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New Croatian Law On Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders in Comparison with Mental Health Acts Across Europe: Do We Have a Different View On Human Rights?

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Introduction: Croatia is introducing the new Law on Protection of Persons with mental disorders on January 1, 2015. Major changes are related to the terms of involuntary admissions, thus aiming to improve protection of persons with mental disorders within psychiatric care.

Aim: Aim of this paper is to compare mental health legislation and position of mentally ill people in five EU countries, namely Croatia, Germany, Spain, Sweden and UK.

Methods: Methods of descriptive analysis are employed to explore similarities and differences among countries in relation to the four following indicators - involuntary admission procedure, forms of involuntary treatment, maximum duration of involuntary treatment and patients' legal right to complain.

Results: Despite all being in the EU, countries included in the study vary substantially in their legislation for the practice of involuntary hospital admission which will be presented in details.

Conclusion: How involuntary treatments should be legislated and regulated is highly controversial. We believe that EU countries should join forces to create a common understanding of this issue because legal differences could lead to substantial discrepancies in human right protection practices regarding persons with mental disorders.