



ENUSP Bulletin

No. 2 - January 2012

Dear friends,

Welcome to the second ENUSP Bulletin.

First of all, New Year's Greetings to all of you...

We want to thank you all for your wonderful responses to our first Bulletin. Over the last few months, we've received messages from users and survivors of psychiatry across Europe and around the world. People are really responding to our call to build up the European Network. They're writing to tell us about their situation, their ideas and their hopes for ENUSP from Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, the UK, the Netherlands, Finland, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Poland, Georgia... Every message like this goes a long way. It's also a startling reminder of how many determined individuals we are in different places across Europe. This includes people who are translating our texts for colleagues who don't use English, or communicating news to people with bad Internet access. We can only thank you again... And we dare to think this is just the beginning.

In this issue of the Bulletin, you'll find the latest news about:

Building ENUSP Together: Find out what's been happening with our new project to strengthen our European Network. Have your say about our emerging website, our publications, and on the big questions and choices facing ENUSP as we plan our future (our strategy). Tell us what users and survivors in your community want to happen!

Users and survivors speaking out: ENUSP representatives have been defending the principle "Nothing about us without us" in forums that discuss our lives and decide on our future. We know this task is rarely easy, and we truly thank them for taking it on.

Human rights and dignity: ENUSP tries to circulate the latest news about the human rights situation of users and survivors in Europe. We focus especially on the latest UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the international human rights treaty which many people believe has the potential to improve our situation more than any other development. It demands that users and survivor have the same full rights before the law as everyone else. This means that compulsory psychiatry and guardianship must end. We invite you to send us YOUR questions about this Convention for answers from survivor experts like Tina Minkowitz and Gabor Gombos, both key figures in the making and now the implementation of the CRPD.

User/survivor group news: We bring you reports of recent activities of user/survivor groups in Europe. This includes listings of upcoming opportunities to connect and cooperate with user/survivor colleagues and allies around the world. Don't forget to send us your latest news, announcements and requests to share in our next Bulletin.

Finally we announce a new contact point for ENUSP...

We now have a landline telephone number where you can contact us between 2 pm and 6 pm (Central European Time) on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

Please call us on **+420 224 910 552** with any of your questions, suggestions or comments...

You can also always reach us at enusp.info@gmail.com

In solidarity,
ENUSP workers

Image via Speak Out Against Psychiatry [speakoutagainstoppsychiatry@groups.facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/speakoutagainstoppsychiatry/)



*ENUSP Bulletin January 2012, copyright ENUSP
Debra Shulkes - Editor
Nadia Mahjoub and Gabriela Tanasan - Design and formatting*

CONTENTS

News from the ENUSP Board.....	4
SPEAKING OUT	
Users and survivors respond to EU research about us.....	6
Growing Our Network - A new directory of European users and survivors.....	9
Have YOUR say about ENUSP's new website	10
Advocacy Update Issue #2 is coming!.....	10
ENUSP's Fundraising Taskforce Urgently Seeks Members!	11
More opportunities	11
HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS AND RESOURCES	
Breaking News	13
Dutch survivor pleads for UN to stop expansion of force	14
Croatia imposes 'adult foster care' on survivors of institutions	15
New Book on Community Treatment Orders by Survivor	15
Your Questions about the CRPD to Survivor Experts	16
CHRUSP (www.chrusp.org) has new human rights resources for users and survivors	16
CARTOONIST'S CORNER	17
USER/SURVIVOR GROUP NEWS	
Letter from Georgia	18
Letter from Romania	20
Letter from Germany	21
UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES, CALLS FOR PARTICIPATION AND INPUT	
Add to a 'snapshot' of user/survivor groups around the world	22
Become a Mad Correspondent	22
Apply for a free Hearing Voices Resource Pack!	23
WNUSP seeks your input on monitoring of psych detention settings	23
Publish your news in the United Nations Newsletter	23
For John McCarthy - With love and respect	24

News from the ENUSP Board ...



Gabriela Tanasan, Chair of ENUSP

Hello ENUSP friends!

The last month has been a really busy time for us. We have been working hard on the new Rebuilding ENUSP project.

I'm excited to tell you that our Board has just finished an intensive two-day meeting that looked very closely at some of the big questions about ENUSP's work and future: What are ENUSP's priorities over the next three years? What should our goals be? And how exactly- are we going to achieve them?

*This meeting was an important step in the creation of **ENUSP's Strategy**.*

*Creating that strategy is a task not just for the Board, but for everyone in ENUSP. In February, we will be sending you a special consultation document that asks for YOUR opinions on the direction ENUSP should take. It covers areas like **developing our organisation; advocacy for the human rights of users and survivors of psychiatry; and communicating and sharing important knowledge inside our Network**. It looks at where we want ENUSP to be by 2015 and the steps we need to take to get there. It's not possible to pursue everything that ENUSP could do at once. So it's essential to prioritise the work ENUSP members believe is most important.*

The Strategy will be quite a special document. This is the first time in many years that ENUSP has had the chance to work intensively on our own long-term agenda.

I am very much looking forward to hearing what you think.

The current Board will begin to enact the agreed strategy. We will also use it to apply for funding so the next ENUSP Board can start off strong.



Planning the strategy questions: **Piotr Iwaneyko** and **Marina Lykovouniotti**, Board member from the North-East region and **Observer, Hearing Voices**, Athens, respectively



I'd like to use the rest of my space here to tell you about some changes on the ENUSP Board.

