



December 2025

Winter issue



A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK AGAINST BRAIN CANCER

Finalizing the year 2025

As 2025 comes to an end, we are all reflecting the balance of our year characterized by progress, persistence, and profound purpose. Within our COST action, we have continued to strengthen the bonds that unite researchers and clinicians, each one an essential force in our shared mission to confront one of the most complex and challenging diseases of our time.

This year, we have created among others also Young Researchers Group and Creative group to support the dissemination of our activities via social media. Since Facebook account was the only social media, we have created also Instagram and LinkedIn accounts. They are very famous and have many followers.

During this year, one successful collaboration was established resulting in a bilateral project: "Assessing the combinatorial effects of Arginine Methyltransferase inhibitors and radiotherapy on glioblastoma organoids." between prof. Tugba Bagci Onder (Koç University School of Medicine, Türkiye) and assist. prof. Barbara Breznik (National Institute of Biology, Slovenia).

As we finalize this year, we also look ahead with renewed determination. In 2026, we will continue building the infrastructure, partnerships, and support new projects, grant schemas, and organizing the events. We are planning our next Annual meeting in Istanbul, accompanied by Young Researchers meeting. Many webinars will take place

To everyone who has contributed time, expertise, energy, or resources—thank you. Your commitment shapes every breakthrough, every support initiative, and every step forward. Together, we are forging a network that does more than fight brain cancer: it empowers, uplifts, and transforms lives.

Best regards,



Terézia Šimková
Scientific Communication Coordinator

Upcoming scientific events

First Net4Brain PhD Student Meeting

Date: 9 December

We are excited to launch another PhD online meeting. This event is a spontaneous continuation of YRG after a successful meeting in October. It provides an opportunity for young researchers to connect, learn from leading experts, and gain practical tips for navigating the early stages of a research career.

We are also pleased to announce our two confirmed keynote speakers, who will share valuable research insights and tools with the community:

To attend the event and/or express interest in presenting, please register here: [Registration link](https://forms.gle/Dtw6xY3LD8kaTT6w8)

Propel your **doctoral research** forward!



December 9th



11:00 (CET)

Join us online

Be part of the event and register!!!

<https://forms.gle/Dtw6xY3LD8kaTT6w8>



**Manuel
Valiente**

Scientific Director
CNIO & RENACER
Head of the Brain
Metastasis Laboratory



**Sarah
Brüningk**

Assistant Professor,
Center for AI in
Radiation Oncology
(University of Bern)



**Gabriel F.
Calvo**

Full Professor,
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WG4 Leader
Net4Brain



**Carmen
Ortega**

PhD Candidate at
MOLAB (UCLM) &
CNIO researcher



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Early Announcement – Third Annual COST Action Annual Meeting (2026)

3RD Net4Brain Annual Meeting

(To be held concurrently with the Early
Career Researcher Meeting)

KOÇ UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH CENTER FOR ANATOLIAN CIVILIZATIONS (ANAMED)
ISTANBUL, TURKEY

1-3 JUNE 2026

CONTACT
Prof. Tuğba Bağcı Onder
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**KOÇ
UNIVERSITY**



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KOÇ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
ANADOLU MEDENİYETLERİ
ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ



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We are pleased to share an early announcement for our Third Annual Meeting of the COST Action, which will bring together the Management Committee, Core Group, Working Groups, and invited participants for workshops and collaborative activities.

Venue

Koç University – Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED)

Located in the heart of Istanbul, Türkiye, ANAMED offers a unique setting that blends academic excellence with the cultural richness of one of the world's most historic cities.

Dates

1 – 3 June 2026

Meeting Format

- Management Committee Meeting
- Core Group Meeting
- Working Group Sessions
- Workshops / Conferences
- Networking Activities
- **Net4Brain ECR One-Day In-Person Event**

This preliminary communication is designed to help participants mark their calendars and get an early sense of the venue and setting. Further details on registration, program, accommodation, and logistics will follow in the upcoming months.

Contact

For questions or early expressions of interest, please contact:

Tuğba Bağcı Önder, Ph.D., Koç University, İstanbul Turkey



Net4Brain ECR One-Day In-Person Event

We are thrilled to announce an upcoming one-day in-person event for Early Career Researchers (ECRs), organized by the Net4Brain Young Research Group and led by Prof Annalisa Occhipinti. It is planned to be a parallel activity during the Annual meeting.

