Content

Introduction

Paris, January 27th, 2021

The ERA-NET NEURON is a collective success-story that began in 2003, which aims to strengthen European research in Neuroscience by funding collaborative projects associating teams from several different nations thanks to the NEURON partners and the EU.

Following a favorable assessment by the European Commission services, the NEURON Cofund2 proposal was approved for funding under the Horizon2020 programme. Thus, ERA-NET NEURON will carry on its work toward supporting brain research in Europe, and beyond. This continuity of the NEURON network grants the opportunity to properly address the priorities for brain research identified in the updated ERA-NET NEURON Strategic Research Agenda (SRA, 2020), both through Joint Transnational Calls (JTCs) and additional enabling activities.

The collective writing of the updated SRA highlights priorities such as sharing of resources, which has been identified as an essential pillar in developing the knowledge and technologies necessary for tackling down brain-related diseases. With 27 partner members from 23 countries, the NEURON network is larger than ever and express a strong desire to strenghten its relation with other European organisations toward this common goal. For this reason, we decided to open this new period with a scientific symposium intitled “Together for Brain Research”, bringing together renowned researchers and organisations to discuss how to work together in tackling brain diseases.

Etienne Hirsch
Inserm

Bernard Poulain
CNRS

Programme

13:30 – 13:40	**Welcome** Marlies Dorlöchter (Germany) – DLR-PT Judith Reichel (Germany) – BMBF Etienne Hirsch (France) – Inserm, Bernard Poulain (France) – CNRS
13:40 – 14:00	**NEURON Introduction and Strategic Research Agenda** Marlies Dorlöchter (Germany) – DLR-PT
14:00 – 15:00	**Panel discussion on priorities for brain research in neurology and psychiatry** *Moderation*: Bernard Poulain (France) – CNRS *Introduction*: Martin Dichgans (Germany) – past Chair of NEURON SAB Frauke Zipp (Germany) – new Chair of NEURON SAB Jean-Antoine Girault (France) – Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) Thomas Berger (Austria) – European Academy of Neurology (EAN) Philip Gorwood (France) – European Psychiatric Association (EPA)
15:00 – 15:15	*Coffee Break*
15:15 – 16:00	**Panel discussion on reinforcing the links between lay organizations and basic scientists and clinicians** *Moderation*: Hella Lichtenberg (Germany) – DLR-PT *Introduction*: Christina Müller (Germany) – DLR-PT Cristina Tassorelli (Italy) – University of Pavia Donna Walsh (Ireland) – European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) Philippa Lowe (UK) – Rethink Mental Illness, European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness (EUFAMI) Christina Fasser (Switzerland) – Past President of Retina International

16:00 – 16:45 **Panel discussion on data sharing, legal and ethical aspects in brain research**

Moderation: Hella Lichtenberg (Germany) – DLR-PT
Introduction: Daniel Strech (Germany) – Quality, Ethics, Open Science, Translation (QUEST)
Jacques Demotes (France) – European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network (ECRIN)
Wiebke Löbker (Germany) – 'Strengthening Training of Academia in Regulatory Science' (STARS)
Thomas Steckler (Belgium) – Janssen Pharmaceutica

16:45 – 17:00 *Coffee Break*

17:00 – 17:45 **Panel discussion on strengthening and structuring brain research in the EU**

Moderation: Etienne Hirsch (France) – INSERM
Introduction: Karim Berkouk – European Commission, Research and Innovation Directorate-General
Marlies Dorlöchter (Germany) – ERA-NET NEURON
Monica di Luca (Italy) – European Brain Council (EBC)
Philippe Amouyel (France) – Philippe Amouyel – EU Joint Programme – Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND)

17:45 – 18:15 **Summary**

Elena Becker-Barroso – The Lancet Neurology

18:15 – 18:30 **Conclusion**

Marlies Dorlöchter (Germany) – DLR-PT
Judith Reichel (Germany) – BMBF

end of virtual meeting

Panel discussion on priorities for brain research in neurology and psychiatry

Martin Dichgans – past Chair of ERA-NET NEURON SAB

Germany

Martin Dichgans is a Professor of Neurology at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, LMU (Munich, Germany). He is the Founding Director of the Institute for Stroke and Dementia Research and President of the European Stroke Organization (ESO). His major research interest is in the mechanisms, diagnosis and treatment of small vessel disease (SVD), stroke and vascular dementia with a focus on genetics, molecular and cellular biology, neuroimaging and the conduct of investigator-initiated studies.