Sadly, Rafaël Daem, the Board Member for the South-West region and Deputy Chair has stepped down from his positions. We all want to thank him for all his hard work for ENUSP. This included building up ties in the South-West region and arranging for crucial administrative and financial help for ENUSP through his own Flemish user/survivor group UilenSpiegel.

We really want to wish him continued success with the European MadPride project and all his many endeavours for our movement.



Erveda Sansi
South-West region Board member

Erveda Sansi, the former deputy Board member for this region, has taken over from Rafaël. Erveda is a dedicated survivor activist and organiser based near Milan, Italy and the founder of the Mad Hatter user/survivor group. She documents events in the worldwide survivor movement at her blog: <http://senzapsichiatria.blogspot.com/>



Erik Olsen
Deputy Chair
Northern region Board member

The Board agreed that Erik Olsen, the Board member for the Northern region, should take over as the Deputy Chair.



Michal Caletka
Co-opted Deputy for Central region

Another new colleague is Michal Caletka of the user/survivor group Kolumbus in the Czech Republic. Michal has been co-opted as the deputy for the Central region to replace Debra Shulkes, who is working on the Rebuilding ENUSP project. Michal brings extensive experience as a peer advocate and survivor activist. He campaigned against the use of caged beds in the Czech Republic in the national parliament. He is keen to build up more links between ENUSP and user/survivor groups especially in Slovakia and other parts of the Central region where we have few members. He is also an English translator and a member of our website taskforce.

I will have more to tell you in the next Bulletin about the Rebuilding ENUSP project and changes on the ENUSP board- For now, I want to thank you again for all your support. I invite you to contact me directly with your concerns and questions at any time.

*Warmest wishes,
Gabriela Tanasan, gtanasan_enusp@yahoo.com*

SPEAKING OUT

The UN CRPD states that users and survivors must be closely and actively involved in all activities about us. ENUSP's representatives are working to make our voices heard.



Survivors speaking out during the UN CRPD negotiations.
Image via Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, www.chrusp.org

Users and survivors respond to EU research about us



Representatives from ENUSP and user/survivor groups from 9 EU countries had the rare chance to share our opinions about draft reports on the state of our human rights in the European Union. We joined a meeting in Vienna organised by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) last November. The FRA collects evidence and advises governments about human rights concerns in the EU. The reports came at the end of a 16-month FRA investigation that looked for the first time at the situations of people labelled with mental health problems and also people with intellectual disabilities in the EU. The investigation focused on conditions in Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. As part of the project, interviews took place with 115 people labelled with mental health problems across these countries. Researchers asked these people about their experiences inside institutions and in the community. They tried to find out if the people were allowed to make decisions about their own lives; and if they could obtain justice if they were abused or mistreated. The aim was to document how much the rights and dignity of users and survivors are respected in reality in the EU. The study should expose where our governments are not honouring their obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

High hopes

Hopes in ENUSP have run high about this project, with many users and survivors long calling for an official inquiry into these topics at European level. This study stood out because it is the first time we have been promised a meaningful role in an EU research project about us. Our representative Jasna Russo led the development of a research design that gave users and survivors and their organisations “an active and guiding role at every stage.”

In the past, ENUSP rejected many project proposals because they maintained that users and survivors were not “qualified” enough to interpret findings about us.

Hearing our voices?

Nevertheless, many of the users/ survivors who came to Vienna expressed concern that user/survivor organisations had little involvement in the research on their countries.

These representatives spoke out at critical moments in the discussions with FRA and European Commission officials, country researchers and academic experts. They singled out the powerful testimonies in the reports from people who had experienced forced and traumatising psychiatric interventions across the nine countries. These testimonies show that psychiatric wards and settings on the whole are not places of safety and healing. The descriptions use words like “humiliated”, “locked up”, “drugged up”, “strapped down”, “secluded”, “not informed”, “fear”, and “no way to complain”.

The powerlessness of users and survivors under their countries' laws was a theme running through the testimonies.

In response, some FRA researchers argued that “less severe” forms of guardianship and coercion were the way forward.

All guardianship and force deny human rights, reacted Maths Jespersen from user/survivor group RSMH- Skåne in Sweden. Instead of promoting these things, the FRA should draw attention to the existence of alternative and humane approaches. There are examples of effective models pioneered by users and survivors across Europe and around the world, but they are not in the reports. Maths said he thought the meeting had gone well considering the presence of others with conservative views. “I think we did a good job. We as users/survivors of psychiatry took the lead in most of the discussions, which means that we influenced the way the discussions turned.” He was only “worried and suspicious” about claims by some officials that the interview findings were too negative and “not representative”. Such experts proposed that the final reports should be rewritten in a “more balanced” way. This, he said, would be manipulating the outcome of the research.

“The researchers did not choose to interview people who complained about psychiatry, but ordinary users/survivors they found through NGOs, drop-in centres and so on. What you could criticise is that they had excluded interviewing persons [currently] in institutions and under guardianship. If they had interviewed such persons as well, the picture of psychiatry would surely have been even darker”

“What is certain is that the interviews reveal conditions that are very cruel and absolutely against the CRPD. They are a call for the FRA to take action”, he said
The FRA's research reports should be published later this year.

