

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	MIND Twinning: Cross-Cultural Mental Health Exchange
Participant:	EVROPAIKO KENTRO KOINONIKON EPISTIMON, POLITISMOU KAI ATHLITISMOU
PIC number:	887557664

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	1		
Event name:	MIND Town Twinning Event		
Type:	Event		
In situ/online:	in-situ		
Location:	Imathia, Greece		
Date(s):	17.05.2026 – 19.05.2026		
Website(s) (if any):	https://equaline.gr/mind/		
Participants			
Female:	171		
Male:	86		
Non-binary:	1		
From country 1 [Greece]:	43		
From country 2 [Serbia]:	51		
From country 3 [Italy]:	4		
From country 4 [Bulgaria]:	155		
From country 5 [Romania]:	5		
Total number of participants:	258	From total number of countries:	5
Description			
Provide a short description of the event and its activities.			
The MIND Twinning: Cross-Cultural Mental Health Exchange took place in Imathia, Greece, from 17 to 19 May 2026. The event was coordinated by the <i>Evropaiko Kentro Koinonikon Epistimon, Politismou kai Athlitismou (EQUALINE)</i> and brought together local authorities, civil society organizations, mental health professionals, youth representatives, educators, and citizens from five European countries.			

Greece, Serbia, Italy, Bulgaria, and Romania, in an open and participatory environment focused on promoting mental well-being and social inclusion.

Designed as an interactive international forum, the event provided a platform for dialogue, reflection, and collaborative learning around culturally sensitive mental health practices. Participants explored key aspects of community resilience, youth empowerment, intercultural dialogue, and the reduction of social stigma surrounding mental health, while exchanging perspectives on how to build more inclusive and compassionate European societies. The twinning format fostered meaningful interaction among partners from diverse municipal backgrounds, encouraging active community alignment with key European priorities. The programme was structured around the three main activities foreseen in the MIND proposal: the “Bridging Cultures, Bridging Minds: Cross-Cultural Mental Health Conference”, the “Global Minds Debate: Exploring Mental Health Perspectives” Workshop, and the “Unity in Diversity: Cultural Festival & Mental Health Exhibition”. Through these complementary activities, participants combined expert input, intercultural dialogue, interactive discussion, cultural expression and community engagement around mental health and well-being.

Throughout the programme, particular emphasis was placed on understanding the modern factors impacting psychological safety. During the thematic session on **Anxiety, Loneliness, and Social Exclusion**, participants examined emotional well-being in contemporary post-pandemic societies and explored grass-roots initiatives for community support systems. Discussions highlighted the critical gaps in accessible care and the distinct ways different demographics, including youth and vulnerable populations, experience social isolation.

A central element of the event was analyzing the intersection between modern information spaces and public wellness. Through dedicated sessions on **Media and Mental Health Awareness**, attendees analyzed the specific psychological risks tied to modern digital culture and continuous information overload. These exchanges encouraged participants to share professional experiences and brainstorm ways the media can instead be leveraged as a powerful tool to spread mental health awareness and break down cultural prejudices.

Special attention was given to elevating wellness to a systemic level. Participants joined structural debates viewing **Mental Health as a Social and Democratic Priority**, looking closely at how social well-being directly shapes active citizenship and democratic participation. This comprehensive approach aimed at establishing new civic standards, ensuring that mental health support is viewed not just as clinical care, but as a foundational pillar of equitable, healthy social governance. Particular attention was also given to youth participation and youth-led volunteer initiatives for mental health. Participants discussed opportunities for young people to contribute to mental health initiatives, the importance of equal opportunities and the role of volunteering in strengthening community-based mental health action.

The “Global Minds Debate: Exploring Mental Health Perspectives” Workshop provided an interactive space for participants to exchange views on how culture influences mental health practices and access to care. Discussions addressed the relationship between healthcare and culture, culturally sensitive mental health practices, cross-border cooperation, social justice, equity and equal access to mental health support. Participants were encouraged to compare different cultural perspectives, identify common challenges and develop shared conclusions and recommendations.

