



**EPIONI**  
GREEK CARERS NETWORK

**Annual Report**  
2018





On behalf of my fellow Board Directors at EPIONI Mrs Zacharenia Karkalaku, Mr. Fokion Dimitriadis, Mrs Efi Sardeli and Mrs Marina Makri I am very pleased to present our report on EPIONI's activities and achievements in 2018. As you will see significant progress has been made towards meeting Greek Carers Network goals.

In terms of enhancing EPIONI's influence with key stakeholders, we

were active representing the experiences of informal caregivers to several projects, conferences and meetings.

Everybody's commitment was strong and evident resulting in many articles and posts on social media.

May I end by renewing our thanks and good wishes to all those associated with EPIONI as members and partners.

Spyros Zorbas, President

## Events for Caregivers

On the 13th of March 2018, at the Biomedical Research Foundation of the Academy of Athens (BRFAA), the Greek Carers Network EPIONI held a workshop on the topic “Caring for the caregiver: connecting to clinical and basic research update resources”. The event was under the auspices of the World Federation for Mental Health, the Greek Psychiatric Society, and the European Brain Council. The participants were eminent mental health scientists such as Professor Georgios Christodoulou, former president of the World Federation for Mental Health, Mr Dimitrios Kontis, assistant professor of



Psychiatry, Professor Magda Tsolaki, neurologist-psychiatrist and president of the Panhellenic Federation for Alzheimer’s and Related Disorders, Dr Kelly Panagiotopoulou allergologist-group therapist. Mrs Magdi Birtha from COFACE Families Europe presented the 2017 “Who

Cares?” European survey for Caregivers. Psychologist Panagiotis Chondros from EPAPSY and Susan Gregory made presentations about carers associations in Greece. Mrs Mary Adamopoulou from EUPATI Greece shared her experience as a Fellow of the Academy and Professor Aris Charonis presented the activities of the BBMRI-ERIC network in Greece. Moderator was Orestis Giotakos. The Brain Awareness event was



conducted with the support of researcher Professor Dimitra Magoura who, aside from her interesting presentation offered an interactive tour of the laboratories of the Biomedical Research Foundation of the Academy of Athens (BRFAA). Participants experienced the way research is done in one of the most modern research centers in Europe. EPIONI, on May 3, 2018,



successfully organized a workshop on "Supporting people with heart disease and the contribution of their carers" at the Technopolis of the City of Athens under the auspices of the Panhellenic Medical Association, the International Heart Hub (iHHub) and the

collaboration of the Cardiopathic Association Officers of the Navy-PF, Harbor-LS. & Friends "and the Panhellenic Association" The Heart of the Child ". Welcome messages were given by MEP Tomas Zdechovsky, Ms Christina Papanikolaou on behalf of the Institute of Scientific Research of the Panhellenic Medical Association (eHealth Sector), Professor of Psychiatry and former President of the World Federation for Mental Health, Mr. Georgios Christodoulou, representatives of carers and patients, members of the University and the medical community. Coordinators of the discussion were Mr. Orestis Giotakos, Mr. Spyros Zorbas and Mr. Fokion Dimitriadis. Contributions were made by prominent health scientists: The leading physician - cardiologist and professor at the University of Athens Dr. Dionysios Kokkinos, who spoke about the transnational research at the Biomedical Research Institute of the Academy of Athens in support of people with heart disease.

The Director of Psychiatric NHS, Mr. Dimitrios Kontis, spoke about the "Joint Decision in Medicine". The speech of Dr. Kalliopi Panayotopoulos focused on "taking care of the caregiver". Professor Mrs. Eleni Kaloudis, by teleconference, and Dr. George Drosatos from the Democritus University of Thrace presented the European Research Program CARRE-Project ([www.carre-project.eu](http://www.carre-project.eu)). Dr. Homer Papadopoulos from the DIMOKRITOS Institute of Informatics & Telecommunications spoke about the state-of-the-art technologies of Demokritos that support the everyday lives of people with heart problems. Dr. Elias Tsugos, Cardiologist, Director, "Errikos Dinan Hospital", Cardiology Clinic, reported on the symptoms of heart failure and the critical role of the family in recognizing the symptoms of a life-threatening condition.