Other comments from ENUSP representatives:

“For us it was really great to meet ENUSP there and all the other people. But we experienced a real [conflict] regarding the place where the meeting took place (a luxurious hotel in Vienna) and the subject we were concerned about.

This is about people that are isolated by poverty and pushed to the margins of our society. EU institutions, NGOs and people with certain power are a part of the world that is responsible for the situation we experience. We are not sure how 'close' to us they really are and if they will be in solidarity with our struggles or whether in the critical moment they will choose to side against us. “

-Self-Help Group Athens survivor representative

“The research about people labelled with mental health problems should be published separately from the concurrent research about people with intellectual disabilities. [T]he abuses and problems of people in these two communities might look the same to an outsider (the FRA always puts them together.) Nevertheless, the differences between our experiences and issues should be treated with respect.”

-Debra Shulkes, ENUSP representative

ENUSP thanks all the user/survivor representatives who took part in this meeting either as representatives or translators/assistants. Mahmud Al-Gailani (VOX-Voice of eXperience, Scotland), Dia Koutsoyianni (Self-Help Group Athens) and Achilleas Christodoulou (Self-Help Group of Athens), Reinhold Hasel (BPE, Germany), Maths Jespersen (RSMH-Skåne), Jean-Marc Lenoble (Union Nationale des GEMs de France), Anne-Laure Donskoy (Union Nationale des GEMs de France) Agita Luse (Anima, Latvia), Marina Lykovounioti (Hearing Voices, Greece, translator), Betty Calin (Mens Sana, Romania), Zsolt Szoke (Voice of the Soul, Hungary), Anna Horniyk (translator), Anna Tilova (Chovekolubie, Bulgaria), Sarah Yiannoullou (National Survivor User Network, United Kingdom).

Fighting for our rights and dignity around the world!



Photo courtesy of U.S. survivor activists Lauren Tenney and Daniel Hazen

BUILDING ENUSP TOGETHER



We have been working hard on our project Re-building ENUSP. Find out what's been happening and how to make your voice heard.

Growing Our Network - A new directory of European users and survivors

ENUSP's workers have set up an up-to-date database of user/survivor groups and individuals in nearly 40 countries across Europe. A version of this database will appear on the new ENUSP website. We hope it will be an important resource for many people.

We have also prepared and sent out a new membership form where ENUSP members can update their contact details, nominate their contact person, and tell us more about their situation. We want to use this information to plan our work.

GET INVOLVED: We are very keen to hear from more user/survivor organisations, emerging networks of users/survivors, or activist individuals who are interested in working with ENUSP in some way. If you are a member and have not received our new membership form, please let us know. We know some people have language concerns, and we will try as much as possible to find a solution.

Please contact us at enusp.info@gmail.com. Share the news with others you know!

Have YOUR say about ENUSP's new website...

ENUSP has a new web designer: Rodica Anton from Romania. The ENUSP Board chose her application because it showed not just extensive technical and design expertise, but first-hand knowledge of the issues of users/survivors. Rodica has been a user and a carer as well as a volunteer for ENUSP. She speaks English, French and Romanian.

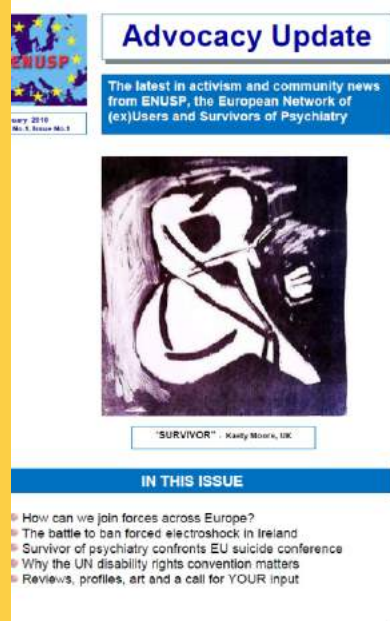
Rodica is ready to start work now on the re-modelling of our website: www.enusp.org. ENUSP has a rough vision for this new site: we want it to be welcoming, easy to navigate, informative and useful to a very diverse audience. We know our website is the first (and recurring) contact point with ENUSP for many of us.

We have set up a Website Taskforce of users and survivors to advise Rodica about the content and design of the new site and give feedback on early versions.

Please consider joining! No special technical knowledge is needed. We seek a range of people of different ages and cultural backgrounds who are willing to share their views and ideas. We're especially looking for your concepts for our new home page.

GET INVOLVED: To join the ENUSP Website taskforce, just send a message marked "Website Taskforce" to enusp.info@gmail.com

Advocacy Update Issue #2 is coming!



ENUSP's newsletter *Advocacy Update* will launch its second issue in late May 2012. *Advocacy Update* is a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, resources, art, and support among users and survivors of psychiatry. It covers issues determined by users and survivors in the forms and language *they* choose, something normally not possible in the publications of others.

Advocacy Update is very keen to hear from survivor/user writers, editors, artists, photographers, graphic designers, researchers, translators, and anyone else who'd like to work on our second issue.

Do you want to...

spread news about an event, campaign or issue affecting users and survivors?

Draw attention to an innovative user/survivor-led service or alternative to psychiatry?

Profile or interview an interesting individual?

Share a viewpoint, a book or film review, an image or other creative response?

This is a chance to connect with others across Europe and beyond. All survivors and users are welcome to join our editorial group, which steers the whole publication.

