

2025

UNLOCKING THE FUTURE



Brain Health Investment Agenda

In an effort to advance the brain health investment agenda, NeuroCentury partnered on 10 February 2025 with the EIB Institute, led by Shiva Dustdar, and co-organised a Foresight Roundtable in Luxembourg. Over fifty senior leaders from the European Investment Bank; pharma, imaging and medical device industry; venture capital; private banking; public policy; and philanthropy. Representatives from McKinsey Health Institute, World Economic Forum, Roche, Merck, Philips, Eli Lilly, Wellcome Trust, Kokoro and Inner Foundation were in attendance.

The Roundtable was titled “Systemic Investing in the Brain Economy: Building an Investment Agenda to Tackle to Challenge of Brain Health”.

Sessions included identifying the size and scope of investment needs, identifying solutions spanning new drugs, devices, digital tools and diagnostics, infrastructure needs in the health system such as infusion and brain imaging centers, neuroscience-designed cityscapes, and the role of public-private-philanthropic partnerships. A range of investment approaches were considered spanning venture capital, fund of funds, venture debt, and debt. This meeting is part of a longer-term project to structure and develop an investment strategy in brain health.

The context for the project is set by implications of dramatic demographic shifts. By 2050, about 30% of Europe's population will be over 65, up from 20% today. At the same time, 67% of health loss from brain conditions occurs in individuals over the age of 50. Putting the two numbers together makes brain health the ultimate foresight challenge.

Brain health is also essential for competitiveness. It is a precondition of thriving in the workplace. Good mental health helps employee engagement. Companies with highly engaged teams achieve higher productivity, better retention, fewer accidents and 21% higher profitability (figures by Gallup). A change in mental health has significantly larger impact on absenteeism than a change in physical health.



What is promising is that conditions are ripe for breakthroughs, from making prevention actionable, all the way to neurorehabilitation. A new combination drug for schizophrenia was approved by FDA last year, the first new pharmacological approach in 50 years

(see: <https://wellcome.org/news/new-treatment-for-schizophrenia-Cobenfy>).

In multiple sclerosis, there were no treatments 30 years ago, and now there are some 30 approved medications, enabling many forms of the disease to be managed. Monoclonal antibodies are making inroads in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Precision psychiatry is advancing. The list could go on but much more progress is needed.

The Luxembourg event was opened by Thomas Östros, Vice-President of the Bank, who noted during the meeting:

“The EIB's investments in the health sector are a testament to our unwavering commitment to improving global health outcomes. We will continue to leverage our expertise, partnerships, and financial resources to support innovative and impactful health projects that benefit communities worldwide, including in transversal priorities like the theme of the day: Brain Health”.



The meeting mapped areas for investment, discussed the methodology to assess outcomes, including patient-reported ones, and explored how the ecosystem for investment can be turned around. It demonstrated that a new coalition is emerging around the case for scaling up brain health investment.

