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For WHO's IGAP see <https://www.who.int/publications/item/9789240076624>

Call for the creation of a European Parliament Intergroup on brain health

For more on the **European Brain Council** see <https://www.braincouncil.eu/>

The European Brain Council (EBC) addressed the SANT (Public Health) Subcommittee of the European Parliament on Oct 17, 2024, in Brussels, Belgium. Professor Claudio Bassetti, Vice-President of the EBC, addressed the audience on the burden of brain disorders, the increasing momentum around prioritising brain health and brain capital in Europe, and the need for prioritising brain research in European policy agendas.

Professor Bassetti also called for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to support the creation of a dedicated European Parliament Intergroup on brain health and research, which could play a crucial role in shaping EU policy and legislation. Most MEPs in attendance expressed strong support for prioritising brain health and discussed issues such as the need for increased research funding, addressing health-care workforce shortages, and building a stronger network connecting specialists in neurological disorders across Europe. The needs to improve

early diagnosis and intervention, and for sharing resources and knowledge, including for rare disorders across Europe, were brought forward by MEPs. Further concerns were raised regarding the under-researched role of environmental factors on brain health, such as pollutants and social media, especially in children. Their endorsement of the Intergroup was reiterated and emphasised by several members of the European Parliament present in the room.

This invitation to speak in front of the SANT subcommittee is extraordinary and reflects a broad recognition of the crucial importance of brain health, as evidenced by recent initiatives such as WHO's Intersectoral Global Action Plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders. There is growing awareness that investing in brain health can yield substantial health and economic benefits for European countries and it is therefore crucial that brain health remains high on policy agendas. The formation of an intergroup on brain health and research at the European Parliament could provide a vital platform for advancing this cause. Additionally, calls have been made for the development of national brain plans and a comprehensive European brain strategy to ensure coordinated action across member states.¹

In conclusion, this historic event at the European Parliament highlighted the urgent need to prioritise brain health in EU policy. With the enormous burden of brain disorders set to increase further,^{2,3} concerted action is needed to promote research, improve care, and ultimately enhance the lives of millions of Europeans affected by neurological or psychiatric conditions.

We declare no competing interests.

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