

# Abstracts

**Rick Kwekkeboom**

***The role of provincial authorities in the Dutch mental healthcare***

This contribution deals with the role the provincial authorities in The Netherlands are expected to play in establishing regional orientated mental health care. The information on which this article is based is obtained from the results of a separate investigation, which formed a part of the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office's project 'Integral mental health care'. Within the framework of this investigation interviews were held with social servants, responsible for the provincial policy in this area.

The provincial authorities only have few tasks where health care policy is concerned and even fewer of them have a legal base. In her Governmental Covenant the second 'Purple' coalition however stated that the provincial authorities had to stimulate and initiate the bringing about of so-called Regional Care Charts. These Charts are, in the Covenants' words, defined as 'a sketchy policy document on regional health care that, within financial constraints, has come about in cooperation with the regional

care insurance offices, interest groups of health care users, care providing organizations en local authorities'.

The results of the investigation show that the main part of the social servants' time indeed is dedicated to consultation about Regional Charts on Mental Health Care and to writing them. By the same token a relatively large part of the (modest) budget available for (provincial) mental health care is deployed for activities and arrangements that directly result from these Charts.

The provincial authorities are found to pay much attention to strengthening the care users' position, both during the consultation process and in subsidizing new projects. Likewise they try to integrate the development of regional or provincial mental health care policy in development processes on other policy fields, such as general health care, housing, employment and economy.

## Deirdre Curtin

The contribution casts a critical eye over the recently published White Paper on European Governance by the European Commission which it was claimed would constitute the 'defining moment' of the Prodi Commission. In particular it examines the scope of public administration which takes place at the level of the EU and concludes that the Commission adopted an overly self-focussed approach in its White paper. Moreover, given the importance of the subject of governance in the EU, in particular the sub-text of enhancing democracy in EU decision-making, the failure not only to link in with the wider institutional debate on the future of Europe as to take an innovative and state of the art approach to the subject under consideration in the specific context of the EU, is regretted. Finally, the thinness of the debate on information and communications policy is highlighted and an attempt is made to offer some very brief suggestions as to how the technology of ICT might be relevant to the debate on the changing relationship between citizen and public administration also at the level of the EU.