

PRESS RELEASE
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Launch of the ALBA Network to work towards diversity and equality in brain research

Despite significant progress in recent years in the promotion of diversity in research, women - among others - are still largely under-represented in science, as they account for less than 30% of the world's researchers (UNESCO, 2017) – and neuroscience is certainly no exception. While a better balance has been reported at PhD level, striking inequalities persist when it comes to career advancement and participation in academic decision-making (EC, She figures 2015, p.8). To address this issue and, more broadly, to promote equality and diversity in brain sciences, a group of international leading scientists founded the ALBA Network.

A special event will be held on Thursday 11th July in Belgrade (Serbia), as part of the **Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) Regional Meeting 2019**, to launch the ALBA Network and spotlight some of the key issues it will address.

Professor Carmen Sandi, FENS President and Chair of the ALBA Steering Committee, and Professor Mara Dierssen, President of the Trisomy 21 Research Society, will highlight the need for such an initiative in the field of brain sciences and introduce the Network.

Supported by FENS, the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) and the Society for Neuroscience (SfN), the **ALBA Network** aims to:

- Promote best practices to counteract bias
- Recognise outstanding contributions to science and diversity
- Provide networking and mentoring opportunities to promote careers for members of underrepresented groups.

These goals will be achieved through:

- Establishing a Declaration to raise awareness on gender and diversity issues
- Curating a centralised resource of available data on bias and underrepresentation, and effective strategies to counter them
- Hosting networking events at major conferences
- Establishing awards with partner sponsors
- Highlighting success stories of individuals and organisations to create role models
- Creating a mentoring community
- Collecting a database of scientists as a resource for speaker invitations and award nominations

Professor Carmen Sandi would like to encourage all brain scientists to join the Network. She believes that “it is important that we join forces and work together to increase diversity and ensure equality in the way we deal with science. The ALBA Network tackles these goals at a global level by launching new and by regrouping existing initiatives for diversity in brain sciences under one umbrella. Our ambition is to create a network to help all brain scientists have equal opportunities to thrive.”

For more information, please visit the ALBA Network website: www.alba.network



About the ALBA Network

The ALBA Network was founded in 2018 by a group of international scientists to promote equality and diversity in brain sciences. It is led by a Steering Committee composed of international brain scientists involved in research, education, communication and advocacy:

- Augustin Anastasia (Argentina)
- Elisabeth Binder (Germany)
- Jacqueline Bracher (South Africa)
- Megan Carey (Portugal)
- Francesca Cirulli (Italy)
- Monica Di Luca (Italy)
- Barbara Franke (The Netherlands)
- Agnès Gruart (Spain)
- Emily Holmes (Sweden)
- Marian Joëls (The Netherlands)
- Zeljka Krsnik (Croatia)
- Gilles Laurent (Germany)
- Thomas Mrsic-Flogel (United Kingdom)
- Dora Reglodi (Hungary)
- Laurence Ris (Belgium)
- Carmen Sandi (Switzerland), Chair of the ALBA Network Steering Committee
- Aparna Suvrathan (Canada)
- Menno Witter (Norway)

Website: www.alba.network

Contact information: info@alba.network

About FENS – the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies

The Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) is the main organisation for neuroscience in Europe. FENS was founded in 1998 at the first Forum of European Neuroscience. Currently, it represents 43 European national and single discipline neuroscience societies, with 22,000 member scientists from 33 European countries.

Website: www.fens.org

Contact information: office@fens.org

About the FENS Regional Meeting

FENS Regional Meetings (FRM) are national or regional scientific meetings organised by FENS member societies with FENS support and label. FRMs are biennial meetings, alternating with the FENS Forums, which are held on even years. In 2019, it will take place on the 10-13 July 2019 in Belgrade, Serbia.

<https://www.fensfrm2019.rs>

About IBRO – the International Brain Research Organization

IBRO is the global federation of neuroscience organizations established in 1961 that aims to promote and support neuroscience around the world through training, teaching, research, outreach and engagement activities, and the publication of our two journals, *Neuroscience* and *IBRO Reports*. More than 90 international, regional and national scientific organizations constitute IBRO's Governing Council which, together with the IBRO Executive Committee and five Regional Committees, address the needs and advance the



ALBA NETWORK
Towards diversity and
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work of individual scientists and research communities everywhere. In addition, IBRO has partnerships with like-minded scientific societies and organizations to identify priorities and help bridge gaps in knowledge, investment and resources in the field of brain research.

Website: www.ibro.org

Contact information: secretariat@ibro.org

About SfN – Society for Neuroscience

Founded in 1969, the Society for Neuroscience (SfN) now has more than 37,000 members in more than 95 countries. Year-round programming includes the publishing of two highly regarded scientific journals, *JNeurosci* and *eNeuro*; professional development resources and career training through Neuronline, the Society's home for learning and discussion; science advocacy and public policy engagement including annual Capitol Hill Day; and a variety of engaging public outreach efforts, led by the expanding and interactive collection of public-facing resources on BrainFacts.org.

Website: www.sfn.org

Contact information: info@sfn.org

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