The conference component also introduced the objectives of the MIND Twinning project and highlighted the opportunities offered by the CERV Town Twinning framework. Participants discussed culturally inclusive approaches to mental health, relevant European initiatives and good practices, available resources and funding opportunities, and the importance of cooperation between communities and organisations in developing more inclusive mental health responses.

The event successfully contributed to the broader goals of the MIND project by fostering transnational solidarity, encouraging localized healthcare dialogue, and building long-term institutional networks across Southern and Eastern Europe.

Agenda Overview

Day 1 - Sunday, 17 May 2026

Theme: Arrival and Welcome

Venue: in situ, Thessaloniki, Greece

The first day marked the beginning of the MIND Twinning Exchange with the arrival and welcome of the international delegations in Thessaloniki. Participants from Greece, Serbia, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania had the opportunity to meet one another, become familiar with the participating organisations and begin exchanging expectations and perspectives ahead of the main programme.

The informal character of the day encouraged interaction between the different national groups and helped create an open atmosphere for the discussions that would follow. The evening concluded with a

welcome dinner, offering further opportunities for networking, intercultural exchange and relationship-building among participants.

Day 2 – Monday, 18 May 2026

Theme: Mental Health, Inclusion and Community Well-being

Venue: in situ, Imathia, Greece

10:00 – 10:30 | Registrations

10:30 – 11:00 | Opening Session & Event Introduction

Speaker: Emily Fountzoula (International & European Studies Graduate & EU Project Manager)

Welcome greetings from the host municipality and brief institutional greetings from participating official organizations: EQUALINE, Danube 1245, Comune di Soriano nel Cimino, Obshtina Strumyani, and Comuna Victoria.

11:00 – 11:45 | Thematic Session 1.1: Anxiety, Loneliness, and Social Exclusion

Speaker: Mrs. Stella Ntouvi (Psychologist & EU Project Manager)

Topic: Focus on anxiety and emotional well-being in contemporary societies, alongside social inclusion and community support initiatives. The session also introduced the MIND Twinning project and the CERV Town Twinning initiative, with emphasis on opportunities for culturally inclusive mental health care and the importance of addressing cultural differences in access to support.

11:45 – 12:30 | Thematic Session 1.2: Media and Mental Health Awareness

Speaker: Mrs. Alexandra Pavlou (Journalist & EU Project Manager)

Topic: Discussions regarding the risks of digital culture, information overload, and the constructive power of media in mental health awareness. The discussion also included European initiatives, good practices and examples of cross-cultural cooperation in mental health, highlighting how organisations and communities can exchange knowledge and resources to promote inclusive mental health practices.

12:30 – 13:15 | Thematic Session 1.3: Mental Health as a Social and Democratic Priority

Speaker: Mr. Christodoulos Archontis (Political Scientist & EU Project Manager)

Topic: Examination of the connection between mental health, active citizenship, social well-being, and democratic participation. The session also addressed youth-led volunteer initiatives for mental health, equal opportunities for young people, community participation and available European opportunities for supporting mental health actions.

14:00 – 14:30 | Closing Remarks

Coordination: Emily Fountzoula (International & European Studies Graduate & EU Project Manager)

Review of the key insights and takeaways from the day's thematic modules.

14:30 – 16:00 | Official Lunch

Group dining to experience traditional Greek cuisine.

19: 30 | Social Dinner

Evening informal networking and cross-cultural socialization.