Dr. Dichgans authored over 500 research articles, reviews, and editorials. He served as a coordinator / principal investigator of various national, EU (FP7 and Horizon2020) and transatlantic (Fondation Leducq) research grants, and is in leadership positions at national and international conferences on stroke and dementia. Dr. Dichgans coordinates multicenter clinical trials on SVD and has contributed to national and international stroke guidelines and expert statements. He is on the Editorial Board of the journals Annals of Neurology, Stroke, European Stroke Journal, International Journal of Stroke, and Frontiers in Stroke. Dr. Dichgans is past chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of ERA-NET NEURON from 2016 to 2020. He further serves on the research committee of the World Stroke Association (WSO) and board of directors of the DFG-funded Excellence Cluster Munich Cluster of Systems Neurology.

Frauke Zipp – New Chair of ERA-NET NEURON SAB

Germany

Prof. Frauke Zipp has been Director of the Department of Neurology at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz since the end of 2009. Her work focuses on the topic of inflammatory neuronal damage and repair in multiple sclerosis, with a focus on therapy, as well as addressing more general questions on the crosstalk between the nervous and immune systems.

Prof. Zipp is also part of the boards of multiple, national and European organizations, such as the German Competence Network of Multiple Sclerosis (KKNMS), the German Multiple Sclerosis Society (DMSG), the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis (ECTRIMS), the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF). She is founding speaker spokeperson of trans-regional collaborative research centers and founding member of an excellence cluster, member of the advisory board for the International Society for Neuroimmunology (ISNI), member of the advisory board for technology to the government of Rhineland-Palatinate, rapporteur for the Max Planck Society, member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the European Academia Europaea.

Member of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of ERA-NET NEURON Cofund since 2016, Prof. Zipp has been appointed in January 2021 the chair of NEURON Cofund 2 new Scientific Advisory Board.

In view of the burden of brain diseases and the size of the European community of researchers, the ERANET NEURON and its actions may seem a very small lever for action. In your opinion, what can NEURON bring that makes it essential in Europe?

"As a Clinician Scientist, I think ERA-NET NEURON offers a unique opportunity to foster both clinical research and combination of basic and clinical studies. NEURON also contributes to interdisciplinarity, with calls that can emphasize a combination of different disciplines supporting classical neuroscientists.
Lastly, there are new challenges in inter-country interaction in digital transformation, requiring data transfer and protection agreements as well as digital platforms. ERA-NET NEURON supports the European Idea, as supra-national funding possibilities help bringing groups from different EU countries together in the neuroscience field. This political dimension of NEURON allows it to help addressing these inter-country interaction challenges."

Jean-Antoine Girault – Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS)

France

Founded in 1998 at the first Forum of European Neuroscience, the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) is the main organisation for neuroscience in Europe. FENS currently represents 44 European national and single discipline neuroscience societies with more than 20,000 member scientists from 33 European countries. FENS promotes excellence in neuroscience research and facilitates the exchange and networking between neuroscientists within the European Research Area and beyond. FENS also promotes neuroscience research to policy-makers, funding bodies and the general public, both regionally and internationally.

Jean-Antoine Girault MD, PhD (France) is the current FENS President for 2020-2022. Inserm Research Director, Head of the Institut du Fer à Moulin (Inserm and Sorbonne University) in Paris until September 2020, his research focuses on the signalling mechanisms involved in the plasticity of the nervous system, in normal and pathological conditions. Former President of the French Neuroscience Society, Jean-Antoine Girault has also actively contributed to the coordination of Neuroscience research and training in Paris region, and the strengthening of interactions between neuroscientists and psychiatrists.

