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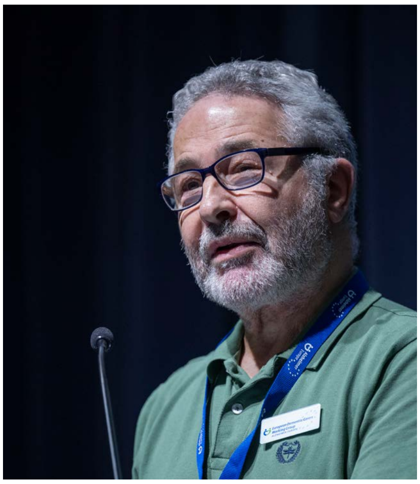

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35th Alzheimer Europe Conference
Connecting science and communities: The future of dementia care

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Welcome

Jean Georges

I am delighted to welcome you to a special publication about the 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference #35AEC which took place from 6 to 8 October 2025, in Bologna, Italy. This publication is a supplement to the 50th edition of Dementia in Europe magazine. If you were at the conference in Italy, we hope you enjoy looking back at some of the highlights from the event and if you were unable to join us there, we hope to give you a real flavour of our conference and encourage you to join us at a future event, perhaps even at our upcoming 2026 conference #36AEC taking place in Dublin, Ireland, from 27 to 29 October 2026 under the banner "Sláinte: Building momentum in dementia through policy, research, and partnership".

We include a "Warmup" section, where you will find coverage of a number of important pre-conference meetings, organised by the European Group of Governmental Experts on Dementia, the INTERDEM network, the European Working Group of People with Dementia (EWGPWD), and the European Dementia Carers Working Group (EDCWG).

We then take a look at all of the conference plenary sessions and I am especially pleased to note that Plenary 1, "Dementia as a European and national policy and research priority – as seen by people with dementia and their carers" was entirely organised, moderated and presented by members of the EWGPWD and EDCWG. Alzheimer Europe was truly proud to be able to include this important plenary in its 2025 conference programme. The work of the EWGPWD and the EDCWG, and the collective voices of its members are vital to our work, helping to ensure we are focused on the needs and priorities of people with lived experience of dementia, in all that we do.

On day 2, the second and third plenary sessions explored topics around gender and sexuality in dementia care, and around preparing for new treatments for Alzheimer's disease, whilst the first of two keynote lectures, titled "The great debate in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease: More than just a β test", was delivered by Dr Nicolas Villain.

On the final day of the conference, the presentations delivered during Plenary 4 looked at some less common types of dementia, and the second keynote lecture of the conference, given by Prof. Marco Trabucchi, asked the question "What next in dementia diagnosis and treatment?"

Alongside coverage of the ancillary meetings and plenary sessions in Bologna, we are pleased to share some other aspects of the event in this supplement to the 50th edition of Dementia in Europe magazine:

- "Breaking down barriers: promoting inclusive research participation and data sharing in dementia", a special symposium supported by Gates Ventures;
- "Translating innovation into improved Alzheimer's care", a special symposium organised by Lilly, with the participation of Italian Senator Beatrice Lorenzin;
- Another symposium presenting the work of nine early-stage researchers, selected by our jury to benefit from attendance bursaries provided by the Alzheimer Europe Foundation, including a Frontiers in Dementia award for the best presentation;
- Insight into the many and varied research projects we are involved in by attending and presenting their work at the event;
- Voices from social media, reflections from delegates and speakers, and key facts and figures from 35AEC.

I would also like to invite you to view the fantastic photo gallery with highlights from across the three days in Bologna, thoughts from our conference co-hosts, Alzheimer Uniti Italia and Federazione Alzheimer Italia; and to learn about our upcoming Dublin event from our 2026 conference co-host The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

Last but not least, we are delighted to include a special five-page article celebrating the 25th anniversary of INTERDEM. INTERDEM is a network of researchers interested in psychosocial interventions, made up of more than 600 researchers and academics with different professional disciplines, spread across 20 countries. Alzheimer Europe is proud to be a key partner and we congratulate INTERDEM and are pleased they chose to mark this important milestone at our Annual Conference.

I hope you enjoy this very special conference publication!

Jean Georges,
Executive Director,
Alzheimer Europe

Warmup

Before the start of the conference, several complementary meetings were held at the venue, including the European Group of Governmental Experts on Dementia, the INTERDEM network, the European Working Group of People with Dementia and the European Dementia Carers Working Group.

European Group of Governmental Experts on Dementia

Between 5-6 October, the members of the European Group of Governmental Experts on Dementia met to share developments, publications and projects with relevance for dementia policy at national, European and international levels. Formed in 2018 by Alzheimer Europe, the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Italian Ministry of Health and the Scottish Government, the group facilitated by Alzheimer Europe.

With participation from 23 European countries, the meeting (online and in person) was also comprised of representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Commission's DG Research & Innovation (DG RTD) and Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and from Alzheimer Europe.

Attendees shared updates on the implementation of national dementia strategies, including France's newly published neurodegenerative diseases strategy and plans by Belgium (Flanders) and Norway to launch new strategies in 2026. Discussions also focused on improving technical approaches to monitoring and evaluating national strategies. Alzheimer Europe led exchanges on emerging anti-amyloid therapies, examining international decision-making with particular attention to EU-level processes, and highlighted the European Parliament debate on a European Alzheimer's Plan, updates to the EU4Health programme and the European Commission's proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

At European and international levels, the OECD outlined plans to update its 2018 report *Care Needed: Improving the Lives of People with Dementia* in 2026, reflecting developments in diagnostics, prevention, risk reduction and support for informal caregivers. The WHO shared updates, including organisational restructuring integrating dementia into a broader non-communicable diseases and mental health department, and the extension of the Global Action Plan on the Public Health Response to Dementia until 2031, as agreed by the World Health Assembly.

INTERDEM

INTERDEM is a network of researchers interested in psychosocial interventions, made up of more than 600 researchers and academics with different professional disciplines, spread across 20 countries (18 of which are in Europe). On 5 and 6 October, the INTERDEM network hosted its Annual Meeting at the Bologna Congress Center, prior to #35AEC.

The first day of the meeting opened with a welcome from INTERDEM Chairperson Marjolein de Vugt, followed by a presentation from Simone Salemme, M.D. on "Bridging data and policy for brain health in Italy: Insights from regional and national analyses on dementia prevention". Next, a workshop, titled "How can INTERDEM support establishing European consortia?" was led by Prof. Martin Orrell and Prof. Manuel Franco. On day two of the meeting, attendees were divided into nine taskforce meetings covering the topics of Prevention, Palliative & End of Life Care, Intersectionality, Assistive Technology, Methodology, Inequalities in Dementia Care, Social Health, Young Onset Dementia, and Dementia Education and Training.

This year's meeting also marked a special milestone in the history of INTERDEM: the farewell of three founding board members, Frans Verhey, Myrra Vernooij-Dassen, and Esme Moniz-Cook, who established the network 25 years ago. Their vision, dedication, and long-standing commitment laid the foundation for what INTERDEM has become today: a vibrant, connected community advancing psychosocial dementia research across Europe. The network expressed their heartfelt thanks for their contributions. The meeting was rounded out with the presentation of the INTERDEM Academy award, chaired by Frans Verhey. The award went to Kate Turley. Congratulations to her on this well deserved recognition!

European Working Group of People with Dementia (EWGPWD) and European Dementia Carers Working Group (EDCWG)

On 5 and 6 October, members of the EWGPWD and EDCWG came together in Bologna, Italy, for their first face-to-face meetings of the current term of office.

During the two-day meetings, members discussed key issues currently being addressed through Alzheimer Europe's project work. On the first day, EWGPWD members reviewed content for Alzheimer Europe's 2025 Yearbook, with particular attention to culture, leisure and transport, and continued developing their recommendations on the use of technology for and by people with dementia.

The group also contributed to the HOMEDEM project, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Doctoral Network which provides high-level training in design and dementia caregiving for early-stage researchers. They provided valuable feedback on a wide range of topics, including playfulness in adulthood, co-creation in care, living spaces and belonging, technologies supporting autonomous living, sleep and night-time agitation, therapy coaching for couples, food-related activities, and the social needs of people with dementia and carers.

In parallel, the EDCWG members worked on similar themes from a carer's perspective. Their discussions included the use of technology in dementia care and an engaging session on citizen science within the framework of the European Platform for Neurodegenerative Diseases (EPND), where members reflected on the benefits and challenges of opening research data to the public.

Beyond the formal agenda, lunch on the first day provided a valuable social space, allowing members of both working groups to meet informally, exchange experiences and connect on a personal level.

During the second day, both working groups took part in separate consultations for the FluiDx-AD project, a Horizon Europe initiative aiming to develop affordable and easy-to-use biomarker tests for Alzheimer's disease. Members of both the EWGPWD and EDCWG tested and discussed a prototype saliva collection device, offering practical and considered feedback to improve its usability and acceptability from lived experience.

The EDCWG also provided feedback on the culture, leisure and transport chapter of Alzheimer Europe's 2025 Yearbook, alongside further discussion of the technology recommendations.

Alzheimer Europe also presented a plaque to Margaret McCallion, a former member of the EWGPWD, in recognition of her longstanding commitment and contributions. The two days concluded with a networking event for individuals with dementia and their carers who attended the conference. The official welcome was given by Kevin Quaid, who highlighted the importance of creating inclusive, supportive spaces within major international events. The event included a guided tour of the conference centre, offering participants an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the venue and continue conversations in an informal setting.

European Dementia Carers Working Group meeting in Bologna

European Working Group of People with Dementia

European Dementia Carers Working Group

Co-hosts

Together with Alzheimer Europe, Federazione Alzheimer Italia and Alzheimer Uniti Italia hosted the 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference in Bologna, Italy. They reflect on the memorable moments that made the event such an inspiring success.

Federazione Alzheimer Italia, founded in 1993, is Italy's leading national non-profit organisation dedicated to dementia research, care, and the protection of the rights of people with dementia and their families.

