



MENTAL HEALTH  
KEEP TALKING ABOUT IT

# Newsletter GAMIAN-Europe

Jan-Feb-March 2018

ISSUE 2018- 1

Dear reader,

Welcome to our first newsletter in 2018 - probably the last one in this format. In a few months, GAMIAN-Europe's identity will be re-branded: a new logo, a new image, a new design for all our communications. Of course, GAMIAN-Europe's Board Members and staff will continue their efforts to raise awareness of mental health and its impact, to advocate for patients' rights and to combat the stigma attached to mental health problems. Enjoy this newsletter!

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

*The Editorial Committee.  
Christine & Erik*



**Foreword by Hilikka Kärkkäinen  
(President)**



Dear reader,

Last year was full of activities which helped increase our visibility, not least by means of our policy statements, endorsements and messages on social media. Just to mention one of these: GAMIAN-Europe, together with some 35 other organisations, signed a letter addressed to European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, calling to enhance EU-level action in the field of health. Partnerships with many other organisations were strengthened and new partnerships were started.

**Other highlights:**

In April, GAMIAN-Europe took part in the EPA Forum, as part of the EPA Congress entitled 'Together for Mental Health: Challenges and Opportunities'. In my role as President, I contributed to the discussion by providing the views of

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patients and services users in identifying and bridging the gaps in the organisation and provision of mental health services across Europe.

We worked together with the EBC on suicide; this resulted in a 'Facts and Recommendations Sheet', which was published on 10 September, as a contribution to Suicide Prevention Day.

The impact of mental health on sexual well-being was explored by means of a GAMIAN-Europe survey, which will be published shortly. The first results of the survey were



already presented at the WPA congress, held in Berlin in October.

Digital engagement of mental health patients was the main topic of our Annual Convention held in Budapest in September, hosted by the Awakenings Foundation.

Furthermore, GAMIAN-Europe coordinated two meetings of the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders in 2017:

- March: a joint meeting with the MEP Interest Group on Brain, Mind and Pain, entitled 'Optimising the European Social Pillar to #MakeWorkWork for those affected by Brain, Mind and Pain Conditions'.
- July: a joint meeting with EBC and the Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders entitled 'The Value of Early Intervention in Brain, Mind and Pain Conditions'.

In November, GAMIAN-Europe and the EBC launched their Expert Policy Paper entitled 'Bridging the Gap: Optimising transition from child to adult mental healthcare' at a meeting in the European Parliament, hosted by Tomas Zdechovsky MEP (see article below).

And last but not least, it has been a welcome challenge for GAMIAN-Europe to actively contribute to EU-funded research projects over recent years; our role is to ensure the patient's voice and experience in these projects as much as possible. Work has started on two new projects, i.e. ImpleMentAll (in January) and CAPICE (in May). GAMIAN-Europe's involvement in MoodFOOD is ongoing; two other projects, MasterMind and E-COMPARED, came to an end and have now published their results.

Mental health is a matter of increasing importance to all of us. In 2018, GAMIAN-Europe's activities will continue to be in line with the three main areas of activities stipulated in our mission statement, i.e. Awareness, Education/Information and Advocacy. We will continue to collaborate with health professionals, policy makers, academics and industry in representing the interests of persons affected by mental illness, advocating their rights.

*We are hoping that you are ready for another Big Year; another year full of passion and commitment, of hope and contentment!*

*A happy and healthy 2018 to you all!*

*Hilkka Kärkkäinen*

*President of GAMIAN-Europe*

## Call for membership renewal

Dear GAMIAN-Europe Member,

Thank you for your continued support and contribution to GAMIAN-Europe and its activities. The organisation continues to grow and advocate for patients' rights and their needs. With a view to achieving the objectives and deliver the projects that have been approved within our membership and the Board, we very much look forward to your contribution this year.

As you know, GAMIAN-Europe is mainly funded through the contributions from its Members and Partners and we are grateful for your continuous support as a member organisation. As we are at the start of a new year, we would like to remind you to kindly pay your membership fees for 2018 as soon as possible. It is important for us to collect the membership fees in the first quarter of 2018 between January and April to help the organisation plan better. **(150 € before 1st April 2018 or 175 € if paid after 1st April 2018).**

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 regarding 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 to the bi-annual Convention (2 nights' free accommodation and reimbursement of travel expenses up to 350 €);
- ✓ Possibility to participate in regional seminars (for full members of the region concerned);
- ✓ Active involvement in GAMIAN-Europe (research) projects and surveys;
- ✓ Eligibility for the GAMIAN-Europe Pedro Montellano Good Practices Award.

