



Institute for
European
Environmental
Policy

Mental health, well-being and the environment

Bringing nature back into people's lives

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Event organised within the EU Green Week

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www.ieep.eu



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Mental health: an increasing share of the disease burden in Europe

- Mental disorders such as depression and anxiety today affect more than **1 in 6 EU citizens** representing a massive personal and societal burden.
- Poor mental health is estimated to cost Europe over **€600 bn/year** or over 4% of GDP of which a third is in direct health care spending.



Sources: Mental health: Fact sheet WHO (2019); ; Health at a Glance: Europe 2018; State of Health in the EU Cycle; World Economic Forum 2020.

Belgium has seen
a **6%** increase
in the rates of **DEPRESSION**

(Sciensano, cited in UNRIC 2020)

Around **60%**
surveyed in Poland
have experienced increased
GENERAL ANXIETY

(Dragan 2020)

In France, **18%** showed
symptoms of severe
ANXIETY, DEPRESSION
and other **MENTAL DISORDERS**

(UNRIC 2020)

In Italy and Spain, children have
DIFFICULTIES CONCENTRATING
and show **IRRITABILITY**
RESTLESSNESS
NERVOUSNESS

(WHO 2020)





69%

of Europeans want the EU to have more competences to deal with crises such as the coronavirus pandemic.

(European Parliament 2020)

Nature provides immense benefits
to people's **MENTAL HEALTH**.

(IEEP 2021)





Protected areas have been estimated
to provide mental health benefits worth
EUR 5.55 TRILLION.

(Buckley et al 2019)

Not everyone gets to
BENEFIT EQUALLY
from nature's positive influences.

Minorities & deprived
communities are more likely to
LACK ACCESS
to green spaces. (IEEP 2017)



Develop a dedicated EU
**MENTAL HEALTH &
WELL-BEING** strategy.



Integrate
RESILIENCE INDICATORS
which consider inter-linkages
between mental health and
the environment.



Ensure mainstreaming of
health and well-being
considerations in the
implementation of the
**EUROPEAN
GREEN DEAL.**



**HOW TO REFLECT
THE LINKS BETWEEN
MENTAL HEALTH
AND NATURE?**



As part of Europe's
forthcoming zero-pollution
action plan, ensure that
those furthest behind
BENEFIT MOST.



Address the **FUNDING GAP** for implementing the EU
Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.



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