

## **Proposal for the Establishment of the EMHCN Advisory Committee**

*(European Mental Health Cities Network – EMHCN)*

### **1. Purpose and Rationale**

The European Mental Health Cities Network (EMHCN), as a structured platform for political coordination, knowledge exchange, and joint action among European cities, requires a robust and credible **Advisory Committee** to ensure the **technical, scientific, and strategic quality** of its work.

The Advisory Committee is conceived as a **non-executive, consultative body**, providing independent expertise to support:

- strategic positioning of the EMHCN at European level;
- technical and scientific soundness of joint initiatives;
- coherence with EU policy frameworks, funding instruments, and regulatory standards.

This proposal follows principles of **good governance, transparency, proportionality, inclusiveness, and accountability**, in line with European Commission guidelines and established practices of European expert and advisory bodies.

### **2. Mission and Role of the Advisory Committee**

#### **2.1 Mission**

The Advisory Committee shall support the EMHCN by providing **independent, high-level advice and strategic guidance** on matters related to:

- mental health policy, governance, and multi-level coordination;

- **evidence-based, rights-based, and person-centred approaches**, in line with European values and standards;
- innovation, prevention, promotion, and community-based mental health systems;
- ethical standards, inclusion, participation, and equity;
- alignment and coherence with **European and international policy frameworks**, strategies, and funding instruments.

In fulfilling its mission, the Advisory Committee shall also contribute to **strengthening the technical and scientific robustness** of EMHCN joint actions, projects, and strategic initiatives.

## 2.2 Role and Scope

The Advisory Committee shall:

- advise the **Executive Secretariat** and the **General Assembly** upon request, in a consultative and non-binding capacity;
- contribute to the **strategic orientation, coherence, and long-term positioning** of the EMHCN at European level;
- provide **guidance and validation** for:
  - joint actions and coordinated initiatives of the EMHCN; ◦ proposals and candidatures to European and international funding programmes; ◦ development of shared projects, pilot actions, and joint responses involving multiple cities;
- support the **quality, credibility, and consistency** of EMHCN initiatives, public positions, and institutional communications;
- facilitate structured dialogue and knowledge exchange between:
  - member cities; ◦ academia and research institutions; ◦ civil society organisations, including service user and family associations;

- public institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

The Advisory Committee acts exclusively in a **consultative and non-binding capacity** and does not assume executive or decision-making functions.

### 3. Model of Functioning

#### 3.1 Nature and Status

- The Advisory Committee operates as an **independent consultative body** within the EMHCN governance framework.
- Its opinions and recommendations are advisory and non-binding.
- It respects the political leadership and decision-making authority of the General Assembly and the Executive Secretariat.

#### 3.2 Composition

The Advisory Committee shall be composed of a **limited, balanced, and manageable number of members**, ensuring:

- geographical balance across EU regions;
- diversity of disciplinary, institutional, and sectoral expertise;
- gender balance and inclusiveness;
- prevention of conflicts of interest.

Members may be drawn from:

- academic and research institutions;
- public health and mental health policy bodies;
- scientific and professional associations;
- civil society, service user and family organisations;
- relevant European or international institutions or networks.

### 3.3 Working Modalities

- The Advisory Committee shall meet **at least once per year**, preferably online.
- Additional meetings or written consultations may be convened when required, particularly in relation to:
  - preparation of joint project proposals; ◦
  - strategic initiatives or candidatures; ◦
  - major policy or positioning documents.
- The Executive Secretariat shall provide logistical and administrative support.
- Outputs may include:
  - written opinions and recommendations; ◦
  - technical or scientific validation notes; ◦
  - thematic contributions supporting EMHCN initiatives.

This meeting frequency is intended to **reinforce the strategic value, continuity, and effectiveness** of the Advisory Committee's contribution.

## 4. Criteria for Integration

### 4.1 Eligibility Criteria

Entities or individuals proposed to the Advisory Committee must demonstrate:

- recognised expertise and experience in mental health or closely related fields;
- alignment with **human rights-based, evidence-informed, and community-centred approaches**;
- institutional credibility and ethical standards consistent with EU values;
- capacity to contribute at a **strategic and advisory level**, rather than operational delivery.

## 4.2 Safeguards and Exclusion Criteria

- Absence of conflicts of interest that could compromise independence;
- No commercial, lobbying, or advocacy activities incompatible with EMHCN principles;
- Formal acceptance of the **consultative, independent, and nonremunerated** nature of the role.

## 5. Phased Procedure for Constitution and Adhesion

The constitution of the Advisory Committee shall follow a **phased, transparent, and proportionate process**, ensuring legitimacy and manageability.

### Phase 1 – Approval of the Model

*(Executive Secretariat)*

- Approval of the Advisory Committee model, principles, and procedure.
- Submission of the proposal to the General Assembly.

### Phase 2 – Validation by the General Assembly

*(General Assembly)*

- Formal validation of:
  - the mission and role of the Advisory Committee;
  - integration criteria;
  - phased approach to constitution.

### Phase 3 – Identification of Proposed Entities

*(Executive Secretariat, with input from cities)*

- Compilation of a preliminary list of proposed entities based on:
  - proposals from member cities;

- strategic relevance, balance, and complementarity.

## **Phase 4 – Formal Invitations and Constitution**

*(Executive Secretariat)*

- Formal invitations sent following validation.
- Confirmation of participation and acceptance of terms.
- Public communication of the constituted Advisory Committee.

## **6. Review and Progressive Development**

- The functioning and composition of the Advisory Committee shall be reviewed periodically.
- Adjustments may be proposed by the Executive Secretariat and validated by the General Assembly.
- The model supports **progressive consolidation**, ensuring quality over scale.

## **7. Decision**

**Decision requested:**

→ Approval of the procedure for the constitution of the EMHCN Advisory Committee and submission of this proposal to the General Assembly for formal validation.