

## **Workshop MHE / SOLIDAR**

### **Title:**

Let's speak about Europe - The Role of European NGO Networks in advancing the Civil Dialogue on the National Level and exchange on issues and policy processes on the European agenda

### **Description:**

The workshop will tackle the issue how to advance and promote the civil dialogue at the national level, with particular focus on the new Member States in Central and Eastern Europe. Mental Health Europe will present its system of "National Focal Points" (presentation given by Elisabeth Muschik). Karel Schwarz, expert invited by SOLIDAR, will provide an overview about on the current state of civil dialogue in the Czech Republic in the field of social affairs and related challenges, based on some examples. We will then discuss which role European networks play in view of capacity-building and as a mediator between the national level and the European arena, facilitating and promoting information flow and feedback in both directions. Participants will have ample time to exchange experiences and jointly develop recommendations on capacities, structures, etc. needed to advance and promote the civil dialogue at the national and the European level.

### **Titles of presentations:**

Stronger Participation in the European Civil Dialogue of National Member Organisations through National Focal Points - Elisabeth Muschik, MHE

Civil Dialogue in the new Member States in Central and Eastern Europe - The Case of the Czech Republic, Karel Schwarz, Asociace NNO/SKOK (CZ)

### **Four questions:**

1. MHE National Focal Points: Which elements can be used by other social NGOs? Where are the advantages and limits of "National Focal Points"? How does this model help to advance civil dialogue at national level and how does it "empower" national members to work with information from European level and to feed back information, opinions, requests, etc. to the European level?
2. Civil dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe: What are the specific needs and challenges? Which elements work well? What could be learnt from these countries experiences? How can we strengthen the representation of organisations from these countries at European level and in European debates?
3. Which role for European networks in view of capacity building and "transporting back" information, opinions and requests from national members to the European arena?
4. What are our expectations vis-à-vis European institutions, in particular the European Commission and the European Parliament (perhaps also: EESC; CoR)