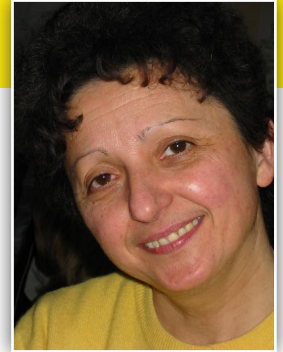




# ENUSP Bulletin

No.6 ■ August 2012

www.enusp.org ■ enusp.info@gmail.com



*Dear friends,*

*Welcome to the sixth ENUSP bulletin!  
Here we are at the end of the first stage of our journey  
called 'Re-building ENUSP – Strengthening the network of  
users and survivors of psychiatry across Europe'.*

## **How Did We Start Off On This Journey?**

In October 2010, at a Conference held in Thessaloniki, we had 'Re-building ENUSP' on the agenda. This working group session aimed to plan actions on the organisational, administrative and financial problems that were blocking our efforts to provide effective lobbying and services. The working group identified and listed the main organisational and work priorities for ENSUP, emphasising funding. The priorities recommended by the group have been adopted by ENUSP's General Assembly as the 'ENUSP Work Programme'.

So we started to look for funders and funding opportunities. Open Society Foundations – Mental Health Initiative was the first funder who positively answered our request for funding. They appreciated 'how difficult it is to get funding when one doesn't have any to begin with' and offered to support our work 'given that, in its view, 'ENUSP is a very important stakeholder in the mental health field'.

Three people worked on the project proposal which was submitted in August 2011 and approved in September 2011. Project implementation began in October 2011.

Our 'itinerary' took us to Oxford for a kick-off project meeting of the two project workers from Oxford and Prague. They discussed and planned the activity for two important goals of the project:

1. building up the membership and drawing up a 3-year strategy to steer the work of ENUSP and
2. improving ENUSP's internal and external communications and strategically reviewing its' representation at external forums.

The main contact point of ENUSP was established in Prague. A new administrative system for recording membership was designed. Organisations from different European countries were approached to (re-)apply for membership in order to have up-to-date contacts and information about our members and reinforce communication between us.

The journey continued with a two-day strategy meeting in Budapest in January 2012, dedicated to producing a consultation document on ENUSP's strategy for the next three years. The strategy consultation document was distributed to our members. This consultation was meant to involve as

many of our members as possible, and was open until 30 March. The responses helped the Board to develop the final strategy. We also received support from Berlin. As a result, we now have one of our most important documents: a three-year Strategy which defines our long-term vision, mission, organisational values and approach, and sets our goals from 2012-2015.

In March 2012 we again reached Budapest where we took strategic steps to ensure long-term independent funding. Our research on funders and funding possibilities resulted in a donor database and timeline of grant opportunities. This led to a Fundraising Development Plan and the development of some project ideas.

During our journey we kept in touch with our members through bulletins; consultations on crucial items; sharing information about the project's progress and our other activities; and circulating announcements from our members. Information about ENUSP and its members later became available on the new website.

This 'journey' brought a significant change in ENUSP's life. Managing change is quite a challenging task. We had sunny and cloudy days as well as strong winds and storms. The wisdom of the crew, project workers, board members and supporters has helped us to enjoy the successful parts of the journey and overcome the not-so-bright parts.

A journey can be regarded as an initiation into the art of living, feeling, supporting and helping people. Even the most difficult journeys can provide unforgettable experiences which might later on prove to be useful. In a journey you learn to be more tolerant, to value the things around you, and to understand that no matter how different we are, we are all determined to achieve the same goals.

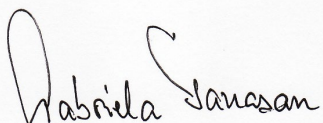
For me this journey was an excellent opportunity to learn many things which I will never forget and I am sure that they will be useful for future projects. I want to express my gratitude to all the people directly involved in setting up the project for their commitment and willingness to cooperate in order to succeed in this journey. I also want to thank the people in the Strategy and Website taskforces for their valuable contribution, as well as all the people who voluntarily supported us to make this journey a successful one.

*'The Rebuilding ENUSP project funded by OSFs was carried out with energy and commitment and a high level of intellect. Let's hope we can maintain our rhythm.'* (ENUSP Board member)

*'The project was very productive. It is the basis for our hope for important progress in future.'* (ENUSP Board member)

In this bulletin we want to share the outcomes of the project, the milestones we reached and the challenges we had to overcome. We welcome your views on this bulletin and on the Rebuilding ENUSP project. This will help us to meet your needs in our current activities and when we design new projects. You can reach us at **enusp.info@gmail.com** or by contacting your regional representatives at the addresses found at **www.enusp.org**.