Katia Pinto, President

Taking part in the Conference was a truly enriching experience. Seeing people with dementia at the centre of the event, together with their caregivers, associations and Dementia Friendly Communities, was deeply meaningful. The strong international exchange and the wide participation made its return to Italy after 30 years especially significant.

Mario Possenti, Secretary General

Co-organising the 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference was an experience of great value. Building dialogue between scientific research and local communities becomes even more meaningful when knowledge can be applied within one's own country. Knowing this work can shape better care strategies and inclusive policies gives it lasting impact.

ALZHEIMER ITALIA©
La forza di non essere soli.

Katio Pinto (left) and Mario Possenti (right)

Since 1999, Alzheimer Uniti Italia has been a national non-profit organisation providing support to people living with dementia and their families, raising awareness, promoting good practice in care, and protecting dignity and rights.

Manuela Berardinelli, President

The Alzheimer Europe Conference is the premier event for all of us who deal with dementia in various capacities. It is a unique opportunity to raise awareness, understand, discuss and facilitate change. The Bologna Conference was an important opportunity for individual and organisational enrichment and growth, for meeting others and for exchanging ideas, which helps to spread knowledge of good practices and successful experiences.

Alzheimer Uniti Italia organised and managed six sessions, which were incredibly well attended in terms of both numbers and attention.

Change begins with meeting, listening, reflecting and putting into practice.

Clelia D'Anastasio, Vice President

My participation in the 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference represented a significant professional and personal milestone. Being involved not only as a participant but also as a member of the Organising Committee on behalf of Alzheimer Uniti Italia, allowed me to contribute to a conference that truly embodied its guiding theme: fostering meaningful dialogue between scientific research, policy, professional practice, and the lived experience of people affected by dementia and carers.

More than 1,500 delegates from across Europe and beyond attended the conference and it was exciting to engage directly with cutting-edge scientific research and innovative community-based practices. Particularly impactful were the sessions that foregrounded the voices of people living with dementia, reminding all participants that science must remain grounded in human experience.

ALZHEIMER UNITI ITALIA

Clelia D'Anastasio

Manuela Berardinelli

Keynote speakers

The conference was honoured to feature two keynote speakers whose complementary expertise in Alzheimer's disease and dementia bridges neurobiological discovery and geriatric practice, reflecting the full continuum from research to patient-centred care.

The great debate in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease: More than just a β test

During the second conference day, a keynote lecture titled "The great debate in diagnosing Alzheimer's disease: More than just a β test", was delivered by Nicolas Villain. He emphasised that prognosis in cognitively unimpaired biomarker-positive individuals is heterogeneous, noting that most remain asymptomatic for years, whereas those with extended tau neuropathological changes in the neocortex confer very high short-term risk (~80% to mild cognitive impairment by six years; ~46% to dementia). "Alzheimer's disease should remain a clinical–biological diagnosis anchored to symptoms or demonstrably very-high risk", he stated, emphasising that "switching to a purely biological definition denotes a different entity with different implications for patients, trials, and policy".

Semantics, he concluded, "carry clinical and public-health weight, with a 'biology-only' label having the potential to inflating prevalence, magnify misdiagnosis and inequities, and enable approvals without proven clinical benefit, especially in asymptomatic populations."

> "Labels matter: if we call asymptomatic biomarker positivity 'Alzheimer's disease,' we risk overdiagnosis, miscommunication, and policy errors. AD should remain a clinical–biological diagnosis anchored to symptoms or truly very-high-risk states—not biology alone." - Nicolas Villain

What next in dementia diagnosis and treatment?

On day 3, the second keynote lecture of the conference was delivered by Marco Trabucchi (Italy). He explored some of the next steps in dementia diagnosis and treatment and stressed the importance of approaching the future of dementia care with optimism.

People affected by dementia and their families are waiting anxiously and are holding out hope for any possible new approach to their clinical, psychological and social needs, he said. Indeed, he continued "they are paying great attention to the rate of progress in the various fields and are not willing to forgive any kind of delay due to inadequate focus on goals connected with a positive outcome for diagnostic procedures and therapeutic approaches." It is therefore vital that research must consider that the progress in dementia "cannot be built on isolated pillars" and that scientific breakthroughs "must be translated into meaningful care", he insisted. He also noted that communities should be strengthened through greater knowledge and support, while policies need to ensure access and fairness. Guiding all of this, he said, must be the lived experience of people affected by dementia. In closing, he said "connecting science, medicine and communities is not just a theme, but a commitment to integration, collaboration and humanity."

> "Patients do not need pessimism; rather, they need a strong, generous engagement from researchers, doctors, and psychosocial professionals to improve their quality of life and overcome numerous interfering challenges." - Marco Trabucchi

Day 1

Opening Ceremony

The 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference (#35AEC), "Connecting Science and Communities: The future of dementia care", officially opened on 6 October 2025 at the Bologna Conference Centre. Maria do Rosário Zincke dos Reis, Chairperson of Alzheimer Europe, addressed delegates at the Opening Ceremony, welcoming a record-breaking number of more than 1,500 delegates from 48 countries.

She highlighted the exciting and varied conference programme, developed with the co-hosts Federazione Alzheimer Italia and Alzheimer Uniti Italia. Marking the conference's second time in Italy (after Milan in 1995), she shares, "Our Annual Conference continues to grow in popularity, providing such an engaging forum for sharing knowledge and for networking, bringing together people living with dementia and their families, carers and supporters, as well as volunteers and staff of Alzheimer associations, policymakers, health and social care professionals, researchers, academics and industry representatives."

She thanked the conference's Gold sponsor, Lilly; Silver sponsor, Bristol Myers Squibb; and Bronze sponsors BioArctic, Biogen, Eisai, Johnson & Johnson, MSD, Novo Nordisk, Roche and UCB for their support, as well as the Emilia-Romagna Region and the City of Bologna.

Finally, she extended a special welcome to the 48 people with dementia and the 43 carers and supporters in attendance. She emphasised the importance of "listening to and learning from people with dementia and carers", especially during the first plenary session.

Next, Mario Possenti, Vice-Chairperson of Alzheimer Europe and Secretary General of Federazione Alzheimer Italia, presented the medal of the President of the Republic to the Conference in recognition of its value. He then read welcome remarks from Professor Orazio Schillaci, Italian Minister of Health, who thanked the organisers for promoting an event of great national and international importance. He reaffirmed Italy's commitment to people with dementia and their carers, noting that the planned update of the National Dementia Plan by the end of 2025 will deliver a modern, shared strategy shaped by scientific evidence and lived experienc In closing, he praised the Conference as "a valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge and best practices, but above all, to reaffirm a fundamental principle: no one should feel alone when faced with dementia".

Mario Possenti then gave the floor to Giovanni Gordini, Councillor and Vice-President of Commission IV "Health and Social Policies", representing the Emilia-Romagna Region, who welcomed delegates to the region. Following this, Roberta Toschi, Bologna City Councillor responsible for Disability and Chair of the Fifth Council Committee – Health, Welfare, Family and Community – welcomed participants to the city of Bologna. Both speeches, delivered in Italian, were translated by Clelia d'Anastasio from Alzheimer Uniti Italia.

(Left to right) Orazio Schillaci, Clelia d'Anastasio, Maria do Rosario Zincke dos Reis, Roberta Toschi, Mario Possenti

Nothing about us without us: From lived experience to action

The first plenary of the conference was a joint session organised by the members of the European Working Group of People with Dementia (EWGPWD) and the European Dementia Carers Working Group (EDCWG), who shared their perspectives on dementia as a European and national policy and research priority, as people with lived experience of dementia.

(Left to right) Trevor Salomon, Rosslyn Vella, Gerda Van Tongerloo, Annick Germeys, Kevin Quaid

Since 2023, the first plenary of the annual Alzheimer Europe conference has been entirely dedicated to people with lived experience, who organise, moderate, and deliver the session.

Moderator Trevor Salomon, Chair of the EDCWG, spoke openly about caring for his wife, Yvonne,setting a powerful tone for the session by underscoring the profound impact of dementia. The next speakers challenged outdated narratives and urged decisionmakers to embrace modern approaches grounded in realism, dignity, and meaningful support.

Kevin Quaid, Chair of the EWGPWD (Ireland), focused on the Helsinki Manifesto, adopted by Alzheimer Europe in 2023, as a call to action rather than a policy paper. For him, the Manifesto centres the lived experience of people with dementia and their families, placing their voices at the heart of all future work. He urged readers to know the document, act on it, and press elected representatives to move from words to meaningful action.

Annick Germeys, a member of the EDCWG (Belgium), drew on her experience as the carer for her husband Geert. She presented how personalised and adaptive technology could be a true partner in dementia care through supporting daily routines, communication, safety and cognitive stimulation, helping people with dementia to live at home longer and with dignity.

Gerda Van Tongerloo, Vice-Chairperson of the EWGPWD (Netherlands), emphasised the urgent need for respectful and inclusive communication about dementia. Despite increasing scientific recognition of the social aspects of dementia, people with dementia are still often defined by their condition. For her, “to change the language, it is essential that those of us with lived experience are at the centre of research and practice.”

Rosslyn Vella, Vice-Chairperson of the EDCWG (Malta) spoke about The Caregiver’s Compass, a framework that highlights the importance of policy in delivering person-centred palliative care in dementia. As her mother’s carer, Rosslyn emphasised that dementia is a terminal illness requiring holistic, family-centred care from diagnosis onward. As vital partners in care, caregivers’ voices must be reflected in policy and practice: “This isn’t just about end-of-life care; it’s about improving the quality of every day, from diagnosis onwards.” The session ended with a standing ovation and long, enthusiastic applause from the audience.

Learn more about the EWGPWD and the EDCWG

What is the Helsinki Manifesto?

Day 2

Gender and sexuality in dementia care

The second plenary of the conference explored themes around gender and sexuality in dementia care and was moderated by Marjolein de Vugt (Netherlands).

