

Europe - The European Network of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry

In April 1997, the European Network of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry was asked by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to comment on the planned WHO declaration on 'Quality Assurance in Mental Health Care', and promoting human rights of people in the psychiatric system.

The European Network was founded in 1991 in The Netherlands by 39 delegates from 16 European countries. Until earlier this year the network was known as The European Network of Users and Ex-Users of Mental Health. It aims to promote and improve the rights of people who are, or could be, receiving psychiatric treatment throughout Europe. Its main concerns are with welfare, rights to housing, income and the application of human rights, regardless of psychiatric history.

Its recommendations were, among others, that:

- (ex-) users and survivors of psychiatry should be invited to hearings before laws are passed
- (ex-) users and survivors of psychiatry should be invited to be ombudsmen/ ombudswomen at a national level
- there should be a body including (ex-) users and survivors of psychiatry at a national level who monitor human rights of people who have, or who are said to have mental disorders, and to register new treatment measures and decisions of ethics' commissions in research fields
- (ex-) users and survivors of psychiatry should be involved in the education and examination of health and psychiatric professionals in a paid capacity
- psychosurgery and other irreversible treatments such as psychiatric drugs, electro- and insulinshock for so-called mental disorders should never be carried out on an involuntary patient or without informed consent. Psychiatrists who treat without informed consent should lose their medical approbation

- clinical trials and experimental treatments should never be carried out on an involuntary patient without informed consent. Institutions carrying out any such measures should be obliged to prove that possible damages are not due to these measures
- coin operated telephone boxes, writing paper, envelopes and stamps, uncensored notice boards, kitchen facilities, smoking and non-smoking areas should be available on all psychiatric wards
- patients should be allowed daily walks in the fresh air for at least one hour
- for every psychiatric bed there should be one bed in an anti- or nonpsychiatric run-away-house. Each second psychiatric bed has to be placed in a Soteria-like institution.

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The European Network would like to be invited to national and international conferences in the psychiatric field throughout the European Commission. Further information from Secretary Clemens Huitink, European Desk, PO Box 645, NL-3500 AP Utrecht, The Netherlands Tel: +31 30 254 1808 Fax: +31 30 252 1935

by Peter Lehmann (Berlin), Chair

