

MINUTES OF THE 2nd MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT European Mental Health Cities Network (EMHCN)

Date: 27 February 2026

Format: Online meeting

Duration: 1h30

Participants: Cities represented in the Executive Secretariat: Barcelos, Braga, Murcia and Athens, including their respective technical and political representatives.

1. Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by the Councillor of the City of Barcelos, who welcomed the participants and framed the meeting as the second meeting of the Executive Secretariat following the 3rd General Assembly held on 20 January 2026.

The strategic importance of the meeting was emphasised in order to consolidate the operational functioning of the Network, ensure institutional coherence, and strengthen the visibility of the EMHCN as a structured and action-oriented European platform for municipal mental health policies.

The Councillor presented the agenda and then gave the floor to Dr. Miguel Durães for the operational management of the meeting.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda, previously circulated, was approved unanimously, with no amendments proposed.

3. Follow-up on the Decisions of the 3rd General Assembly

An analysis was conducted on the current status of the implementation of the decisions adopted at the Assembly of 20 January 2026, with particular reference to:

- Establishment of the Advisory Council;
- Procedure for the admission of new cities;
- Preparation of the Annual Activity Plan (AAP) and the 2026 Budgetary Framework.

It was confirmed that the minutes and recordings of the Assembly had been shared, as well as a summary of the decisions taken, ensuring the follow-up of the processes defined.

4. EMHCN Advisory Council

4.1 Consolidation of the Process

The Executive Secretariat defined the operational phase of the establishment of the Advisory Council:

- Current status of nominations from member cities;
- Final validation of the consolidated list of entities and experts to be contacted;
- Planning of the formal communication and the sending of the Membership Confirmation Form;
- Timeline for the formal establishment of the Council, expected by the end of June 2026.

The Membership Confirmation Form was approved and authorised for immediate distribution.

4.2 Consolidated List of Entities and Experts

The consolidated list of entities and experts proposed by the member cities was presented. With no corrections proposed, the list was formally confirmed.

5. Open Call for the Admission of New Cities

- The Information Note was sent to Portuguese municipalities and to EMHCN members;
- Around 15 cities have expressed interest, although this has not yet been formally submitted;
- Support was requested from the cities represented in the Secretariat for dissemination, using regional networks, academic and institutional partnerships, national associations of municipalities, and direct contacts.

The process will proceed as approved by the General Assembly, with evaluation and political validation according to the established timeline.

6. Annual Activity Plan (AAP) and 2026 Budgetary Framework

The AAP and the 2026 Budgetary Framework highlight:

- **Governance and Institutional Activities Pillar:** monthly Secretariat meetings, coordination of the Advisory Committee, management of the Open Call, institutional representation, and communication;

- **Programmatic Pillar:** mental health actions targeting children, young people, adults and older persons, housing, employment, education, family support, social protection, advocacy, socio-occupational and cultural development;
- **Cross-cutting Instruments:** EMHCN Online Manual and the European Capacity-Building Programme for Municipalities;
- **Preparatory Processes:** structured collection of municipal practices, contributions from the Advisory Council, and mapping of European funding opportunities.

The Secretariat approved the preliminary structure of the AAP and the Budgetary Framework and authorised the distribution of the contributions template to the cities in order to consolidate the final version to be submitted to the General Assembly in March 2026.

7. Institutional Communication and Network Identity

7.1 Website

The City of Braga presented the development of the EMHCN website. All members recognised and congratulated the work carried out. The website will include institutional information, members, the Advisory Council, founding cities, documents, minutes and contacts, and will also serve as a formal communication instrument of the Network.

The creation of a WhatsApp group was proposed in order to streamline the operational communication of the Executive Secretariat.

7.2 EMHCN Logo

Following the analysis of the proposals, the logo proposed by the City of Braga (option 1) was approved as the official visual identity of the EMHCN, which appears in the header of the present document.

7.3 Update of Institutional Contacts

The institutional contacts of the cities represented in the Executive Secretariat were updated.

8. Strategic Institutional Coordination

- **Invitation to new cities:** The cities of Mechelen (Belgium) and those from the Trieste region, including Gorizia (Italy), were included in the EMHCN Open Call, in full alignment with the governance procedure validated by the General Assembly.

- **International positioning:** Potential cooperation within the framework of the United Nations was also discussed, aiming to strengthen the institutional credibility of the Network and its contribution to the global mental health agenda.
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9. Other Matters and Next Steps

- **Next meeting of the Executive Secretariat:** 27 March 2026, 14:00 (Portugal) / 15:00 CET;
 - **Items to be submitted to the next General Assembly:** establishment of the Advisory Committee, applications from new cities, AAP and Budgetary Framework, visual identity and communication;
 - **Distribution of responsibilities:** sending of confirmation forms, follow-up of the Open Call, collection of contributions for the AAP, development of the website, and consolidation of the logo;
 - **Creation of a WhatsApp group of the Executive Secretariat to facilitate operational communication.**
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10. Closing

With no further matters to discuss, the meeting was closed by the Councillor of the City of Barcelos, who thanked all participants for their presence and underlined the importance of the decisions taken for the future of the EMHCN.