Looking forward to hearing from you,



Gabriela Tanasan  
ENUSP Chair

# Re-building ENUSP: Strengthening the network of users and survivors of psychiatry across Europe

Project report

## Introduction

The European Network of (Ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, ENUSP, is the only independent umbrella organisation that unifies mental health service users and survivors of psychiatry throughout Europe. We have operated for 20 years in which time we have carried out impressive professional work, built excellent partnerships with other organisations and established a solid membership base.

Our complete lack of public funding since 2004 has brought ENUSP to the edge of existence. But with the help of our membership fees and a great amount of committed voluntary work by a small number of individuals we have kept going. The 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of ENUSP held in 2010 paved the way for a number of essential organisational changes. This conference marked a turning point as it became clear that our old way of working was no longer feasible. Creating stable funds for ENUSP was amongst our top priorities.

We began planning to build our capacity so that we could take advantage of new opportunities and meet new challenges, particularly those presented by the United Nations Convention of Rights for People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). By targeting key areas – organisational management and strategy, communications and fund-raising – we planned to create a stronger platform for mental health service users and psychiatric survivors across Europe to find out about their rights and to influence policy decisions which affect them.

The project reviewed and set up administrative systems, policies and procedures; built up our membership; reviewed our representation at external forums; improved communications with members and external stakeholders; drew up a three-year strategy; and sought funding to implement the strategy.

New administrative systems and a central contact point were set up in order to support communication with existing and potential members. Five ENUSP bulletins were sent to our members to facilitate their participation and consultation on the development of the strategy and our work in external forums. A new website was launched and the strategy was finalised.

The project had support from other Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like European Disability Forum (EDF), European Patients' Forum (EPF) and Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC), who advised us on strategy development. Mental Health Europe (MHE) provided a list of institutional and media contacts.

This project has established a sound infrastructure, which has in turn increased our capacity to communicate with our members and external stakeholders and to raise funds to deliver our strategy.



We are fully convinced that by doing this, ENUSP will become a more strategic, interactive, politically visible and sustainable NGO of users and survivors across Europe.



## Strategy – the Way Forward

The biggest success and the most important outcome of the project is that we can finally call ourselves a strategy driven organisation.

As envisioned during the setting up phase of the project, the Strategy Taskforce created the basic documents and an outline of the strategic plans. Between 23-25 January 2012 the Board and project workers met in Budapest where key areas of the strategy (mission statement, values, objectives) were discussed and consultation questions for our members were developed.

A special strategy consultation edition of the bulletin was sent as bulletin No.3 to ENUSP member organisations on 23 February 2012. Gabriela Tanasan, ENUSP's Chair, asked everybody to respond by 30 March. As the response rate was very low, project worker Debra Shulkes sent a reminder on 14 March.

On 1 April a total of nine responses were forwarded to Jasna Russo, responsible for drafting the final document. The responses came from organisations and individuals, including two very new organisations that had only just been granted ENUSP membership.

The strategy was finalised by Jasna Russo in consultation with the Strategy Taskforce. At its 5 July meeting the Board endorsed the strategy. This document was sent out to all ENUSP members as bulletin No.5, which is now available on our website [www.enusp.org](http://www.enusp.org).

An important event for the implementation of the strategy will take place in Zagreb in October 2012 when a selected group of 19 active ENUSP representatives from 15 countries will discuss how to achieve the goals set in the strategy. By doing this we hope to start developing a sense of ownership of the plan amongst our members. Bringing together everyone's best and most reasoned efforts is important in building a consensus about where our organisation is heading.

Despite the fact that many people had input into this strategy, we must admit that unfortunately it can't be taken as a reliable picture of our members' opinions. For us to learn about our members' aims and views in more depth, we will need to undertake more detailed research; this is an area of work foreseen by the strategy, and appropriate research tools are already being secured for this purpose. We decided, however, to work with the finalised strategy because of the significance of its content for ENUSP. This content includes an update and clarification of our mission statement and values in order to reflect major internal and environmental changes over the last 10 years, such as the adoption of the UNCRPD. The strategy provides a clear and logical framework for our development, and we hope it will be an excellent tool to motivate members to get engaged more easily and to guide our advocacy, capacity building and fundraising activities for the coming period.