What are the recent advances in Neuroscience - in terms of knowledge, technological advances or new concepts - that you think will have a major impact on our understanding of brain diseases and their management?

"The Neuroscience field is constantly bursting with new developments. Progress in understanding brain development sheds light on its alterations, including those which, in interaction with environmental factors, favour psychiatric conditions. Cultivating human brain tissue (induced pluripotent stem cells and organoids) opens the possibility to study pathological mechanisms, to test new molecules, and to envision regenerative approaches. Deciphering brain functional anatomy at an unprecedented pace, progress in analysing brain activity, and improvements in brain-machine interfaces open new ways to elucidate neurological and psychiatric dysfunction and possibly correct them."

Thomas Berger – European Academy of Neurology (EAN)

Austria

The European Academy of Neurology (EAN) was founded in 2014 when the two main European neurological societies, the European Neurological Society (ENS) and European Federation of Neurological Societies (EFNS), agreed to join forces and merge into a single organisation. EAN's mission is to foster and support the development of neurological excellence in Europe and across the world, leading to better patient care and outcomes. EAN aims to promote quality in neurology and bring together Europe's best clinicians, educators and scientists in the field to achieve our mission.

Thomas Berger is Professor of Neurology and Chair of Neurology at the Medical University of Vienna since 2018, with a research focus is on neuroimmunology and multiple sclerosis. He has also implemented and coordinated the Austrian MS Therapy Registry and the Austrian Neuromyelitis Optica database. Since 2020, Professor Berger is Chair of the EAN Scientific Committee.

Philip Gorwood – European Psychiatric Association (EPA)

France

With active individual members in as many as 88 countries and 44 National Psychiatric Association Members the EPA represents more than 80,000 European psychiatrists, the European Psychiatric Association focuses on the improvement of care for the mentally ill and the development of professional excellence, including academia, research and practice aspects, throughout all Europe and beyond.

Specialized in behavioural genetics, Pr Philip Gorwood is head of department at the Clinique des Maladies Mentales et de l'Encéphale (CMME) since 2017, an academic department in Saint-Anne hospital (GHU Paris). Pr Gorwood is also team leader at INSERM research unit U1266, focusing on genetic vulnerability to addictive behaviours. Member of EPA for 25 years, Pr Gorwood was laureate of the "Young scientist" award in 1999, then successively acted as editor-in-chief for the European Psychiatry journal, and treasurer, before becoming President-elect in 2017. He became President of EPA in 2019 for a term of two years.

Can you tell us what are the highest priorities for brain research in Psychiatry and what are the areas of Psychiatry where you feel that increased cooperation between basic and clinical researchers could lead to major breakthroughs in the understanding of the pathophysiology of psychiatric diseases and their stratification?

"Psychiatry is where psychology overlaps with neurology, therefore this medical specialty deals with all illnesses having behavioral, emotional or cognitive aspects. Psychiatry benefits of the high quality research of neuroscience, but is still limited by the scarcity of biomarkers and the presently limited understanding of their mechanism of actions. Proposals to enhance the quality of research in psychiatry could be to (1) facilitate an "international biobank of brains" to allow neuroscientific discoveries to be tested in psychiatric disorders, and (2) creating expert clinical centers with open access data to analyze disorders in all their various aspects, subtypes and specificities."

Panel discussion on reinforcing the links between lay organizations and basic scientists and clinicians

Cristina Tassorelli – University of Pavia

Italy

I am a full professor of Neurology at the University of Pavia and Director of the Headache Science Centre at the Neurological Research Institute C. Mondino, Pavia (I).

I have dedicated my entire professional life to research and care of subjects suffering from primary headaches, e.g. migraine and cluster headache, serious neurological diseases that, while not killing people affected, do rob them of a large part of their lives.

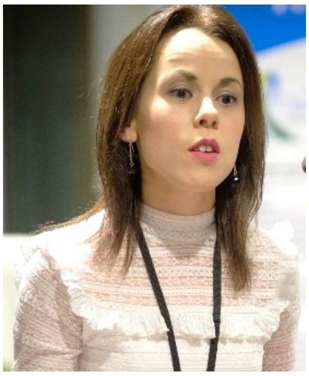
Notwithstanding notable advances in headache science, these disorders still remain largely overlooked by research funding bodies and healthcare providers, and underdiagnosed and undertreated by professionals.

