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-  Hellenic Ministry of Health & Social Solidarity
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Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Crises and Disasters occur very frequently in our world. Some of them are natural, others are human-made. The former as a rule cannot be prevented but we can certainly prevent or limit their psychosocial consequences. The latter are by definition preventable although in practice they are very seldom prevented (just think of war conflicts and other situations associated with human aggression). Economic crises are included within the latter category. Their impact is serious. Suicide, homicide, exacerbation of psychopathology and especially depression have been reported in previous economic crises and are verified and repeated as a consequence of the present world financial crisis. This crisis has hit every country but its impact has been (and still is) very serious in the countries of Southern Europe, including the host country of the Congress that we have the privilege to announce to you to-day.

Financial crises (as well as other crises for that matter) have a greater impact on vulnerable groups. One of these groups is the group of consumers, persons with mental disorders. Advocacy and protection of this group of vulnerable persons is sine qua non under the present adverse conditions and we hope that our congress will serve this scope.

Our Congress is organized by the World Federation for Mental Health in collaboration with the Hellenic Psychiatric Association and the Society of Preventive Psychiatry. It will be held in **Athens, Greece from 6 to 9 March 2013** at the Royal Olympic Hotel, situated centrally in Athens, just opposite the columns of the Olympian Zeus with a breath-taking view of the Acropolis and the Lykabetus Hill and a few steps from the Plaka region and the spectacular Acropolis museum. The main topic of the Congress is “**Crises and Disasters: Psychosocial consequences**” but submission of papers on other topics within the area of the behavioral sciences are also welcome.

We look forward to welcoming you all to Athens. We will do our best to offer you an interesting scientific program and to make you feel at home.

With best regards

Prof. John Giouzepas
President, Hellenic Psychiatric Association

Deborah Wan
President, World Federation for Mental Health

Prof. George Christodoulou
President-elect, World Federation for Mental Health
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Assoc. Prof. Dimitris Ploumpidis
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