

Meeting Report: General Assembly, CSA BrainHealth

Overview

The first General Assembly (GA) of the [Coordination and Support Action \(CSA\) BrainHealth](#) took place on May 14, 2024, in Berlin, Germany and online. The meeting gathered 73 participants representing the CSA Brain Health partners, funders forum members (i.e., national funding agencies and ministries) and representatives from the European Commission Directorate General Research and Innovation (EC DG-RTD). The assembly aimed to provide an overview of the progress made towards the future European Partnership for Brain Health (EPBH) and to discuss the next steps.

Key Highlights

- **Welcome:** Tanja Fröhlich-Israng from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) and the CSA BrainHealth Coordinator Ulrike Bußhoff (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt Projektträger, DLR-PT) opened the meeting, emphasizing the significance of aligning efforts towards a EPBH, while highlighting progress made since the start of the project.
- **European Commission Perspective on EPBH:** Tim Raemaekers (EC-DG RTD) outlined the EC's vision, objectives, and timeline for the upcoming EPBH. He underlined the importance of request letters to EU member states for preliminary financial commitments, which is a crucial milestone for the partnership's progress.
- **Patient Perspective on brain health:** Astri Arnesen (European Federation of Neurological Associations, EFNA) and Erik van der Eycken (Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Network, GAMIAN-Europe) presented the perspective of people living with brain conditions on brain health, stressing the importance of active involvement in governance and resource allocation within the partnership.

Presentations and Discussions

1. **Roadmap to a EPBH:** Friederike Bathe (DLR-PT) detailed the progress in generating the proposal that will be submitted to the EC, highlighting the mission, vision, and objectives of the EPBH. The discussion emphasized the need for a broader focus on brain health, beyond brain disease .

2. **EPBH Governance and Structure:** Christina Müller (DLR-PT) outlined the proposed governance framework and modes of participation for the future EPBH. The feedback called for a patient advisory board and suggested the inclusion of a vice-chair (in addition to the chair) in the EPBH Governing Board.

3. **Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) - Research Areas of the EP Brain Health:** Etienne Hirsch (INSERM) presented the [development of the SRIA](#), focusing on the brain health research priorities, transversal fields of action and upcoming steps to gather insights from the brain health community. Key feedback included the importance of ensuring diversity in all brain health analysis and addressing the attrition of young researchers.

4. **International and Global Networking:** Frédéric Destrebecq (European Brain Council) and Philippe Vernier (European Brain Research Infrastructures, EBRAINS) introduced current and planned outreach activities to connect with global initiatives in the area of brain health, emphasizing the need for international collaboration to enhance knowledge-sharing and capacity building.

Future Directions

The open discussion underscored the need for a collaborative and coordinated approach to pave the way towards a successful EPBH, coupled with strong financial commitments from both EU member states and funding agencies. The feedback collected from the brain research community will guide the refinement of the partnership proposal and the further development of the SRIA.

Conclusion

The first GA of the CSA BrainHealth was an opportunity to successfully foster a collaborative environment, allowing participants to provide critical feedback and share insights, and engaging with key stakeholders from the community. The GA marked an important moment in the journey towards a successful EPBH, setting the stage for future achievements and collaborative success.

More information

The Coordination and Support Action (CSA) BrainHealth is preparing a European Partnership for Brain Health to structure research and innovation in this area. The ultimate goal is to preserve and promote brain health in society and to enhance the well-being of people with neurological and mental health conditions in Europe and worldwide.

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