In this setting, the role of patients is of the utmost importance. This is one of the reasons why in 2005, with a small group of highly inspired advocates, we founded the European Headache Alliance, which later became European Headache and Migraine Alliance, a non-profit umbrella organization, that includes over 30 patient associations for Migraine, Cluster Headache, Trigeminal Neuralgia and other head pain diseases, across Europe.

> "Let's never forget that that the ultimate aim of science is to make the world a better place to live for those who suffer"

Donna Walsh – European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA)

Ireland



My name is Donna Walsh and I have been working as Executive Director at the European Federation of Neurological Associations (EFNA) since 2012.

Finding a cure for most neurological disorders is, unfortunately, proving elusive and current treatments are often sub-optimal. However, this means that our community has an added incentive to become involved in research which might lead to treatment breakthroughs and better patient outcomes.

In my time with EFNA, we have organised annual Training Initiatives for Neurology Advocates to create a pool of empowered patients and caregivers who have the knowledge and skills to be active in such Research &Development. But still, these representatives are often faced with closed doors. There needs to be an attitude shift, a culture change – amongst researchers and healthcare professionals (whose work can benefit from patient involvement) but also amongst the 'expert patients' who are already embedded in the system.

All stakeholders should know that patient involvement is meaningful and valuable, and that patients are ready, willing and able to get involved. This trust and relationship-building between all stakeholders is a prerequisite to effective patient involvement.

While considerable progress has been made in recent years, at an EFNA workshop one year ago, three areas in particular were suggested as warranting further attention if we want to see more meaningful patient involvement:

- Priority Setting: Ensuring that research is informed by what matters to patients and addresses unmet need
- Training: Equipping researchers and patients with a better understanding of the value of patient involvement and how to do it right
- Match-Making: Connecting the right patient with the right research partner

"There needs to be an attitude shift, a culture change – amongst researchers and healthcare professionals (…) but also amongst the 'expert patients' who are already embedded in the system."

Philippa Lowe – Rethink Mental Illness - European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness (EUFAMI)

United Kingdom

I am Philippa Lowe, carer of a son with schizophrenia and Chair of Trustees of the England-wide charity Rethink Mental Illness whose mission is a better quality of life for all those severely affected by mental illness – that means carers as well as service users. I am also a non-executive Director of EUFAMI, a European charity for carers of those with mental illness. At Rethink our involvement of our service users and carers in, for example, designing new services and organising campaigns, means that the work develops high credibility and authenticity. Involvement in governance leads to our Board being composed largely of members of our 8 Regional Committees, which are made up of service users and carers.

> “Our mission is a better quality of life for all those severely affected by mental illness”

Christina Fasser – Past President of Retina International

Switzerland

I am a patient advocate affected myself by Retinitis pigmentosa, born visually impaired and I am blind for 20 years. I am the immediate past president of Retina International, a global umbrella group of 43 national organizations all with the same objectives to promote research in order to find a cure for inherited retinal degenerative diseases such as Retinitis pigmentosa, Stargardt disease, usher Syndrome etc., and in acquired retinal degenerative diseases such as age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathies. Retina International advocates for equal access to treatment and rehabilitation where possible and to give vision research the necessary funding to find cures for all those diseases that are untreatable so far.

> "... advocates for equal access to treatment and rehabilitation where possible and to give vision research the necessary funding to find cures for all those diseases that are untreatable so far"

Panel discussion on data sharing, legal and ethical aspects in brain research

Daniel Strech – Quality, Ethics, Open Science, Translation (QUEST)

Professor for Translational Bioethics at the Charité – University Medicine Berlin
Vice director of the Berlin Institute for Health QUEST Center for Transforming Biomedical Research
Germany

Pharmaceutical industry (as well as academia) depends on robust data and scientific rigor as key drivers for decision making, patent strength and time-to-market, which in turn will determine the availability of new, efficacious and safe treatments to patients.