Very interesting speeches were given by Mr. Stavros Terzakis on an innovative blood donation program, Mr. Thanasis Vratimos on the GIVEMED online platform (<https://givmed.org/>) and Mrs Susan Cambell via a conference call from International Heart Hub.

The intent of the workshop was to raise awareness in informal carers about heart disease. The sponsors of the event were: Interamerican, Novartis, AMKE "Aegeus", Sklavenitis and Mikel.

C o m m u n i c a t i o n

S p o n s o r s

were: [www.psychologynow.gr](http://www.psychologynow.gr), [www.iatronet.gr](http://www.iatronet.gr) and [www.socialpolicy.gr](http://www.socialpolicy.gr)





### **Caring for Carers: Young Carers in a Changing world.**

EPIONI on September the 28th 2018, organized at the office of the European Parliament in Athens, a conference focusing on young caregivers. The event was under the auspices of the Ministry of Health in Greece, the World Federation for Mental Health, the Hellenic Psychiatric Association, and the European Brain Council. The Commission advocates the introduction of a new entitlement for caregivers, which includes a five-days compensated Carers leave per worker per year, which should be compensated no less than a compensated sick leave. Additionally, the Commission advocates the entitlement of flexible working arrangements for the same reason said the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis. In the conference, prominent scientists such as Professor of Psychiatry George Christodoulou, Dr Dimitrios Kontis, Dr Kalliopi Panagiotopoulou, Mr. Panagiotis Chondros from NGO EPAPSY, Dr. George Pavlidis from the University of Sheffield and Mr. Alexandros Oikonomou from NGO EDRA gave insights about long term care. Other prominent speakers included Mr. Stecy Yghemonos, Executive Director of Eurocarers, Mrs Miia Männikkö, President of EUFAMI and Professor Peykan Gokalp from Turkey.

The event which had the support of the *European Parliament office in Greece and the European Commission Representation in Greece* gave the opportunity to caregivers such as Mrs Dragana Kistner from Germany and Mrs. Stefania Buoni, president and founder of COMIP from Italy to share their personal experiences and discuss the challenges involved in caregiving. Mr Lorenzo Mannu shared his experience from the perspective of civil service in Italy. The conference was organized by EPIONI with the support of MEP from Czech Republic, Mr Tomas Zdechovsky (Welcome Speech), former MEP Mr Nikos Chrysogelos and MEP from Greece Mrs Kostadinka Kuneva. Former minister of Education and Health Mrs Marietta Giannakou delivered a welcome speech. We would like to thank Interamerican, Pharmaserve Lilly and AMKE Aegeas for their generous support and [www.psychologynow.gr](http://www.psychologynow.gr), [www.socialpolicy.gr](http://www.socialpolicy.gr) and [www.iatronet.gr](http://www.iatronet.gr) for being the media sponsors.





## **Social Activities Scheme for Members:**

The program of the **EPIONI Social Club** includes meetings for coffee and participation in Cultural Events.

The goal is to give the members of the association the opportunity to entertain and receive the benefit of culture through modern and high-standard productions. Participation in this program provides the opportunity for socialization and social inclusion of sensitive population groups such as carers.

### **A. Café**

Café meetings feature informal advice and support from professionals and non-professionals. Many reasons to meet new members such as strengthening relationships and extroversion for anyone who spends time once a month getting acquainted with people who have a chronic condition and with their relatives.

### **B. Art & Therapy Program**

The program relates to the development of a social culture with an artistic element. The Onassis Foundation's Center for the Arts and Letters addresses selected non-governmental organizations for the care of people with disabilities and drug addiction treatment and offers free invitations to attend artistic performances hosted by the foundation.

### **C. Cooperation with the Eugenides Foundation**

The collaboration with the Eugenides Foundation allows members to attend scheduled screenings of the Syngrou Planetarium. The environment is contemporary, pleasant, and the shows are very interesting and educational.

### **D. Cinema Nights**

Cooperation with ODEON cinemas continued, with the aim of free entertainment and socialization of members through performances selected by the members themselves. The cinema with which there is a solid cooperation is located at 111 Syngrou Street, Neos Kosmos. The collaboration includes 14 invitations each month for any screening selected.

