



BRAINSTORMING THE FUTURE OF BRAIN HEALTH

Research, Collaboration and Impact



NCBR/BSP
RUE BELLIARD 40, BRUSSELS



12 NOVEMBER
12:00-18:00



Event Recap: Brainstorming the Future of Brain Health

Date: 12th November 2024

Location: NCBR/BSP, Rue Belliard 40, Brussels

Overview: The policy event titled “Brainstorming the Future of BRAIN HEALTH: Research, Collaboration, Impact” organised by the PolSCA - Polish Academy of Sciences Contact Agency, Helmholtz Association and SwissCore – Contact Office for European Research, Innovation and Education gathered more than 60 internationally renowned experts and guests around the aim of exploring new frontiers in brain health research. The focus was on the expected impacts of the upcoming **European Partnership for Brain Health** and the development of solutions for prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care that promote brain health.

Opening Remarks: MEP Adam JARUBAS, Chair of the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Public Health (SANT), delivered the welcome address, during which he presented the economic and social impact of brain health across Europe, assured that mental and brain health are of great interest to the European Union, and proposed a more holistic approach to research and less fragmentation among the existing funding schemes. He emphasized the



relevance impact of brain conditions on Europeans, with **179 million people** affected and economic costs exceeding **€800 billion per year**. MEP Jarubas highlighted the **18% increase** in disability, illness, and premature deaths caused by neurological conditions since 1990. The Parliament's recent focus has shifted towards a holistic approach to brain health, integrating



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mental and neurological perspectives. Key outputs include the adoption of resolutions on mental health in the digital work environment and the call for a comprehensive EU Mental Health Strategy. Additionally, MEP Jarubas underscored the actions taken by the EU so far as well indicated future ventures in the area of brain health and mental diseases. [[See the full speech](#)].

Policy panel on Infrastructures, Cooperation, Policy: Dr. Ulrike BUSSHOFF, CSA Brain Health, DLR, opened the panel with an address that highlighted the key elements needed for research to thrive in an international and competitive environment. The focus of her presentation was an in-depth introduction to the **European Partnership for Brain Health (EP BH)**.

Dr. Busshoff discussed the CSA Brain Health initiative, focusing on the importance of brain health, the challenges faced, and the need for concerted action to prepare for the future European Partnership for Brain Health, emphasizing research collaboration, impact, and a holistic brain health ecosystem.

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Panel I: Infrastructures, Cooperation, Policy
Creating Critical Mass for Progress in Brain Health Research

MODERATOR:

Dr. Ulrike BUSSHOFF CSA Brain Health, DLR	Kasia JURCZAK European Commission Directorate-General for Research and Innovation	Dr. Cezary MAZUREK Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center - Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry, PAS	Prof. Katrin AMUNTS Institute of Neurosciences and Medicine (INM) - Forschungszentrum Jülich & EBRAINS	Prof. Indrit BEGUE University of Geneva - Swiss Brain Health Plan



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The policy panel united representatives from the European Commission – Ms. Katarzyna JURCZAK, DG RTD – Combating Diseases, Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Center – Dr. Cezary MAZUREK (affiliated with the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry PAS), the Institute of Neurosciences and Medicine (INI) at Forschungszentrum Jülich & EBRAINS – Prof. Katrin AMUNTS, and the University of Geneva represented by Board Member of the Swiss Brain Health Plan Prof. Indrit BEGUE. The experts discussed the actions, collaboration, financing, and policies required for the future development of the partnership.

Scientific panel on Uncharted Territory: Challenges of Modern Brain Health Research: Prof. Leszek KACZMAREK, Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology PAS, ERC Scientific Council, opened the second panel with a focus on the challenges of modern brain health research. Prof. Kaczmarek positively referred to the scientific foundations of the partnership. He highlighted



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that expanding the understanding of molecular and cellular phenomena and harnessing this knowledge for the benefit of science and society is a major brain health and disease research challenge.

Additionally, he pointed out the essence of his

research, emphasizing the role of **MMP-9 in structural LTP of the dendritic spine** and its involvement in schizophrenia, as well as referencing Stanisław Lem's concept of "betrisation" from a philosophical perspective.

The scientific panel featured experts from the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE) – Director Prof. Gabor PETZOLD, International Institute of the Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw – its Deputy Director for Science Prof. Jacek JAWORSKI, and the Vice-Rector of University of Fribourg – Prof. Chantal MARTIN-SCHÖLZ. They discussed the state of the art in brain health and the key topics shaping the field.

Reflections and conclusions of the event.

Interdisciplinary Approach: The event emphasized the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to brain health. Understanding the brain's functionality and the influence of environmental, societal, and technological factors - beyond the genetic makeup - is crucial.

The discussions highlighted the need for collaboration across various disciplines to gain a comprehensive understanding of brain health.

Collaboration and Policy: A key takeaway was the need for enhanced collaboration between European and global research efforts. The policy panel discussed the essential elements for advancing brain health research within an international framework, emphasizing the role

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Panel II: Uncharted Territory?
Challenges of Modern Brain Health Research

MODERATOR:



Prof. Leszek KACZMAREK
Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology PAS, ERC Scientific Council



Prof. Gabor PETZOLD
German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE) / Helmholtz



Prof. Jacek JAWORSKI
International Institute of the Molecular and Cell Biology in Warsaw



Prof. Chantal MARTIN-SÖLCH
University of Fribourg, Department of Psychology



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of partnerships, financing, and policies in creating a supportive environment for research to thrive. Strategies to boost collaboration between European and global research efforts were discussed, with a focus on scientific accuracy, innovative solutions, ethical concerns, and long-term vision of partnership based on shared values.

Infrastructure and Investment: The event underscored the importance of infrastructure in brain health research. Creating critical mass for progress through infrastructures, cooperation, and policy was highlighted as a priority. The need for further research and investments in brain health to prevent diseases was a recurring theme.

Challenges in Modern Brain Health Research: The scientific panel the need for international cooperation and funding as prerequisites to transform research into clinical practice. The panellists discussed the state of the art in brain health and what is needed to push it further.

Future Vision: The event concluded with a discussion on creating and uniting stakeholders' voices using current tools and envisioning the future brain health partnership. The importance of a holistic and inclusive approach to brain health was emphasized, with a focus on translating scientific knowledge into practical applications that benefit individuals, healthcare systems, and society as a whole.

These reflections capture the essence of the event and the collective vision for the future of brain health research. The event was a significant step towards shaping the future of brain health research and collaboration in Europe, emphasizing the importance of a holistic and inclusive approach to brain health. It was an important discussion among European key stakeholders in the field, highlighting the need for interdisciplinary research, international cooperation, and the creation of a European brain health ecosystem that transcends geographical boundaries.