



## **STOP THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPULSIVE COMMUNITY TREATMENT IN THE GREEK MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM.**

It is well known that, after about 30 years of a supposed psychiatric reform in Greece, there was not even the slightest step towards a Community based Mental Health System. The situation that prevails in Mental Health in Greece is a totally Hospital-based System, with repressive characteristics, with almost no community services and with *involuntary admissions in mental health units to have reached about 65% of all admissions* - always executed by police with handcuffs.

In face of this situation, the only answer, elaborated by the Ministry of Health, in preparation for its implementation, is the introduction, also in Greece, of “*Compulsive Community Treatment*”. That is, after a medical certificate by a psychiatrist and the order by the public prosecutor, the patient has to conform to this order (“Community Treatment Order”-CTO) for taking his/her medicines (basically in the monthly, or quarterly injection form), otherwise he/she be involuntarily hospitalized in a mental health unit (in a mental hospital or a general hospital).

It is a practice that establishes a further diffusion and, at the same time, hardening of the social control in the community. Towards a psychiatric practice that, instead of putting in priority and pursuing a real therapeutic relation with the patient, a real communication, interaction and negotiation on equal base with the psychiatrist, it will follow, even more than now, a repressive approach by transferring the institutional practices in the community, in the place where the patient lives. With the person to experience therapy, the therapeutic relation, as a *continuous coercion*, as an eternal compulsion, with impending the threat of the consequences if he/she refuses this coercive drug therapy.

This is the official approach to the high percentage of involuntary hospitalizations, an approach aiming to decrease this percentage, but just as an image, since it does not puts into question the *system that produces them*. At the same time that it is well known that the *declared aim*, internationally, of “Compulsive Community Treatment”, that is, the decrease of the involuntary hospitalizations and of the prevailing phenomenon of “revolving door”, *was not achieved - the result was a complete failure*. Although data suggest (where available) that compulsory treatment in the community, such as Community Treatment Orders, are largely ineffective in preventing re-admission to hospital and restrict patient autonomy they remain a

rapidly expanding form of involuntary treatment in many countries (see “Mapping and Understanding Exclusion: Institutional, coercive and community-based services and practices across Europe”. Project report. Mental Health Europe, Brussels, Belgium, 2018).

The only real answer to this huge number of involuntary hospitalizations is the promotion and development of a Comprehensive Community based Mental Health System, with all the needed financing, properly staffed (in numbers and training) and an alternative psychiatric “practice and culture”, radically alternative to institutionalization, inside and outside the mental health units.

Therefore, the meeting “ ***40#180 DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTHCARE. Participation, citizenship and reform processes in Italy and worldwide 40 years after law 180. Conference of collective subjects and organizations for change.***”, with more than 500 delegates from 32 countries, organized with WHO and International Mental Health Collaborating Network (IMHCN); World Association Psychosocial Rehabilitation (WAPR); UNASAM; Fondazione Franca e Franco Basaglia; LegaCoopSociali FVG; Conferenza Permanente per la Salute Mentale nel Mondo “Franco Basaglia” (CoPerSaMM); StopOpg; Forum Salute Mentale; Società Italiana Epidemiologia Psichiatrica (SIEP); Psichiatria Democratica (PD); European Community Mental Health Service providers network (EuCoMS); World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation (WAPR) Italia; World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) **supports the following statement and position:**

**“Compulsive Community Treatment”  
must not be implemented in Greece and nowhere.**