Maria Teresa Ferretti opened the session by highlighting that Alzheimer's disease affects women far more than men: women make up two-thirds of those living with the disease. She explains that both sex (biology) and gender (socioeconomic factors) impact the clinical manifestation of Alzheimer's disease, where space women present higher accumulation of tau pathology and have specific risk profiles. She also stated that, according to a recent survey from the European Academy of Neurology (EAN), the majority of European neurologists would welcome more training to treat patients belonging to the LGBTQI+ community. She summarises that "The current 'one-size-fits-all' approach in neurology fails to address patient-specific needs related to sex and gender, particularly those from LGBTQI+ minorities. A precision-medicine approach is needed to ensure health equity in Alzheimer's"

Next, Ingrid Hellström drew attention to the fact that male carers remain largely invisible despite their growing numbers. Male spousal carers struggle with stigma and identity shifts, in addition to feeling unseen in research, policy, and everyday support systems. She stressed the need for more inclusive, gender-sensitive services that better reflect men's experiences as carers, as well as improved access to such services, particularly clearer information. She emphasised that "inclusive, gender-sensitive support means providing practical, tailored, and emotionally aware interventions that respect men's experiences as carers."

Afterwards, Martina Roes presented preliminary findings on the experiences and unmet needs of LGBTQ+ people with dementia in healthcare. She shared combined review results from a JPND-funded INTEREST project, an INTERDEM taskforce on culture, content, and intersectionality, and a recently published article on needs, preferences, and experiences of LGBTQ+ people. Although dementia is rising worldwide, little research looks at the experiences of LGBTQ+ people with dementia and their carers. Persistent discrimination has left many feeling "doubly invisible", highlighting key needs such as safe identity disclosure, LGBTQ+ inclusive care, recognition of 'chosen families', and easier access to support services.

The final speaker was Diego De Leo, who presented "Gender as a factor in mental health and depression in old age care", looking at how gender plays a significant role in shaping mental health outcomes and experiences of depression among older adults receiving care. Research shows older women are more likely to report depression, while older men may underreport due to stigma and gender norms. Differences in life expectancy, caregiving roles, social support and access to health services also drive gender gaps in mental health. Understanding these dynamics is key to developing tailored interventions, improving diagnosis and ensuring equitable geriatric mental health care.

(Left to right) Marjolein de Vugt, Martina Roes, Maria Teresa Ferretti, Ingrid Hellström, Diego De Leo

Preparing for new AD treatments

The third plenary of the conference focused on preparing for new AD treatments and was moderated by Angela Bradshaw, Director for Research at Alzheimer Europe.

A plenary roundtable on “Preparing for new AD treatments” brought together a panel of speakers to discuss the opportunities and challenges of disease-modifying therapies. The panel included Joanne Pike, Alzheimer’s Association (USA), Sabina Capellari, University of Bologna (Italy), Lutz Frölich, Central Institute for Mental Health, Mannheim (Germany), and Marco Bozzali, University of Turin (Italy).

The speakers agreed that these new therapies are a landmark moment in Alzheimer’s care but stressed that their success depends on timely and accurate diagnosis, a continuous monitoring system to assess treatment efficacy and safety, as well as improved access to biomarkers through standardised pathways.

They also noted that, while the ability to identify patients at an early stage has improved, there are still significant challenges to address, including late and underdiagnoses, the need for training and upskilling, adapting healthcare systems to new treatments, investing in diagnostics, harmonising policies and raising public awareness.

Joanne Pike, reflecting on experiences from lecanemab rollout in the US, highlighted the Association’s ECHO telementoring programme for healthcare professionals, saying “strong infrastructure is needed for equitable delivery, but capability is also important; physicians must have skills and knowledge, supported by robust guidelines and models of care.”

Alongside contributions from the European Working Group of People with Dementia, and the European Dementia Carers Working Group, the panel discussed questions such as how to improve timely diagnosis, whether European health systems are ready for the introduction of new treatments, what role there might be for genetic counselling, and how to ensure safe monitoring of side effects. The plenary finished with a call to policymakers, to “get serious about dementia,” to ensure strong, sustained investment in health systems, so people who could benefit from treatment can access new AD medicines in a timely, safe and equitable way.

Kevin Quaid, Chairperson of the European Dementia Carers Working Group, asks a question

(Left to right): Angela Bradshaw, Joanne Pike, Marco Bozzali, Lutz Frölich, Sabina Capellari

(Left to right): Angela Bradshaw, Marco Bozzali, Joanne Pike, Sabina Capellari, Lutz Frölich

Day 3

Not all dementias are Alzheimer’s disease

The fourth plenary session looked at some of the less common types of dementia and was moderated by Jean Georges, Executive Director of Alzheimer Europe.

(Left to right) Jean Georges, Piero Parchi, Claire Fyvie, Yolande Pijnenburg, Rejko Krueger

The final plenary session of the conference titled, “Not all dementias are Alzheimer’s disease”, showcased a wider range of other dementia conditions beyond Alzheimer’s dementia. Yolande Pijnenburg (Netherlands) opened the session with “Improving the diagnosis and treatment of fronto-temporal dementia”. She presented statistics on frontotemporal dementia (FTD), explaining that it is the second most common cause of young-onset dementia but is often missed because it affects younger people, does not usually begin with memory problems, and lacks clear biomarkers. She highlighted recent progress using social cognition testing, neurofilament measurements in blood or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF), and new development of disease-specific plasma biomarkers. It is advised that careful symptom profiling can support earlier diagnosis, and several treatments are now in clinical trials, particularly for genetic forms of FTD, which account for around 20% of cases. She concluded that genetic testing holds strong potential to improve both diagnosis and treatment.

Afterwards, Rejko Krueger (Luxembourg) discussed genetic risk factors, in relation to Lewy Body Dementia, Parkinson’s disease, but also Alzheimer’s disease (AD). He drew attention to the fact that, although AD is the most common form of neurodegenerative dementia, there are also significant numbers of dementia cases that are in fact caused by synucleinopathies, conditions caused by abnormal protein build-up in the brain, such as dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) or Parkinson’s disease dementia (PDD). Most dementia cases result from a mix of genetic and environmental factors, but rare inherited forms have helped researchers understand how these diseases begin, improving diagnosis and opening the door to new and promising disease-modifying treatments.

The third speaker in this plenary session was Piero Parchi (Italy), whose talk was titled “Are prion diseases the forgotten dementias? An update on their prevalence and diagnosis”. He started with some words of explanation about prion diseases: These are rare neurodegenerative disorders related to prion protein (PrP) misfolding, characterised by extensive phenotypic heterogeneity, and, in most cases, by rapid progression and spreading and include sporadic (or idiopathic), genetic and acquired forms.

He explained that the most common human prion disease is Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) but rarer prion diseases also exist and tend to progress much more slowly. In these forms, abnormal proteins build up in the brain differently, often forming amyloid plaques, and they are less easily transmitted.

Diagnosing CJD early is difficult because symptoms can be vague, unusual, or limited to a single problem for a long time. As a result, some people with prion disease may never be correctly diagnosed unless brain tissue is examined after death.

The final speaker for this plenary session was Claire Fyvie (United Kingdom - Scotland). The main message of her presentation was that children can get dementia too. “Most stakeholders and policymakers think of dementia as a disease of old age, but childhood dementia is real, under-recognised and devastating”, she said and noted that there are more than 100 genetic conditions that cause childhood dementia. “They are all terminal. There are no cures. Half of the children with dementia die by the age of 10. Most die before reaching their 18th birthday”, she said. She spoke from the heart and from personal experience, about the effect of dementia on her fourteen-year-old son Alexander, calling on Alzheimer Europe, its members and their governments, to include children in their dementia frameworks, policies, research strategies, and events.

Jean Georges (left) moderating the fourth plenary session

Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony began on an uplifting note with a vibrant and deeply personal presentation created by some members of the European Working Group of People with Dementia. Through a photography and storytelling initiative led by the Ri-scatti project and Federazione Alzheimer Italia, participants were provided with cameras before the event, and captured meaningful moments from their journey to the conference and their time together once they arrived. Compiled into a slideshow, it provided a heartfelt glimpse into the highlights of the past days as seen through the eyes of people living with dementia themselves.


Maria do Rosário Zincke dos Reis

Building on this celebratory moment, Alzheimer Europe Chairperson Maria do Rosário Zincke dos Reis also shared her closing remarks, thanking all of the delegates and speakers, all of our corporate sponsors, long-standing collaborators and the local staff in supporting this record-breaking event. She also offered a huge thanks to the Alzheimer Europe team and the new Conference Coordinator Isabelle Collot for all the hard work in making the conference happen, as well as to our co-hosts Alzheimer Uniti Italia and Federazione Alzheimer Italia.

Andy Heffernan, Chief Executive of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI), then took to the stage to invite delegates to the 36th Alzheimer Europe Conference, "Sláinte: Building momentum in dementia through policy, research and partnership", which will be held in Dublin, Ireland, from 27-29 October 2026.

To conclude the conference, the audience was treated to an uplifting and deeply moving performance by Ologramma Argento, a choral group composed of older adults (over 65) with a strong focus on inclusion, memory, and community engagement, based in the Emilia-Romagna region. Their performance brought the audience to tears and earned a standing ovation.

> "OLOGRAMMA ARGENTO is an inclusion model for people living with dementia that integrates music, relationships, and community. It promotes active participation, caregiver support, and dementia-friendly environments, in line with European strategies on human rights, cultural welfare, and person-centred psychosocial interventions." - Roberta Frison, President, CEMU-OLOGRAMMA-APS

Watch the conference through the eyes of people living with dementia


Andy Heffernan and The Alzheimer Society of Ireland team


The Ologramma Argento choir

Special symposia

(Left to right) Patrick Crosbie, Lukas Duffner, Matt Clement, Michael Schöll

Breaking down barriers: promoting inclusive research participation and data sharing in dementia

Wider participation in dementia research and responsible data sharing are essential for scientific progress and transferability of research findings. A Gates Ventures symposium brought together speakers with lived experience, as well as research and data initiatives within the dementia field.

