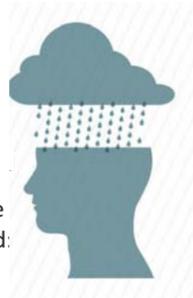


VI. How is targeting the impact of depression addressed in policy initiatives?



There are currently three policies and instruments, where it will make a significant impact if targeting the impact of depression is referenced:

- 1. Directive 89/391/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work**
 - This directive covers all types of risk to workers' health including mental health and contains basic obligations for employers and workers.
 - According to Article 5 (1), "the employer shall have a duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to the work"¹⁰.

It is imperative that the European Commission initiates a revision of this directive to ensure that targeting the impact of depression becomes a key priority at workplaces

2. Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being

The EU Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being is a 3-year initiative that aims at building a framework for action in mental health policy at the European level.

It is imperative that Member States agree to make tackling the impact of depression a key priority from a health, employment and economic perspective.

3. European Commission's Framework on Health and Safety at Work

The European Commission presented¹¹ a Communication on a Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work in June 2014.

- The Communication indicates that 'specific attention should be given to addressing the impact of changes in work organisation in terms of physical and mental health'.
- In terms of actions, the Communication only tasks the EU-OSHA to 'identify and disseminate good practice on preventing mental health problems at work'.

It is imperative that the European Commission introduces a Strategy on Health & Safety at Work that will guide Member States and employers to prioritize and address depression at workplace.



¹⁰ European Council (1989), Council Directive of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:01989L0391-20081211>. Accessed 22 September 2014.

¹¹ European Commission (2014), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on an EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020. Available at: ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=11828&langId=en.

VII. What can you do as an ambassador: break the silence, break the silos, fight the impact of depression

If you are a Member of the European Parliament or have an interest in fighting depression, you can do much to help and support people fighting with depression. By signing up to the Ambassador Programme, you commit to:

- Share information about the condition, advances in research and other relevant data and information to your colleagues, both in the European and national parliaments as well as other workplaces you think appropriate to raise awareness about the illness and its impact on individuals and the families;
- Submit written and oral questions to the European Commission and to the Council of the EU, to keep track of the progress of ongoing legislation and encourage debate in the relevant Committees;
- Raise the profile of depression in debates related to public health and mental health policies and legislation.

VIII. Sign up now

If you'd like to sign up and become an ambassador, you may do so:

- on the spot, at the European Depression Day, on 1st October 2014
- electronically, by accessing the website of the European Depression Association: www.europeandepressionday.com



MEP Ambassador Programme against Depression

"Depression can take many shades and shadows. It can be silence, loneliness, closed roads, and even death. Support can be words of wisdom, the gift of time, an understanding attitude, encouragement to seek help, the choice to try once more when it is most appealing to give up.

We, as Members of the European Parliament, can look both ways and see the gap. We understand the world of policy-making, and we have a responsibility enshrined in the Treaty to protect and promote the health of the millions of citizens that voted for us.

We can give support. We can fight depression. We can break the silence that shrouds depression in too many corners of society, from where policy is made to where policy is enacted."

(Jutta Steinruck, Member of the European Parliament)



I. Welcome

The European Depression Association (EDA) welcomes your interest in the MEP Ambassador Programme. We believe it is people like you who can join our cause of raising the profile of depression in Europe and help more people be diagnosed correctly, receive treatment, support and care, and keep their lives and loved ones.

In this booklet, you will find the essentials of depression, data of current trends, timely information regarding the policy initiatives of relevance, **and what you can do to make a difference.**

Essentially, we believe strong voices are needed to break the wall of silence surrounding depression on a metaphoric as well as concrete level. Strong and informed opinions such as yours need to be voiced. They will carry the message that depression can and must be managed far and wide. Join us to speak up and speak out to policy makers like yourself, to healthcare professionals, to patients, to family members, and tell them what depression is and means. Encourage them to see it, recognise it and speak about it. **Become an MEP Ambassador against depression!**

(Vincenzo Costigliola and Amelia Mustapha, European Depression Association)

It is my great pleasure to endorse the MEP Ambassador Programme against depression and to be one of the first MEP Ambassadors. I have been surprised by the enormous human and financial burden depression bears on the European society. I have also been convinced that we, as elected Members of the European Parliament, have a great chance but also huge responsibility to help our fellow Europeans fight this severe disease. I encourage you to join me and the other fellow MEP Ambassadors in the fight against depression, a fight that didn't start today, or yesterday, but that we now move to the next level, and that we are determined to win!

(Jutta Steinruck MEP)

30million
EU citizens will suffer from depression at some point in their life

II. Executive summary

This booklet is designed for use by all who are contemplating to become Ambassadors against Depression and commit to break the silence surrounding depression through their efforts and engagement with fellow policy stakeholders, opinion leaders and influencers.

It contains a set of essential facts and figures about depression, which are based on state-of-the-art literature stemming from reputable specialists in the common mental health disorders field, as well as high-level organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The concise set of high-level messages presented in this work book is realistic, truthful and comprehensive in scope. It is important to state clearly that depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide affecting working capacity, that as a "ticking bomb" under Europe's society, it amounts to high human and financial stakes that impose a haemorrhage of resources on individuals, families, businesses and states.

