Luxembourg*  
*6 and 7 October 2016*

On 6 and 7 October 2016, the first Annual EU Compass Forum on Mental Health and Well-being took place in Luxembourg.

The event was attended by a broad range of stakeholders, e.g. policymakers, non-governmental stakeholders from advocacy groups and care organisations, well as mental health care providers, professionals, and patients.

The purpose of the Forum was to discuss the implementation of policy recommendations of the

European Framework for Action on Mental Health and Well-being and the outcomes of activities related to the work of the EU Compass during 2015-2016. In addition, the Forum presented an opportunity to share good practices with and between organizations in the EU, and to propose concrete actions to further improve mental health in the EU.

The focus of this year's Forum was the prevention of depression and the promotion of resilience and improving access to mental health care. In line with this, two EU Compass scientific papers on "prevention of depression and promotion of resilience" and on "provision of more accessible mental health services" were discussed during break-out sessions and interactive round-table meetings. Moreover, the results of the annual EU Compass surveys regarding the activities of EU Member States and stakeholders in mental health, as well as good practices in EU Member States were presented.

The Forum invited participants to discuss the annual themes, draw conclusions on the EU Compass scientific papers, to share thoughts and propose ideas to further improve mental health and mental health care in EU Member States.

For a full report of the meeting and the presentations, click [here](#).

#### ***GAMIAN-Europe comments:***

While we warmly welcome the European Framework for Action on Mental Health and the efforts made by the Compass, GAMIAN-Europe is concerned that the emphasis will remain on collection and dissemination of information rather than on concrete implementation of the recommendations contained in the Framework. This is why we have developed a proposal for a more concrete EU-level Action Plan on mental health (available on [www.gamian.eu](http://www.gamian.eu)), which –inter alia - advocates the putting in place of national action plans, along the lines of the current EU actions on rare disorders and cancer. By means of the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders we will keep a close look on the activities of the Compass and the implementation of the Framework for Action.

#### **Written Declaration on the mental health of asylum seekers**

Since September 2015, GAMIAN-Europe has been advocating for political and practical attention with respect to the mental health of asylum seekers and their access to services. Our regional seminar in March 2016 addressed this topic. On this occasion, we obtained the support of

Thomas Zdechovsky MEP: he was found willing to table a Written Declaration on this topic.

A Written Declaration is a tool that Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have to underline their interest in and the need for action for a certain topic. It needs the support of the majority of Members (i.e. 376) in order to become adopted as a formal Parliamentary document.

This Written Declaration was prepared as it is felt that there is too little awareness of and attention for the mental health risks and challenges faced by asylum seekers being traumatised 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. Policymakers across the EU should be more aware of the fact that this is a real and serious issue which needs to be taken into account in any effort to address the situation of asylum seekers and their integration in their host countries and communities.

In order to get the 376 signatures required to adopt the Declaration in the European Parliament, GAMIAN-Europe called on its members to urge the MEPs from their countries to sign the Declaration. In addition, we obtained the support of the European Brain Council, the European Psychiatry Association, EUFAMI and Mental Health Europe, and these organisations asked their members to get in touch with their MEPs as well.

Despite these efforts, the required amount of signatures was not obtained. However, we sincerely believe that the efforts to have the Declaration adopted have contributed to raising the awareness of MEPs and other stakeholders, so it was well worth working on this.

For the Declaration: [www.eu.gamian.eu](http://www.eu.gamian.eu)

#### **Interest Group on Mental health, Wellbeing and Brain Disorders :**

##### ***'Suicide and suicide prevention'***

*Brussels*

*9 November 2016*

On 9 November 2016, the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders, met to discuss suicide and suicide prevention.

The meeting was organised by GAMIAN-Europe in cooperation with the Expert Platform on Mental Health – Focus on Depression. Background to the meeting is the fact that, according to the WHO, every year more than 800 000 people take their own life and there are many more people who attempt suicide. As not all suicides are recognised or documented as such this number may be considerably higher. Suicide occurs throughout the lifespan and was the second leading cause of death among



15–29-year-olds globally in 2012. The meeting addressed the various measures that can be taken in order to prevent suicide, such as:

- early identification, treatment and care of people with mental and substance use disorders, chronic pain and acute emotional distress;
- training of non-specialized health workers in the assessment and management of suicidal behaviour;
- follow-up care for people who attempted suicide and provision of community support.

According to research presented in the meeting by the Expert Platform on Mental Health, suicide prevention efforts require coordination and collaboration among multiple sectors of society, including the health sector and other sectors such as education, labour, agriculture, business, justice, law, defense, politics, and the media.

A video, showing a powerful testimony was prepared for the meeting by mental health activist Jonny Benjamin (UK), and can be found on the GAMIAN-Europe website ([www.gamian.eu](http://www.gamian.eu)). A full report of the meeting is also available there.

### The Interest Group in 2017: development of the work programme

GAMIAN-Europe is currently in the process of developing the agenda for this year's meetings of the Interest Group, by means of collecting meeting topics which will then be presented to the Group's 4 co-chairs. At the moment, these are the topics that are being considered:

- Depression
- Transition from childhood to adult services
- Sexual health and mental health
- Workplace mental health
- Progress of the Mental Health Compass

### GAMIAN-Europe proceeds its participation in EU research projects in 2017

During the past months, preparatory work and negotiations with the European Commission with respect to EU-funded research project proposals took place by a number of research consortia of which GAMIAN-Europe's as a member. These efforts have resulted in the Commission approving two projects, i.e. **ImpleMentAll** and **CAPICE**. GAMIAN-Europe's role in these projects is to ensure a strong patients' voice. 'ImpleMentAll' will develop, apply, and evaluate tailored implementation

strategies in the context of on-going eHealth implementation initiatives in the EU and beyond.

The ImpleMentAll project had its kick-off meeting on 17 January in Amsterdam.

CAPICE is planned to start in the first half of this year **and in this project, focus is put on three (ROAMER) priorities/themes.**

1. Research into mental disorder prevention, mental health promotion and interventions in children, adolescents and young adults
2. Focus on the development and causal mechanisms of mental health symptoms, syndromes and well-being across the lifespan (including older populations)
3. Developing and maintaining international and interdisciplinary research networks and shared databases

More details will follow in next issues of this newsletters.

Of course, GAMIAN Europe's continues to contribute to the on-going research projects, **E-COMPARED** and **MooDFOOD** in 2017.

More info can be found [here](#)

All projects will be managed by the GAMIAN-Europe staff members, guided by the Research Committee.



### GAMIAN-Europe's News Flash



- ✓ GAMIAN Europe has recently discussed with EPF how to strengthen their collaboration and what EPF could do in relation to mental health.
- ✓ Earlier in January, GAMIAN-Europe was invited along with 7 other organisations (EPA, ECNP, Expert Platform on Mental Health, EUFAMI, UEMS, EBC and Eurocarers) to a meeting in the offices of Janssen in Brussels, addressing 'Unmet needs on mental health'.
- ✓ On 9 December 2016, during the EPA Policy Event, GAMIAN-Europe's President Hilka Kärkkäinen and EPA President Professor Dr. Wolfgang Gäbel signed the **Memorandum of Understanding** between the **European Psychiatric Association (EPA)** and **GAMIAN-Europe**. More information can be found [here](#).