

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT MEETING

European Mental Health Cities Network (EMHCN)

Date: January 16, 2026

Format: Online meeting

Duration: Approximately 1h45

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

1. Opening of the Meeting

The meeting was opened by the representative of the City of Barcelos, who welcomed the participants and framed the session as the first follow-up meeting of the Executive Secretariat after the formal establishment of the EMHCN and the election of its bodies on December 19.

The strategic importance of this meeting was emphasized for consolidating the Network as a credible, structured, and action-oriented European platform in the field of city-level mental health policies.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda, previously sent to all members, was submitted for approval.

No objections or proposals for amendments were raised, and the agenda was unanimously approved.

3. Establishment of the EMHCN Advisory Committee

3.1 Approval of the Procedure

A proposal for the procedure regarding the establishment and operation of the EMHCN Advisory Committee, previously sent by email, was presented and discussed.

The Advisory Committee was defined as a consultative, non-executive body tasked with providing independent strategic and technical advice to the Executive Secretariat and the General Assembly, in alignment with European and international principles on mental health, human rights, scientific evidence, and good governance.

After a general review of the document, the procedure was unanimously approved and will be submitted for formal validation by the General Assembly.

3.2 Proposals of Entities and Experts

Proposals for entities and experts submitted by member cities were reviewed, including those from Valencia, Ceuta, Seville, Avilés, and Murcia, covering public institutions, universities, professional associations, and recognized mental health experts.

The Executive Secretariat decided to approve the initial list of proposals, recommending its submission to the General Assembly. After validation, formal invitations will be sent to the selected entities and experts, accompanied by the terms of acceptance.

It was also noted that additional proposals may be submitted in future phases, in accordance with the approved procedure.

4. Institutional Communication and External Positioning

The current presence of the EMHCN on the European Mental Health Capital website was reviewed, recognizing its usefulness in an initial phase.

However, there was consensus on the need to develop a dedicated EMHCN website, and it was decided that:

The City of Braga will coordinate the development of an initial website proposal;

The work will be carried out in coordination with the other cities of the Executive Secretariat;

The EMHCN institutional email address will continue to serve as the formal channel for external communication.

It was also decided to proceed with the creation of an institutional EMHCN logo, with the following agreements:

Each city of the Executive Secretariat will submit logo proposals;

The final decision will be made jointly in a future meeting or electronically.

Additionally, the collection and sharing of institutional contacts of the Executive Secretariat cities and the creation of an informal internal communication channel for operational coordination were agreed upon.

5. Preparation of the 3rd General Assembly

The provisional agenda for the 3rd General Assembly of the EMHCN, scheduled for January 20, 2026, was presented.

The Executive Secretariat decided to:

Approve the provisional agenda;

Send the official notice and approved documentation to all member cities.

6. Summary of Decisions and Next Steps

The Executive Secretariat decided to:

- Confirm its internal operational mechanisms;
- Approve the procedure for the admission of new cities to the EMHCN;
- Approve the model and procedure for the establishment of the Advisory Committee;
- Define initial guidelines for institutional communication;
- Submit all decisions for validation by the General Assembly.

The next Executive Secretariat meeting was scheduled for February 27, 2026, at 15:00 CET.

Preparatory work to be carried out before the next meeting includes:

- Annual Activity Plan;
- Budget framework and funding opportunities;
- Initial website proposal;
- Logo proposals;
- Potential new applications to the Advisory Committee and the Network.

7. Closing

With no further matters to discuss, the representative of the City of Barcelos thanked all participants, highlighting the progress made and the importance of the decisions for the future of the EMHCN, and the meeting was adjourned.