

response and rehabilitation. Disasters provide a unique opportunity for public and policy makers to recognise and address the broader mental health and psychosocial needs of community and health workers and humanitarian workers. A WHO regional forum on disaster-related mental health, hosted by the Institute of Mental Health at Peking University, was recently organised in Beijing. The main purpose of the forum was to address post-disaster mental health needs and to promote an integrated multidisciplinary approach to provide protection and promotion of psychosocial well-being for disaster-affected populations, including disaster responders.

Continuous efforts are being made in the region to link mental health with other health programmes, such as those relating to non-communicable diseases, maternal health, child and adolescent health, ageing, 'healthy city and healthy islands' initiatives, and health system development. More efforts are needed to ensure that mental health issues are incorporated into general health policies and plans. There should be a review and monitoring mechanism to determine whether mental health issues are being addressed by all the health system building blocks: service delivery, health workforce, information, medicines, financing and governance.

In May 2013, the 66th World Health Assembly adopted a resolution on the Global Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–20. To support

implementation of a global plan with a view to addressing the unique challenges faced by member states in the region, the WHO will work with those states in the following ways. It will monitor, analyse and disseminate information on regional trends, examine the consequences and risk factors associated with suicide and mental disorders, and help to develop national policies, as well as support legislation and programmes that contribute to global targets. There will be unique challenges in member states, but the framework aims to support multidisciplinary and multisectoral programmes to improve the ability of health and social systems in member states to prevent and manage suicide and mental disorders, and to strengthen regional and subregional networks and partnerships.

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Mental health law profiles

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The Eastern Mediterranean has a profoundly rich but troubled history. The histories of Greece and Turkey have been closely entwined over many centuries. Both have undergone major social changes, with the economic development of Turkey being a particularly welcome phenomenon in the past 10–20 years, while Greece, after a period of unprecedented growth and prosperity, is currently undergoing a destructive economic crisis, with adverse consequences for mental health and increasing rates of suicide.

On the evidence of the two papers published here, social and economic development in these countries has been associated with initiatives in

law to safeguard the rights of people with a mental illness, with Greece having adopted relevant legislation to conform with United Nations and European Union standards, and Turkey, a nation aspiring to join the European Union, being on the brink of doing so. However, the routine use of emergency orders and the lack of due process in practice in Greece, even in times of plenty, are both worrying and reprehensible, and the hope must be that in both Greece and Turkey safeguards to ensure implementation of the spirit of the law will be seen as a priority and be put in place, and resources allocated to make this possible, irrespective of economic conditions.