Date

1 June 2026

Location

Koç University – Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations (ANAMED)

This event is designed to be highly interactive, providing networking opportunities, career discussions, and collaborative exchange across the Net4Brain community. The program will include:

- Keynote talks on topics highly relevant to early career researchers, including career development, funding opportunities, and scientific communication.
- Panel discussion with experienced researchers sharing insights and advice on navigating the early stages of a research career.
- Networking and interactive sessions, giving participants a chance to connect, share ideas, and build collaborations.

This is a fantastic opportunity for PhD students, postdocs, and other early career researchers to engage with peers and senior researchers, gain practical tips, and strengthen the Net4Brain community.

Registration Link: coming soon

Best regards,
Prof. Annalisa Occhipinti, Young Research Group Leader



Calls

The calls for various grant schemas are opened. For questions about eligibility, the e-COST form, or required documentation, contact the Action Grant Awarding Coordinator or the Grant Holder.

Short-Term Scientific Missions STSM Grants — research visits

(up to EUR 4 000,00 per grant)

We invite researchers and innovators to apply for Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSM) Grants to carry out focused, short-term research visits at a host institution in a different country. STSMs must implement a clearly defined scientific project that advances the Action's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) through hands-on collaboration, data collection, method transfer, training, or pilot experiments. Grants contribute to travel, accommodation, subsistence, and the effort required to deliver the planned work.

Who can apply

Eligible applicants: Individuals who meet COST financial-support eligibility and are affiliated with a legal entity.

Host requirement: The host institution must be located in a country other than the applicant's country of affiliation.

Timing: Activities must take place within the Action's active Grant Period and must not overlap with activities funded in other Grant Periods.

What to submit in e-COST

Title of the STSM.

Start and end dates within the active Grant Period (no overlap across Grant Periods; final date for submissions: 15 September).

Budget requested.

Host institution and contact details.

Application form (e-COST template) including: goals, detailed work plan and timetable, expected outcomes and deliverables, clear description of how the STSM contributes to the Action MoU objectives, and host confirmation (letter or email).

Selection criteria and assessment

Applications are evaluated on: scientific quality, feasibility, relevance to the Action, and contribution to Excellence and Inclusiveness (geographical diversity, career stage, gender balance). The Grant Awarding Committee may prioritize proposals that strengthen ITC participation, involve Young Researchers and Innovators, or transfer methods and capacity.



Virtual Mobility VM Grants – task-based remote collaboration

(up to EUR 1,500.00 per grant)

Virtual Mobility (VM) Grants support task-based, non-physical collaboration such as joint data analysis, protocol development, shared tool creation, co-authored deliverables, or online training materials that clearly advance the Action's objectives. Funding reflects the duration, scope and complexity of the proposed virtual tasks.

Who can apply

Eligible applicants: Individuals eligible for COST financial support who are active participants in the Action and able to lead clearly defined virtual tasks.

What to submit in e-COST

Title of the Virtual Mobility activity.

Start and end dates within the active Grant Period (final submission date: 1 October).

Budget requested.

Application form (e-COST template) describing the main objective, detailed task list, roles and responsibilities, plan for participation and communication, expected outcomes and deliverables, and how the activity contributes to the Action MoU objectives.

Selection criteria and assessment

The Grant Awarding Committee assesses relevance to the Action, clarity and measurability of tasks, expected scientific or technical impact, and inclusiveness (opportunities for ITC participation and YRI involvement).

ITC Conference Grants – capacity building for Inclusiveness Target Countries

(up to EUR 2,500.00 per grant for face-to-face conferences or EUR 500.00 for online conferences)

ITC Conference Grants support researchers and innovators from Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC) and Near Neighbor Countries (NNC) to present their own work at high-level third-party conferences within the Action's scope. Grants cover travel, accommodation, subsistence, registration fees, and the costs of participation.

Who can apply

Eligible applicants: Action participants affiliated with ITC or NNC countries who meet COST financial support rules and will present their own work.

What to submit in e-COST

Title of the oral presentation.

Conference title, date (within the active Grant Period, 15 October) and country.

Attendance type (on-site or online).

Budget requested.

Application form describing the conference relevance and motivation, including expected impact on the applicant's career.

Abstract of the accepted oral presentation and the acceptance/invitation letter.

Selection criteria and assessment

Selection focuses on scientific quality, alignment with Action objectives, and added value for ITC/NNC capacity building.