### *Why is strategy important for an organisation?*

Many of us have asked this question... Our organisation is running anyway, sometimes we struggle, we face a lack of resources, but we always manage. Yes, possibility driven organisations think this way. But what are the benefits of being strategic?

**"All great achievements require time."**

*Maya Angelou*

The strategic planning process is an excellent tool for an organisation to define how to get from where it is today to where it wants to be in several years time. We hope that strategic planning will serve a variety of purposes including:

- Defining clearly our purpose and establishing realistic goals and objectives consistent with our mission statement.
- Providing a base from which progress can be measured and establishing a mechanism for informed change when needed.
- Ensuring that the most effective use is made of our resources by focusing on key priorities.
- Providing clearer focus, making us more efficient and effective.
- Acting as a bridge between staff and the board, and providing the glue that keeps the board together.
- Creating satisfaction amongst planners around a common vision and enabling the board and staff to safely solve major problems or conflicts.

### *How do we ensure implementation of our new plan?*

A frequent complaint about the strategic planning process is that it produces a document that ends up collecting dust on a shelf... Yes, if we are not vigilant we could go back to the good old patterns.

How will we make sure that the plan is implemented? After listening to our members' views during the planning process, we must now ensure that the plan is realistic and collaborative. The Board will be holding several events where our members can be asked "Is this plan realistic? Can we really do this?" The first event will be an Empowerment Seminar in Zagreb this autumn.

We also plan to keep our members informed of any developments to the plan. We believe that if people know the action plans and are continuously informed on progress will sign up more easily. We will distribute the plan to all of our members to enable their input.

### *We repeat our question from the strategy bulletin: "What direction is ENUSP headed in?"*

But this time we have a concrete answer. We are committed to choosing our own destination. To this end, our project workers have drawn on the views and suggestions of our members, as well as the Board. We have started to learn what our members want to happen.

If you would like to read our strategy for 2012-2015 please visit

**[http://enusp.org/enusp-documents/enusp\\_strategic\\_plan\\_202012-2015.pdf](http://enusp.org/enusp-documents/enusp_strategic_plan_202012-2015.pdf)**.

2012

**"Fundraising is the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving."**

*Hank Rosso*

## **The Importance of Fundraising**

Fundraising has a purpose for user survivor organisations that goes beyond raising funds. It is about raising awareness, telling others about the issues you are focusing on and using your supporters to spread the word.

The current economic recession makes us realise that we need to fundraise. Even established nonprofit organisations that rely on private donations and foundation funding have to increasingly do more fundraising to stay afloat. Fundraising is necessary to generate funds. Having adequate funds is the fuel that keeps your cause moving.

During the implementation period, the project team began to develop a Fundraising Development Plan as the first step to more detailed research into potential institutional donors. Currently, we



possess a database of more than 25 institutional donors who can be approached for funding. We also have a plan to the end of January 2013 with open calls to apply for as well as concrete project ideas ready for submission in the next 3 months.

Many member organisations approach us about their burning need for knowhow and resources about fundraising. So as an outcome of this project we plan to create a dedicated, password protected area on the

ENUSP website where articles, news about fundraising possibilities and best practice advice can be posted. Parallel to this, those members or individuals who wish to apply for grants or initiate fundraising campaigns can ask our fundraising project worker for help and input. This networking could also lead to the development of joint project proposals among ENUSP and its members.

We need to mention that while other Taskforces created within ENUSP have been quite active, we have not been able to create a Fundraising Taskforce, despite advertisements in previous bulletins. This is a real burden and makes it difficult for the project worker responsible for fundraising to apply for all available grants.

So we are again using this bulletin to articulate that we need people who can join a Fundraising Taskforce. Activities will involve sharing ideas for projects, helping to develop project proposals and reading and assisting with writing and refining funding proposals. If you want to get involved please send an e-mail marked "fundraising taskforce" to **[kirynoemi@gmail.com](mailto:kirynoemi@gmail.com)**.

We are aware that fundraising is critical to the success of most small nonprofit organisations. Unfortunately, too many nonprofit organisations secure one funding source and then stop looking for funding. They incorrectly assume that they don't need to seek additional revenue. They don't consider the possibility of losing the one funding source or what might happen to their organisation if the worst should happen. Ideally, the funding for any nonprofit organisation should come from lots of different sources and no one source should make up more than about 30% of the overall revenue. If more than half of your fundraising revenue comes from one grant or event and that grant or event goes away, what then? To prevent this from happening we are continuously exploring fundraising opportunities using more techniques than simply proposal writing. Our next step is to make the fundraising section of our website user friendly. We will also make it possible for people to donate money to us through the website, and we are preparing adverts to encourage individual donations. We have to make sure that we have several different sources of funding. These diversified revenue streams will help us to take the loss of a grant or donor in our stride.



