

Kick off Meeting in Athens - GREECE
11 - 13 January 2017

Welcome message (n1) (letter) from:

MEP Mrs Kostadinka Kuneva is Member of the "Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and Co-president at Disability Intergroup of European Parliament.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/it/125092/KOSTADINKA_KUNEVA_home.html

The letter of the MEP Mrs Kostadinka Kuneva was read by Mr Anestis Roukai during the IS to the Kick off Meeting in Athens (11/01/2017).

The letter's content:

Dear Gentlemen

The logic of de-institutionalization and inclusion of people with mental health problems in our society and the full enjoyment of their fundamental rights is inalienable. Who can argue this?

But in Greece we had several problems regarding the issue of psychiatric reform. Approximately 30 years after the first efforts in the context of de-institutionalization of people with mental health problems, during which spent millions of Euros from EU and state funds, most of which through the so-called "Psychargos" program, the country is still far behind and few of the benefits of psychiatric reform reached to people with mental problems and their families. What we have seen is that several NGOs without a specific plan and action take a chunk of psychiatric "reform", while many of them were first introduced private employment affairs in the field of mental health. In my opinion, the attempt of the privatization of the mental care system played a key role in the failure of the psychiatric reform.

I expect that your program will contribute to the two, in my opinion, most critical goals for the future.

Firstly, for social perspective to fully remove the stigma of people with mental problems.

And secondly, to the State level to create a comprehensive network of services of distributed in that way will be a continuity and consistency in the treatment process. A treatment process which will be accompanied by sufficient and appropriate staff. This good practice can and should be a common European policy and must be implemented in all EU countries or at least in countries with the poorest performance in the de-institutionalization of the people with mental health problems.

Finally, I want to make a short comment regarding the European Union. The EU is at a critical turning point in its history. It faces serious existential problem in ideological, political, economic and social level. To get out of this impasse -that has come due to the adoption of the neo-liberals policies- should prioritize its social policies and to invest in human. And this respect and care for the reintegration of the people with mental health problems in society without stigma and without bias. And I hope the program in which you participate to make a decisive contribution to this.

Yours Sincerely,

Kostadinka Kuneva

Welcome message (n2) (mp4) from Mr Tomáš Zdechovský - Member of European Parliament:

[See file: _hero WELCOME_ Zdechovsky MEP.mp4]

Please find below the content of the video message of MEP Zdechovský.

“Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, in a few words I would like to express my support for the project on Housing for people with mental health problems. As we all know our society also includes people who were not so lucky, like other ones and have to face problems with their mental health. Such people need our empathy, understanding and last but not least nice environment for living. Nobody wants to live in an impersonal institutional care. Our fellow citizens with mental health problems deserve better living conditions, without any obstacles.

I wish you good luck in your efforts and I hope it will bring improvement of living conditions for as many people as possible”

Tomáš ZDECHOVSKÝ, Member of European Parliament, Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)