Net4Brain
Let's beat brain cancer together

NET4BRAIN COST ACTION (CA22103)

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026 Issue

Let's beat brain cancer together

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Welcoming Autumn:

Scientific Maturity, Strategic Growth, and Direct Communication

Autumn 2026 marks a highly productive period for Net4Brain, translating collaborative discussions into advanced training schools, strategic assemblies, and public-facing communication.

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Autumn issue

A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORK AGAINST BRAIN CANCER

Editorial – Welcoming Autumn: Scientific Maturity, Strategic Growth, and Direct Communication

Dear Friends and Colleagues of the Net4Brain Community,

Autumn is traditionally a season of harvest and consolidation, and for our COST Action CA22103, this autumn represents our most productive period of scientific execution to date. Having transitioned through the success of our 3rd Annual Meeting in Istanbul, the network has translated collaborative discussions into concrete deliverables: advanced training schools, pan-European strategic assemblies, and communication series connecting our labs to the public.

September and October 2026 have proven pivotal. In mid-September, our **Training School on Mathematical Oncology in Almagro, Spain**, demonstrated the power of true interdisciplinary synergy by uniting mathematics, machine learning, and cancer biology. Simultaneously, our dissemination infrastructure underwent dedicated professional training via the **COST Academy in Brussels**, ensuring that our science reaches beyond academia to clinicians, patients, and policy-makers.

To bridge leadership insights with our vibrant cohort of early-career investigators, we launched our live interactive series, **"Tea Time with Net4Brain."** Following our inaugural session with Action Chair **Prof. Xinzhong Li**, we are proud to spotlight our next guest, newly elected EMBO Member **Prof. Tuğba Bağcı Önder**.

Furthermore, our **Core Group convened for a full-day strategic meeting in Košice, Slovakia**, establishing decisive roadmaps for multi-country review papers, international conference integrations (including FENS-FRM), and the final grant-period dissemination targets.

As we reflect on these achievements and adjust our grant timelines—including the conclusion of our latest Short-Term Scientific Mission (STSM) application round—we invite each of you to dive into the updates compiled in this issue, from our new dissemination reports in Dublin, Madrid and Coimbra to the Lab Photo Challenge.

Warm regards,

Working Group 6



The Pulse of Net4Brain: Autumn 2026 Milestones at a Glance

As Net4Brain progresses through its lifecycle, our multidisciplinary network—spanning 38+ countries, 635+ members, and 6 specialized Working Groups—continues to deliver on its primary mission: accelerating translational breakthroughs in neuro-oncology.

Autumn 2026 at a Glance: Core Developments

#	Event	Date	Focus
1	**Almagro Training School**	15–18 Sept 2026	Mathematical Oncology & Multimodal AI
2	**COST Academy Brussels**	18 Sept 2026	Dissemination & Advanced Social Media
3	**Tea Time with Net4Brain #1**	23 Sept 2026	Action Chair Prof. Xinzhong Li
4	**One-Day Core Group Meeting**	3 Oct 2026	UPJŠ Košice, Slovakia: Strategic Roadmap
5	**Tea Time with Net4Brain #2**	12 Oct 2026	EMBO Member Prof. Tuğba Bağcı Önder
6	**STSM Funding Status**	October 2026	Current Call Closed; Reporting Underway

38+	635+	6
COUNTRIES	MEMBERS	WORKING GROUPS

Advancing the Pan-European Consensus

The transition into late 2026 marks an operational shift from exploratory meetings to deliverable finalization. Each Working Group is actively synthesizing data collected across member institutions:

- **WG1:** Finalizing multicentric validation pipelines for non-invasive imaging biomarkers and radiomics signatures.
- **WG2:** Standardizing protocols for 3D glioblastoma organoid biobanking and patient-derived cell models.
- **WG3:** Mapping glioma-microenvironment crosstalk via spatial transcriptomics and single-cell multiomics.
- **WG4:** Implementing mechanism-aware machine learning frameworks to model phenotypic drift and drug resistance.
- **WG5:** Establishing the first Net4Brain clinical recommendation consensus on European radiotherapy harmonization.
- **WG6:** Scaling open-science dissemination, media outreach, and public engagement initiatives.

