european mental health

Proposal for the Admission of New Cities to the European Mental Health Cities Network (EMHCN)

1. Purpose and Legal-Institutional Framework

The European Mental Health Cities Network (EMHCN) is governed by its **Charter of Principles**, the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**, and the **Rules of Procedure**, which together define its mission, values, governance, and membership conditions.

In accordance with these founding documents, the admission of new cities to the EMHCN must be conducted through a **clear, transparent, and legally coherent procedure**, ensuring:

- formal political commitment at municipal level;
- explicit acceptance of the Network's principles and rules;
- institutional legitimacy and accountability.

This proposal establishes the procedure for the **admission of new cities**, fully aligned with the Network's normative framework and European standards of good governance.

2. Model of Functioning

2.1 Nature of Membership

- EMHCN membership is **institutional and voluntary**, open exclusively to **cities and municipalities located in European countries**, in accordance with the Charter of Principles and the Rules of Procedure.
- Membership is formalised through:
    - the **signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**; and
    - the **explicit acceptance of the Charter of Principles and the Rules of Procedure**.
- Membership implies both **political endorsement** and **technicaloperational engagement**, through designated representatives.

2.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Member Cities

Upon admission and signature of the relevant documents, member cities:

- acquire the right to participate with voice and vote in the **General Assembly**;
- may propose initiatives, projects, and amendments in accordance with the Rules of Procedure;
- commit to implementing local policies aligned with the Charter of Principles;
- agree to comply with the governance, ethical, and communication standards of the EMHCN.

3. Criteria for Integration

3.1 Mandatory Eligibility Criteria

Cities applying for EMHCN membership must demonstrate:

- a **formal political decision** by the competent municipal authority expressing the will to join the EMHCN;
- readiness to **sign the Memorandum of Understanding**;
- explicit acceptance of the **Charter of Principles** and the **Rules of Procedure**;
- alignment with **human rights-based, evidence-informed, and community-oriented approaches** to mental health.

3.2 Institutional and Operational Capacity

Applicant cities must designate:

- an **official political representative** to the EMHCN;
- a **technical focal point** responsible for coordination and follow-up;

3.3 Safeguards

- Commitment to ethical standards, inclusion, non-discrimination, and transparency;
- Respect for data protection and institutional integrity;
- Absence of conflicts of interest incompatible with EMHCN principles.

4. Phased Procedure for Admission

The admission of new cities shall follow a **formal, phased procedure**, ensuring clarity, fairness, and compliance with the EMHCN governance framework.

Phase 1 – Launch of the Call for Cities

(Executive Secretariat)

- Launch of a **Call for Expressions of Interest** following approval of this procedure.
- Dissemination through:
    - direct contact with identified European cities;
    - cities previously approached or expressing interest;
    - a general call disseminated through the institutional networks of the four cities represented in the Executive Secretariat.

Phase 2 – Submission of Expressions of Interest

(Applicant Cities)

Expressions of Interest shall include:

- a formal letter/e-mail of political intent;
- confirmation of willingness to sign the MoU and accept the Charter and Rules;

- brief description of local mental health priorities and policies;
- designation of political and technical contact points.

Phase 3 – Technical and Institutional Assessment

(Executive Secretariat)

- Verification of compliance with eligibility and integration criteria;
- Assessment of strategic relevance, geographical balance, and complementarity;
- Preparation of a consolidated proposal for admission.

Phase 4 – Decision by the General Assembly

(General Assembly)

- Submission of proposed new member cities to the General Assembly.
- **Formal decision on admission**, in accordance with Article 7 of the Rules of Procedure.

Phase 5 – Formalisation of Membership

(Executive Secretariat)

- Signature of the **Memorandum of Understanding** by admitted cities;
- Formal registration of acceptance of the Charter of Principles and Rules of Procedure;
- Integration into EMHCN governance, communication, and working structures.

5. Preliminary List of Cities to Be Contacted

(Following Approval of the Procedure)

Following approval, the Executive Secretariat shall activate a **preliminary and non-exclusive list of cities**, including:

- European cities identified as strategically relevant;
- European cities previously contacted but not yet admitted;
- Cities that have formally expressed interest;
- Additional cities identified through the institutional networks of the Executive Secretariat cities.

6. Review and Progressive Development

- The admission procedure may be reviewed periodically by the Executive Secretariat.
- Any amendments require approval by the **General Assembly**, in line with the Rules of Procedure.
- The model ensures **progressive, quality-driven expansion**, safeguarding the Network's credibility and coherence.

7. Decision

Decision requested:

➞ Approval of the procedure for the admission of new cities to the EMHCN, submission of the proposal to the General Assembly for formal validation, and authorisation to launch a new call for European cities, followed by the formalisation of membership through signature of the Memorandum of Understanding and acceptance of the Charter of Principles and Rules of Procedure.