# Progress of ENUSP's Representation Work

November 2011 - June 2012

By Debra Shulkes

## 1. Summary of Achievements

During the project period, ENUSP has:

- ✓ *Been vocal at EU level*, especially through the EU Fundamental Rights Platform (FRP) which we are now members of. Erik Olsen represented ENUSP at a FRP meeting in April. We've also kept up our presence at a European Commission level as "joint collaborating partners" in a project proposed by the EC Health and Consumers Directorate General (The ENUSP Board decided ENUSP's participation in this project was especially important since other proposed partners are mental health organisations, family organisations and pharma-sponsored patient organisations that are all very ready to speak for users and survivors in Europe).
- ✓ *Started directly lobbying UN treaty bodies*. ENUSP made a submission to the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) about human rights abuses in Czech psychiatric hospitals and institutions. Our representatives, Michal Caletka and Jolijn Santegoeds, advocated in person at the Committee's hearing about the Czech Republic. The results of this work were very promising: the CAT has called on the Czech Republic to ban cage beds by June 2013. The Committee also recommended that „free and informed consent“ be the basis for psychiatric treatment. It condemned solitary confinement, psychiatric restraints and institutionalisation, quoting directly from ENUSP's statements.
- ✓ *Made a joint submission to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)* with the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP), International Disability Alliance and European Disability Forum. We sent an amicus brief in the case of *Mihailovs vs. Latvia*. The aim was to educate the court about CRPD standards. This is the first ECHR submission filed by user/survivor organisations and disability organisations
- ✓ *Strengthened ties with WNUSP*. ENUSP comments regularly on WNUSP submissions to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on CRPD-related issues such as the right to accessibility, detention monitoring and psychiatric abuse as violence against women with disabilities. We're also developing closer relationships with the Pan-African Network of People with Psychosocial Disabilities (PANUSP) and the Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (CHRUSP).
- ✓ *Increased our work with European Disability Forum*, and developed a good working relationship with International Disability Alliance. Both disability organisations supported our UN CAT submission and the ECHR submission; more cooperation is being planned.
- ✓ *Maintained a good relationship with other EU-level NGOs* like Mental Health Europe (MHE) and European Patients' Forum (EPF). MHE has allocated some of its EC funding to support an ENUSP Empowerment Seminar for 19 representatives in Zagreb later in the year.



- ✓ *Built up relationships with the European Network of Independent Living (ENIL) and Intervoice.* We published profiles of ENUSP in the newsletters of both organisations. The ENUSP Chair and Bosnian member also spoke at an ENIL event on independent living and CRPD implementation in South-East Europe.
- ✓ *Continued to advocate at human rights themed events organised by the Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC).* Our representative Jolijn Santegoeds took part in an MDAC conference on detention monitoring attended by members of the Committee on Prevention of Torture, the UN Subcommittee on Prevention from Torture and the UN CRPD Committee. She spoke impromptu on the harm done by psychiatric institutionalisation and the impact of the CRPD. ENUSP deputy board member Maths Jespersen regularly participates in MDAC training across Europe where he educates law and policymakers and user/survivor groups about the Personal Ombudsman service, a survivor-led model of supported decision-making in Sweden.
- ✓ *Given advice to the Kosovo Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (KRCT) about how to raise awareness of horrific human rights abuses at a closed institution in Shtime.* ENUSP argued that KRCT should abandon its proposal to hold an Open Day at the institution, and instead organise a public seminar about the need to end institutionalisation and forced treatment and to ensure voluntary community-based supports. At the time of writing, it looks like KRCT will follow these suggestions: we have been invited to send a representative to address the proposed seminar on CRPD standards and good practices according to ENUSP.
- ✓ *Become more prominent internationally.* Our press statement in four languages increased international knowledge about the use of cage beds and other tortures in psychiatry in the Czech Republic and elsewhere. As a result, many user/survivor groups and others such as Disability Rights International, European Disability Forum, European Network for Independent Living, Mental Health Europe, the International Society for Ethical Psychology and Psychiatry, and People in Need all sent letters of protest to the Czech government.
- ✓ *Decided to apply for ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) status* in order to boost our presence at a UN level.
- ✓ *Investigated joining the Social Forum* and negotiated a potential fee waiver.