If there are any changes in your contact data please let us know by sending an email to [secretariat@gamian.eu](mailto:secretariat@gamian.eu) or [executive.director@gamian.eu](mailto:executive.director@gamian.eu)

## GAMIAN-Europe's Annual Convention and General Assembly in 2017

*Budapest (Hungary)  
22 – 24 September 2017*

### *'Digital Capacity Building of Mental Health Organisations'*

From 22 to 24 September, some 40 representatives of patient organisations, GAMIAN-Europe Board members and other stakeholders travelled across Europe to GAMIAN-Europe's Annual Convention in Budapest, hosted by the Awakenings Foundation.

During workshops and keynote speeches, participants discussed and shared learnings and opinions on 'Digital Capacity Building of Mental Health Organisations'. Patient organisations, currently focusing mostly on websites, newsletters and Facebook, are struggling to take their digital communication to the next level, hindered by a lack of human and financial resources. To solve this, training should be provided to allow these organisations to develop their digital expertise, and inter-organisation communication should be increased to increase dissemination. Most importantly, when communicating to patients and the general public, it is crucial to translate the (scientific) content into a language that everyone can understand.

*The Patient Advisory Board  
'Nothing about us without us'*



*The value of patient representation in research*

On 22 September, the Convention started with a meeting of the Patient Advisory Board, addressing the current state of play of five collaborative EU-funded research projects. The projects MasterMind and E-COMPARED provided a useful introduction to the digital theme of the event. The results of these two projects will now be implemented in the ImpleMentAll project, of which GAMIAN-Europe is also a part.

GAMIAN-Europe has been involved in research projects for over 3 years; inclusion of patients or end-users in mental health research is now a requirement for EU funding. Representing many European patient organisations GAMIAN-Europe is the ideal research partner to ensure our slogan 'Nothing about us without us'.

To read the full report please click [here](#)

## EU News

by Christine Marking  
(GAMIAN-Europe EU Liaison)



### 'Bridging the Gap: Optimising transition from child to adult mental healthcare'

In November, GAMIAN-Europe and the EBC organised a meeting in the European Parliament entitled 'Bridging the Gap: Optimising transition from child to adult mental healthcare'.

Transition of care is vitally important in determining patient outcomes and, while GAMIAN-Europe is delighted that initiatives such as the MILESTONE project are beginning to focus on this issue, there remains a pressing need to ensure that patients about to enter the transition phase are adequately supported now.

The meeting therefore aimed to explore the reasons why transition of care is currently suboptimal and to agree a roadmap for driving improvements in this important area. The resulting Expert White Paper, which was formally launched in the November meeting, identifies existing gaps and contains a number of policy and practice recommendations.

The objectives of the November meeting, which was kindly hosted by Tomas Zdechovsky MEP, were threefold:

- Highlight the crucial importance of continuity of care when moving from child/adolescent to adult services;
- Focus on appropriate and effective patient pathway to ensure a smooth transition;
- Explore EU actions to ensure policy attention for this topic.

In the meeting, chaired by Frédéric Destrébecq (EBC) contributions were made by Professor Swaran Singh (University of Warwick), Professor Geert Dom (EPA and University of Antwerpen), Dolores Gauci (GAMIAN-Europe), Andrea Bilbow (ADHD-Europe), Professor David Nutt (EBC), Terje Peetso (European Commission, DG CONNECT) and Tomas Zdechovsky MEP.

It was underlined that the White Paper can serve as a useful policy tool to clearly identify existing gaps. It provides a number of specific policy recommendations, which relevant stakeholders can take note of and make use of to support their advocacy efforts in order to improve the situation for patients on the ground.

A full report of the meeting is available [here](#), the White paper can be found [here](#)

### **Nessa Childers MEP advocates GAMIAN-Europe's European Action Programme on Mental Health**

GAMIAN-Europe was delighted to note an article submitted to Pan European Networks by Nessa Childers MEP, one of the co-chairs of the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental health, Well-being and Brain Disorders, in which she promotes GAMIAN-Europe's proposal for a meaningful follow-up action to the current EU-level activities of the Mental Health Compass.

As readers may recall, when the EU Joint Action on Mental Health came to an end, the EU-Compass for Action on Mental Health and Well-being was put in place; this is a mechanism to collect, exchange and analyse information on policy and stakeholder activities in mental health. This Compass aims to disseminate the 'European Framework for Action on Mental Health and Well-being' as developed by the Joint Action and it monitors mental health and wellbeing policies and activities by Member States and non-governmental stakeholders. The Compass will come to an end in 2018 and currently, no specific action on mental health is foreseen; instead, the Commission intends to address mental health as part of its more general chronic disease agenda.

This is why GAMIAN-Europe, in 2016, developed a blueprint for a European Action Programme on Mental Health, to ensure a more specific and action-oriented approach to mental health.