Patrick Crosbie from Ireland opened with a personal contribution, speaking about his late husband Derek's experience of research participation, which he saw as a way to give back. He reflected on their experiences as a couple, the value of research to people affected by dementia and why it matters that people with lived experience are actively involved in research.

Michael Schöll (University of Gothenburg) focused on inclusion and data sharing in dementia research, drawing on lessons from the REAL-AD project and the AD-RIDDLE project's data sharing practices. He described REAL-AD's screening and participant engagement practices, highlighting the value of the data, including sociodemographic information, for advancing research.

Matt Clement (Gates Ventures) outlined how data sharing supports research and innovation. Referencing the Alzheimer's Disease Data Initiative and the European Platform for Neurodegenerative Diseases, he described how it works in practice, the disease areas covered, and the importance of responsible, data protection–compliant sharing.

Finally, Lukas Duffner (Alzheimer Europe) shared public opinion poll findings on attitudes towards research participation and data sharing, where nearly 3,000 people across Europe took part. Overall, attitudes towards research participation and data sharing are rather positive and are critical to accelerating dementia research, while limited awareness of research opportunities is a major barrier to participation.

Translating innovation into improved Alzheimer's care

Conference gold sponsor Lilly organised an immersive session, "Translating innovation into improved Alzheimer's care", exploring the future of dementia care.

Led by Italian science journalist Elena Meli, it highlighted the powerful intersection of scientific innovation and community engagement, focusing on one of the most pressing challenges in Alzheimer's disease (AD): achieving timely and accurate diagnosis.

An expert panel discussed how decades of research are now converging into transformative diagnostic and therapeutic innovations: Catherine Reed (Lilly); Lutz Frölich (Central Institute for Mental Health); and Jean Georges (Alzheimer Europe). With the potential to modify the course of AD on the horizon, time is of the essence to ensure timely intervention, when it can make the greatest difference.

The segment, "Gamification: Put yourself in a policy makers' shoes: Where would you invest to advance the health care system?" gave insight into how prioritising and financing different aspects of the dementia health environment impacts outcomes.

Former Italian Health Minister and Senator Beatrice Lorenzin closed the session with an update on Italy's dementia actions, calling for a European Alzheimer's strategy and full involvement of people with dementia in policy planning:

"A strong collaboration between institutions, patients, and their associations is essential to transform real needs into concrete public health policies, and international opportunities for dialogue such as the Alzheimer Europe Conference move precisely in this direction. As the Parliamentary Intergroup on Neurosciences and Alzheimer's, we are working to ensure that therapies capable of slowing cognitive decline for defined groups of patients reach them in the shortest possible time. For this reason, a shared commitment, both national and European, is extremely necessary to achieve the definition of a European Plan for Alzheimer's and Dementia, based on equity, access to innovation, and mutual support among countries."

(Left to right) Lutz Frölich, Catherine Reed, Beatrice Lorenzin, Elena Meli, Jean Georges

Dementia researchers of the future

This special symposium was organised by the Alzheimer Europe Foundation and INTERDEM, thanks to the support of Frontiers in Dementia.

This session was a great opportunity for nine early stage researchers selected by the Alzheimer Europe Foundation's jury to benefit from bursaries to attend and presentat the conference. The selection of these bursaries was based on the best average scores each received from the jury members.

In addition, Frontiers in Dementia awarded a EUR 2,500 prize for the best quick oral presentation.

The co-chairs of this session were: Iva Holmerová (Czechia), Fania Dassen (Netherlands) and Valentina Barrera (Switzerland).

The nine presentations given by early stage researchers at the session were:

- Examining the Key Correlates of Functional Impairment in Behavioural Variant Frontotemporal Dementia: Cognitive, Behavioral, Personality, and Brain Perfusion Contributions, by Electra Chatzidimitriou (Greece)
- Integrating Mild Behavioral Impairment into Dementia Prevention Strategies: A Telemedicine-Based Approach Aligned with WHO's Global Action Plan, by Efthalia Angelopoulou (Greece)
- Longitudinal Trajectories of Sleep Disturbances and Cognitive Decline in Mild Cognitive Impairment: Evidence from a Three-Phase Study, by Areti Batzikosta (Greece)
- Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Theory Driven Person-Centred Disaster Preparedness Program for Family Caregivers of People Living with Dementia, by Özlem Çiçek Doğan (Türkiye)
- Art therapy and Alzheimer's disease in Greece: Who influence(d)(s) whom? by Vaitsa Giannouli (Greece)
- Genetic predisposition for different aspects of dementia pathology and cognitive decline in a community elderly population, by Stefanos N. Sampatakakis (Greece)
- Diet quality modifies the risk of dementia conferred by AD pathology in older adults: a 15-year population-based study, by Anja Mrhar (Slovenia)
- Application of Positive Psychology Interventions in individuals with early-stage cognitive decline related to dementia: their impact on cognitive and brain functioning, by Dimitra Vasileiou (Greece)
- The well-being and lived care experiences of family caregivers of people living with dementia: the case study of Photovoice practice in Lithuania, by Ieva Petkutė (Lithuania).

> "Attending the 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference was a deeply inspiring and meaningful experience for me. Exchanging ideas with dedicated colleagues and receiving the 'Dementia Researchers of the Future' recognition strengthened my motivation to continue working on mild behavioral impairment and telemedicine, aiming to promote early detection and more equitable access to dementia care." - Efthalia Angelopoulou

2025 Dementia researchers of the future

Projects at 35AEC

Projects supported by Alzheimer Europe featured throughout the conference as presenters, exhibitors, and session hosts, highlighting how scientific innovation can translate into real-world, patient-centred impact.

In a parallel session titled "Connecting science with patients, nurses, and public voices in Alzheimer's care", the REBALANCE project explored how stakeholder perspectives can actively strengthen Alzheimer's disease research. Speakers Jukka Jolkkonen, Signe Mežinska and Anna Žabicka examined healthcare professionals' attitudes toward innovative therapies, the role of public involvement in basic and translational science, and the value of lived experience drawn from daily life with dementia.

Early diagnosis and technological innovation were central to the CombiDiag session, to show how multimodal data can improve diagnosis, differentiate Alzheimer's disease from similar disorders, and deliver clinically and economically useful insights. The different talks of its ten CombiDiag fellows showcased an integrated approach to detecting neurodegenerative diseases, combining genetic, metabolomic, oral, blood-based, speech, EEG, and digital biomarkers with machine learning and advanced biosensor technologies.

Moving the focus to participation and co-creation, the session "Research and co-creation: from tokenism to meaningful engagement" was organised by the DEMPACT project. Presentations given by Jeroen Vlug, Gili Yaron, Wijnand IJsselsteijn and Niels Janssen were about sustained involvement of people with lived experience in quality-of-life research, co-creation as a core practice in dementia technology design, and strategies for engaging underrepresented groups in dementia risk reduction. DEMPACT promotes inclusive, ethical research practices that strengthen relevance, equity, and real-world impact.

The INTEREST session focused on advancing more inclusive dementia care through the integration of policy, practice, and research. Contributions from Wei Qi Koh, David Neal and Sara Lauren Bartels examined unmet needs among people affected by dementia, proposed recommendations for more personalised and equitable technological and psychosocial care and outlined dissemination activities and future directions.

Improving care for younger people affected by dementia was the focus of the YOD-INCLUDED session. Moderated by Rianne de Heus and Christian Bakke, speakers shared early findings from a national young-onset dementia cohort, explored gene–environment influences and cognitive profiles, and examined patterns in formal care use. The session also highlighted gaps in post-diagnostic support and transitions from memory clinics into ongoing care, underscoring YOD-INCLUDED's goal of more timely, tailored, and equitable services.

During the ABOARD symposium, the talks provided by Wiesje van der Flier, Jean Vosny and Marco Blom highlighted the development of the Dutch ABOARD Cohort as a nationwide registry, alignment of real-world datasets across international registries, and the value of registry data for patients and caregivers. Overall, it emphasised how collaboration and data harmonisation can accelerate translational impact in Alzheimer's research.

Digital innovation and artificial intelligence were explored in the TEF-Health session, which showcased how European AI ecosystems are supporting research and care in neurodegenerative diseases. The Italian presentations highlighted Testing and Experimentation Facilities, European Digital Innovation Hubs, and advanced data science approaches, including emerging concepts such as brain digital twins. Together, they illustrated how TEF-Health supports trustworthy, scalable AI solutions in healthcare.

The SIGNATURE session focused on socio-affective assessment in dementia, highlighting the importance of aligning assessment methods with real-life needs and care perspectives to support more person-centred outcomes. Speakers Jordi Matias-Guiu Antem, Chiara Cerami and Alessandra Dodich looked at changes in social behaviour, social cognition, and emotional functioning, and discussed collaborative approaches to translating research evidence into patient benefit.

Alongside these sessions, several other projects were also represented through presentations and discussions across the conference programme, including ADIS, PREDICTOM, AD-RIDDLE, EPND, AI4Hope, PROMINENT, and LETHE.

The following projects hosted sessions covering a wide spectrum of research themes:

More information about our projects and their funding is available at: https://www.alzheimer-europe.org/our-work/current-work

The INTERDEM Silver Jubilee

25 years of building bridges for psychosocial dementia research across Europe

25 years of connection

When INTERDEM was founded 25 years ago, the European dementia research landscape looked very different from today. Psychosocial research was still often positioned at the margins of dementia science, overshadowed by biomedical approaches and fragmented by national borders, disciplinary silos, and differences in health and care systems across Europe. Against this backdrop, INTERDEM was initiated with a clear ambition to connect researchers across Europe who shared a commitment to improving the lives of people with dementia and their families through high-quality psychosocial research.

A quarter of a century later, INTERDEM stands as a flourishing European research network with over 600 members, nine active task forces, a growing Academy for early-career researchers, and a strong partnership with Alzheimer Europe. Its influence reaches far beyond publications and projects alone. INTERDEM has helped to set research agendas, inspired and supported generations of researchers, and consistently advocated for a view of dementia that recognises people's capacities, relationships, and social contexts.