## 2. Lessons from the Representation Taskforce

During the first half of the project, ENUSP formed a representation taskforce. This taskforce and the ENUSP board reflected via email on the themes in ENUSP's representation work to date. They also named some priorities for our future representation activities.

Below we summarise some conclusions from these discussions.



a. *It's very important for ENUSP to work with others*

**“If we really want changes, paradigm shifts, revolutions, to occur, we must cooperate with others. If you have a political ambition – if you really want to change reality and not just express your opinion about it – you have to have allies.”**

*ENUSP deputy board member Maths Jespersen*

b. *We need to become more strategic when choosing representation activities to focus on*

**“We need to avoid getting sucked into bureaucracy with its overkill of working groups and sub-management.”**

*ENUSP representative*

As requests rise for our involvement in events and projects, we must pay attention to our limited resources and heavy workloads. We need especially to guard against potentially exploitative involvement i.e. efforts to use us to legitimise work that goes against our advocacy and interests.

Some suggested questions for assessing invitations:

- *How much impact will this really have for users/survivors?*
- *Does the involvement advance OUR existing priorities and goals?*
- *Is the gain from participating greater than the resources required?*
- *Is the involvement tokenistic?*
- *Is our expertise being respected? e.g. Are we presented/ positioned as experts? Are we being paid for our consultancy if others are paid?*

c. *We need some guidelines for ENUSP representatives*

Currently there are no guidelines for ENUSP representatives. Taskforce members suggested that written guidelines are needed. For example, they said representatives should:

- *“Prepare adequately, behave in a professional way, present ENUSP positions not personal opinion, take decisions back for consultation”*

- *“Ensure transparency and share, do not keep [information] to yourself, allow and enable others to join in the work, or to take it over at another stage”*
- *“Take notes, share outcome documents, highlight important discussions, write down names of important people you met, and make it transparent in some way.”*

Right now reporting is very inconsistent. One or two representatives give detailed reports to the Board after they attend events; some offer occasional information about their work; some do not report at all. A few people suggested that ENUSP should create a standard reporting form that representatives have to fill in after an event. This would help the bulletin editor, who currently has to compile a report from scant information.

Other recommendations include that ENUSP should ensure a good gender, age and geographic balance among its representatives and that we should aim for better representation of minority groups.

#### *d. ENUSP needs to offer its representatives training, consultation systems and more concrete support*

Taskforce members said ENUSP needs to offer support to representatives, such as:

- *“General training on role of ENUSP representative, job description, etc.”*
- *“Background information about the event, known participants, ENUSP positions, priorities and strategies, records of previous meetings”*
- *“Encouragement and feedback. The Board, in particular, should read reports and respond to the person.”*

At the moment there is no training for ENUSP representatives and no clear way for volunteers (including potential representatives) to get involved in ENUSP. ENUSP representatives usually come from the Board or from a tiny group of user/survivor experts already known to the Board.

Taskforce members suggested that ENUSP should:

- *Appoint a volunteer coordinator as a contact point and support person for volunteers.*

They also said that ENUSP should:

- *Compile a database of known user/survivor experts and potential advisors/speakers/trainers on different topics.*

This work could begin by drawing on recommendations from Board members and member organisations.

Two people suggested setting up larger consultation groups to support representatives. This seems especially important given the advice above that representatives should present ENUSP (and not personal) positions.

At the moment, ENUSP positions are not clear on many different topics; there is no clear way to discuss new questions or issues or to reach a consensus among ENUSP members (or even Board members). In some cases, ENUSP representatives need to rely on WNUSP documents, or they have to do ad hoc consultations with people whose email addresses they happen to know. ENUSP consultation groups could communicate via email or skype conference call. Forming consultation

groups might help ENUSP to improve communication and networking among members, to identify experts and future representatives on particular topics, and to develop position papers:

- *“Sharing information and getting/giving responses is very empowering (getting more angles). In that way we also get to know each other and each other’s expertise, which will lead to a strong network, where we can find expertise when we need it, because we know where to look (where to find the right person).”*

Against this, we know that maintaining these groups takes committed work. Most of the taskforces formed in Brussels in 2011 are no longer active. A moderator with adequate time is needed to keep the discussions going and to get new members on board.

