



Joaquin Alexander Maza Matelli,  
President, United Nations Human Rights Council  
Dainius Puras, United Nations Special Rapporteur  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
United Nations Office, Geneva, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

**President**

Hilkka Kärkkäinen  
(Finland)

**Vice President**

Raluca Nica (Romania)

**Treasurer**

Jacinta Hastings  
(Ireland)

**Secretary General**

Aikaterini Nomidou  
(Greece)

**Past president**

Yoram Cohen (Israel)

**Communications  
Officer**

Dolores Gauci (Malta)

**Counselors:**

Bert Aben  
(Netherlands)

John Bowis (United  
Kingdom)

Daniel Černík  
(Czech Republic)

Matt Muijen  
(The Netherlands)

Robert M. Kristof  
(Hungary)

Dear Mr Maza Matelli and Dr Puras,

**World needs “revolution” in mental health care – GAMIAN-Europe’s Patient Perspective**

GAMIAN-Europe (Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks-Europe), a patient-driven pan-European organisation, represents the interests of persons affected by mental health issues and advocates for their rights. Its main objectives are: advocacy, information and education, anti-stigma and discrimination, patients’ rights, co-operation, partnerships and capacity building.

GAMIAN-Europe urges Governments to have mental health in parity with physical health and the two systems of care should be integrated within Health and Social Care.

The right to treatment is a human right and Governments are to ensure that holistic approaches are affordable, available, accessible, acceptable and of quality and provided in a manner that respects the dignity of people.

People with mental health issues urge all health and social stakeholders to be in constant dialogue, together with them, to ensure that legislation, policies, standards of care, treatments and services are of the highest quality and rights based and recovery oriented at all times. We believe that a statement emphasising weaknesses in mental health care only, taking an adversarial position that ignores some considerable improvements of care in several countries and constructive partnerships that have been established between patients and professionals is unjustified. As a patient representative organisation, we are only too aware of many human rights infringements inflicted on people with mental health issues, and many flaws in the system. But we are also aware of the championing of the improvement of rights and services by many service providers, including psychiatrists. A more balanced statement rather than a generalised condemnation might encourage and motivate such people to continue working with us and acting on our behalf.

Stigma related to mental health issues is pervasive and effects all aspects, the person with a mental health issue, their family, professionals, services and society in general. The letter does not help with addressing stigma. Even decision makers are effected by stigma thus leading to stigmatising legislation. Any type of stigma hinders people from accessing mental health care. Stigma is the cause and effect of low quality care.

GAMIAN-Europe welcomes and looks forward to being an equal partner in discussions on issues related to mental health as foreseen by the Human Rights Council and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations.

Hilkka Karkkainen  
President  
o/b/o the General Assembly  
GAMIAN-Europe  
23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017

GAMIAN-Europe, a patient-driven pan-European organization, represents the interests of persons affected by mental illness and advocates their right  
Friends of Europe is an independent think tank for EU policy analysis and debate