You can find our first issue here: <http://enusp.org/1.pdf>

*****ENUSP's Fundraising Taskforce Urgently Seeks Members!*****

ENUSP needs people who are able to dedicate some energy to helping us solve a fundamental goal: finding funding to continue the work of the European Network. Our current grant expires in the middle of this year.

We are looking for people who can help. This could be, for example, by sharing your fundraising ideas and experiences, reading and summarising funding options, or assisting with writing up/refining funding proposals. Previous fundraising experience could be helpful, but it's not essential. We are very grateful for any time you can give to this all-important task.

GET INVOLVED: Just send a message marked "Fundraising taskforce" to enusp.info@gmail.com.

More opportunities...

Interested in ENUSP's representation in outside forums?.

ENUSP has set up a special Representation Taskforce whose task is to suggest principles and priorities for ENUSP's representation, involvement and collaboration in outside events and projects over the next 3 years.

This taskforce will address questions like: Which organisations/bodies is it most important for ENUSP to work with? How do we decide when our participation is worthwhile? How do we choose our representatives, and what supports do they need? How can we enable more people to become ENUSP representatives? *To share your thoughts on these questions, please just send a message marked "Representation Taskforce" to enusp.info@gmail.com*

Are you a survivor researcher? ENUSP is eager to hear your ideas and views for our 3-year strategy. What types of research issues do you think are most important for users and survivors of psychiatry? Do you have a research specific topic in mind?

For a list of questions for survivor researchers in our Network, please send a message marked "Research Taskforce" to enusp.info@gmail.com

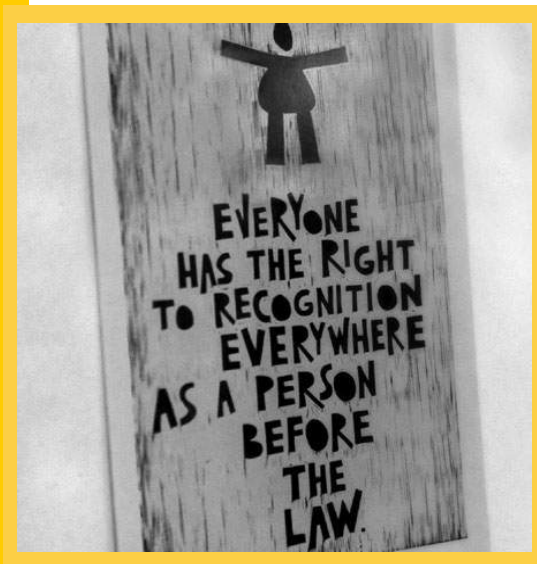


Calling all translators!... We are looking for ways to reach more people in Europe who do not use English. ENUSP would especially like to offer translations (or summaries) of our English-language texts in other languages. We also want to enable non-English speaking users and survivors to share their translated texts with a wider audience. If you think you may be able to help with translation, please get in touch with us.

There is no minimum time commitment. Any help you can give will make a huge difference.

HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS AND RESOURCES

ENUSP tries to circulate the latest news about human rights for users and survivors in Europe. Please send any items you think should be shared to enusp.info@gmail.com



Human rights. Know them, demand them, defend them

"Until all of us are recognized everywhere as human beings equal to all other human beings, human rights is an unfulfilled promise verging on betrayal...Occupy human rights"

Message from Tina Minkowitz, WNUSP International Representative on International Human Rights Day, December 10, 2011



European Court: Bulgaria breached human rights of man forced to live in social care institution

In an important decision, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg found on January 17 that Bulgaria had violated the human rights of a man, Rusi Stanev, who was labelled schizophrenic and confined in a social care home without his consent for more than 10 years.

Mr. Stanev was kept at the institution at the request of his guardian despite making repeated efforts to leave. When he applied to be released from guardianship, a Bulgarian court rejected the application because his guardian had not authorised it.

In a statement read by Mr. Stanev's lawyer to the European Court, he said: "I'm not an object. I'm a person. I need my freedom."

The court ruled that Bulgaria had breached Mr. Stanev's rights under the European Convention of Human Rights, including his right to liberty (Art 5), his right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (Article 3) and his right to a fair trial (Art 6).

In a deeply disappointing finding, the court held that Mr. Stanev's long-term institutionalisation and guardianship did not breach his right to private life (Article 8).

Explaining what is meant by 'social care homes' in Europe, survivor activist Gabor Gombos said:

"Social care homes are residential 'social services' institutions for people diagnosed as mentally ill, who 'do not require' hospital treatment" but are 'in the need of care'. They are widespread in former communist countries. The average size is between 100 and 1000 residents per institution. Almost all of the inmates are under guardianship and the guardian "consented" to placement and treatment. Everyone is put on neuroleptics. No doctors are regularly available. Very few people have left such institutions alive. Once admitted, detained for life.. In short, social care homes are like modern concentration and death camps".

The case was significant, he said, because it is "the first time the European Court has seen such placements as detention".

For the judgement in this case, please see <http://www.bailii.org/cgi-bin/markup.cgi?doc=/eu/cases/ECHR/2010/1182.html&query=%22care+home%22&method=boolean>

Dutch survivor pleads for UN to stop expansion of force



Jolijn Santegoeds
Dutch survivor activist

In an email to the United Nations' European representative Mr. Jan Jarab on December 8, survivor activist Jolijn Santegoeds called for urgent help to stop a proposed law that will expand psychiatric force in the Netherlands.

