



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EUROPEAN MENTAL HEALTH CITIES NETWORK (EMHCN)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

PREAMBLE

The undersigned cities and municipalities:

- Recognising that mental health is a fundamental determinant of public health, social cohesion, and sustainable development;
- Acknowledging the pivotal role of local authorities, as proximity-based governance units, in promoting mental health and community well-being;
- Committed to the European values of human dignity, inclusion, equality, territorial cohesion, and social justice;
- Aligning with the strategic objectives of the European Union, the World Health Organization, and other leading global frameworks on mental health;

Formally agree to establish the European Mental Health Cities Network (EMHCN) as a collaborative structure among municipalities, based on the following terms:

1. PURPOSE

This Memorandum sets out the joint commitment of the signatory cities to create, develop and consolidate the EMHCN, in accordance with the principles defined in the Charter of Principles, which forms an integral part of this Memorandum.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE NETWORK

The EMHCN shall pursue the following core objectives:

- Promote integrated, evidence-informed local public policies in the field of mental health;
- Foster the exchange of best practices, knowledge, and experience between European cities;
- Develop and implement collaborative projects, with a focus on innovation and social equity;
- Enhance technical and institutional capacity at municipal level;
- Facilitate access to European and international funding;
- Contribute actively to the shaping of European public mental health policy.

3. COMMITMENTS OF SIGNATORY CITIES

By signing this Memorandum, the cities and municipalities commit to:

- Join the Network as founding or participating members;
- Designate an official representative to the EMHCN;
- Implement local actions aligned with the Network's principles and objectives;
- Actively engage in the General Assembly and relevant Working Groups;
- Promote intersectoral cooperation and citizen participation in mental health at local level.

4. GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION

The governance and functioning of the EMHCN shall be guided by:

- The **Charter of Principles**;
- The **Operational Guidelines**, to be approved by the General Assembly;
- The decisions taken by the Network's official bodies, including the General Assembly, the Executive Secretariat, and the Advisory Council.

5. NATURE OF THE AGREEMENT

This Memorandum:

- Does not constitute a legally binding agreement;
- Represents a political, ethical, and strategic commitment among the parties;
- May be complemented by formal protocols or project-based agreements within the scope of the Network.

6. DURATION AND REVIEW

- This Memorandum enters into effect upon signature by each participating city or municipality;
- It may be reviewed by mutual agreement of the parties or by decision of the General Assembly of the EMHCN.

7. FINAL PROVISIONS

- Membership is open to new cities subject to acceptance of the Charter of Principles;
- Official versions of this Memorandum shall be provided in both English and Portuguese;
- Signatures may be collected either in person or through digital means.

Promoting City,

/ Mário Constantino Lopes/

Mayor of Barcelos

Member City,

/Sameiro Araújo/

Vice-Mayor of Braga