



For more information
Doctors of the World – Greek Delegation
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Press Release

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE on MENTAL HEALTH
"From Crisis Management to Sustainable Reforms"
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In the context of the recent “reception crisis” in Europe and the socio-economic crisis plaguing Greece, the needs of mental health and psychosocial support have emerged as a crucial issue. The psycho-social risks for national population as well as for people on the move, refugees and migrants, intensify due to the traumatic experiences to which they are exposed. Tackling them poses a challenge to the national health system especially considering the inherent weaknesses of the mental health system in Greece and the consequences that the economic crisis has inflicted upon the fields of mental health and social welfare in general. Recent disasters of national proportions, such as the wildfires in Mati area last summer are adding to the above and highlight new complexities regarding the issue of crisis management both at operational level and at the level of citizens' mental health.

Civil society collaborates in order to find solutions, ways and tools that will drive and ensure the welfare of the community; means and methods that are known and accessible at the level of public and local administration but also to the citizens themselves, who were the front-liners of response when boats full of refugees and migrants were reaching the Greek islands by hundreds as well as when Mati, Rafina, Marathon and N. Makri were swept by the wildfires on July 23, 2018.

In this direction, the Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) Guidelines of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) recently translated to Greek from the Day Centre Babel/Syn-Eirmos is particularly important, as they have now become easily accessible to a wider public in Greece. Thus, with the support of Doctors of the World, the Attica sub-working

group for mental health and psychosocial support and the MHPSS Reference Group of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (RG IASC) co-organise, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, an International Conference on Mental Health in Athens, from the 3rd to the 6th of June 2019. The conference will take place on the 3rd and 4th of June 2019 in the auditorium of the Athens University, “Alkis Argyriadis Hall” (Panepistimiou 30), which will be followed by a two-days training on IASC guidelines for professionals and field experts (June 5th and 6th).

In addition to the IASC guidelines, the Conference will tackle the issues of intercultural approaches to Mental Health and the necessary reforms and good practices that should be taken into account towards the formulation of relevant policies in the field of mental health, in view of promoting community psychiatry and addressing stigma and social exclusion. The topics will be analysed and discussed in the context of different thematic tables, with the participation of Greek and international speakers. A round table dedicated to the recent disaster in Mati will attempt to cover the spectrum between crisis management, prevention and early warning systems, community participation in support services and actors’ cooperation in crises’ settings.

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About Médecins du Monde - Doctors of the World – Greece

Médecins du Monde-Doctors of the World Greece was founded in 1990 and is part of the International network of MdM that consists of 16 Chapters in the world (Argentina, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Turkey, Luxemburg, Netherlands Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and U.S.A.) It remains, though, a Greek organization, taking its own path based on circumstances particular to Greece, while maintaining financial and administrative independence and transparency shared with the network. Completing 28 consecutive years of action in 2018, MdM-Greece has been acknowledged as a credible and efficient organization that fosters the sense of solidarity within the Greek Community. Having conducted numerous humanitarian aid programs in Greece and in developing countries, Greek doctors, administration, medical staff and technical experts continue to offer their voluntary services. MdM-Greece with more than 600 volunteers since its foundation, in around 50 countries around the world, contributes to medical and humanitarian aid programs. Throughout the years, medical and humanitarian aid programs have been carried out in Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Serbia, Sudan, Palestine, Haiti, Gaza, Uganda, Tanzania, Algeria etc. Doctors of the World Greece works with other international Non-Governmental Organizations in order to more efficiently provide humanitarian aid to people in need.