The Dutch government is finalising the draft law which will give authorities the right to use force against anyone they think could cause 'damage' to themselves or others. 'Damage' is very vaguely defined..It includes harm to someone's property or finances, or even to their reputation. At the same time, the law gives a green light to almost any kind of coercion including forced drugging and medical acts, detention, limiting communication, and body searches. Seclusion may continue for a month without any review.

"It's very sad to see my country producing these kinds of proposed laws in the age of CRPD," says Jolijn. The Netherlands has not yet ratified the CRPD, but many say it will do so in 2012. Even so, the government is doing nothing to remedy current Dutch laws. These laws see the long-term tethering of a patient to a wall as acceptable psychiatric 'care'. "Our western countries are arrogant, and think that they aren't violating human rights (as if that only happens in poor countries)," Jolijn believes.

The UN Convention prohibits forced psychiatry under many different provisions, For example, Article 14 says "the existence of a [perceived] disability shall in no case justify a deprivation of liberty." Article 25 obliges doctors only to treat with free and informed consent. Article 15 upholds the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, including medical or scientific experimentation.

"The draft law is deeply inhumane. Force has nothing to do with care, " Jolijn told Jarab. "It would be great if you could help to create understanding of the spirit of the CRPD in the Netherlands. So hereby I ask you for your help."



Jan Jarab
United Nations'
European representative

Croatia imposes 'adult foster care' on survivors of institutions



The Croatian government is not liberating people from social care institutions. Instead, it is abandoning these people in the custody of abusive foster care families, according to Kristijan Gđan of user/survivor-directed group The Shine in Zagreb.

He says the state's latest “Master Plan on De-Institutionalization” reveals that Croatia is not sincere about implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Croatia ratified the CRPD in 2007.

The foster care families usually live in rural areas where bigoted attacks on people with psychiatric labels are common. Kristijan says the people dumped in these arrangements are not even allowed to have personal documents. “Their freedom is restricted, they work with animals and in agriculture for no salary (such work is considered as an 'occupational therapy'), and they are divested of legal capacity,” he says.

Nevertheless the Croatian government boasts that this scheme is a model of services honouring everyone's right to live independently in the community under the CRPD . "Foster care for adults" is a priority until 2018 along with plans to empty long-stay social welfare institutions. “After 2018, the Croatian government will argue it fully complies with the CRPD,” Kristijan says.

New Book on Community Treatment Orders by Survivor



Erick Fabris
author of *Tranquil Prisons*

A new book *Tranquil Prisons: Chemical Incarceration Under Community Treatment Orders* by Canadian survivor and academic Erick Fabris addresses the impact of forced drugging and treatment in the community.

His new book highlights major ethical, public health and legal concerns around CTOs. It is enriched immeasurably by something missing from most research on this topic: the voices of people who have known psychiatric force first-hand.

[Http://www.utppublishing.com/Tranquil-Prisons-Chemical-Incarceration-under-Community-Treatment-Orders.html](http://www.utppublishing.com/Tranquil-Prisons-Chemical-Incarceration-under-Community-Treatment-Orders.html)

Your Questions about the CRPD to Survivor Experts

Much is being said about the potential of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to offer real protection to users and survivors of psychiatry around the world. What is the significance of the CRPD exactly? What does it mean for people who are experiencing abuses where you live? ENUSP is very lucky to be able to draw on the expertise of Gabor Gombos and Tina Minkowitz, two individuals from our movement who were key actors in the drafting and negotiation of the CRPD. You can read more about their ongoing work on the CRPD below.

Please send us your questions for Gabor and Tina to enusp.info@gmail.com.

We thank them in advance for their help!



Psychiatric survivor and lawyer **Tina Minkowitz** represented the World Network of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry in the drafting and negotiation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She served on the steering committee that created the official text of the treaty for negotiation. She is credited with much of the paradigm-shifting character of the CRPD in the areas of legal capacity, liberty and respect for integrity of the person.



Gabor Gombos is a former theoretical physicist, survivor of psychiatry and a world renowned human rights defender. Since January 2011 he has been a member of the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee reviews the reports of member states about what they have done to fulfil their international human rights obligations under the CRPD. It also hears complaints from some individuals who have experienced violations.

CHRUSP (www.chrusp.org) has new human rights resources for users and survivors

The Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (CHRUSP), www.chrusp.org, now has a page with more human rights reporting resources:

