

**Richmond Foundation
PRESS RELEASE**

**Press Conference
Launching of ESF project:**



**Healthy Mind for
Healthy Business**

Healthy Mind for Healthy Business (ESF3.193)

Richmond Foundation is the applicant and coordinating partner of the project. Other partners include the Malta Employers Association, Malta Chamber Foundation, Gozo Business Chamber, GRTU Malta Chamber of SMEs, as well as the Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

Main guest:

Hon. Ian Borg – Parliamentary Secretary for EU funds

Date: Monday, 14th October 2013

Time: 10:00am

Venue:

**Richmond Foundation
424, St. Joseph's High Street
Sta. Venera**



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
Project part-financed by the European Union
European Social Fund (ESF)
Co-financing rate: 72.25% EU, 12.75% MT, 15.00% NGO



Investing in your future

Introduction

Mr Anthony Guillaumier, Chairman, Richmond Foundation

Nowadays Mental Health issues have been proclaimed as one of the top threats for modern businesses. One in four Europeans are affected by mental health problems each year. Many people experience it without even noticing it and the consequences can be detrimental for the individual and others. About 25% of the Maltese population may experience mental health problems in a given year.

A research carried out by Richmond Foundation under the ESF 3.71 Project 'Impact Assessment of Mental Health on Employment for Policy Development' shows that 26.9% of participants said they were diagnosed with some form of stress problems and 24.4% with depression.

Another deficit that Richmond Foundation has identified while developing this project is the lack of information available on introducing mental health policies at the workplace. This lack of awareness leads to a certain degree of discrimination and stigma which has had a negative impact on people with mental health problems.

Apart from the lack of awareness, there is also lack of support infrastructures from where potential entities can obtain guidance and assistance on the development and implementation of mental health policies at the place of work.

This project aims to address these issues in a structured and professional manner.

Richmond Foundation is the applicant and coordinating partner of the project. Other partners include the Malta Employers Association, Malta Chamber Foundation, Gozo Business Chamber, GRTU Malta Chamber of SMEs, as well as the Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

I would like to thank Hon Ian Borg for accepting our invitation to address this Press Conference, and to the press representatives for being with us here this morning.



More accessible European Funds for specialised health and security training in the workplace

Hon. Ian Borg – Parliamentary Secretary for EU funds

‘In the next financing period 2014-2020 we are committed to help more companies and organisations in order to access more European Funds for health and security training in the workplace.’ This was said by the Parliamentary Secretary for the EU Presidency 2017 and EU funds Dr Ian Borg when he was addressing the launch of a project titled ‘Healthy Mind for Healthy Business.’

The main beneficiary of this project is the Richmond Foundation who benefited from around €110,000 under the European Social Fund. The aim of this project is to increase the awareness regarding cases of mental health at the workplace, while providing the necessary training about this subject to workers in various enterprises and organisations.

Dr Borg said that currently the €140 million allocated to Malta under the European Social Fund in the next financial programme 2014-2020 are being programmed. These funds will be used in order to invest in the development of our human resources.

Dr Borg encouraged this Foundation to present the results obtained from the carried research to the Ministry for Health. This is because in the coming days and months the government will be planning and discussing the national strategy regarding mental health.

The Parliamentary Secretary thanked Richmond Foundation for being in the forefront over the years in order to increase the awareness about mental health issues. He also encouraged its representatives to make more use of European Funds during the next programming period.



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013
Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life
Project part-financed by the European Union
European Social Fund (ESF)
Co-financing rate: 72.25% EU, 12.75% MT, 15.00% NGO



Healthy Mind for Healthy Business

Ms Antoinette Shah, Chief Executive Officer, Richmond Foundation

The project Healthy Mind for Healthy Business was presented within the Operational Programme II: Empowering People for More Jobs and a Better Quality of Life, under Priority Axis 3 - Promoting an equal and inclusive labour market.

The project is part-financed by the European Union from the European Social Fund (ESF), and will run until the end of 2014.

The project consists primarily of awareness raising on mental health issues in the workplace. Its activities focus on enterprises and employees, and are intended to generate positive attitudes towards mental health as an essential prerequisite for employee well-being and personal development, but also for the success of businesses themselves.

The project is supported by *MSV Life* and *APS Bank*. I take this opportunity to publicly thank our sponsors for their generosity and availability.

The overall objective of the Healthy Mind for Healthy Business project is to contribute towards the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market. By aiming to introduce mental health policies at the workplace, the project seeks to safeguard employees with mental health problems. The specific objectives are:

- To raise awareness on the effects of mental health problems on individuals and at the place of work; and,
- To provide tools to support employers and workers in leading positions in developing policy and implementing actions related to mental health.

The project builds upon research activities on topical occupational mental health issues, as well as on the awareness campaign itself, with the aim of improving mental health and safety at work. It will develop management tools which enterprises can use to set up mental health policies in their workplace, as well as provide training to improve the relevant skills of key personnel.



The ultimate objective is to contribute to healthy lifestyles whilst maximising the potential of employees and the effectiveness of enterprises in generating wealth and contribute to general well-being and a better quality of life.

The principal stakeholders of the project are the trade associations, their member organisations, other enterprises and employers, central government ministries, as well as trade unions, NGOs, employees, Human Resource and Health & Safety practitioners, mental health professionals, and the general public.

The project includes a research component by virtue of which a number of audits will be conducted among enterprises in order to analyse the working environment and any policies that are currently in place. The research will gather data on perception and the level of awareness of mental health issues in the workplace.

On the strength of the findings of the research, the project will design and implement the awareness campaign, develop management tools and guidelines for enterprises, as well as develop and deliver training sessions that will offered as part of the project's training component targeting key personnel.

By engaging in targeted capacity building initiatives, the project seeks to foster a supportive culture that will equip organisations with the necessary tools to enable them to increase their knowledge on mental health problems in their workplace.

An Empowerment Programme, dealing with the development of a mental health policy at the workplace, will be delivered by Richmond trainers to people in key positions. Further training will be provided to Richmond personnel on how to run and manage the helpline for enterprises.

Towards the end of the project, a second research activity will assess the effectiveness of the project activities in sensitising enterprises to mental health issues and the need for policies to deal with them.

The activities and results of the project will be communicated to stakeholders and the general public using a mix of different media, including printed material, billboards, promotional material and electronic media. The project will make full use of online communication



channels such as social networking sites and email. Such interventions have been chosen to reach a wide audience of individuals, taking into consideration the large number of enterprises registered.

The experience gained during implementation of the activities will lead up to the formulation of specific policy recommendations. These will be presented during a final conference, which will also provide a forum where the findings and results of the interventions will be critically analysed and discussed.

The recommendations of the final conference will be included in the final report, which will be published and will be presented to a number of stakeholders and policy-makers working in the mental health sector.

It is important to note that last Thursday, 10th October, we marked World Mental Health Day. Mental health is a state of health wherein the individual brings out his/her potential to succeed and advance in life, and thereby to contribute to the well-being of the community.

There is a need for a National Mental Health Strategy with specific objectives in favour of better mental health in the community. The strategy should strengthen the cooperation between the various stakeholders, and should ensure that resources are utilised in the best possible manner. This would be in accordance with the EU's recommendations as per the *Green Paper 'Improving the mental health of the population: Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union'*. The strategy should include:

1. mental health promotion;
2. information on mental health problems;
3. prevention and early intervention;
4. services;
5. research and analysis of services; and,
6. legislation.

I am pleased to say that this project, that Richmond Foundation is launching today, addresses at least the first five.