Summary of recommendations:

- *Creation of written guidelines/training package for ENUSP representatives, including information on the duties of representatives.*
- *Creation of reporting form for representatives.*
- *Appointment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator to recruit and manage volunteers.*
- *Compilation of a database of user/survivor experts.*
- *Establishment of ENUSP consultation group(s) to support representatives and appointment of group moderator(s).*

**“Communication works for those who work at it.”**

*John Powell*

## **Communication – Sharing and Building Together**

Effective communication helps us to better understand diversity, enables us to resolve differences, build trust and respect, and create environments where creative ideas, problem solving, mutual support and cooperation can flourish.

As an organisation uniting users and survivors across Europe and working with

important stakeholders, we have to carefully focus on internal and external communication as well as our visibility. The development of a new website and the publication of regular bulletins are the solutions we have found for communicating and engaging with our community.

We set up a Website Taskforce to advise on the development of the website. The taskforce prepared the ground for the new website by sharing ideas about its look, content and functions, talking to members of user/survivor groups about what they’d like to see and creating a concept for the website’s homepage and structure.

Following advertisements in December 2011, the Board appointed Rodica Anton from Romania as a webmaster (and web designer). The webmaster



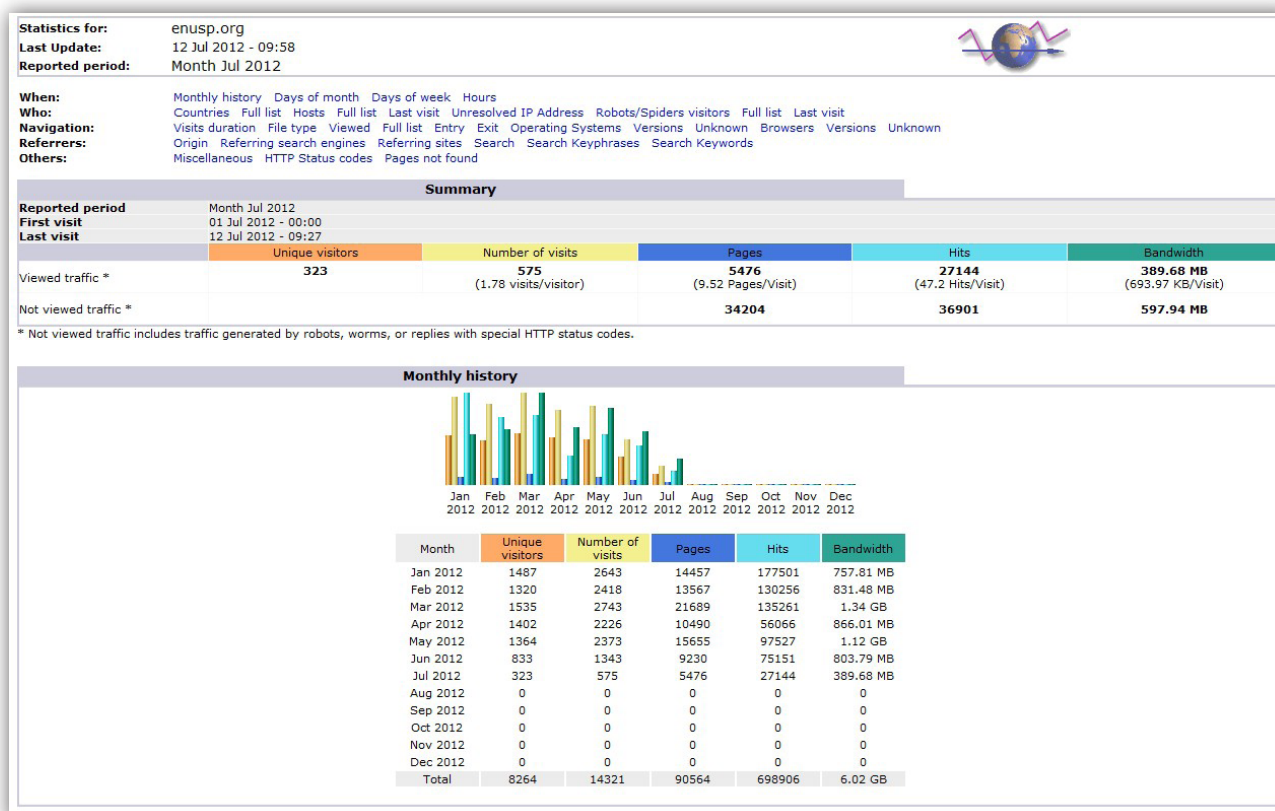
worked closely with the Website Taskforce, project workers and people from the ENUSP community to identify the main requirements and priorities for the new website.