http://www.chrusp.org/home/human_rights_reporting

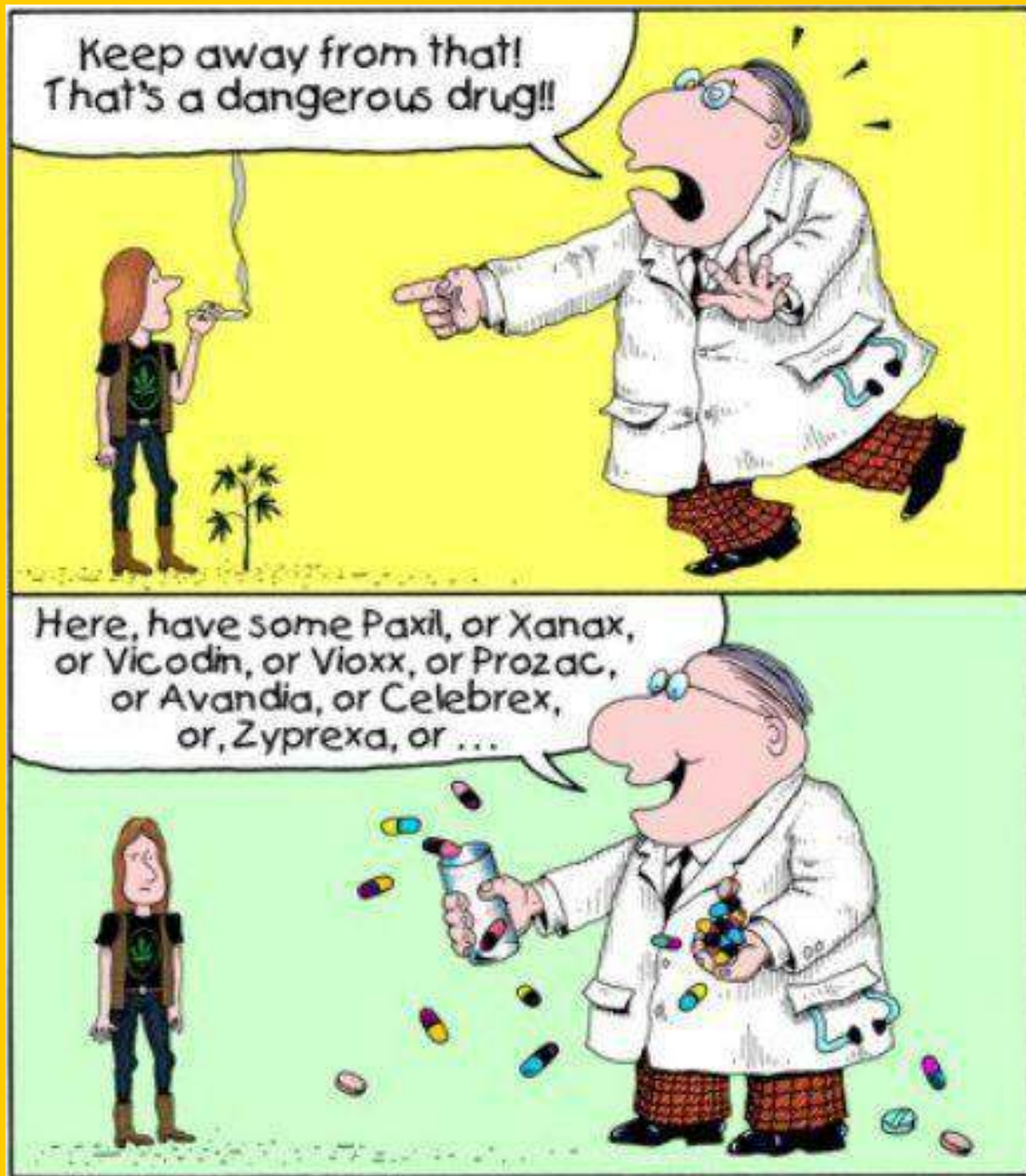
- General "how to" materials on human rights reporting

- CRPD-related materials

- Examples of human rights reports done by users and survivors of psychiatry

Please also consider joining ENUSP's CRPD Taskforce, which we hope can be a forum to discuss special issues and questions about the CRPD To join, send an email to enusp.info@gmail.com

CARTOONIST's CORNER



Psychiatry's Grand Confession: Serotonin Theory was a Lie

“The psychiatric profession has finally come clean and confessed on a national media outlet that there is no evidence to support the Serotonin Theory of Depression. On a segment on American radio last week, virtually all the psychiatrists interviewed acknowledged that there was never any evidence in support of the idea that low serotonin *causes* depression. But then, amazingly, they go on to say that it is perfectly fine to tell patients that serotonin imbalance causes depression even though they know this isn't the case” Read more about the lie psychiatrists have been repeating to patients for decades...<http://www.madinamerica.com/2012/01/psychiatrys-grand-confession/>



Share your latest news, announcements and requests with other user/survivor groups across Europe. Please contact us at [enusp.info@gmail](mailto:enusp.info@gmail.com) com if you'd like to be listed next time.

Letter from Georgia

Olga Kalina, a psychiatric survivor reflects on the rise of user/survivor activism in Georgia.

I have been working with the Partnership for Equal Rights (PER), which is the only organisation in Georgia whose members are mostly users and ex-users of psychiatry. Among other things, we do work and trainings to strengthen user/survivor groups in regional areas. It is all part of a project we call "Promoting the Human Rights of Children and Adults with Mental Health Problems - through developing a strategy for mental health advocacy". We actually secured EU funding for this. Now we are at the end of it and will speak about the results on quite a popular TV programme. The media learned about this organisation which managed to receive an EU grant to do work on mental health advocacy issues. This will probably be the first programme where mental health users and ex-users will speak so publicly about their problems and achievements. We hope for the best. In fact we hope to drive public attention to a more massive scale than ever before. Let's see what happens...

