

**PRESS RELEASE****EMBARGOED UNTIL Wednesday, 18 June 2025, 17h00 CEST****CONTACT:**

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**Prof. Aikaterini Fotopoulou Awarded 2025 ALBA-FKNE Diversity Prize**

**Oslo, 18 June 2025** – [Prof. Aikaterini Fotopoulou](#) from University College London (UCL), UK, has been awarded the 2025 ALBA-FKNE Diversity Prize for her contributions to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in brain research. This prestigious award – jointly presented by the ALBA Network and the FENS-Kavli Network of Excellence (FKNE), with the support of the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies (FENS) – celebrates Europe-based students and researchers who have made a significant impact in promoting diversity within the brain sciences.

Prof. Francesca Cirulli (Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy), Chair of the ALBA network, expressed, *“With the Diversity Prize, the ALBA Network and the FENS-Kavli Scholars aim to recognise leaders and role models who drive the full integration of all scientists at every career stage. This annual award honours individuals whose efforts – through advocacy, mentorship, or diversity-focused initiatives – have significantly contributed to this mission.”* Dr Andrew Lin (University of Sheffield, UK), chair of the ALBA-FKNE Diversity Prize Selection Committee, added, *“Prof. Fotopoulou has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to advancing equitable practices in science through both her research and institutional leadership. Her innovative and systemic approach to embedding EDI into the fabric of neuroscience sets new benchmarks for the field.”*

Aikaterini Fotopoulou is Professor in Psychodynamic Neuroscience in the Research Department of Clinical, Educational and Health Psychology at UCL. She has been awarded the prize in recognition of her sustained leadership and transformative contributions to advancing EDI in neuroscience research, training, and academic culture. Her work spans the development of inclusive research infrastructures, mentorship of diverse early-career researchers, and institutional change across national and international scientific communities.

In 2022, she founded the Centre for Equality Research in Brain Sciences (ERB) at UCL – the first centre of its kind globally. The ERB Centre is internationally recognized for its pioneering work in improving both the content and culture of neuroscientific research. With over 15 commissioned research projects addressing topics such as racial and ethnic disparities in education, accessibility in neuroimaging, and participatory research with neurodivergent populations, the Centre is a model of how inclusive research can directly contribute to better health outcomes and more representative science.

Prof. Fotopoulou has had a lasting impact on mentoring and career development, particularly for women and researchers from underrepresented backgrounds. She founded and coordinated the ‘World of Work (WoW) Mentor’ scheme, through which over 90 early-career neuroscientists were mentored, achieving outstanding satisfaction and replication of the scheme across multiple institutions. As Gender Equity Lead in her Faculty at UCL, she has also guided six divisional committees in achieving significant improvements in gender and intersectional representation via the Athena Swan framework. She has also supported scholars from resource-limited countries via Commonwealth Scholarships and CIFAR fellowships and contributed to citywide mentoring initiatives such as ‘B-Mentor,’ aimed at supporting Black and ethnic minority academics in London.

In her current role as President of the European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience (ESCAN), Prof. Fotopoulou has embedded EDI principles into the society’s core operations. ESCAN has aligned its values with the

ALBA Declaration on Equity and Inclusion, adopted a comprehensive EDI code of practice, offers carer travel awards to support conference participation, and actively champions diversity in speaker representation and award selection.

Through her pioneering work, Prof. Fotopoulou exemplifies the values of the ALBA-FKNE Diversity Prize and continues to shape a more inclusive future for neuroscience. *“I am most honoured to receive this prestigious prize, particularly as this moment of recognition belongs also to all my committed colleagues at UCL. The prize recognises our shared belief that EDI research is not only a moral imperative; it is a key contributor to the improvement of neuroscientific knowledge and culture, as well as an opportunity to improve physical and mental health outcomes for all.”*

The ALBA-FKNE Diversity Prize, awarded for the first time in 2020, is celebrated every year at the FENS Forums of Neuroscience and FENS Regional Meetings. For additional information about the prize, please visit: <https://www.alba.network/alba-fkne-diversity-prize>

#### **Warmest congratulations from the ALBA-FKNE Diversity Prize Selection Committee,**

Andrew Lin, Committee Chair (University of Sheffield, UK - ALBA and FKNE)

Carmen Sandi (Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne, Switzerland - ALBA)

Elisabeth Binder (Max Planck Institute of Psychiatry, Germany - ALBA)

Simona Lodato (Humanitas University, Italy & Humanitas Clinical and Research Center, Italy - FKNE)

Lora Sweeney (Institute of Science and Technology, Austria - FKNE)

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The [ALBA Network](#) is a division of FENS committed to promoting equity and diversity in the brain sciences. The goal of ALBA is to establish a global network in order to share best practices and provide better visibility, networking and mentoring opportunities to scientists from underrepresented groups in brain research.

The [FENS-Kavli Network of Excellence \(FKNE\)](#) is a self-organised and multidisciplinary network comprising 30 outstanding early- to mid-career independent European neuroscientists. Inaugurated in 2014 by FENS and The Kavli Foundation, FKNE aims to improve neuroscience research in Europe and beyond through scientific exchange, providing opportunities for young scientists and facilitating dialogue between scientists, policymakers, and society.

The [Federation of European Neuroscience Societies](#) is the main organisation for neuroscience in Europe. FENS mission is to advance research and education in neuroscience within and outside Europe, to facilitate interaction and coordination between its members. It currently represents 42 European national and single discipline neuroscience societies, with 22,000 member scientists from 32 European countries.

The [FENS Regional Meeting](#) is dedicated to supporting member societies in promoting excellence in research, with a European regional focus. FRMs aim to strengthen neuroscience in all European countries, promote scientific exchange within and across European regions and secure representation and access to the FRM programme for underrepresented scientists and topics. The 2025 FRM will take place in Oslo, Norway, in June. Hosted by the Norwegian Neuroscience Society, the meeting is being organized in partnership with the Swedish, Danish, Finnish, and Icelandic neuroscience societies, bringing together researchers from across the Nordic region.