Strategic Governance: Core Group Meeting in Košice

Face-to-Face Core Group Meeting: Pavol Jozef Šafárik University, Košice

Date: Saturday, 3 October 2026

Venue: Pavol Jozef Šafárik University, Trieda SNP 1, 040 11 Košice, Slovakia

Format: Full-Day In-Person Strategic Session



On October 3, 2026, Core Group members, Action leadership, and Working Group leaders gathered in Košice, Slovakia, for a focused strategy session hosted at the Faculty of Medicine, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University (UPJŠ). The objective was to evaluate progress, review WG deliverables, and outline priorities for upcoming project cycles.

Meeting Agenda

TIME	SESSION AGENDA & STRATEGIC FOCUS
09:00 – 09:10	**Registration & Opening Remarks**
09:10 – 10:30	**Agenda Topic 1: WG Deliverables & Multi-Country Review Papers** *Status evaluation of joint literature syntheses and protocols.*
10:30 – 10:45	**Morning Coffee & Networking Break**
10:45 – 11:30	**Agenda Topic 2: FENS-FRM Istanbul Satellite Planning** *Scientific symposium alignment with the FENS Regional Meeting in Istanbul.*
11:30 – 13:00	**Executive Lunch & Strategic Break**
13:00 – 14:30	**Agenda Topic 3: Annual Meeting Planning, Upcoming Webinars & Dissemination Campaign Execution for the Final Grant Period**
14:30 – 15:00	**Afternoon Coffee Break**
15:00 – 16:30	**Comprehensive Open Discussion, Budget Realignment, Next Steps**

Core Decisions and Outcomes

1. **Multi-Country Review Papers:** The Core Group evaluated several collaborative review manuscripts currently in preparation across Working Groups 1 through 5, targeting high-impact oncology and neurobiology journals.

2. **FENS-FRM Istanbul:** The leadership established dedicated scientific proposals to anchor Net4Brain symposia at the upcoming Federation of European Neuroscience Societies Regional Meeting (FRM) in Istanbul.
3. **Final-Year Dissemination:** WG6 presented an expanded dissemination strategy focusing on increased multimedia outputs, clinical summary briefs, and regular social media campaigns.

Capacity Building: Almagro Training School

Net4Brain Training School on Mathematical Oncology: Bridging Biology and Equations

Dates	15–18 September 2026
Location	Almagro, Spain
Co-organized by	Net4Brain Working Group 4 (Mathematical & Computational Modelling)

Have you ever thought that mathematics could be useful not only for doing the maths… but also for understanding cancer?

From September 15 to 18, the historic town of Almagro, Spain, hosted the official **Net4Brain Training School on Mathematical Oncology**. The event brought together **15 international trainees** and **12 trainers and academic contributors** spanning computational biology, clinical oncology, applied mathematics, and bioengineering.



Trainees and trainers at the Net4Brain Training School, Almagro (15–18 September 2026)

Curriculum Overview

10 Interactive Lectures	Mathematical Modeling, Machine Learning in Healthcare, Multimodal Deep Learning, Virtual Clinical Trials, and Fusion-Gene Discovery.
5 Supervised Hands-on Mini-Projects	Trainees applied theoretical formulas directly to curated glioma transcriptomic and radiological datasets.
Final Project Presentations	Interdisciplinary teams pitched their computational solutions to the entire academic board on the concluding morning.

Why Interdisciplinarity Matters in Glioblastoma Research

The core philosophy of this school was to dismantle the communication barrier between experimentalists and theorists. Biologists learned how to interpret differential equation models of tumor

invasion, while mathematicians and computational engineers were exposed to the real-world biological complexities of intratumoral heterogeneity and patient therapeutic resistance.

By working on supervised translational mini-projects, participants learned to speak a shared scientific language, illustrating that computational models can directly inform clinical trial design and drug discovery pipelines.