I am also leading a project called the Persons of Trust Initiative in one psychiatric hospital in the capital. It's with the help of Dutch activist Clemens Huitnik, who spoke with Georgian users and ex-users about Persons of Trust, patients' councils and advance directives during a series of trainings. In the frame of this small project with no salaries available, my peer Paata Skhirtladze and I regularly visit closed wards of the psychiatric hospital, situated in the capital of Georgia. We speak with the patients about their rights, resolve some of their problems, help them to communicate with the hospital staff and with their relatives, and sometimes help them to get home.

Still I always have a very bad feeling of helplessness when patients beg us to help them get out. Most of them are forced to stay in the hospital not because of their health problems, but because of their social circumstances (homelessness mostly, but also their relatives, who refuse to live with them). They spend many years in the hospital. In-patients of the social department (one of the hospital departments) are doomed to stay in the psychiatric institution for the rest of their lives. One woman always begs me to help her to find her children, and she cries because she knows she will probably never see them again.

When we started our work in this hospital, some patients did not know where they were. They were sure they were in some place for elderly people. One woman cried out to me: "I do not belong in here, I am still young, I can work!" She definitely can. And it is really awful to look at these people, locked away, with no chance to continue their lives, to marry and have children.

At the same time, you know, we face 50% unemployment in Georgia. Social benefits for people are so small that people cannot live outside institutions if they have no other source of support (no good relatives or other income).

PER has an idea about a family (home) support programme, and we have already applied for the funding. If we succeed, our members and I, of course, will help people with mental health problems at home. I think it is very important for us to move from the hospital system to support services in society. In this way we can help people live outside and be included.

We have a website at www.per.ge (in both English and in Georgian) where you can see our news and look at the pictures.



Olga (far left) and other participants at a peer advocacy workshop in Gldani.

Gabriela Tanasan reports on the first national forum of users and survivors of psychiatry

Called “Bridge over Indifference”, Romania’s first national meeting of users and survivors of psychiatry took place in Bucharest on October 14 and 15, 2011. User/survivor group Aripi Association Bucharest organised this important meeting.

The event brought 50 of us, users and survivors together from the most active organisations across the country. We were joined by representatives of mental health professional associations and the mass media.

One main goal was to create more cooperation among user/survivor groups and activists across Romania . National co-ordination could help us to achieve a louder voice and more influence over everything that affects our lives. That includes the government’s mental health policy, human rights, discrimination, and the image of users and survivors in the mass media.

The meeting was a rare and precious opportunity for the slowly growing user/survivor movement in Romania. We had the chance to take stock of where we are now, share our experiences and our work, and plan a way forward.

Comments from participants:

Stefan Bandol, Chair of Aripi Association ;

“Discrimination against people with mental health problems is one of the biggest challenges in our lives. Even from the very first contact with the psychiatrist, you find out, either directly or indirectly (beating about the bush!), that you are good for nothing.”

Representative of “Estuar” Foundation, Ploiesti

“I have the feeling that this forum has been organised for me. The participation at the event can have a long term effect on us.”

Representative of “Orizonturi” Foundation, Campulung Moldovenesc

“We have to be “a voice”, “a driving force”, to give life to our opinions and ideas, to make people around us pay attention to them. Only by uniting in our efforts can we succeed.”



Stefan Bandol of Aripi organisation talks to journalists

German survivors raise issues in workshop on torture prevention

The German Institute for Human Rights hosted a one-day workshop on November 17. The title was 'Prevention of Torture and Mistreatment in Germany'.

The goal was to start a dialogue between the National Agency for the Prevention of Torture, NGOs, and human rights researchers. The National Agency invited about 40 people to take part in this important consultation. Among them were Dagmar Barteld-Paczkowski from the Board of the German Federal Organisation of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and Jasna Russo, an individual ENUSP member.

The Agency's main tasks are to make regular visits to places where people are deprived of their liberty, to identify problems and make recommendations to authorities. Those places include prisons and juvenile prisons, police stations, pre-deportation detention prisons, psychiatric hospitals and care homes for the elderly, for children and for people with disabilities. The Agency presented the way it works and reported the visits conducted so far. The main difficulties are very limited resources in terms of both personnel and funding. Since its establishment in 2009, it has managed to visit only one forensic psychiatric institution.

Both Dagmar and Jasna joined the working group on visits to psychiatric institutions and care homes for the elderly. They were able to highlight some issues which must be examined when monitoring these places. They also stressed the importance of having psychiatric survivors in the inspection team. This has not been the practice so far.

-Thanks to ENUSP members in Germany for this report



UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES, CALLS FOR PARTICIPATION AND INPUT

Add to a 'snapshot' of user/survivor groups around the world

User/survivor self-advocacy organisations around the world have a diversity of approaches, organisational structures, activities and experiences. Together with the Center for European Constitutional Law (<http://www.cecl2.gr/>), a research institute in Athens, Greece, ENUSP Board member Erik Olsen is trying to document some of this diversity via a small survey. The information gathered will be used to support the development of the user/survivor self-advocacy movement in Greece.

User/survivor self-advocacy organizations interested in sharing their experiences can participate by responding to an online questionnaire

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Mapping_The_SelfAdvocacy_Movement

The research is based on the financial support of the National Confederation of People with Disabilities in Greece.

Contact persons: Erik Olsen erikpsych@gmail.com, Maria Mousmouti, centre@cecl.gr

Become a Mad Correspondent

Robert Whitaker, author of the book *Mad in America*, has launched a new collective website at <http://www.madinamerica.com/> Through this site, he aims to bring together news, blogs and resources that will tell the story of a community that is "rethinking psychiatry".

