

High-level conference on mental health in all policies: addressing challenges and designing shared solutions

Paris, France, 16–17 June 2025

Scope and purpose

Background

Good mental health is the foundation of any functioning society, enabling people of all ages and walks of life to participate fully in their communities and to pursue what matters most to them – education, employment, family and more. Poor mental health therefore carries a considerable burden, both to individuals and society. This has become increasingly apparent during the succession of crises of the last five years. However, countries continue to struggle to build the systems infrastructure and capacity necessary for widespread access to mental health services and supports.

In response to the need for urgent action, the WHO Regional Office for Europe is collaborating with the European Commission on a four-year European Union-funded project entitled “Addressing mental health challenges in the European Union countries, Iceland and Norway”. The project aims to provide tailored support and capacity-building to these countries in building stronger, more resilient mental health systems.

Since 2023, the Regional Office has engaged in tailored policy discussions with 29 participating countries to identify their concrete needs in protecting population mental health. A common throughline in these discussions has been how practically to enable cross-sectoral collaboration in mental health policy work. In many countries, mental health is still primarily the responsibility of the health sector, which has contributed to overwhelmed services and underinvestment in prevention and promotion initiatives. Countries have asked for support in bridging the work of the health sector with that of the education, welfare, finance, housing, employment, justice, agriculture and other sectors, clarifying how each – in policy and practice – contributes to population mental health. In this way, countries can move towards more efficient mental health systems and thereby support more productive, inclusive and resilient populations.

Seeing an opportunity to answer countries’ calls for support, and acknowledging France’s sustained championing of mental health in its national frameworks through innovating solutions for mental health and its long-standing collaboration with WHO – notably through the WHO Collaborating Centre of Lille, France – the WHO Regional Office for Europe plans to organize jointly a two-day conference in Paris, France, centred on the theme of integrating mental health into all policies. This initiative follows the recent calls to action by the French Prime Minister, who established mental health as the “*grande cause*” for 2025. He emphasized that mental health is a collective responsibility involving the state, local authorities, businesses and associations, and placed mental health as one of the five major priorities, highlighting the urgent need to improve access to quality public services and invest in prevention of mental ill health.



Objectives

The conference will bring together representatives of European Union countries, Iceland and Norway, and the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). Participants will include high-level policy-makers from across government sectors, health professionals and people with the lived experience of mental health conditions, to:

- facilitate cross-fertilization and knowledge sharing on how to realize effective cross-sectoral collaboration in mental health;
- convene stakeholders from various sectors outside health to discuss mental health care, promotion and prevention, and to strengthen collaborative efforts to ensure comprehensive mental health support for all;
- foster meaningful connections between policy-makers, professionals and people with lived experience across different sectors; and
- issue a call for actions to mainstream mental health in all policies at European Union, national and subnational levels.

Key stakeholders

- The conference will aim to convene representatives of various government ministries (including health, education, solidarity, welfare, finance, housing, employment, justice and agriculture) and people with lived experience of mental health conditions. Around 3–4 delegates from each participating country are expected to attend, along with WHO partners, non-State actors, observers and WHO experts.
- Countries themselves (notably representatives of ministries of health) will be tasked with contacting their counterparts in other sectors and securing their participation on the basis of their context and relevance.