36
DAYS ON AVERAGE LOST PER DEPRESSION EPISODE

Here is where you, as a key policy-maker, step in. You, as an elected and trusted individual, have a voice that needs to be heard. In this booklet, we outline some of the ways in which you can make a difference in the fight against depression. You can exercise your role as an ambassador by addressing written or oral questions to the European Commission and the Council inquiring about their strategy to combat depression through an integrated policy that involves the health and employment aspect; hosting a policy roundtable at the European Parliament to tackle different issues; blog about your activities against depression so your constituents can learn about them; tweet to disseminate the latest findings about depression.

There are many ways in which you can speak up and speak out, break the silence around depression, make yourself heard, and eventually bring some light into the lives of those afflicted by it. The good news is that depression can be managed, and for that it needs to become part and parcel of the European Union's public health and employment policies.

III. Depression is the leading cause of disability

Depression is a serious and complex medical condition. It is highly prevalent and is affecting more than **30 million Europeans**¹ and one of the top three causes of disease burden in all EU Member States.

Depression has a corrosive effect on the individual's ability to function at home, at work and within everyday social networks. Symptoms such as sadness and fatigue are often associated with depression. Less well understood are the cognitive symptoms of depression such as lack of concentration, indecisiveness and forgetfulness which directly affect an employees' ability to function both outside and inside the workplace.

ABOUT HALF
OF DEPRESSED PATIENTS ARE UNTREATED¹

About 50% of people with depression are untreated². The risk of dying prematurely for people suffering from depression is 40% - 60% greater than the general population³. According to the WHO, depression is now the **leading cause of disability** worldwide⁴.

IV. A ticking time bomb under Europe's society

The costs of depression amount to 92 EUR billion per year, with up to 52 EUR billion of indirect and non-health related costs (loss of productivity due to e.g. sick leave and early retirement)⁵. Depression is the **leading cause of lost work productivity, long-term disability and early retirement**⁶. Two in five employees are suffering from a mental health problem and one in ten has taken time off work due to depression⁷. On average, 36 working days are lost per depressive episode⁸. It has a significant and often unrecognised impact on employees and, consequently, their employers.

¹ Olesen J et al. (2012), *The economic cost of brain disorders in Europe*, European Journal of Neurology, vol. 19, Issue 1, pp. 155-162

² World Health Organisation Europe, (2012), Depression in Europe. <http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/mental-health/news/news/2012/10/depression-in-europe>. Accessed 22 September, 2014.

³ OECD (2014), "Making Mental Health Count". Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/els/health-systems/Focus-on-Health-Making-Mental-Health-Count.pdf>.

⁴ World Health Organization (2004), The global burden of disease. Available at: http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/GBD_report_2004update_full.pdf.

⁵ Olesen J et al. (2012), *The economic cost of brain disorders in Europe*, European Journal of Neurology, vol. 19, Issue 1, pp. 155-162

⁶ Olesen J et al. (2012), *The economic cost of brain disorders in Europe*, European Journal of Neurology, vol. 19, Issue 1, pp. 155-162

⁷ European Depression Association (EDA), 2014, <http://www.europeandepressionday.com/burden.html>, accessed 22 September, 2014.

⁸ European Depression Association (EDA), (2012), IDEA: Impact of Depression at Work in Europe Audit-Final Report. http://www.europeandepressionday.com/resources/IDEA%20Survey_depression%20in%20the%20workplace_results.pdf. Accessed 22 September, 2014.

The costs of depression in the EU in 2010 was estimated at

€92 BILLION

59% of costs are indirect such as lost work productivity, due to e.g. sick leave and early retirement



V. Depression can be managed

If adequately managed, people with depression can lead productive lives and make valuable contributions to society as a whole. A number of businesses and private companies have started to recognise the important impact that promoting good mental health at the workplace has on the business as a whole. For example the HR Leadership Forum to **Target the Impact of Depression in the Workplace**⁹ is guided by senior HR and corporate health and medical executives from major European employers alongside international organisations working on health, labour and employment issues. Together the Forum is recommending concrete tools and resources that will enable HR professionals:

- Better manage depression in the workplace;
- Identify and support employees at risk of depression;
- Promote good workplace mental health.

43%
OF MANAGERS CALL FOR BETTER POLICIES

Through improvements in policy and health and safety legislation, the European Union and its Members States can ensure the protection of workers from inappropriate psychosocial risks in the workplace. In a survey commissioned by EDA, 43% of managers call for better policies⁸. For example, Members of the European Parliament can:

- **Break the "silos mentality"** - depression is a disease that needs to be looked at across European Union and national government departments to ensure a robust policy response;
- **Ensure early diagnosis and intervention** - people should not have to wait until they are really sick before they receive help otherwise the consequences can become too costly to manage;
- **Stimulate awareness** on the issues related to depression, including stigma, prevention, diagnosis, adequate access to treatment through an open question with debate within the relevant European Parliament committees;
- **Encourage the European Commission and the Member States to put in place an ambitious plan to tackle depression** through the Joint Action on Mental Health and Well-being;
- Include **concrete actions to tackle depression in the new Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work and in the upcoming review of occupational health and safety legislation** (Framework Directive 89/391 and related directives).

⁹ <http://targetdepression.com/#intro>