

• **8<sup>th</sup> European Depression Day focused on treatment of depression .**

On 30 September, the **European Depression Association (EDA)** organized its **8<sup>th</sup> European Depression Day** in the European Social Economic Committee under the theme “Depression: treat and defeat” under the patronage of EU Health Commissioner Dalli. Participants included Prof. Costigliola (President of EDA), Jürgen Scheftlein (DG SANCO, European Commission), health specialists (e.g.: Dr Mark Agius, Department of Psychiatry University of Cambridge) and representatives of mental health organisations (e.g.: Paul Arteel of GAMIAN-Europe, Amelia Mustapha of the Centre for Mental Health UK, Stéphanie Wooley of France-Depression).

Key highlights of the event include:

- Prof. Costigliola explained that the objective of EDA is to **spread the message to the broadest audience** that depression is a disease that can be cured.
- Jürgen Scheftlein stressed that there is an **ongoing interest in depression among many stakeholders** (e.g. increasing awareness in employers) and that addressing depression is a matter of public health, but also solidarity and good economics.
- Participants agreed on **the need for re-evaluating guidelines for the treatment of depression** in order to **ensure adequate diagnosis** and to take into account **innovative interventions**. Moreover, it was stressed that patients must have continued **access to a holistic treatment** (e.g. medication, talking therapies, instruments supporting social inclusion) as long as needed.
- The need for **improved training for GPs and all health professionals** in order to ensure adequate diagnosis was raised by several participants (e.g. Dr Giuseppe Tavormina and Mark Agius provided the example of misdiagnosis of bipolar disorders and major depression disorders).
- Moreover, participants called for **increased research** on key topics such as resistance to treatment or impact

- Participants stressed the role played by **stigma around depression and the limited awareness** on this disease, leading to lack of adequate treatment. As such, they called for **increased awareness in the general public** (e.g. role to be played by employers and trade unions to improve social inclusion of people suffering from depression).
- Presentations also highlighted the benefits of **mental health patients' empowerment** as well as the involvement of mental health organisations in developing mental health policies.

During the debate following the presentations, participants debated the issue of **resistance to treatments** and the need for increased research on this issue. As such, they regretted that whilst innovative techniques exist (e.g. TMS interventions), they are not included in guidelines, prescribed and reimbursed.