This anniversary is therefore not only a moment to look back with pride, but also an opportunity to reflect on what has made INTERDEM endure and what will be needed to carry its mission forward.

Why INTERDEM was founded

INTERDEM was founded at a time when there was a growing recognition that dementia could not be understood or addressed solely through neuropathology or pharmacology. People living with dementia, their carers, and professionals alike were struggling with challenges related to, for example, quality of life, behaviour, identity, relationships, care transitions, and social participation; areas where psychosocial research could make a difference.

The purpose of INTERDEM was therefore clear from the outset:

- To grow and sustain pan-European research on early, timely and quality psychosocial interventions in dementia.
- To actively disseminate this and enhance practice, policy and the quality of life and well-being of people with dementia and their supporters, across Europe.
- To place people with dementia and their supporters at the centre of European research and practice, by actively involving them in developing these activities.

INTERDEM network meets in Bologna, Italy, 6 October 2025

The INTERDEM Silver Jubilee

From its early days, INTERDEM positioned itself as an open, collaborative network. Researchers at different career stages, from different disciplines and European countries, were encouraged to contribute and to jointly develop new ideas and initiatives. This culture of accessibility and shared ownership has remained one of INTERDEM's defining characteristics.

From informal collaboration to a European reference network

Over the years, INTERDEM has evolved in response to both growth and external developments. What began as a small group of passionate senior researchers gradually expanded into a broad European community, encompassing diverse disciplines such as psychology, medicine (working in psychiatry, elderly medicine, neurology and primary care), nursing, occupational therapy, human movement therapy, social work, medical sociology, ethics, health and social sciences, gerontology, implementation sciences, and in recent years technology and epidemiology.

With growth came the need for structure. INTERDEM professionalised its governance, by establishing a Board to oversee developments, clarifying membership criteria, and developing thematic task forces that allowed members to collaborate around shared interests, including young-onset dementia, technology, social health, intercultural aspects, palliative and end of life care, prevention, inequalities in dementia care, education/ training and methodology. These task forces became engines of innovation and collaboration, leading to influential publications, consensus papers, and large-scale European research projects.

An important milestone in INTERDEM's evolution has been the publication of successive INTERDEM Manifestos, which articulate a shared vision for the future of psychosocial dementia research and help to position the network within the broader European research landscape. Beginning with the first manifesto in 2011 and followed by later updates, these statements have progressively refined INTERDEM's scientific and societal ambitions.

Across the manifestos, several core themes consistently emerged: the need for stronger integration between research and care practice; meaningful involvement of people with dementia and their carers in shaping research; greater attention to implementation, scalability, and real-world impact; and a life-course perspective on dementia that spans prevention, living well with the condition, and palliative care. Later manifestos further emphasised the importance of bridging biomedical and psychosocial approaches, highlighting concepts such as social health as a way to connect biological processes with lived experience and everyday functioning.

Together, the INTERDEM Manifestos have served as both reflection and direction, actively guiding INTERDEM's strategic priorities. The principles they articulated have since become central pillars of the network's work, including task force activities, collaborative projects, and learning activities.

Partnership with Alzheimer Europe

The partnership between INTERDEM and Alzheimer Europe is one of the most enduring and meaningful collaborations in the European dementia field. Formalised through a partnership agreement, it recognises INTERDEM as a reference network for European psychosocial dementia research, while acknowledging Alzheimer Europe as the representative voice of people with dementia, their carers, and national Alzheimer associations across Europe.

This collaboration goes far beyond symbolic recognition. Over many years, Alzheimer Europe has consistently facilitated INTERDEM's annual meetings, provided space and organisational support during its conferences, and created visibility for INTERDEM symposia and Academy activities. In turn, INTERDEM has actively contributed to Alzheimer Europe conferences by encouraging its network to submit abstracts, organising dedicated scientific sessions, and supporting the evaluation of submitted work.

At its core, the partnership reflects a shared mission: to change perceptions, practice, and policy in order to improve the quality of life of people with dementia and their carers. Through joint projects and European consortia, INTERDEM researchers work closely with the European Working Group of People with Dementia and the European Carers Working Group, ensuring that lived experience meaningfully informs research priorities, study design, and interpretation. These collaborations play a crucial role in strengthening the societal relevance, legitimacy, and impact of psychosocial dementia research across Europe.

Reflections from former chairs, Myrra Vernooij-Dassen and Esme Moniz-Cook

Esme Moniz-Cook

A European Commission award 'Early Detection and Psychosocial Rehabilitation to Maintain Quality of Life in Dementia' (1997-1999) and a UK award "Early Psychosocial Intervention through a Memory Clinic - A Randomised Controlled Trial" (1998-2000), funded a conference at the University of Hull, UK. Dementia care practitioner-academics from the UK, Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Ireland gathered to share knowledge. At the time, international peer reviewed articles about psychosocial support in dementia across Europe were scarce, since these could be 'hidden' within national language-specific publications.

At a meeting in Zamora, Spain (2000), INTERDEM and its website were born, followed by 'think-tanks' in Maastricht (2001); contributions to the Alzheimer Europe Conference (Maastricht 2002); continued annual meetings hosted by

INTERDEM members aligned (from 2006) with Alzheimer Europe's annual conferences. Our collaboration soon received two pan-European INTERDEM EU awards (2023/2004) and we presented two symposia to disseminate findings at the Prague Alzheimer Europe Conference Jean Georges and the team. At the next Alzheimer Europe Conference (Killarney, Ireland, 2005) INTERDEM made strong contributions from our growing high-quality published and ongoing work. Our contribution to an Alzheimer Europe-administered EU project EUROCODE and development of 12 quality indicators for the trajectory of dementia care services, followed.

Esme Moniz-Cook

Since then, well-funded national and pan-European studies have flourished. For example, at our 25th anniversary symposium, I listed over 40 large scale programmes of psychosocial dementia work known to me - there are undoubtedly more!

Europe remains a wonderful natural environment for developing scientific knowledge about the experience of dementia in society, including improving our understanding of language and cultural contributions to person/family centred care for this complex condition. These perspectives continue to achieve beyond what I hoped for, 25 years ago.

As I reflect on the pleasure we have had, I use this opportunity to thank:

- Jean Georges and his team for their warm collaboration in the mutual journey towards improving lives for those affected by dementia
- 1999 founding members Bob Woods, Myrra Vernooij -Dassen, Frans Verhey, Steve Iliffe and Manuel Franco for the *silver threads* that held our work together; and Jill Manthorpe who joined me in editing the INTERDEM psychosocial intervention books published in 2008 and 2020.

Many of us founding members from 1999 are now emeritus professors still connected to INTERDEM. We are thankful that the network is safe in the hands of our very able Chair, Marjolein de Vugt, and the numerous lively members across INTERDEM. I, as well as others, remain open to supporting INTERDEM, its Chair, its projects and Alzheimer Europe conferences, if opportunities arise.

I look forward to contributing to INTERDEM's 'Severe Behavioural Challenges' social health interest group, the methodology 'METHODEM' project, the Road Map work and to the 2026 INTERDEM meeting alongside Alzheimer Europe - till then, *Slàinte* (good health)!

Myrra Vernooij-Dassen

Esme Moniz-Cook invited me to join the founding meeting of INTERDEM. She welcomed us with boxes of chocolates and created a warm friendly atmosphere.

I enjoyed the combination of friendship and ambition so much. We managed to channel our enthusiasm into products such as vision articles and grants allowing us to study key topics in dementia. Each year I was looking forward to the new developments and tried to contribute e.g. by bringing in the implementation knowledge of my department.

In our 2011 and 2020 manifestos, we acknowledged the state of the art and identified important gaps. While there was a strong foundation of effective interventions, we recognised the need for more personalised approaches that enhanced a sense of purpose and pleasure for people with dementia and their carers. The 2011 INTERDEM Manifesto therefore called for research into the working mechanisms of effective interventions, the systematic implementation of proven approaches, and improved outcome measurement. In particular, research on meeting centres and occupational therapy proved successful in advancing these aims.

Myrra Vernooij-Dassen

In our 2020 Manifesto, we focused on the multifactorial nature of dementia. Research across the three health domains—biological, psychological, and social—was largely conducted in silos, obscuring their interrelationships. At that time, social health research was underdeveloped. INTERDEM made a strong contribution to its conceptualisation and to bridging biological, psychological, and social research. Building on early epidemiological findings that highlighted the preventive potential of social health, we expanded our focus to modifiable social health factors that are amenable to intervention (SHARED project). Our guiding motto became *living well with(out) dementia.*

The network enabled the development of an ambitious research agenda. Joint research

The INTERDEM Silver Jubilee

proposals were successful and allowed us to pursue our shared ambitions. We participated in European Scientific Advisory boards (e.g JPND), thus being involved in setting the European research agenda and sitting on boards of research journals. Dedicated task forces were established, initiatives were taken for dedicated taskforces. The INTERDEM Academy was founded and nurtured. We are now working on a roadmap to inspire those who are on the INTERDEM journey. At this stage, I had the pleasure of handing over the chair to the capable hands of my successor, Marjolein de Vugt.

Without INTERDEM, the field of psychosocial dementia research would not have achieved this level of systematic progress. The network helped place the person at the centre of research—recognising people's capacities, relationships, and social contexts—while consistently promoting scientific excellence.

As an emeritus professor, I can now dedicate my time to scientific research that satisfies my curiosity and holds high societal value. My greatest reward is having INTERDEM colleagues among my closest friends, and the opportunity to travel across Europe to visit them—and to welcome them in return.

Reflections from the current Chair, Marjolein de Vugt

My own history is closely intertwined with that of INTERDEM. I joined the network around the year 2001 as a young PhD student at the very beginning of my academic journey. At that stage, being part of an international research network was far from self-evident. INTERDEM opened that world to me. It introduced me to colleagues across Europe, exposed me to different perspectives on dementia research, and, most importantly, made me feel welcome to contribute, even as a junior researcher.