Dissemination Excellence: WG6 at the COST Academy

Upscaling Our Communication Impact

Event	COST Academy 'Social Media Training'
Date	18 September 2026
Location	Brussels, Belgium
Participant	Assist. Prof. Aylin Toplu-Hocaoğlu (WG6 Dissemination Leader)



COST Academy, Brussels

As a pan-European research network, generating high-impact scientific data is only half the battle; ensuring that this science is clearly understood, disseminated, and leveraged by the public, patient communities, and clinical stakeholders is equally essential.

On September 18, 2026, WG6 Leader **Dr. Aylin Toplu-Hocaoğlu** represented Net4Brain at the **COST Academy Social Media Training** workshop organized by the COST Association in Brussels. Certified by Interim Director Barbara Bottiau and Coordinator Anna Toivonen, this executive training focused on:

- **Algorithmic Reach & Visual Dissemination:** Optimizing multi-platform reach across LinkedIn, X, Instagram, and YouTube to enhance research visibility.
- **Distilling Complex Science:** Formulating bite-sized, accessible summaries of highly technical papers (e.g., single-cell sequencing and mathematical modeling) without compromising scientific rigor.
- **Crisis Communication & Open Access:** Establishing reliable digital dissemination funnels aligned with European Open Science policies and ethical data sharing principles.

> ***"Generating high-impact scientific data is only half the battle; ensuring that science is understood and leveraged is equally essential."***

The strategies acquired during this session are being integrated across all Net4Brain public channels to support network engagement through the end of the Action.

"Tea Time with Net4Brain": Demystifying Science, One Conversation at a Time

Brewed for curiosity. Shared for change.

In September 2026, the Net4Brain Dissemination Team officially launched **"Tea Time with Net4Brain,"** an informal interview series created to highlight the personal stories, career paths, and mentorship philosophies behind our network's leaders. Short, relaxed conversations of 15–20 minutes are held every two to three weeks, free of charge and aimed mainly at early-career researchers.

Inaugural Session Recap



Date & Time	23 September 2026 | 16:00 CEST
Guest	Prof. Xinzhong Li (Teesside University, UK)
Role	Action Chair & Grant Holder of Net4Brain CA22103
Topic	"The Mind Behind the Network: Humanizing Science over a Cup of Tea"

Highlights from the Session

- **On Lowering Barriers:** Reiterating the network's guiding principle that *"silly questions do not exist,"* Prof. Li urged early-career researchers to present their ideas without fear of academic hierarchies.
- **On Open Science:** Discussed the necessity of cross-border data democratization, noting that no single institution can defeat brain cancer in isolation.
- **Leadership in Three Words:** Summarized Net4Brain's defining trajectory as *"Inclusive, Innovative, Impactful."*

Nearly 30 people attended the first session, which followed a simple arc: the human element behind a career in neuro-oncology, a core scientific dialogue (including the goal of Net4Brain explained to a non-scientist and why Open Science matters), and closing mentorship advice for early-career researchers. Several audience questions overlapped with the planned ones, showing how much these topics matter to the community.

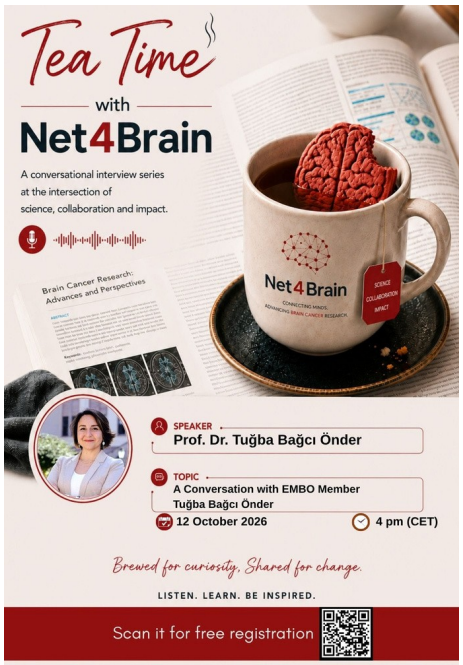


Participants joining the first Tea Time session (23 September 2026)

Tea Time with Prof. Tuğba Bağcı Önder

A conversation with EMBO Member Tuğba Bağcı Önder

Our second installment of "Tea Time with Net4Brain" features **Prof. Tuğba Bağcı Önder**, who was recently honored with election to the prestigious **European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO)** membership.



