

## PRESS RELEASE

### CONNECTS-UK Gathers Leading Experts at the University of Bristol to Tackle Future Healthcare Challenges"

**Bristol, 7 April, 2025** – In a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape, global experts will convene at the University of Bristol for the 3rd Open Forum on Emerging Challenges in Healthcare. Organised by the EU-funded CONNECTS-UK initiative, this landmark event will foster cross-border collaboration to address critical issues in healthcare research and innovation.

CONNECTS-UK, a pan-European initiative fostering scientific collaboration between the EU and the UK, will bring together leading global health experts for an interactive discussion on the most pressing challenges and opportunities in healthcare research. Through plenary sessions, panel discussions, a roundtable, and a poster and video competition, participants will explore three key themes:

1. The role of interdisciplinarity, collaborations, and partnerships in tackling current and future healthcare challenges.
2. The societal impact of research and the importance of building trust in science.
3. Effective mechanisms for identifying and addressing healthcare challenges, ensuring that research efforts translate into tangible benefits for patients and society.

#### Key Discussions and Insights

The forum will serve as a platform for analysing emerging healthcare challenges and showcasing innovative solutions. Experts will discuss crucial topics such as the health economics, evidence-based policies, new frontiers in immunology or drug discovery. Among the critical questions guiding discussions:

- How can we improve disease prevention?
- How can scientific advancements contribute to more effective treatments and prevention strategies?
- How can we foster collaborations between public and private sectors to tackle healthcare needs and accelerate innovation?

#### Opening Remarks & Speakers

The forum will commence with introductory remarks from **Sara Alvira de Celis** (University of Bristol and CONNECTS-UK Co-Chair). **Liang-Fong Wong**, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Bristol, will welcome attendees, and **Cyril Robin-Champigneul** from the Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom will deliver a video message highlighting the European Union's contributions in the field.



## Featured Panels and Experts

### Panel 1: Science & Healthcare Challenges (11:45 AM – 1:00 PM)

- **Britta Stordal** (Middlesex University London) – "How Academics Can Get Involved in Healthcare Evidence-Based Policy Work"
- **Isra Cruz** (Instituto de Salud Carlos III, Spain) – "Research in Neglected Tropical Diseases: Challenges and the Path to Decolonisation"
- **Michela Noseda** (Imperial College London) – "Unlocking the Heart's Hidden Secrets"
- **Tomek Włodarski** (Polish Academy of Sciences) – "Unravelling Protein Folding in Cells Through a Computational Microscope"

### Panel 2: Society & Trust in Science (14:00 AM – 15:15 PM)

- **Catia Nicodemo** (Brunel University London, University of Oxford) – "Trust, Society, and the NHS: How Economics Shape the Future of Healthcare"
- **Margarita del Val** (Centro de Biología Molecular Severo Ochoa, CSIC) – "The Spanish Interdisciplinary Research Platform on Global Health: Collaborative Research for Societal Challenges in Infectious Diseases"
- **Linda Karlsson** (University of Turku) – "Building Trust and Addressing Vaccine Concerns: Effective Communication Strategies for Healthcare Professionals"
- **Agata Nyga** (Synlaia Innovations, UK) – "The Role of Society in the Drug Discovery Space"

**Roundtable Discussion:** Working Together to Tackle Global Healthcare Challenges  
Chair: Kourosh Norouzi (University of Bristol, Impact Development Manager for Health and Life Sciences)

- **Evert Jan van Asselt** (Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the UK)
- **Valentina Chervenkova** (Academy of Medical Sciences)
- **Hazel Phillips** (NIHR Bristol Biomedical Research Centre)
- **Diogo Martins** (Wellcome Trust, UK)
- **Katherine Furman** (University of Liverpool)

The forum is co-sponsored by the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT) and the Embassy of the Netherlands in the UK, with leadership from the Dutch Network of Academics in the UK (Dna in UK) and Spanish Researchers in the UK (SRUK) with the support of the University of Bristol.

This high-impact event will provide invaluable insights and foster meaningful collaborations to drive innovation in global healthcare.

For more details or to register, click [here](#)

For media inquiries, please contact:



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Further details on the [CONNECTS-UK website](#) and its social media [Twitter page](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#)

### About CONNECTS-UK:

CONNECTS-UK stands for 'Connecting European Communities Through Science in the UK' and is a pioneering pan-EU project co-funded by the European Union (EU) that aims to advance scientific collaborations between the EU and the United Kingdom (UK) in the post-Brexit context. The initiative brings together scientific diasporas from Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and Spain, and the non-profit organisation, Native Scientists, to foster cross-border research, promote knowledge exchange, and drive innovation. CONNECTS-UK serves as a catalyst for groundbreaking scientific collaborations and partnerships in diverse fields of study. The EU funding of around half a million euros not only reflects its commitment to advancing scientific progress but also underscores the importance of maintaining robust research ties between the EU and the UK despite the challenges posed by Brexit.

By creating a robust framework for cross-border collaboration, CONNECTS-UK will enable scientists, researchers, and innovators to overcome the barriers created by Brexit and tap into the vast wealth of expertise and resources available in both the EU and the UK to jointly tackle pressing global challenges.

CONNECTS-UK is a partnership, open to new collaborators, between

- [Association of Italian Scientists in the UK](#) (AISUK)
- [Dutch Network of Academics in the UK](#) (Dna in UK)
- [Finnish Science Society in the UK](#)
- [French Education and Research Network UK](#) (FERN-UK)
- [Native Scientists](#)
- [Polonium Foundation](#)
- [Portuguese Association of Researchers and Students in the UK](#) (PARSUK)
- [Society of Spanish Researchers in the UK](#) (SRUK/CERU)
- [Association of Slovans Educated](#) (VTIS)