This Action Plan would consist of 6 strands:

#### **Inclusion of mental health as a priority in health and social policy development: mainstreaming:**

There is a need, recognised by the Joint Action to explicitly include mental health in all areas that have a direct or indirect bearing on mental health, such as the Health Programme, the European Social Fund, the D disability strategy, the social Open Method of Coordination (addressing accessible, high quality and sustainable health and long term care systems), Horizon 2020 (research), the European Semester Process, actions on Corporate Social Responsibility, health and safety in the work place and the Employment Strategy.

#### **Awareness-raising and good practice exchange: mutual learning and exchange:**

The EU Action programme should ensure and coordinate an effective exchange of information, experience and good practice between relevant stakeholders and Member States. Another option to raise awareness would be to consider designating one of the coming years as the European Year of Mental Health and Well-being.

#### **Stimulate the development of national action plans on mental health and well-being:**

As already referred to in the 2011 Council Conclusions, national action plans on mental health could be put in place, using the existing national actions plans on cancer and rare diseases as models: these plans should be established to explore appropriate measures for mental health in order to ensure that patients with mental health problems have access to high-quality care, including diagnostics, treatments and rehabilitation. National plans can also be useful for mutual learning and exchange., with the Group of Governmental Experts on Mental Health acting as a coordinating mechanism for a structured and effective exchange and mutual learning.

#### **Financial support:**

A number of the above initiatives hold the potential for funding (e.g. the health programme, the Structural Funds, Horizon2020). This funding could contribute to capacity building of mental health organisations in relation to provision of support (e.g. emotional support, exchanges, information) and advocacy (e.g. policy development, practical solutions). It could also support the exchange of information, research and networking.

#### **Data collection and monitoring:**

The Horizon2020 programme should continue to issue specific calls for research projects addressing mental health in future calls for proposals under the action 'Tackling Societal Changes', section 'Health, demographic change and well-being'. The EU-funded ROAMER project has developed a sensible and inclusive roadmap for

research in this area, which could provide guidance on priority setting and the most pressing issues.

#### **Inclusion of people affected by mental health problems in relevant EU consultations, fora and Advisory boards:**

Any strategy or policy addressing mental health should be developed as a joint effort by all key stakeholders from societal and policy sectors concerned, including representative organisations active in the field of mental health should explicitly be included in social and health consultations as well as in relevant fora and advisory boards.

#### **This Action Plan will be the focus of GAMIAN-Europe's advocacy activities for this year and MEP Nessa Childers' support is warmly welcomed.**

Her article is published in Pan European Networks: Government and can be found at <http://www.paneuropeannetworks.com/government/mobilising-mental-healthcare/>

#### **Interest Group on Mental health, Well-being and Brain Disorders: new co-chair**

GAMIAN-Europe is very happy to welcome Tomas Zdechovsky MEP as a new co-chair of the European Parliament Interest Group on Mental Health, Well-being and Brain Disorders.

Mr Zdechovsky is an active champion on mental health and has already been involved with some of GAMIAN-Europe's previous activities, for instance in relation to mental health in migrants and the recent Parliament meeting on transition of care, taking place in November. We are very much looking forward to working with Mr Zdechovsky and will support him to the best of our abilities.

**For more information:**

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/124713/TOMAS\\_ZDECHOVSKY\\_home.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/124713/TOMAS_ZDECHOVSKY_home.html)

## **GAMIAN-Europe proceeds its participation in EU research projects in 2018**

In 2017, 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 is 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 as well as patient-relevance.

The ImpleMentAll project had its kick-off meeting on 17 January; CAPICE started in May 2017.

In both projects, GAMIAN Europe will ensure the dissemination and patient advisory activities.

Of course, GAMIAN Europe continues to contribute to the on-going research project **MoodFOOD** in 2018.

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

### **GAMIAN-Europe's News Flash**



- ✓ The report of GAMIAN-Europe's PAN EUROPEAN QUESTIONNAIRE ON SEXUAL HEALTH AND MENTAL WELL-BEING will be available very soon on our website.
- ✓ The **General Assembly and Annual Convention 2018** will take place in the month May. The dates will be communicated soon.
- ✓ You can find an overview of GAMIAN-Europe's activities in 2017 by clicking on [NEWS2017](#).
- ✓ A new member has joined GAMIAN-Europe's staff: Lina Papartyte. Lina joined GAMIAN-Europe in October 2017 and supports the day-to-day management of the organisation. Before joining the team, Lina acquired sound knowledge of European and regional governance at the European Commission (DG SANTE) in Luxembourg and European Regional and Local Health Authorities (EUREGHA) in Brussels. She holds a Master's degree in Politics and Government in the European Union from the London School of Economics.
- ✓ <https://www.facebook.com/GAMIANEurope>  
<https://twitter.com/gamiane?lang=en>