- While most stakeholder agree in principle we are still in need of simple, sustainable solutions that facilitate data quality in Research & Development (R&D) without impacting innovation and freedom of research. Example: EQIPD

- The degree of robustness and reproducibility of non-clinical data also has important ethical implications for the use of animals in R&D. Poor robustness and biased results re-porting of non-clinical research, leading to animals being wasted in irreproducible studies, must be considered ethically unacceptable.

- Furthermore: Irreproducible and biased preclinical results misinform the design and approval of early clinical trials and thus impact on the safety of trial participants.

- Therefore: For clinical, economic, and ethical reasons we need to find, implement, and critically evaluate the above mentioned "simple and sustainable solutions" for improving the trustworthiness and usefulness of preclinical data.

"Dissemination of results and data-sharing are broadly accepted as fundamental ethical principles for research. But how to translate these principles into practice in an effective, efficient, and adequately rewarded way? Here, despite all the progress over the past years, we still need to increase our efforts."

Jacques Demotes Mainard – European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network (ECRIN-ERIC)

France

Access to patients and medical expertise through multinational clinical trials is hampered by many hurdles for investigator-initiated and SME-sponsored studies. With the objective of boosting clinical research addressing questions relevant for the healthcare systems, ECRIN (www.ecrin.org) was therefore designed as an instrument facilitating multinational trials in Europe, supporting the trial planning and design, then providing operational services to sponsors in the trial management tasks (ethical and regulatory approvals, vigilance, monitoring, data management, data sharing).

Sharing clinical trial data in the European context is challenging due to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and its divergent interpretation by EU Member States. ECRIN has produced recommendations on clinical trial data sharing, evaluated the currently available data sharing repositories , and built a metadata repository to foster discoverability of trial-related metadata (https://ecrin.org/clinical-research-metadata-repository). ECRIN is now developing a flexible, GDPR-compliant COVID19 trial repository allowing sharing of both anonymized or pseudonymized datasets, in the context of the European Open Science Cloud and of the EU COVID19 data portal (https://www.covid19dataportal.org). Later on this pilot will be extended to other scientific do-mains.

Jacques Demotes-Mainard, MD-PhD-MBA, is a neurologist and professor of Cell Biology. Since 2004 he has been driving the development of ECRIN, and in 2014 became Director of the Paris-based ECRIN-ERIC, the ESFRI-roadmap research infrastructure supporting multinational clinical trials in Europe. He chaired the working group who drafted the 2012 OECD Council Recommendation on the Governance of Clinical Trials.

"ECRIN's vision is to generate scientific evidence to optimize medical practice."

Wiebke Löbker – ‘Strengthening Training of Academia in Regulatory Science’ (STARS)

Germany

STARS is the EU funded Coordination and Support Action on Strengthening Training of Aca-demia in Regulatory Science (CSA STARS). Lack of specific relevant know-how in regulatory science delays the development of new treatment strategies or limits the chances that promising innovations will reach patients. STARS aims to improve the direct regulatory im-pact of results obtained in medical research. 18 European countries are represented in the consortium through their national competent authorities, alongside academic and industry representatives, and associations with relevant experience. STARS has the objective and the potential to complement, coordinate and harmonise regulatory efforts among Member States and at European level to support academic health research for the benefit of pa-tients. The aim is to reach academic researchers very early in the planning of relevant grant applications. A further aim is to strengthen regulatory knowledge in general by reaching clinical scientists during professional training and qualification. https://www.csa-stars.eu/

Reaching out to medicine innovators in academia to bridge the regulatory knowledge gap and enhance interaction between academia, regulatory authorities and further engaged stakeholders by raising awareness of support activities but especially fostering bidirectional knowledge exchange is our core business within STARS team.

Wiebke Löbker is Coordinator of the European action on ‘Strengthening Training of Academia in Regulatory Science’ (CSA STARS), and Head of the Unit of Innovation and Change management at the German Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM, Germany).

“Lack of specific relevant know-how in regulatory science de-lays the development of new treatment strategies or limits the chances that promising innovations will reach patients.”