Over the years, INTERDEM became the environment in which I grew professionally. It offered opportunities to collaborate on joint papers, to participate in European projects, and gradually to take on more responsibility. Senior researchers took the time to mentor, encourage, and challenge me, creating space to develop confidence and leadership. Looking back, INTERDEM feels very much like a research family, a place where I did not just build a CV, but where I learned what it means to work together in a generous, open, and respectful way.

Marjolein de Vugt

This long-term involvement influenced my development from early-career researcher to senior scientist, and eventually to Chair of the network. That trajectory was not planned, but it was made possible by a culture in which people were willing to invest in each other and in the collective. The trust and continuity within INTERDEM allowed sustainable collaborations and ideas to mature across years rather than funding cycles.

What continues to inspire me is that INTERDEM has maintained this friendly and open atmosphere while growing substantially in size and influence. It remains a network where junior researchers are encouraged to speak up, where people with dementia and their carers are taken seriously as partners in research, and where scientific excellence goes hand in hand with social responsibility.

I am very aware that I would not be in the position I am today without INTERDEM. The network has been essential in my career journey, my way of working, and my view on what meaningful dementia research should be. Being Chair now feels less like a role and more like a responsibility to give back to the community that has given me so much, and to ensure that future generations of researchers can grow within INTERDEM in the same way I did.

Investing in the future: the INTERDEM Academy

One of the most significant developments in INTERDEM's recent history has been the creation and growth of the INTERDEM Academy. Emerging from Marie-Curie funded European international training networks such as PRIDE, INDUCT, and DISTINCT, the Academy reflects INTERDEM's long-standing commitment to nurture the next generation of psychosocial dementia researchers. Alzheimer Europe is a trusted advisor of the Academy, offering valuable insights and reflections on activities and ambitions.

Today, the Academy includes more than 300 early-career researchers from across Europe. It provides a supportive environment where PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers can build international networks, receive mentorship, and develop leadership skills. Activities such as summer schools, masterclasses, fellowships, the MENTORDEM programme, publication awards, travel grants, and dedicated conference symposia offer young researchers opportunities that are often difficult to access within national settings alone. The INTERDEM Academy also increased its reach by collaborating with other initiatives for early-career researchers, such as the ISTAART PEERs, the WYLD network, and Dementia Researcher UK, resulting in joint publications, podcasts, and book chapters. These efforts increase awareness for, the needs of, and improve support for, early-career dementia researchers, globally.

These young researchers are not only the future of INTERDEM, but of the entire field of dementia research. INTERDEM meetings and conferences such as Alzheimer Europe's often mark formative moments in their careers: the first international presentation, the first critical discussion with peers, or the first encounter with people living with dementia who challenge them to reflect on the real-world impact of their work.

Looking ahead, strengthening the connection between the Academy and the senior INTERDEM network remains a key priority. Involving Academy members more closely in task forces, publications, and governance not only supports their development, but also brings fresh perspectives and energy to the network.

Voices from the Board

INTERDEM's success has always rested on shared stewardship by its Board and active members. Board members past and present have contributed not only scientific expertise, but also organisational commitment, creativity, and a willingness to voluntarily invest time beyond formal roles.

Rabih Chattat, long-standing Board member and a driving force behind many INTERDEM activities, has been instrumental in translating INTERDEM's vision into practice. In particular, his commitment to organising the annual INTERDEM meetings, held alongside the Alzheimer Europe conferences, has been crucial in stimulating the network's collaborative culture. These meetings have become much more than formal agenda-driven gatherings. They offer a space to present and discuss ongoing work, to explore emerging ideas, to meet in task forces, and to initiate new collaborations that often grow into joint publications and new grant proposals.

Equally important is the informal dimension of these meetings. By bringing members together in person, year after year, they create opportunities for personal connection, trust-building, and mutual support. Early-career researchers meet senior colleagues in an approachable setting, new members are welcomed into the network, and long-standing collaborations are strengthened. This combination of intellectual exchange and informal bonding is one of INTERDEM's defining strengths, and it is precisely this atmosphere that allows ideas and people to flourish.

Looking ahead to the next 25 years

As INTERDEM celebrates its 25th anniversary, the challenges faced in dementia research and care are both urgent and complex. Ageing populations, workforce shortages, societal challenges due to migration and war, health inequalities, and rapid technological developments all demand new ways of thinking and working.

INTERDEM enters this next phase with confidence rooted in experience. Its history shows that collaboration, inclusivity, and a clear focus on quality of life can generate lasting impact. Its future will depend on continuing to build bridges between generations, disciplines, sectors, and perspectives.

If the past 25 years have taught us anything, it is that psychosocial research matters. It contributes to how people live with dementia, how families cope, and how societies respond. INTERDEM will continue to stand for that vision, guided by its members, inspired by lived experience, and committed to improving life with dementia across Europe.

25 years of INTERDEM is not only a celebration of what has been achieved, but a reaffirmation of why the network exists: to work together, across borders and disciplines, to create a better future for and with people living with dementia and those who care for them.

INTERDEM meeting before 27AEC in Berlin on 2 October 2017

Speaking up

Our attendees reflect on the insights, conversations, and lasting impact of 35AEC

René Thyrian, DZNE, Germany

"The Annual Conference in Bologna was full of opportunities to network with colleagues and get updates on the current developments in Europe, but also specifically about dementia in Italy. What I like the most is that very diverse stakeholders meet and interact. People with lived experience, service and care providers, researchers and policy makers participate and have their share. This is unique!"

Margarita Grammatikopoulou, CERTH, Greece

"At my first AE Conference, I presented CERTH's Banking app, an online tool assessing financial management, an activity of daily living often affected early in dementia. Hearing from people living with dementia highlighted the importance of keeping the conversation alive and pursuing research with dedication, as even small contributions could have an impact on people's lives."

Joni Henderson, C2N Diagnostics, USA

"C2N Diagnostics, maker of the Precivity™ blood tests for AD, is a proud sponsor of the Alzheimer's Europe (AE) Anti-Stigma Award, the annual AE conference, and a partner in the AD-RIDDLE research study. We greatly value the work of AE in presenting the highest quality of research, policy efforts, and prioritising the voice of those living with AD throughout their annual conference."

Charles Scerri, University of Malta, Malta

"Attending the 35th Alzheimer Europe conference was, as always, truly inspiring. I was most impressed by the amount of young researchers who participated and the inclusion of those living with dementia in the presentations and discussions. A key takeaway was the bridge that is constantly being built between medical research and social care."

Simone Salemme, University of Camerino, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy

"During my presentation, 'Towards a reorganization of dementia services in Italy in the new pharmacological era', I truly appreciated the opportunity to draw on the diverse perspectives and expertise of participants at the Alzheimer Europe Conference, including people living with dementia, care partners, professionals and advocates. The discussion reinforced that, when these voices come together, they can not only enrich the ongoing reorganisation — a key priority for our public health system — but also inspire more ambitious, person-centred and equitable change."

Roos Jutten, Amsterdam UMC, Netherlands

"As a first-time attendee, I found the Alzheimer Europe Conference to be very welcoming and highly engaging, with many opportunities for discussion and exchange. I learned a great deal from the diversity of perspectives and particularly valued the openness of discussions including people with lived experience, and the chance to connect with researchers across disciplines and countries."

Anne Rita Øksengård, Norwegian Health Association, Norway

"I was very pleased to give an oral presentation about "The Norwegian Registry of Persons Assessed for Cognitive Symptoms (NorCog)", at 35AEC in Bologna. NorCog, a national quality and research registry with over 27,000 patients, includes variables stating lived experience related to dementia diagnostics and, together with our working group for persons with dementia, we developed patient-reported measures (PREMs) to evaluate dementia diagnostics in Norway. This tailored questionnaire shows overall satisfaction but highlights gaps in information about diagnostics and treatment, follow-up, and family involvement. Findings will inform improvements in the upcoming Norwegian Dementia Plan 2025."

Věra Ryšava, EWGPWD member, Czech Republic

"The AE conference in Bologna was my third conference (I had already attended conferences in Helsinki and Geneva). I felt tremendous positive energy around me at the conference in Bologna, which always gives me the strength to cope with my illness and helps me in my efforts to remove the stigma surrounding this disease, which I am working on in the Czechia. In Bologna, I was also delighted to take part in a photography project with other EWGPWD members and it was nice and interesting to see the video created from our photos taken during the conference. I am very happy and honoured to be a member of the EWGPWD. It has broadened my perspective on dementia, the importance of disseminating information to the general public for prevention and the importance of properly linking the social and health systems. But what is very important to me is that at meetings such as those in Bologna, Helsinki, and Geneva, I meet many people who care about this issue and who are devoting their energy to solving it and trying to ensure that people who are personally affected can live with dignity for as long as possible."

Jonas Radermacher, Fraunhofer SCAI, Germany

"It's always inspiring to see research from all different angles coming together. What stood out most for me, however, were the talks by people living with dementia and their carers. Hearing their stories and witnessing their strength in not letting the disease dictate their lives was deeply moving and motivating."

Hanneke Rhodius-Meester, Oslo University Hospital, Norway

"I presented on DLB caregiver schools and I absolutely loved the Alzheimer Europe Conference in Bologna! Of course… the city, the presentations, the people, but most of all, the fantastic possibility to discuss research and clinical work on the spot, with people with lived experience, significant others, policy makers and colleagues. The mix of all the relevant people present makes AEC unique! See you in Dublin."

Esme Moniz-Cook University of Hull, UK

I first contributed to Alzheimer Europe's conference in 2002 and have joined every year since 2004, when I met Jean Georges and the team in Prague. The Bologna 2025 attendee presentations were higher than usual, making it a bit challenging to choose from all the interesting talks offered. However poster presentations more than compensated for this, as there was time for thoughtful discussion, debate and connection with authors and attendees.