## Collaboration with European Organizations

EPIONI is member in the following EU organizations and participates as leader or partner in the following EU projects:

- 1) **EUFAMI** - European Federation of Families of People with Mental Illness
- 2) **MHE** - Mental Health Europe



- 3) **Eurocarers:** The European network representing informal carers and their organisations, irrespective of the particular age or health need of the person they are caring for continues to be a valuable supporter. Through Eurocarers EPIONI is informed about the political environment at the European level for informal carers. Participating in meetings, working groups and General Assemblies allow Epioni members not only to be trained but also to cooperate with counterparts from other countries (eg Ireland, France, etc.)
- 4) **EASPD:** The European Association of Service Providers
- 5) **EFGCP:** The European Forum for Good Clinical Practice
- 6) **International Heart Hub (iHHub)**
- 7) We represented the perspective of the caregiver (e.g. in Patient Advisory Board, Stakeholder Forum etc): **EPTRI**, **IMI RADAR-CNS** and in **BBMRI-ERIK**.



## European Projects

We are pleased to announce that the EPIONI Erasmus+ KA1 project entitled



“Educating Informal Caregivers” was approved by the Greek National Agency IKY. This project will offer training to EPIONI Greek Carers Network members in effective management of EU funded

projects. It will also facilitate the exchange of best practices and the

understanding of the European dimension

through study visits in various organizations with

considerable experience in the support of informal

caregivers. The project will train carers’

representatives from Greece and facilitate the



transfer of know-how from organizations like Care Alliance (Ireland),

Compagnie des Aidants (France), ANT (Italy), and Eurocarers (Belgium). The

participants in shadow visits will learn new ways to stimulate the audience of

EPIONI workshops and events and practice new skills for planning and



managing annual educational

projects for informal caregivers.

The “Educating Informal



Caregivers” project will enable caregivers from Greece to build on acquired skills and experiences and be in a position to disseminate the results and extend collaboration with other EU countries. The project will kick-off in October 2018 and will run until July 2020.

### **Learning for Caregivers in Europe - #Learn4carers**

We are pleased to announce that the EPIONI Erasmus+ KA2 project, entitled “Learning for Caregivers in Europe” (2018-1-EL01-KA204-047837), was approved by the Hellenic State Scholarships Foundation (IKY)



This 2-year project will enable caregiver representatives from Greece (EPIONI and PEPSAEE) to exchange good practices with organizations which have extensive long term experience in Ireland (Care Alliance Ireland), France (Compagnie des Aidants) and Belgium (Eurocarers). The Learn4Carers



project will allow representatives of informal carers from 4 European countries to showcase good practices from their countries. These successful local practices or awareness-raising campaigns can be an excellent example for other countries. The program will start in December 2018 and will last until the end of November 2020. The kick-off meeting will be

held in Athens on 11 and 12 February 2019. The meeting will involve, in addition to the members of the partnership, representatives from partners from Greece and the EU. More information is available on the project website:

<https://learn4carers.eu/>

## **Linking Partners to Share Good Practices for Social Inclusion of Mental Health.**

This Erasmus+ KA2 program (2018-1-TR01-KA202-058739), in which the coordinating partner is the Istanbul Health Directorate, was approved by the Erasmus+ National Authority of Turkey. This two-year project is part of the VET (Vocational Education and Training) category and will provide opportunities for organisations from Greece (EPIONI), Italy (Consortio SGS), Slovenia (Slovenian Association of Mental Health) and Croatia (Vrapce University Psychiatric Clinic) to exchange good practices and provide education on the issue of the social integration of people with psychiatric experience. According to the proposal, transnational meetings will be held in Turkey and Italy and five-day educational activities in Croatia, Greece and Slovenia.



## **Tools & Skills for Emotional Management.**



In this Erasmus + KA1 program (2018-1-EL01-KA104-047332), members of the EPIONI association will be trained in Emotional Management in Spain. The co-ordinating partner of the project is the Greek body "Edrase" in cooperation with the Spanish educational institution "Permacultura Cantabria". The duration of the seminar in Cantabria will be from 17 to 27 March 2019.



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