



Brain Awareness Week 2026

Introducing the European Partnership for Brain Health

*Empowering and uniting Europe's brain health community
for collaboration, innovation and impact*

Comet, Room 4.4 | 19 March 2026, 08:30 - 14:30

[\(20, Place Stéphanie, 1050 Bruxelles\)](#)

The [European Partnership for Brain Health \(EP BrainHealth\)](#) is a major initiative involving more than 60 participants from 36 countries across Europe and worldwide, co-funded by the European Commission, including primarily national and regional funding organisations, non-funding partners, associated partners, and ad hoc funders contributing to specific calls. It is one of the largest collaborative efforts in brain research worldwide.

As the first public event of the EP BrainHealth since its launch in January 2026, this event aims to introduce and present the vision of the initiative, as well as the concrete plans, support, research, engagement and impact it aims to bring over the next decade and how interdisciplinary collaboration continues to shape the future of brain health research and innovation across Europe and beyond.

Attendees will hear from experts directly involved in the Partnership about upcoming funding opportunities and the intentions to boost dialogue between science and society to ensure research truly serves the needs of patients, caregivers, and communities, addressing today's pressing gaps in brain health and brain research and advancing key EU-level priorities.

The event will provide a unique opportunity for researchers, healthcare professionals, patient advocates, policymakers, and all stakeholders interested in the future of brain research to gain insights into what is ahead in the European brain health research landscape and engage with the wider brain health community.

Agenda

Master of ceremony: Chris Burns (Multilingual journalist, moderator, presenter, trainer, video producer, Burnstorm Communications)

08:30 - 09:15: Welcome Coffee & Registration

09:15 - 09:25: Welcome & Opening

Speaker: Chris Burns (Multilingual journalist, moderator, presenter, trainer, video producer, Burnstorm Communications)

09:25 - 09:35 Keynote 1: Living with Alzheimer's

This keynote speech sheds light on Helen's journey with Alzheimer's disease - from early symptoms to diagnosis to present-day experiences, living and adapting with the disease. Helen will address her journey, offering an insight into how Alzheimer's continues to shape her life and those around her.

Speaker: Helen Rochford-Brennan (Board member, Alzheimer Society of Ireland)

09:35 - 09:55 Keynote 2: Understanding Neuroplasticity: The Brain's Ability to Adapt and Change

This keynote unpacks neuroplasticity - the brain's lifelong capacity to rewire and adapt. The audience will learn about its mechanisms, why and how the brain evolves and adapts, and how appropriate treatment can reshape and alter brain health trajectories.

Speaker: Monica di Luca (Professor of Pharmacology and Vice-Rector for Research and Technology Transfer, University of Milan)

09:55 - 10:15 Presentation: Introduction to EP BrainHealth Priorities

This presentation introduces the European Partnership for Brain Health (EP BrainHealth), outlining its key goals, vision, and mission for the next 7-10 years. It will highlight how EP BrainHealth aims to support brain health research and innovation by strengthening trans-national collaboration and alignment and promoting the translation of results into tailored solutions for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care for all.

Speaker: Katja Huettner (Member of Coordination Team EP BrainHealth, DLR Projektträger)



10:15 - 11:05 Panel 1: Back to Basics: Conducting Research to Improve the Lives of People - Patient, Citizen, and Societal Engagement in EP BrainHealth

This panel refocuses on the core purpose of research, namely, to advance knowledge and drive innovation for and with the people. Panelists will discuss how EP BrainHealth embraces a holistic approach to research that prioritizes community engagement and co-creation, empowering and engaging science, society, and patients through inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration for social innovation. Featuring representatives from ministries of health and patient organizations, the session highlights the continuous link between science and society.

Speakers:

Orla Galvin (Executive Director, European Federation of Neurological Associations - EFNA)

Simone de Ioanna (Executive Director, European Psychiatric Association - EPA)

Melanie Neijts (Senior Policy Officer, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek - NWO)

Nadja Cobal (Head of Sector for Mental Health and Dementia, Ministry of Health Slovenia)

Audience Q&A (10:55-11:05)

11:05 - 11:35 Coffee Break

11:35 - 11:45 Presentation on EP BrainHealth research funding call opportunities

Speaker: Katja Huettner (Member of Coordination Team EP BrainHealth, DLR Projektträger)

11:45 - 12:35 Panel 2: From Research to Impact - Translating Research Findings into Innovative Solutions for Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care

This panel explores how Europe can strengthen the bridge between research and real-world impact, turning scientific results into actionable solutions for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care. Speakers will share perspectives from science, industry, policy, and health systems, discussing how the EP BrainHealth initiative fosters innovation and empowers the next generation of researchers to meet today's pressing needs.



Speakers:

Loredana Babeau-Simulescu (Executive Director, Biomed Alliance Europe)

Matteo Scarabelli (Associate Director Market Access, European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations - EFPIA)

Antonia Mochan (Deputy Head of Unit, EU Policy Lab within the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission - JRC)

Michele Calabró (Executive Director, European Regional and Local Health Authorities - EUREGHA)

Audience Q&A (12:25-12:35)

12:35 - 13:15 Roundtable Outlook on European and Global Collaboration

This roundtable examines how science diplomacy and international collaboration can strengthen Europe's global competitiveness in science and innovation. Discussions will explore EP BrainHealth's stakeholder engagement as one example, alongside broader strategies for aligning priorities through diplomatic channels, policy integration, and cross-border partnerships.

Speakers:

Frédéric Destrebecq (Executive Director, European Brain Council - EBC)

Jan Marco Muller (Team leader Global Approach, Multilateral Dialogue and Science Diplomacy, European Commission, DG Research and Innovation)

Laura Kreiling (Policy Analyst, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - OECD)

Audience Q&A (13:05-13:15)

13:15 - 13:20 Closing Remarks

Speakers:

Jolien Roovers (Policy Advisor, Flemish Government Department of Work, Economy, Science, Innovation and Social economy - VLO-WEWIS)

13:30 - 14:30 Networking Lunch