

# ***The Future of European Brain Research***

#COSTconnect

19 - 20 November 2018

COST Association  
Avenue Louise 149, 1050 Brussels

## BACKGROUND

One of the great scientific challenges is to understand the human brain and its complexity. Brain disorders (mental and neurological disorders) represent 35% of Europe's total diseases burden and a study carried out in 2010 estimated that this burden has a global cost of 800 billion euros in Europe a whole<sup>1</sup>, it is needed to enhance cross-border cooperation building on complementarities and coordination in research to avoid duplication of efforts and accelerate results.

While advances in neuroscience and neurotechnology offer major opportunities for health innovation and societal benefit, they also present key challenges and barriers to effective integration of research and policy results. This COST Connect will provide a platform for fostering common understandings across various research initiatives in the field of brain research. The event aims to identify and address knowledge gaps in brain research and coordinate research and innovation activities at a European level, by bringing together relevant stakeholders to provide relevant perspectives and share good practices. An important objective is to enhance collaboration between researchers, innovators and policy makers from the fields of neuroscience, psychiatric genetics, psychosocial research, psychiatry, psychology, medical genetics, molecular sciences, chemistry, computing and robotics.

This COST Connect will provide an opportunity for leaders from across sectors to discuss and assess various aspects of innovation in the field, with the objective to improve and accelerate policy impact of research and innovation results in the area. Following an interactive format, participants are encouraged to explore possible recommendations on future research agendas in the field of brain research to provide targeted advice for policy-makers with regard to the upcoming discussions on Horizon Europe. In this context topics for discussion could include translating outstanding and clinically relevant projects into medically-valuable applications; exploring lead structures for drug development, offering valuable new opportunities for European pharmaceutical research and industry; strengthening information systems, evidence and research for brain research and related policy fields.

COST has been creating networks of excellence in all scientific fields for more than 45 years, where knowledge is widely shared among different types of specialists, using bottom-up principles. Participants are active in various disciplines and include a variety of companies and stakeholders such as European and international organisations. COST nourishes free and open spaces where people and ideas can grow. This helps to internationalise the scientific community and leads to true breakthroughs in science and technology in Europe and beyond.

COST allows researchers and scholars to create interdisciplinary networks, the so-called 'COST Actions', where they can develop their own ideas. COST Actions are completely bottom-up and implement workshops and conferences, training schools, short-term scientific missions and dissemination activities.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

COST organises this highly interactive COST Connect event series to bring together representatives of COST Actions as well as scientific communities, stakeholders and policy makers working on the broader topic of brain research.

The event will help to:

- Strengthen effective leadership and governance for brain research;
- Fight against dispersion of resources and fragmentation of research activities;
- Support the cooperation of COST Actions with relevant stakeholders in the field of brain research;

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<sup>1</sup> Gustavsson et al., 2011

- Encourage collaborations between relevant stakeholders and trigger alignment of resources to develop research and innovation on brain research;
- Promote synergies between activities funded through other EU programmes;
- Provide networking opportunities for all partners involved;
- Promote joint activities including proposition for open calls;
- Propose effective mechanisms for data sharing and knowledge exchange.

In this particular case, the potential questions to be answered are structured around the identification of future research cooperation and funding opportunities, the promotion of COST Actions strategic research roadmaps and the identification of priorities for Horizon Europe. Furthermore, the discussions will build on COST experiences, bridging the research and innovation divide in Europe.

## INVITED PARTICIPANTS

Invited participants include:

- COST Actions relevant to the topic
- Horizon 2020 projects relevant to the topic
- Policy and Programme Officers of European Commission Directorates-General RTD, CONNECT and JRC
- Relevant Members of the European Parliament
- COST Scientific Committee Members and COST Senior Officials
- Representatives from EU Joint Programme Neurodegenerative Disease Research
- Representatives from the Innovative Medicine Initiative
- Representatives from the FET Flagship Initiative 'The Human Brain Project'
- Representatives from the KIC Health
- Representatives from the European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA)
- Representatives from the European Psychiatric Association
- Academic sector stakeholders, NCPs and representatives from the national policy system

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology of the workshop is based on the concept of the “Pro Action Café”, which is a methodology allowing for creative and inspiring conversations. Participants are invited to share their questions (around projects – seed ideas) and obtain group input (deeper questions – knowledge – experience) from others. A Pro Action Café is an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions, projects, and concerns that matter to the attendees.