As part of this effort, Robert would like to recruit "foreign correspondents" who can write, in blogs, of what is going on in their countries. This might involve writing of peer initiatives, the running of safe houses, the establishment of treatment programs that minimise use of psych drugs, or of legislative change. It could also include reports of "outcomes" and trends in the country, asking questions like "Is the current treatment model working to improve people's lives?" "Are more neuroleptic drugs being prescribed to children and dementia patients?", and so on.

To apply to be a foreign correspondent, please send a brief description of your activist work, organisation (if applicable) and relevant interests to robert.b.whitaker@verizon.net. This is a voluntary position.

Apply for a free Hearing Voices Resource Pack!

HVN Cymru (Wales, UK) are inviting applications from around the world for free Hearing Voices Resource Packs in 2012. The pack is for people wanting to know more about the hearing voices approach. You can apply for a Resource Pack for Individual voice Hearers, made up of two books and a DVD. For groups, the Resource Pack consists of two DVDs and five books on the topic of hearing voices. For information on how to apply, click on the link.

[Http://hearingvoicescymru.org/?page_id=213](http://hearingvoicescymru.org/?page_id=213)

WNUSP seeks your input on monitoring of psych detention settings

WNUSP International representative Tina Minkowitz writes:

“You may remember that a few years ago WNUSP made recommendations on the monitoring of psychiatric institutions under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). At that time we emphasized the CRPD standards, i.e. that forced psychiatric interventions and incarceration are unlawful.

Now the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT), which is the international body created by OPCAT, is especially interested in guidance for conducting its own visits to psychiatric institutions, and also its visits to prisons and other places of deprivation of liberty in relation to "mental health" issues.

WNUSP will be participating in a "thematic discussion on mental health in places of deprivation of liberty" organized by the SPT on Feb 22-23. We are also preparing a paper which needs to be submitted by Feb 6.

I know that some of you have experience visiting psychiatric institutions and social care homes (and possibly prisons and other detention settings as well). It would help a great deal if you can share your knowledge and contribute to this paper.“

Please contact Tina Minkowitz at tminkowitz@earthlink.net

Publish your news in the United Nations Newsletter

The United Nations invites NGOs to send information to the UN newsletter - Enable Newsletter. Submissions can include:

- News related to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
 - Other disability-related news, information on events, meetings, seminars, publications, etc.
 - Other news that would be of interest to the international disability community and beyond
- Contributions on each item should be under 100 words and include a web-link or contact details. The newsletter is currently disseminated via email to over 6,000 recipients and is also posted on the United Nations Enable website at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities>.

For John McCarthy - With love and respect

Mad Pride Leader, Poet, Friend



John McCarthy, Mad Pride Ireland Founder, Beloved Colleague and Friend--"What they have done is they've diagnosed life."

As we end this Bulletin, the worldwide survivor community is mourning the loss of a treasured colleague: John McCarthy of Mad Pride Ireland. John passed away at his home in Cork City on January 10, 2012 after a hard fight with motor neurone disease. He was just 61.

It is hard to know what to say about John except that he was integral to the lives and work of so many people in our movement and beyond. He was unforgettable: an activist known for his deep-running compassion, courage and humour. He was a warm friend and mentor to individuals from many different worlds. Their memories are now flooding online forums.

John founded Mad Pride Ireland whose last Family Fun Day in June 2011 drew 17,000 people out to a park in Cork. The point was "to show the world that madness is an everyday occurrence that affects us all and can be dealt with openly, lovingly and without fear". The other side of this was an unfaltering commitment to ending the violence of forced psychiatry. This work took him to the United Nations building in New York and the drafting of the CRPD. The lobbying he did there (as an honorary delegate of Vanuatu) was inspirational and legendary.

As many people observed, when John knew his body was failing, his political commitment only intensified. In the last few months, he campaigned across the national media to free psychiatric prisoner John Hunt; he submitted incisive critiques of Ireland's terrible draft mental health legislation; he published a book of his brilliant weekly columns in the *Cork Independent*.

He was enthusiastic and generous to a fault when the ENUSP Bulletin contacted him about referring to his work in our pages. He wrote back to say yes, that would be grand and to remind us to always mention Mad Pride Ireland and WNUSP as well.

We will always miss him. We will carry on his work.

"He was a noble man with a huge heart and a sharp mind. He was the only one I knew who could convince many people why force is wrong with his gentle, joyous smile. I can hear his voice saying, 'Hi guys, I have done. It is your turn and I am following what you are doing. You are doing great'

You will be missed and you are in us."

-Gabor Gombos

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis

[In the language of Ireland, this calls for peace for John and says that we will not see his like again. Thank you to Frank Mulcahy for the translation]

Our thoughts are with John's mother, beloved wife Liz, son David, daughter Jill, grandchildren and extended family.

[Http://www.madprideireland.ie](http://www.madprideireland.ie),

<http://wnusp.rafus.dk/>

Mad Pride Ireland campaign to Free John Hunt and Help end FORCE in Irish mental health

<http://www.madprideireland.ie/index.php/petition/>



Mad Pride Day Portlaoise



Mad Pride Ireland in Uganda

Source: <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1193151056&sk=wall>



ENUSP HAS MEMBERS IN 38 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES - AND WE NEED MORE

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