First Fortnight is an Irish charity that challenges mental health prejudice through cultural action and the provision of creative therapy to marginalised groups.

Since 2009 First Fortnight have produced 7 national mental health arts festivals challenging mental health prejudice and ending stigma. Last year’s edition saw over 8000 people attend 105 events across 17 counties.

In 2016 the first European Mental Health Arts Festival was hosted in Athens Greece as part of a Creative Europe funded project with partners from Greece, Ireland, Spain, Italy and Lithuania. The project led to the formation of the NEFELE (Networking European FEstivals for Mental LifeEnhancement) network.

In 2017 we outbid 12 countries from 22 organisations to host Europe’s Mental Health festival in Ireland. For decades Ireland has been home to citizens from every corner of Europe who have enriched our society. Our presentation this festival will provide a platform to embrace the vibrancy of modern Ireland but also to reflect on the pressures that modern society can place on our mental health, with an emphasis on the European community. We are challenging artists to submit artistically ambitious mental health themed work with an emphasis on multicultural themes and providing voices for the people of Europe.

Accessibility and inclusiveness are the cornerstones of our programming policy as mental health applies to all of us and is something unifying that transcends the borders of European countries. We believe this festival will help strengthen the idea of the Irish seeing themselves as European and be a strong reminder of the many opportunities the European Union offers its citizens.

The festival will be held in January 2019 in Dublin & regional venues but with satellite events planned throughout the country.