In a Pro Action Café, topics are brought forward by participants themselves. There is no set agenda, only overall guiding questions and “setting-the-scene” presentations with the intention of deepening the learning process of everyone.

Short setting-the-scene presentations provide a possibility for COST and stakeholders to bring in key information relevant for the discussion and suggest questions to be discussed. After the introduction and the setting the scene presentations parts, there are three rounds of conversation in café style – each guided by a few generic questions to help to dig into the subject and narrow down the ideas.

## DRAFT AGENDA – 19 NOVEMBER 2018

<i>Networking lunch</i>	12.00 – 13.00
<b>1. Introduction and welcome</b> Welcome words by the organizers	13.00 – 13.15
<b>2. Welcome round and check-in</b> All participants briefly introduce their work	13.15 – 13.45
<b>3. Setting the Scene</b> Brief input on the current state-of-play	13.45 – 15.00
<i>Coffee break</i>	15.00 – 15.20
<b>4. Announcing, discussing and selecting questions</b> People bring forward their question with the offer to host a discussion table. After all tables have been chosen by someone sharing a question, the other participants are invited to think about which table they want to join first.	15.20 – 16.00
<b>5. Pro-Action Café Round 1: What is the quest behind the question</b> Every participant is invited to challenge the table host and different facets of the question are explored.	16.00 – 17.00
<b>6. Pro-Action Café Round 2: What is missing</b> The participants aim to make the picture more complete, redefine and deepen the discussion on the question (e.g. questions not asked yet, perspectives or options not considered yet).	17.00 – 18.00
<i>Social dinner</i>	19.30

## DRAFT AGENDA – 20 NOVEMBER 2018

<i>Welcome breakfast</i>	08.30 – 09.00
<b>7. Pro-Action Café Round 3: What is next</b> What did we learn? What next steps will each of us take? What are possible actions?	09.00 – 10.00
<i>Coffee break</i>	10.00 – 10.20
<b>8. Presentation of results</b> Wrap up of the results by the hosts of the tables	10.20 – 11.15
<b>9. Next steps and closing of the meeting</b> Brief input from high-level policy maker in the field (MEP) and COST on the next steps, feedback by all participants	11.15 – 12.15
<i>Lunch</i>	12.15

## LOGISTICS

The event will take place in at the COST premises, Avenue Louise 149, 1050 Brussels.  
The social dinner will be organised in a restaurant nearby.

## CONTACTS

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## LIST OF RELEVANT AND INVITED COST ACTIONS

- BM1309: European network for innovative uses of EMFs in biomedical applications (EMF-MED)
- CA15111: European Network on Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (EUROMENE)
- CA17103: Delivery of Antisense RNA Therapeutics
- CA17130: Enhancing Psychiatric Genetic Counselling, Testing, and Training in Europe
- CA16210: Maximising Impact of research in NeuroDevelopmental Disorders
- CA16118: European Network on Brain Malformations
- CA15120: Open Multiscale Systems Medicine (OpenMultiMed)
- BM1307: European network to integrate research on intracellular proteolysis pathways in health and disease (PROTEOSTASIS)
- CM1103: Structure-based drug design for diagnosis and treatment of neurological diseases: dissecting and modulating complex function in the monoaminergic systems of the brain
- CA15135: Multi-target paradigm for innovative ligand identification in the drug discovery process (MuTaLig)
- CA15133: The Biogenesis of Iron-sulfur Proteins: from Cellular Biology to Molecular Aspects (FeSBioNet)
- CM1207: GLISTEN: GPCR-Ligand Interactions, Structures, and Transmembrane Signalling: a European Research Network
- TD1006: European Network on Robotics for Neuro Rehabilitation
- CA16122: Biomaterials and advanced physical techniques for regenerative cardiology and neurology
- IC1401: Memristors - Devices, Models, Circuits, Systems and Applications (MemoCiS)
- BM1306: Better Understanding the Heterogeneity of Tinnitus to Improve and Develop New Treatments
- BM1103: Arterial spin labelling Initiative in Dementia
- CA15214: An integrative action for multidisciplinary studies on cellular structural networks
- BM1203 EU-ROS
- BM1402 Development of a European network for preclinical testing of interventions in mouse models of age and age-related diseases (MouseAGE)
- CA16112 Personalized Nutrition in aging society: redox control of major age-related diseases