Test versions were launched. The web designer prepared the first version of the new website. The Board, Website Taskforce and project workers gave feedback on the draft website. The feedback was incorporated into the second version of the website. The Board, project workers and Website Taskforce gave final feedback. The new website was launched in June. Angela Sweeney from the UK helped us by proofreading the website.

We can now say that ENUSP’s website is functioning, more detailed and follows a more logical way of listing data and information.

We must mention that reaching consensus on the appearance and content of the website was not easy, and the data transfer from the old website was not smooth.

We always ask for feedback from visitors and believe that more work is needed to boost the website, to deliver new information and to start engaging members in different forums.



The web statistics on how the number of hits and visitors has increased in the past six months.

We now have constant and rich communication with our community through ENUSP bulletins. Our readers can find out what's happening in ENUSP, major recent news in the field and upcoming events and opportunities. The bulletins are also used to seek members' feedback on key issues and documents and to encourage our members to get involved in our work.

### **Bulletin No.1**

October 2011 contained the first call for action and the description of the project framework as well as a lengthy report on the activities of the previous year (annual report).

*Editor: Debra Shulkes, Czech Republic*

### **Bulletin No.2**

January 2012 offered news about the progress of the Re-building ENUSP project, reported about users and survivors speaking out in forums that discuss and decide on human rights situation of users and survivors in Europe.

*Editor: Debra Shulkes, Czech Republic*

### **Bulletin No.3**

February 2012 contained a consultation on our strategy, encouraging members to comment on our strategic questions.

*Editor: Elizabeth Winder, UK*

### **Bulletin No.4**

May 2012 presented the new members of the board and staff changes as well as speaks against human rights abuses in Czech Republic, contains other human rights news from all around Europe. This bulletin also had a Special Supplement introducing three new member organisations.

*Editor: Debra Shulkes, Czech Republic*

### **Bulletin No.5**

June 2012 was a special issue containing ENUSP's finalised strategy for 2012-2015 as well as a detailed step by step timeline of possible actions that could enable us to achieve the strategy.

*Editor: Jasna Russo, Germany*

### **Bulletin No.6**

August 2012 contains the summary and achievements of the "Re-building ENUSP project"

*Editor: Noémi Kiry Ambrus, Hungary*

An Editorial board of user/survivor experts and a designer/design team was planned to support Debra Shulkes in her role as publications editor. Because of a lack of responses from members, Debra worked alone and did an excellent job in putting together half of the bulletins and drafting about 30 pages of the No.2 issue of the Advocacy Update based on the contributions of many individuals from different countries in the Network. This issue will most likely be distributed to members in August.

The initial concept of the layout of the bulletins is based on the design ideas of Nadia Mahjoub, Belgium.

There has been a great deal of interest in all of our bulletins, and they have received extremely positive feedback and lots of encouragement. The hits on our website vary between 21-170.

**“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”**

Henry Ford

## Membership – the Framework for ENUSP

When thinking about how to report on the successes of our membership, I was searching for some ‘recipes’ on how to build the best networks. I learned that every network is unique in its purpose and, as a result, must be unique in its design. However, there are a number of critical success factors which must be kept in mind when managing a network – I will share a few here:

- At the heart of all decisions is a compelling unifying purpose which all members agree.
- Members feel deep ownership of the outcomes and the strategies for achieving them; demonstrate mutual respect and shared values; resolve issues openly and constructively; and receive timely, transparent and inclusive communication. As a result, a high degree of trust exists among them. Leadership is characterised by an ability to build mutual goodwill among members, to facilitate agreement among diverse perspectives, and to mobilise the strengths and capacities of others toward achieving concrete results.
- The focus is on developing and unleashing the brainpower, expertise and experience of network members, rather than staff doing the work for them.
- Communication between network partners is fast, flexible, effective, diverse and accessible. It takes advantage of both formal communication mechanisms and informal interpersonal communication processes.
- The network is highly adaptable. Structures and processes stay in place only as long as they serve a clear purpose. When there are new opportunities or emerging threats, when new members join, when goals are achieved or progress is faltering, the network is agile enough to change direction or to revise its structures and processes.
- Members are clear about, and supportive of, the network’s intended outcomes. They clearly understand what is expected of them and how they will benefit from their participation.
- The benefits derived by members exceed the time and resources they contribute. Members find value at the individual and organisational level and are therefore committed to seeing the network’s goals accomplished. This leads to a high degree of mutual accountability and a willingness to find consensus.
- The right balance is found between inclusiveness and shared decision-making on the one hand and achieving results on the other.
- Credit for the network’s success is shared among its members.\*

Throughout this list, members are a key to success. So we need to emphasise that in order to successfully implement the new strategy ENUSP needs members. Existing ones and new ones – but active members. A series of first steps were taken during the project period in order to achieve this – but the journey is still long.