Guðlaugur Eyjólfsson, Alzheimersamtökin á Íslandi, Iceland

"Being part of the Alzheimer Europe Conference in Bologna in 2025 was a valuable experience. It provided a very good insight into the latest developments in dementia research and offered an opportunity to learn, reflect and be better equipped for future work and decision-making. The conference also provided a valuable chance to meet colleagues from across Europe and engage in meaningful collaboration."

Sophie van der Landen, Alzheimercentrum Amsterdam, Netherlands

"35AEC was an inspiring conference, where I had the opportunity to present my research on the validation of the Amsterdam IADL Questionnaire in Swedish primary care. Insightful discussions on dementia diagnosis and care, combined with the lively atmosphere of Bologna and its delicious Italian cuisine, made it a memorable event."

Christina Zioga, EDCWG member, Greece

"Attending the Alzheimer Europe Conference in Bologna with my mother was both deeply personal and empowering. As her caregiver and member of the EDCWG, I felt seen and supported. The sessions bridged science and humanity, reminding me that behind every diagnosis is a family. Sharing this journey with my mother was a unique experience for both of us."

Speaking up

Peter Thörngren, EDCWG, member, Sweden

"My first Alzheimer Europe conference has enriched me with many new impressions and meaningful experiences. I had the privilege of attending a series of captivating presentations-spotlighting the latest research, economic frameworks, and geopolitical perspectives, exploring international differences, and showcasing inspiring initiatives from various countries. Some sessions were deeply emotional, with personal stories shared by those directly affected and their loved ones."

Olivier Constant, Alzheimer Liga Vlaanderen, Belgium

"It is good to see that the beating heart of the Alzheimer Europe Conference is more than ever the voice of people with dementia and their caregivers as experts by experience. On behalf of our member organisation from Belgium it was not only a pleasure to present the mission and first realisation of our 'Flemish working of caregivers for people with dementia'. It was also inspiring to learn more about all the great work done by other colleagues. But as always, the best memories are the valuable connections that are made during the conference. They provide not only hope and ambition for the future, they are also vital to strengthen our collaboration across borders!"

Shelagh Robinson, EWGPWD member, UK

"If not the oldest attendee at the conference at 85 i was certainly one of the oldest and despite the challenges of travel that come with dementia in old age I was determined to attend Bologna 2025. The reminder across a range of presentation to stay active and keep busy was my main take home message and as always the shared lived experience with renewal of old friendships and making of new ones was both informative and reassuring. As always, huge thanks to the staff of Alzheimer Europe for their hard work in putting on the conference but also the way in which they look after delegates with dementia."

Niels Janssen, Universiteit Maastricht, Netherlands

"As a researcher I really like the Alzheimer Europe Conference, and I try to participate every year. One aspect I really like and value about the conference is that is not only open to researchers and policy makers, but also to people living with dementia and informal caregivers. This inclusive environment, in which the perspective of the people living with dementia forms the centre, therefore makes it of great value."

Raffaella Bugliazzini, Lilly, Italy

"The 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference was a unique moment of exchange and innovation. The quality of the sessions and the openness to dialogue made the experience truly valuable. Events like this are crucial to strengthen our commitment to turning research into concrete solutions for patients and their families, and to highlight the importance of rapid access to care."

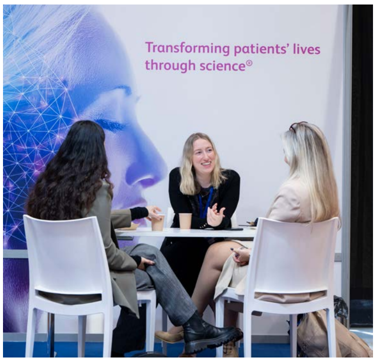
Johanna Mitterreiter, Siemens, Healthineers AG, Germany

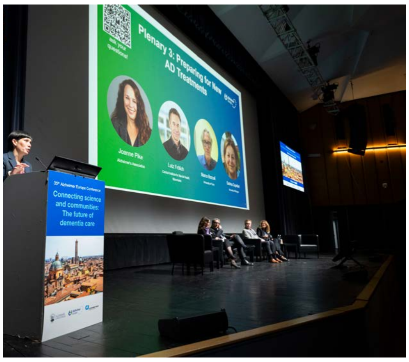
"As a scientist, you don't very often see the patient, carer or (public health) policy perspective, which I really appreciated and learned from. Attending the AE conference for the first time, I was truly inspired by hearing directly from those living with AD — both patients and carers. Their experiences highlighted the real-world difference our work can make."

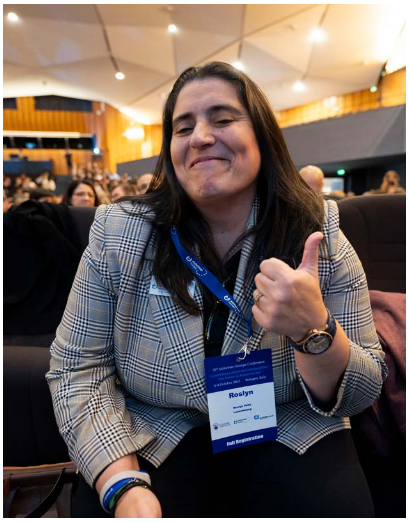
Frederik Barkhof, Amsterdam UMC, Netherlands

"It is great to see the breadth of the AE meeting progressively embedding more biologically focussed research and their discussion with patient and advocacy participants. I also enjoyed seeing so many great European projects being presented, allowing better integration of their findings, and interlinking the respective research communities."

Photo gallery







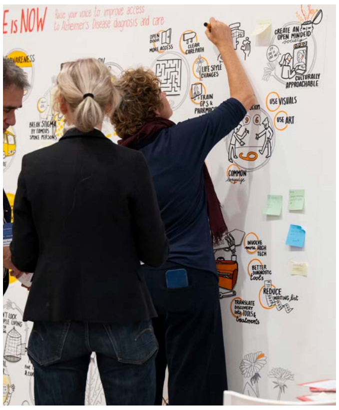
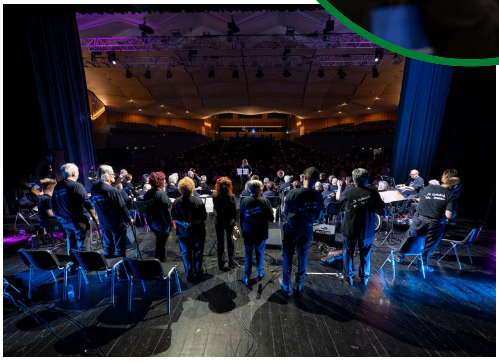


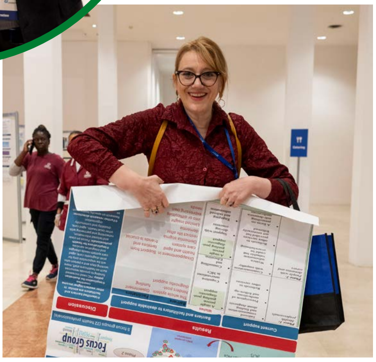
Photo gallery


TIME is NOW


FEDERAZIONE ALZHEIMER ITALIA
BRISTOL

Photo gallery



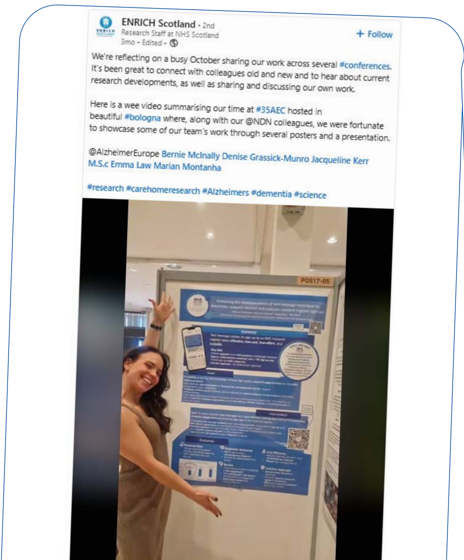


Live from social media


Stefanie Becker • 1st
Opportunitäten erkennen und ergreifen | Hinter dem Tellerrand wird's interessant
4mo •

Eröffnung der 35. Alzheimer Europe Konferenz in Bologna #35AEC: Neuer Rekord: Über 1'500 Teilnehmende
... more

Show translation


ENRICH Scotland • 2nd
Research Staff at NHS Scotland
3mo • Edited •

We're reflecting on a busy October sharing our work across several #conferences. It's been great to connect with colleagues old and new and to hear about current research developments, as well as sharing and discussing our own work.

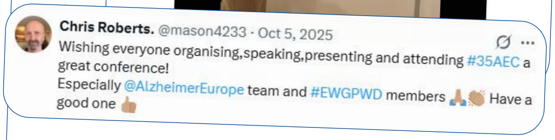
Here is a wee video summarising our time at #35AEC hosted in beautiful #bologna where, along with our @NDN colleagues, we were fortunate to showcase some of our team's work through several posters and a presentation.

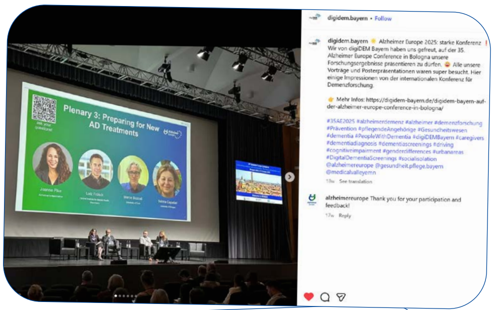
@AlzheimerEurope Bernie McInally Denise Grassick-Munro Jacqueline Kerr M.S.c Emma Law Marian Montanha

#research #carehomeresearch #Alzheimers #dementia #science


Dementia Research Network Ireland @drni.bsky.social · 3mo
What an amazing experience #35AEC has been! DRNI really enjoyed the knowledgeable & thought-provoking presentations, innovative and insightful posters, & meaningful networking with great people. Thank you @alzheimereurope.bsky.social - and we can't wait to attend #36AEC next year in Dublin!


