

Dear Mrs. de la Mata, dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Federal Chamber of Psychotherapists, I cordially welcome you to our round-table forum on the provision of care to mentally ill refugees in the EU Member States hosting them. I wish to thank you for your cooperation in responding to our survey. This has enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of the status of care in your countries, and of the challenges being faced. Today, we would like to share the survey's results with you. While the prevailing conditions among our countries may differ both in terms of performance requirements and in terms of the resources that are available to care for refugees, the challenges of meeting their needs do not. The people in question have fled war and violence. A large proportion of them experienced traumatic events prior to their arrival. Many are traumatised, psychologically burdened or ill, and need help – professional psychotherapeutic help.

I hope and expect that, in the course of our discussions today, we will manage together to identify the central challenges being faced on the ground in providing care to these people. A further aim will be to see if we can pinpoint connections and similarities between the various projects and initiatives being undertaken in different Member States. Today, we have an opportunity to learn from one another. Possibilities for collaboration may

emerge, and synergies for future work may develop. This round-table forum could mark the beginning of a long-term exchange. *One* objective could be to plan and implement further steps not just within our respective countries, but cooperatively with one another. Finally, we should endeavour to ensure that those at the European Commission have a common understanding of the problems that exist, and that they, along with EU institutions, actively contribute to securing an adequate provision of care for mentally ill refugees in all host countries. The issue will surely accompany us for years to come. An existing problem is that many national governments are increasingly pursuing a more restrictive asylum policies with respect to refugees. In this respect, it is important that we – out of our sense of professional duty to those we are trained to help – advocate for human rights to be respected in every nation of Europe. More than just being able to contribute to improving the provision of care, we are also in a position to help people and communities across Europe better understand both the importance of fulfilling this moral duty and their ability to successfully accommodate those seeking help.

I am delighted to welcome Isabel de la Mata, who, as Principal Advisor for Health and Crisis Management, is responsible for these matters at the EU Commission. Dr de la Mata is graduated in Medicine and Surgery, holds post-graduate

degrees in Public Health, Hospital Administration and Statistics and is a specialist in Preventive Medicine and Public Health. Your participation shows us that the issues being addressed here today are indeed being taken very seriously by the European Commission.

Responses to our survey were received from 14 different countries. Today, I am pleased to be joined by representatives of nine of these countries for our round-table discussion. My colleague Angelika Kiewel will provide us with a report summarising the survey results for those countries, from which no one was able to attend today's forum.

I look forward to stimulating exchanges, and will now hand matters over to Angelika Kiewel. She will be moderating our discussion, and thus will have the thankless task of keeping track of time to ensure that everyone has the same opportunity to present themselves and join in discussions.