Thomas Steckler – Janssen Pharmaceutica

Associate Director, Bioresearch and Quality and Compliance, Nonclinical Quality Risk Management at Janssen Pharmaceutica NV
Project Leader of the EQIPD (European Quality In Preclinical Data) consortium
Co-chair of the ECNP Preclinical Data Network.
Belgium

Pharmaceutical industry (as well as academia) depends on robust data and scientific rigor as key drivers for decision making, patent strength and time-to-market, which in turn will determine the availability of new, efficacious and safe treatments to patients. From an industry perspective there is a need for simple, sustainable solutions that facilitate data quality in Research & Development (R&D) without impacting innovation and freedom of research, both for data generated within pharmaceutical companies, as well as for external data originating from contract research organizations (CROs) and generated in industry-academic research collaborations. Such a solution was recently proposed by the EQIPD (Enhancing Quality In Preclinical Data) quality management system (https://osf.io/ng32b). Better guidance by such a quality management system will enhance the experimental design of non-clinical in vivo and in vitro studies, with improved data transparency, traceability and error reduction.

The degree of robustness and reproducibility of non-clinical data not only impacts on decisions whether to proceed from the discovery stage to preclinical and clinical testing, but also has important ethical implications for the use of animals in R&D. Poor robustness and rigor of non-clinical research, leading to animals being wasted in irreproducible studies, must be considered ethically unacceptable. Conversely, better guidance provided by a quality management system will lead to enhanced predictive validity of animal studies. Together with more open data sharing, this will enhance the responsible use of animals in research and hence positively impact on the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement), which are important considerations for ethics committees evaluating project applications involving animals, as well as for every researcher conducting animal experiments.

".. need for simple, sustainable solutions that facilitate data quality in Research & Development"

Panel discussion on strengthening and structuring brain research in the EU

Karim Berkouk – European Commission, Research and Innovation Directorate-General

Dr. Karim Berkouk, is the deputy Head of Unit in the unit responsible for "Combatting Diseases" in the PEOPLE Directorate of the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation at the European Commission (EC). This Commission department is responsible for EU policy on research, science and innovation, with a view to help create growth and jobs and tackle our biggest societal challenges. Dr. Berkouk thus develops and implements research policies on brain, cancer, cardiovascular, diabetes and obesity, and other chronic diseases as well as on infectious diseases. He also leads policies on Artificial Intelligence in Health.

Previously, Dr. Berkouk was Head of Sector for the EC Marie Curie Actions. Prior joining the EC, he held various research positions on prosthesis specific to patients, improvement of nuclear brain images and brain connectivity, respectively in Exeter (UK), the French National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM, FR) and Cambridge (UK).

Marlies Dorlöchter – DLR-PT - NEURON Coordinator

Germany

PD Dr. Marlies Dorlöchter is Head of Division of International Collaboration in Health Research at the programme management agency DLR in Bonn, Germany. In this regard she is in charge of research funding programmes on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, BMBF, in the areas of brain research, global health, and European research funding networks. She initiated the ERA-NET NEURON and coordinated the network since 2003.

Marlies Dorlöchter is a neurobiologist by training and graduated at the university of Münster, Germany. She pursued her research as a postdoc or visiting professor at the universities of Bonn (Germany), Los Angeles (USA), Shanghai (China), and Aachen (Germany), where she is a faculty member since 1996. From 1999 she has been working as programme manager at the German Aerospace Center DLR.

Since the magnificent NEURON adventure began in 2003 and its development into a full-fledged ERA-NET since 2007, what are its main achievements? How do you envision the role it may play in the future in structuring brain research in Europe?

"Fostering excellent translational research into diseases of the brain and nervous system is certainly among our main achievements. We created an inspiring platform to provide research grants, support scientists in their early careers, and offer training opportunities to improve preclinical studies. The future role of NEURON will be integration of all pertinent players in the field."