A new membership form for applications and guide to membership were developed in the first stage of the project, and an email to members and

\* *Parts of this text are taken from the article Building a Nonprofit Network, by Linda Mollenhauer, Mollenhauer Consulting and Valerie Johnston, Johnston Consulting, Janine Gates, Gates Consulting Inc. November, 2011*



potential new members described the whole process of (re)applying for membership with the new application forms attached.

Because of the considerable changes in the contact details (and in some cases the very existence) of user/survivor organisations across Europe over the last few years, the ENUSP board decided that all former members should renew their membership. Members were not very active in re-applying so several reminders were sent by project workers and board members. Up until the closing of the project (11 June 2012) fifteen organisations and one individual member applied for membership. They were reviewed and accepted by the Board. A list and short description of members can be found on ENUSP's website. We are aware that the number of actual members might seem low; this is due to the fact that former members are expected to re-apply as well. On the website one can only find those member organisations who (re)-applied and were adopted by the Board.

So we highly encourage everyone who used to be a member to re-apply for membership by downloading and completing the new application form on the website. We also encourage potential members to get involved, ask questions and apply to become members of ENUSP.

Project workers carried out detailed research and information gathering which mainly targeted under-represented regions (Baltic States, Russia, FSU and Balkans). Thirteen organisations were identified to be contacted, with a further nine organisations recommended through the strategy consultation process. This means that a total of 21 new organisations will be contacted by the Chair of the Board introducing them to ENUSP and offering them the possibility of joining. This task was deliberately deferred so that we could refer these organisations to the newly developed strategy.

In order to handle membership data, keep it accurate and maintain relations with our donors, a new administrative system has been identified and tested and will be purchased during the summer. The system is a Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) tool, a cloud system specifically designed for NGOs to store and handle data on members and donors. Its name is eTapestry, and we have found it the best tool to keep updated and accurate information on our membership and to have a centralised database which is regularly updated and maintained.

Building a network is not a linear task. It is an ongoing process of engagement, reflection, refinement and revitalisation. The steps we have taken with the project are only the beginning of the journey of building and nurturing relationships that can, together, accomplish something that couldn't be done alone. At the heart of its success there must be trust and respect among those who choose to participate and a deep commitment, on the part of both the individual and the organisations they represent, to make it work and achieve its goals. Without this, neither large numbers of members nor highly developed structures will ensure that it succeeds.

## Acknowledgments

The European Network of (Ex-) Users and survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP) gratefully acknowledges the staff who brought to success the 'Re-building ENUSP – Strengthening the network of users and survivors of psychiatry across Europe' Project

- *Kiry Noémi Ambrus*
- *Jasna Russo*
- *Debra Shulkes*
- *Elizabeth Winder*

We would like to thank all organisations that offered support and assistance for the project, European Disability Forum (EDF), European Patients' Forum (EPF), Mental Health Europe (MHE), World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (WNUSP), and particularly Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) that provided advice on strategy and the venue for this project.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all organizations and individuals that provided support, information, and insights for this project.

Particular thanks are due to Open Society Foundations – Mental Health Initiative for financial assistance.

ENUSP Bulletin August 2012, copyright ENUSP

**Noémi Kiry Ambrus** Editor  
**István Fenyvesi** Design and layout of this bulletin

The Rebuilding ENUSP project is funded  
by the Open Society Foundations – Mental Health Initiative





**ENUSP Registered Office**

Vesterbrogade 103, 1.sal  
1620 Copenhagen V, Denmark

**ENUSP bank-connection for donations**

Danske Bank, Holmens Kanal 2-12, 1092 Copenhagen K, Denmark

**Account holder**

ENUSP – European Network of (Ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry

**International Bank Account Number (IBAN Code):** DK7630003719376320

**Bank Identifier Code (BIC/SWIFT Code):** DABADKKK