Chris Bintener @ChrisBintener · Oct 7, 2025
Time flies, so do we. #35AEC @AlzheimerEurope
@AngeBradshaw_AE
@CindyBirck
@LukasDuffner


Chris Roberts. @mason4233 · Oct 5, 2025
Wishing everyone organising,speaking,presenting and attending #35AEC a great conference!
Especially @AlzheimerEurope team and #EWGPWD members 🙏👏 Have a good one 👍


digidem.bayern • Follow

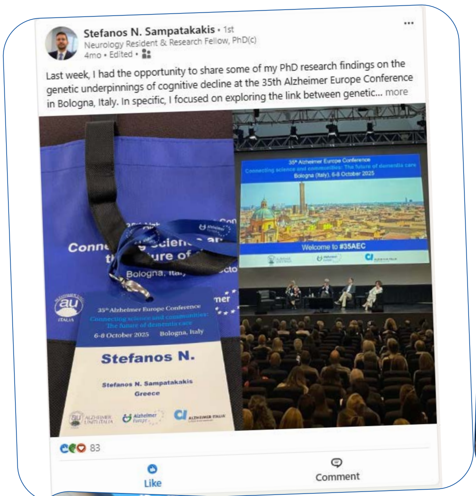
digidem.bayern ☀️ Alzheimer Europe 2025: starke Konferenz ❗ Wir von digiDEM Bayern haben uns gefreut, auf der 35. Alzheimer Europe Conference in Bologna unsere Forschungsergebnisse präsentieren zu dürfen. 😁 Alle unsere Vorträge und Posterpräsentationen waren super besucht. Hier einige Impressionen von der internationalen Konferenz für Demenzforschung.

👉 Mehr Infos: https://digidem-bayern.de/digidem-bayern-auf-der-alzheimer-europe-conference-in-bologna/

#35AE2025 #alzheimerdemenz #alzheimer #demenzforschung #Prävention #pflegendeAngehörige #Gesundheitswesen #dementia #PeopleWithDementia #digiDEMBayern #caregivers #dementiadiagnosis #dementiascreenings #driving #cognitiveimpairment #genderdifferences #urbanareas #DigitalDementiaScreenings #socialisolation @alzheimereurope @gesundheit.pflege.bayern @medicalvalleyemn
18w See translation

alzheimereurope Thank you for your participation and feedback!
17w Reply


Prof Elaine Hunter @elaineahpmh · Oct 8, 2025
#35AEC delighted to share our @AhpDementia programme in Scotland today & some of my key messages : the voice of lived experience front and central, collaboration, community connections, engagement, leadership, rehabilitation, values and rights alzscot.org/ahpresources @alzscot


Stefanos N. Sampatakakis • 1st
Neurology Resident & Research Fellow, PhD(c)
4mo • Edited •

Last week, I had the opportunity to share some of my PhD research findings on the genetic underpinnings of cognitive decline at the 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference in Bologna, Italy. In specific, I focused on exploring the link between genetic... more


afedaz Follow

afedaz 20w
Afedaz esta presente en el 35 Alzheimer Europe Conference en Bologna. Agradecer a la @fpmaragall darnos la oportunidad de poder asisitir a este congreso, muchísimas gracias.

@fpmaragall
@alzheimereurope
See translation

alzheimereurope 17w
Thank you for your participation!
1 like Reply

fpmaragall 19w
Un honor coincidir y colaborar en esta misión común hacia un futuro sin Alzheimer. 💚
1 like Reply See translation

23 2
October 7, 2025


SDWG @S_D_W_G · Oct 6, 2025
A fantastic morning with @S_D_W_G member Margaret as she received her award from colleagues of the European Working Group #EWGPWD @AlzheimerEurope for her 4 years of dedication representing Scotland and as latterly the Vice Chair. Congratulations and thankyou Margaret #35AEC


demenzworld Follow
Original audio

demenzworld 20w
💡 Wie kann eine Welt aussehen, in der Menschen mit Demenz dazugehören – ganz selbstverständlich?

Der niederländische Pfleger, Autor und Aktivist Teun Toebes lebte in einem Pflegeheim, um zu verstehen, was echtes Miteinander bedeutet. 🏡💬

Wir haben ihn am Alzheimer-Europe-Kongress in Bologna getroffen 🇮🇹 und ihn gefragt, welche Botschaft er an die demenzworld-Community hat. ❤️

👉 Was ist dein wichtigstes Anliegen im Zusammenhang mit Demenz? Schreib's in die Kommentare! 💭

162 10
Liked by **selbsthilfe_demenz** and **161 others**
October 7, 2025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Bologna Congress Center BO

demenz.pflege.kommunikation 19w
🧠 Rückblick: 35th Alzheimer Europe Conference, Bologna 🇮🇹

Letzte Woche fand die 35. Alzheimer Europe Conference (35AEC) in Bologna statt.

Zwei Mitarbeiterinnen unseres Projekts TriaDe präsentierten dort aktuelle Ergebnisse aus unserer Forschung zu Live-in Care in der häuslichen Demenzversorgung.

🎤 Vortrag von Anna-Eva Nebowsky: „Negotiating Roles and Informal Care Concepts in Dementia Live-in Arrangements"
➡️ Der Beitrag zeigte, wie komplexe Rollenaushandlungen zwischen

20
October 14, 2025


France Alzheimer et maladies appa... @FranceAlz... · Oct 8, 2025
L'opportunité pour @FranceAlzheimer de présenter les formations professionnelles de son Institut dédiées aux maladies apparentées à #Alzheimer telles que la maladie à corps de Lewy, pour adapter la prise en soins et l'accompagnement des patients et de leurs #aidants. #35AEC

Conference at a glance

1518
PARTICIPANTS

48
COUNTRIES

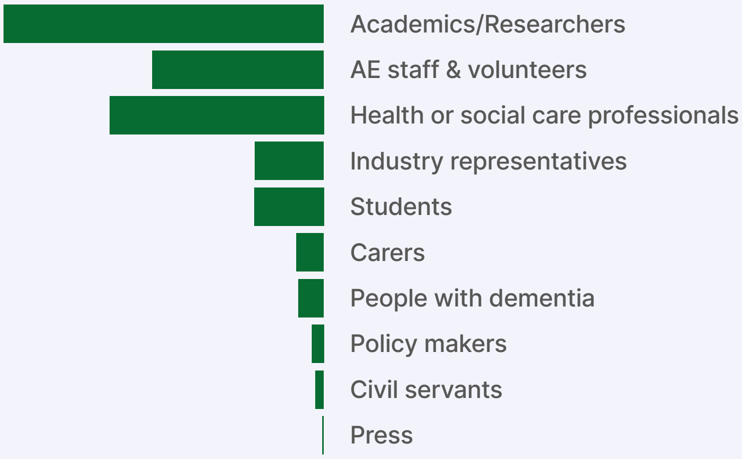
369
ORAL PRESENTATIONS

495
POSTERS

Conference participants

Top Countries in Attendance

Breakdown by category



Breakdown by gender

73%
FEMALE

25%
MALE

Topics that left a lasting impression with attendees

Brain Health & Research

Medical & Scientific Focus

Lived Experience & Inclusion

Caregiving & Social Support

Creative & Environmental Approaches

Education & Awareness

Special Populations & Conditions

93%
WOULD RECOMMEND ALZHEIMER EUROPE CONFERENCES

53%
ARE FIRST TIME ATTENDEES

Based on attendee responses to the post-conference survey

Ireland looks forward to #36AEC in Dublin

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) will mark a significant milestone in 2026 when Dublin hosts the 36th Alzheimer Europe Conference from 27–29 October at the Convention Centre Dublin. Bringing this prestigious event to Ireland will showcase national progress in dementia care, research, and advocacy. The conference takes place at a critical time, as dementia prevalence continues to rise in Ireland, placing increasing pressure on individuals, families, communities, and the healthcare system. With Ireland set to hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the conference offers a timely and unique platform to elevate dementia on both national and European policy agendas.

Under the theme "Sláinte: Building momentum in dementia through policy, research and partnership", the conference will focus on collaboration, innovation and real-world impact. Andy Heffernan, CEO of the Alzheimer Society of Ireland, welcomed the announcement, saying:

"We are absolutely delighted to be hosting the Alzheimer Europe Conference in Dublin. This is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the work being done in Ireland, to learn from our European colleagues and, most importantly, to ensure that the lived experience of people with dementia and their families is at the heart of conversations about the future."

More than 1,200 delegates from across Europe and beyond are expected to attend, including people living with dementia, family carers, researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers and advocates. Together, they will share knowledge and explore solutions shaping the future of dementia policy and practice, addressing new approaches to treatment and the challenges of translating scientific developments, such as e-health interventions, into everyday practice.

Dr Kevin Quaid, Chair of both the European Working Group of People with Dementia and the Irish Dementia Working Group, is originally from County Limerick and now lives in Cork. He lives with Lewy body dementia and is a passionate advocate for the rights of people living with the condition.

"It's a real honour to see Ireland host the Alzheimer Europe Conference in 2026. As someone living with Lewy body dementia, I know how important it is for our voices to be heard. This conference brings those voices to the forefront - right here in Ireland - and helps shape the future of dementia care and policy across Europe and at home."

Hosting the conference for the first time since 2005, ASI views #36AEC as a powerful platform to strengthen partnerships, influence policy, and promote a more inclusive, dementia-friendly society valuing intersectionality, better care, and diverse voices.

Watch the 36AEC Dublin video here.

Team ASI in Bologna

Andy Heffernan welcoming everyone to join us in Dublin in 2026

36th Alzheimer Europe Conference

Sláinte: Building momentum in dementia through policy, research and partnership

27 - 29 OCTOBER 2026

DUBLIN, IRELAND

Join healthcare professionals, researchers, policy makers and advocates to explore advances in dementia care, research and policy. Connect, contribute and drive progress! **#36AEC**

Alzheimer Europe

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland

www.alzheimer-europe.org/conferences/2026-dublin