Mental health disorders are experienced by approximately one in ten EU citizens , with depression and anxiety being the most significant health challenges in many states. Suicide alone is a significant cause of death, with
 about 55.000 Europeans
taking their own lives every year.

People suffering from mental health problems encounter prejudices and barriers to their full integration into society in general, and in the workplace in particular.

 World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues and mobilizing efforts in support of better mental health.This year's theme focuses on "Mental health in the workplace".

Promoting mental health efforts in the workplace offers significant benefits not only to individuals, but also to enterprises and state economies. A recent study led by the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that common mental health disorders account for more than 50 million lost years of work and cost the global economy US$ 1 trillion a year in lost productivity. If we only look at the European Region of the WHO, the estimated cost exceeds US$ 140 billion per year. In most European countries, cases of absenteeism and early retirement caused by mental illnesses have been on the rise in recent years.

The need for the promotion of mental health good practices at work is vital. It is essential for enterprises as well as governments to recognize the workplace as both a major factor in development of mental health issues and as a platform for the introduction and advancement of effective preventive measures.

At a global policy level, WHO's Global Plan of Action on Worker's Health (2008-2017) and Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2020) outline relevant principles, objectives and implementation strategies to promote good mental health in the workplace.

At a European policy level, national and Europeans programs in recent years have put a greater emphasis on mental health in the workplace. European action aims to add value to the existing mechanisms of the promotion of mental health services in Member States. This was the objective of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-Being launched by the EU in 2008 as an outcome of the 2005 WHO European Ministerial Conference on Mental Health.

More recently, the EU-Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020 identified mental health as one of its priorities. The 2016 European Framework for Action on Mental Health and Wellbeing also provides a good overview of the actions taken and the path forward.

Yet despite all these efforts and the existence of cost-effective interventions to both treat and prevent mental disorders, only about half of people with a severe mental disorder in the EU receive adequate treatment.   Due to the stigma surrounding mental health problems, people experiencing them are often reluctant to seek help. Putting an end to

the overall lack of awareness and knowledge about mental health in the workplace and across society is therefore the first step in achieinge healthier societies.