Date & Time	12 October 2026 | 16:00 CEST
Format	Live online session & recording
Affiliation	Koç University School of Medicine, Translational Medicine Research Center (KUTTAM)
Net4Brain role	WG3 Co-Chair (Pathogenesis and Tumour Profiling) & 3rd Annual Meeting Local Organizer

Topics of the Conversation

- **The Journey to EMBO Membership:** Insights into building an internationally recognized brain cancer research lab in Türkiye.
- **Overcoming Resistance in Glioblastoma:** Her lab's latest discoveries in epigenetic vulnerabilities, TRAIL-induced apoptosis, and combinatorial radiotherapy.
- **Navigating the Academic Pathway:** Candid advice for female researchers balancing academic leadership, grant writing, and mentorship.
- **Reflections on Istanbul 2026:** Highlights and legacy of the 3rd Net4Brain Annual Meeting at ANAMED.

ABOUT THE SERIES

Under Working Group 6, the series moves away from rigid conference formats. Short, relaxed conversations over a cup of tea are intended to humanise science, showcase the people behind the network, and discuss emerging trends, translational research and practical career advice. Senior researchers are asked socially oriented, personal questions, while early-career researchers get direct access to experienced scientists at no cost.

Missed the live session? Keep an eye on our social media channels for the recording and for the announcement of upcoming guests, and send us your questions for the next conversation.

Net4Brain on the Road: Dissemination Activities

Our members continue to carry the Net4Brain message to national neuro-oncology societies and to the public. Here are the latest activity reports from Ireland and Spain.

Irish Neuro-Oncology Society (INOS) Event, Trinity College Dublin

Date & place: 21 August 2026, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Presenter: Dr Claudia Mazo (Dublin City University)

The INOS invited Net4Brain to a day of scientific discussion and exchange within the Irish neuro-oncology community. Dr Mazo introduced COST Action CA22103, shared examples of the work carried out, and showed how the Action brings researchers and professionals across Europe together. She also highlighted the opportunities COST Actions offer for networking, training and mobility, especially for young researchers and innovators.

The presentation increased Net4Brain's visibility in Ireland. Next steps: inviting INOS members to Net4Brain events and STSM calls.



Dr Claudia Mazo presenting Net4Brain at INOS

XVII GEINO Symposium, Madrid

Date & place: 27–28 October 2025, Madrid, Spain | **Presenter:** Carla Vitorino

The XVII Symposium of GEINO, the Spanish neuro-oncology research group, brought together clinicians and researchers working on brain tumours. Carla Vitorino delivered a talk entitled "Network Against Brain Tumors", introducing Net4Brain, its collaborative structure and its aim of advancing research and improving outcomes for patients. The talk drew the interest of attendees and created an opportunity to meet and discuss with Dr. Roger Stupp, whose pioneering work led to the Stupp protocol. As GEINO is an influential network in Spain, the activity opens routes for new Spanish members, joint projects and STSM exchanges.



XVII GEINO Symposium, Madrid

European Researchers' Night, Coimbra

Activity type: Public engagement / outreach | **Date & place:** 27 September 2024, Coimbra, Portugal | **Net4Brain representative:** Carla Vitorino

On 27 September 2024, two Net4Brain activities took place during European Researchers' Night: one in Coimbra and one in Slovakia. This report covers the Coimbra activity.

European Researchers' Night is an EU-wide event held every September to bring researchers closer to the public through accessible, engaging activities—a natural platform for a COST Action whose aims include communicating brain cancer research beyond the scientific community.

The Coimbra activity took the form of an interactive public-engagement session, combining short informal conversations with hands-on activities, simple demonstrations and a quiz-style game suitable for both children and adults. It presented Net4Brain and explained, in plain language, why brain tumour research matters and how collaboration across Europe helps patients. Posters, flyers and QR codes linking to the Net4Brain website and social media channels were used, together with simple visuals showing the brain and how brain tumours are studied.