Day 3 – Tuesday, 19 May 2026

Theme: Reflection, Cooperation and Departure

Venue: in situ, Imathia, Greece

The "Unity in Diversity: Cultural Festival & Mental Health Exhibition" that took place on May 19th brought together cultural expression and mental health awareness in an interactive community setting. Participants explored the relationship between culture and mental well-being through storytelling, creative expression, artistic activities and the presentation of cultural traditions. The activity encouraged participants to share different perspectives on mental health and to identify common values and practices across cultures. Participants had the opportunity to discuss traditional healthcare practices, cultural approaches to well-being, food and culture, and personal and community experiences related to mental health. The activity also highlighted the contribution of culturally diverse mental health advocates and encouraged community engagement, intercultural understanding and the reduction of cultural barriers surrounding mental health.

The final day concluded by focusing on the reflection of the experience of the MIND Twinning Exchange and discussing how the main ideas and lessons from the programme could be carried forward.

Participants shared their impressions, identified key takeaways and considered how greater awareness of mental health and social inclusion could be promoted within their own communities. The closing exchanges also provided an opportunity to discuss continued cooperation among the partner organisations and to reinforce the connections developed during the event.

Conclusions

The MIND Twinning Exchange successfully demonstrated the critical importance of mental health awareness, cross-cultural solidarity, and community support networks in strengthening social resilience across Europe. Through thematic presentations, interactive structural debates, and collaborative networking, participants from five European nations exchanged valuable cultural perspectives, identified systemic gaps in accessible care, and developed shared insights for mitigating loneliness and social exclusion. The event reinforced the urgent need to destigmatize mental health challenges, protect psychological well-being against digital information overload, and integrate emotional wellness as a foundational pillar of democratic and equitable civic governance. Furthermore, it highlighted the vital role of sustained cooperation between local authorities, civil society organizations, healthcare professionals, and international stakeholders in building more inclusive, transparent, and supportive communities.

The event also directly implemented the three complementary dimensions of the MIND proposal: knowledge exchange through the Cross-Cultural Mental Health Conference, participatory dialogue through the Global Minds Debate, and intercultural community engagement through the Cultural Festival and Mental Health Exhibition. Together, these activities enabled participants to exchange practices, reflect on cultural differences, discuss common challenges and promote greater understanding of culturally sensitive mental health approaches. The outcomes of this exchange contributed directly to the overarching objectives of the MIND project and successfully laid the groundwork for continued transnational action toward a healthier, more compassionate, and socially unified European society.

Dissemination Activities

For dissemination and visibility purposes, the MIND Twinning Exchange in Imathia was actively promoted through a comprehensive range of communication channels designed to maximize regional and international outreach. A unique visual identity (banner) and dedicated event materials were created and displayed throughout the venue, significantly enhancing the recognition of the MIND project and its core values of social inclusion, mental well-being, and cross-border solidarity.

The host organization, EQUALINE, in close cooperation with the international project partners, disseminated targeted posts and promotional content across their official social media networks, including Facebook and Instagram, highlighting key thematic discussions, expert presentations, and major collaborative outcomes, ensuring that the project's vital messages reached a wider audience of youth, civil society actors, and community stakeholders.

Links:

- <https://equaline.gr/mind/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=122305019768072099&set=a.122100556928072099>
- <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=122305020890072099&set=a.122100556928072099>
- <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=122305021430072099&set=a.122100556928072099>
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/DctI7RGjTTQ/?igsi=Yjllc25zcHo3cTNh>
- <https://www.instagram.com/p/DctJh3qDZOI/?igsi=MWZ1aDVrcGQ1ZXEwbA%3D%3D>
- <https://www.naoussa.gr/news/press/i-naoussa-sto-epikentro-tis-eyropaikis-synergasias-i-ekdilosi-adelfopoiisis-poleon-mind-cross-cultural-mental-health-exchange-ston-dimo-naousas-7770>
- <https://strumyani.org/subsection-432-content.html>
- <https://www.dunav1245.org/en/2026/08/31/mind-cross-cultural-mental-health-exchange-project/>
- <https://comunavictoria.ro/proiecte/>

HISTORY OF CHANGES

VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	08.08.2025	Initial version (new MFF).