Monica Di Luca – European Brain Council (EBC)

Italy

The European Brain Council (EBC) is a network of key players in the "Brain Area", with a membership encompassing scientific societies, patient organisations, professional societies and industry partners. A non-profit organisation based in Brussels, its main mission is to promote brain research with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of the estimated 179 million Europeans living with brain conditions, mental and neurological alike. EBC stands as the platform to foster cooperation between all stakeholders, consistently promoting dialogue between scientists, industry and society and to build strong European health policies, raising awareness on the brain and the repercussions of neurological and mental health conditions on society.

Monica Di Luca is a professor at the University of Milan and is renowned for her involvement in collaborative networks for scientists and clinicians. She was the Chair for Europe of International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) from 2010 to 2012, and President of the FENS from 2014 to 2016, and Vice Rector of the University of Milan for International Affairs from 2014 to 2018. Since 2017, Monica Di Luca is the President of the EBC.

Could you explain why brain research is so important and what has EBC done to improve the future of brain research in Europe? Is the field enough supported?

"Despite considerable advances in basic neuroscience, the complete understanding of brain functions and the mechanisms behind brain disorders remains a future perspective, and many brain conditions remain without a disease-modifying therapy. Enhanced multi-stakeholder engagement is needed to foster dialogue, exchange knowledge, accelerate investment in research and innovation and facilitate treatment and cure development. The brain community has many examples of successful collaborations and the importance of collaboration in brain research and brain health is a key theme in EBC's advocacy work.

It is essential that Horizon Europe begins with a robust and appropriate structure for research. It holds the potential to accelerate the development of novel treatments for improving the lives of people affected by mental and neurological conditions, if well designed and implemented. In order to do so, the EU needs a vision that addresses brain research as one key priority."

Philippe Amouyel – EU Joint Programme – Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND)

France

The EU Joint Programme – Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND) is the first and largest global collaborative research initiative established to tackle the growing challenge posed by the increasing prevalence of neurodegenerative diseases (ND) worldwide.. Initiated in 2009 under the auspices of the European Commission, JPND increased coordinated and defragmented investment between the 30 participating countries in research aimed at finding causes, developing cures and identifying appropriate ways to care for those with neurodegenerative diseases.

Philippe Amouyel is professor of Public Health at the Lille University Hospital, with research interests in the identification of determinants and risk factors in cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases. From 2002 to 2011, Philippe Amouyel headed the Pasteur Institute of Lille. He participated in the national report on Alzheimer disease and related disorders, leading to the publication of the National French Plan Alzheimer in 2008. He was thus appointed director of the French Foundation of Scientific co-operation on Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders, charged with national coordination and support of research on these disorders. Philippe Amouyel is a member of the World Dementia Council. He chairs the JPND Management Board.

JPND is an organization focused exclusively on neurodegenerative disorders. What have you done so far and what are the perspective in this field?

"One of the major visible successes of JPND was that it brought together hundreds of scientists in Europe and beyond, who, very likely, would not have collaborated without the JPND calls, or at least to a much lesser degree. Guided by a common strategic research and innovative agenda, the JPND calls sparked transnational collaborations and innovative research approaches. More than 4800 individual research teams have applied to the different JPND calls. As of today, JPND has funded some 121 research projects, gathering more than 600 research teams, representing about €175 millions of funding."

Summary by Editor

Elena Becker-Barroso – The Lancet Neurology

The Lancet Neurology is now the leading academic journal in clinical neurology, in large part because of the relevance and quality of its research articles.

Dr Elena Becker-Barroso is the Editor-in-Chief of *The Lancet Neurology*. She joined the editorial team in August 2005 as a Senior Editor. At that time, her major responsibility was to oversee the original-research section of the journal.

Dr Elena Becker-Barroso became Editor-in-Chief of *The Lancet Neurology* in July 2012 after serving as Acting Editor for 1 year, 2 years as Deputy Editor, and 3 years as Senior Editor for the journal. She earned her PhD in molecular biology from the Instituto de Microbiologia-Bioquimica, CSIC-Universidad de Salamanca (Salamanca, Spain) and did her postdoctoral training at the Skirball Institute of Biomolecular Medicine, New York University (New York, NY, USA).

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