The activity raised public awareness of brain cancer research and of the role of European collaboration, gave early-career researchers experience in science communication, and contributed to the Action's goal of making research understandable to society.





Net4Brain at European Researchers' Night, Coimbra (27 September 2024)

Mobility & Grants: STSM Update

Short-Term Scientific Missions (STSMs): Grant Status & Current Cycle Closure

Short-Term Scientific Missions represent the core engine of knowledge transfer within COST Actions, providing up to **€4,000** to support young investigators and researchers traveling to partner laboratories across Europe.

STSM Grant Call Status: Current Cycle

Status	**CURRENT CALL OFFICIALLY CLOSED**
Focus	Finalizing host lab research stays & submitting scientific mission reports
Next window	Pre-announcement scheduled for early 2027

Reporting Phase & Scientific Deliverables

With the latest call for STSM applications formally closed, our attention shifts to grantee support and scientific report approvals. Beneficiaries from recent mission windows are completing experimental stays focusing on:

- **Spatial Transcriptomics Implementation:** Cross-institutional validation of high-resolution molecular pathology platforms.
- **Computational Drug Repurposing:** In silico multi-omics modeling applied to clinical glioblastoma cohorts.
- **Patient-Derived 3D Cultures:** Hands-on training in organoid biobanking protocols.

Detailed grantee experience spotlights will be published in our upcoming winter edition. Grantees are reminded that scientific reports must be submitted via the e-COST portal within 30 days of mission completion to facilitate grant clearance.

> **STSM eligibility in brief**
> Priority goes to Young Researchers and Innovators (under 40) and to applicants from Inclusiveness Target Countries. For more details, contact our STSM coordinator: Dr Milica Pešić (camala@ibiss.bg.ac.rs).

Community Engagement: The Net4Brain Lab Photo Challenge

Our exciting competition continues!

We are thrilled to report that the **first Net4Brain Lab Photo Challenge** is running at full speed! Scientific research is demanding, rigorous, and often high-stress; this challenge provides a creative outlet to showcase the artistic, human, and spontaneous side of life in your research facility.

How to Participate Before the Cycle Closes

1. Capture Your Moment	• A striking confocal or fluorescence microscopy capture • An innovative or creative wet-lab / dry-lab experimental setup • A candid picture capturing your team's collective research spirit
2. Post on Social Media	• Share on LinkedIn, Instagram, X (Twitter), or Facebook • Include the mandatory hashtag: **#Net4BrainChallenge**
3. Tag Our Channels	Connect with **@Net4Brain** to ensure your entry is tracked.

What Happens Next?

The submission window will formally conclude shortly. Our **WG6 Creative Group** will shortlist the top candidate photographs based on originality, scientific beauty, and storytelling impact. The final winner will be determined through an **open community vote across our social media platforms**. The winning photo will be featured on the cover of the Winter 2026 Newsletter and will receive a special Net4Brain recognition award!

Looking Forward: Late Autumn & Winter 2026 Horizons

As we move into the final months of 2026, keep your calendars marked for several key initiatives:

- **Upcoming Webinar Series:** Online lectures covering single-cell pipelines, clinical hadron therapy updates, and AI radiogenomics.
- **FENS-FRM Istanbul Preparations:** Working Group symposia abstract submissions opening for the regional neuroscience congress.
- **Dissemination Toolkits:** Open-access downloadable infographics explaining brain tumor classifications for patient advocacy groups.

Net4Brain Newsletter Core Directory

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Follow Us & Stay Updated Across Our Official Channels

- **Official Website:** net4brain-cost.eu
- **LinkedIn Network:** Net4Brain Dissemination
- **YouTube Channel:** @Net4Brain
- **Instagram Profile:** @net4brain
- **Facebook Group:** Net4Brain-COST

Join the Network

Let's beat brain cancer together.

When publishing with us, do not forget to thank COST:

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Prepared by: Working Group 6 – Dissemination