Dissemination Conference Grants – promoting Action results

(up to EUR 2,500.00 per grant for face-to-face conferences or EUR 500.00 for online conferences)

Dissemination Conference Grants support Action participants who will deliver an Action-focused oral presentation at third-party conferences to maximize the visibility and impact of the Action's scientific achievements.

Who can apply

Eligible applicants: Action participants eligible for COST financial support who will present on the Action's results.

What to submit in e-COST

Title of the presentation.

Conference title, date (within the active Grant Period; final date for submissions: 15 October) and venue.

Attendance type (on-site or online).

Budget requested.

Application form describing alignment with the Action's Science Communication Plan and expected impact.

Abstract of the accepted oral presentation, evidence that the talk focuses on the Action's achievements, and the acceptance/invitation letter.

Selection criteria and assessment

Priority is given to proposals that contribute to the Science Communication Plan, increase the visibility of Action results, and have strong potential to establish new collaborations or stakeholder links.

YRI Conference Grants – empowering Young Researchers and Innovators

(up to EUR 2,500.00 per grant for face-to-face conferences or EUR 500.00 for online conferences)

YRI Conference Grants are dedicated to Young Researchers and Innovators (YRI) to present their own work (oral or poster) at international conferences in the Action's field. Grants support travel, accommodation, subsistence, registration, and the effort of participation.

Who can apply

Eligible applicants: Young Researchers and Innovators as defined in the Annotated Rules, who are eligible for COST financial support and will present their own work within the Action's scope.

What to submit in e-COST

Title of the presentation.

Conference title, date (within the active Grant Period, 15 October) and country.

Attendance type (on-site or online).

Budget requested.

Application form describing relevance to the Action, motivation, expected career impact and networking opportunities.

Abstract of the accepted oral or poster presentation and the acceptance/invitation letter.

Selection criteria and assessment

Priority is given to strong scientific contributions that clearly benefit the grantee's career and strengthen the Action's visibility and inclusiveness targets. YRIC grant funds a presentation (poster/oral presentation) of their own work by a Young Researcher and Innovator (YRI) in a high-level conference fully organized by a third party, i.e. not organized nor co-organized by the COST Action.

Experiences from STSMs

Simona Katrin Galun

Home institution: National Institute of Biology, Slovenia

Host institution: University of Antwerp, the Department of Veterinary Sciences, Laboratory of Cell Biology and Histology – Antwerp Centre for Advanced Microscopy, Belgium

In March of 2025, I had an opportunity to participate in a two-week Short-Term Scientific Mission under the Net4Brain COST action. This research visit provided an invaluable experience that allowed me to enhance my skills in advanced microscopy, with a focus on visualizing complex 3D glioblastoma models.

I had a wonderful experience meeting the entire research team led by Prof. Dr. Winnok De Vos, as well as scientists from other departments. Their supportive and collaborative atmosphere enabled me to gain valuable knowledge and new insights. Beyond the productive laboratory experience, I also had a chance to explore Belgium's rich culture and its beautiful cities, while enjoying their delicious cuisine.

The outcomes of this visit will contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying cancer cell resistance to treatment and could potentially contribute towards development of new models for studying brain tumor biology. At the same time, it marked an important step in my own growth as a researcher, broadening both my skills and perspectives.



Net4Brain Photo Challenge

Our exciting competition continues!

The first Net4Brain Lab Photo Challenge!

All members are invited to share **snapshots** from their daily experimental work in the lab whether it is a striking microscopy image, a creative experimental setup, or a moment that captures the spirit of scientific discovery. By posting your photos on social media with the hashtag **#Net4BrainChallenge**, you can showcase your research to the wider community, connect with fellow scientists, and engage in friendly competition.

The most original and inspiring images will be shortlisted by our creative group, and the final winner will be selected through community voting across our social media platforms. The winning entry will not only be featured in our next newsletter and Net4Brain channels but will also receive a special recognition prize.

Net4Brain Publications Challenge

*We are thrilled to announce the new Challenge for you. When you prepare your publication dealing with various aspects of brain cancer, **acknowledge our COST action** and let us know. From your publications we will choose the One. The winner may win interesting prizes (a place on the STSM grant / a lecturer slot at our Final Meeting in 2027 / the opportunity to receive a Dissemination grant).*

The preliminary deadline: 15 October 2026



Use the formula in your publication and win



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Net4Brain
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Contacts

Chair: Prof Xinzhong Li x.li@tees.ac.uk

Further contacts see:

<https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA22103/#tabs+Name:Main%20Contacts%20and%20Leadership>

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