

## EBRAINS and OECD host roundtable on the future of brain health in Europe

Scientists, patient organizations, and clinicians call for prioritizing brain health in the European policy agenda

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*EBRAINS, the Research Infrastructure for the study of the brain, and the current coordinator of the Human Brain Project, in a joint initiative with the OECD's New Approaches to Economic Challenges (NAEC) initiative, hosted an online discussion to articulate the vision and key elements of the future European brain research and brain health agenda. The meeting brought together representatives from the French EU Presidency, European Commission, World Health Organisation, scientific societies, patient organizations, health professionals, as well as leading brain researchers.*

Better understanding the brain, brain health, and brain disorders is essential to improving patients' health and quality of life. It also offers a pathway to better understanding the new economic and social reality and the challenges posed by the pandemic.

"Brain function can be positively or negatively impacted by a number of factors with major implications for productivity, well-being and policy" said William Hynes, Head of New Approaches to Economic Challenges Unit, Office of the Secretary General, OECD. "OECD has established a [Neuroscience-inspired Policy Initiative](#), which aims to use insights from brain science to influence policies supporting productivity, education and innovation." The Policy Initiative focuses on the concept of "Brain Capital", which considers brain skills and brain health as indispensable parts of the knowledge economy.

This principle-based approach to understanding the interplay between brain function and health and the economy also highlights the cost and burden when function and health turn into dysfunction and disease. The impacts of adverse brain function have never been greater. There is an unprecedented dynamic for making brain health a pillar of public health policy in Europe.

"The challenge of brain disorders in an ageing society, coupled with growing awareness of the importance of good brain health, as well as progress in science and technology, calls for a revamping of current efforts", said Paweł Świeboda, Director General at Human Brain Project and CEO of EBRAINS. "The situation is ripe for a new European Brain Initiative with its own pillar in the European Health Union, in which EBRAINS and the Human Brain Project are ready to play an active role. The first steps towards such an initiative should include a holistic Brain Health Strategy, a Partnership on Brain Health in the latter part of Horizon Europe, prepared by EBRA (European Brain Research Area), and alignment of research agendas across Europe."

For more information on the outcome of the roundtable, visit: <https://ebrains.eu/news/Towards-a-European-Brain-Initiative>

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## **About EBRAINS**

EBRAINS is a new digital research infrastructure, created by the EU-funded Human Brain Project, to foster brain-related research and to help translate the latest scientific discoveries into innovation in medicine and industry, for the benefit of patients and society.

It draws on cutting-edge neuroscience and offers an extensive range of brain data sets, a multilevel brain atlas, modelling and simulation tools, easy access to high-performance computing resources and to robotics and neuromorphic platforms.

All academic researchers have open access to EBRAINS' state-of-the art services. Industry researchers are also very welcome to use the platform under specific agreements. For more information about EBRAINS, visit [www.ebrains.eu](http://www.ebrains.eu).

## **About the Human Brain Project**

The Human Brain Project (HBP) is the largest brain science project in Europe and stands among the biggest research projects ever funded by the European Union. It is one of the three FET Flagship Projects of the EU. At the interface of neuroscience and information technology, the HBP investigates the brain and its diseases with the help of highly advanced methods from computing, neuroinformatics and artificial intelligence, and drives innovation in fields like brain-inspired computing and neurorobotics.

## **About OECD New Approaches to Economic Challenges**

The New Approaches to Economic Challenges (NAEC) initiative develops a systemic perspective on interconnected challenges with strategic partners, identifies the analytical and policy tools needed to understand them, and crafts the narratives best able to convey them to policymakers. It provides a space to debate, discuss and experiment with new analytical approaches drawn from a range of disciplines including physics, neuroscience, complexity, engineering and others.