



# European Lighthouse of AI for Sustainability

## **Press Release**

**ELIAS Nodes have been presented to the public during the Falling Walls Event in Berlin, Germany**

*Berlin, Germany - November 8, 2024*

### **Inspiring a new generation of AI&Science value creators**

The [ELIAS Alliance](#) for *European Leadership in Innovation with AI and Science* proudly introduced eight inaugural [ELIAS Nodes](#) at the Falling Walls AI Night, held on November 8th, 2024, in Berlin, Germany. This event, renowned for celebrating breakthroughs in science and innovation, provided an excellent platform for launching the pan-European Alliance with its new nodes in **Amsterdam, Barcelona, Cambridge, Copenhagen, Munich, Potsdam, Tübingen, and Zurich**. The nodes establish a network of startups and incubators and collaborate to support entrepreneurship and the open-source development of foundation models for European value creation.

Funded by the EU through the [European Lighthouse of AI for Sustainability](#), the ELIAS Alliance has close links to the European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems ([ELLIS](#)) which brings together the strongest AI research labs in Europe and serves as a one-stop shop for PhD and postdoc candidates to find their best matching supervisors. Building on this academic excellence network, the ELIAS Alliance is now pushing to integrate **value-creation literacy** and future skills into academic curricula, **linking talent between academia and business across Europe**. Each ELIAS node operates as an entrepreneurial hub, leveraging the unique strengths and ecosystems of its location, and creating new possibilities for students to earn their degrees with innovation-centric research projects.

**Matthias Bethge**, Director of the Tübingen AI Center and main initiator of the Alliance, highlights: "I envision science becoming a place of intellectual pursuit combining knowledge and value creation as two sides of the same coin. AI has the power to drive meaningful innovation by transforming technology and empirical science. In education, for instance, AI holds immense potential to empower self-directed learning and foster future skills, benefiting all learners. At the same time, AI can elevate education research by providing deep insights into the actual needs of students, teachers, and other stakeholders through large-scale data collection and analysis."

**Jessica Montgomery**, Director of ai@cam, Co-head of the ELIAS Node Cambridge added: "Advances in AI are giving us an increasingly powerful set of tools that could help tackle some of the major challenges that society faces. We need to do more to translate our technical capabilities to widespread public benefit. ELIAS is helping build an infrastructure for interdisciplinary innovation with AI that will tackle real-world problems."



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Highlights from the event included presentations on two new initiatives supported by the ELIAS Alliance: the “Open Sci” foundation model project and the “AI Launchpad” accelerator. **Ann-Lauriene Schumacher** from ETH AI Center noted: “With the AI Launchpad, we are building a pan-European accelerator program as a one-stop shop to support innovative startups and fostering the European exchange in terms of knowledge, resources and financing.”

These initiatives reflect the ELIAS Alliance’s commitment to catalysing open science and supporting the next generation of AI innovators through access to **advanced tools, mentorship, and networking**. During the event, representatives from each ELIAS Node shared insights into their current projects, showcasing the breadth and diversity of innovation tailored to the unique strengths of their regions. **Dimosthenis Karatzas**, Associate Director of the Computer Vision Center in Barcelona and Co-head of the ELIAS Node there, shared his thoughts on Europe’s potential: “While Europe is at the forefront of AI talent and knowledge, much of the real-world impact is currently happening outside our borders. ELIAS offers a platform that combines AI expertise with entrepreneurial skills, enabling us to scale up AI-driven innovation in Barcelona and collaborate seamlessly with other top innovation hubs across Europe.”

The Alliance also unveiled plans for a European MSc Graduation Project Program and an annual Sciencepreneur Meeting, both designed to promote knowledge exchange and cultivate thought leadership in AI value creation across Europe. Through these initiatives, the ELIAS Alliance will nurture a robust European ecosystem of talent, entrepreneurship, and AI advancement that supports sustainable, high-impact innovation.

The ELIAS Alliance represents Europe’s decisive step towards fostering AI “made in Europe.” By connecting academia, industry, and startup ecosystems, ELIAS is paving the way for a future in which AI and innovation thrive together, building a sustainable economy while addressing the needs and values of European society.

### About the Event

The Falling Walls AI Night, held on 8 November 2024 in Berlin, is part of the annual Falling Walls Summit, which celebrates global scientific breakthroughs. This unique event attracts researchers, decision-makers, CTOs, and strategists, fostering interdisciplinary discourse.

Initiated by the Falling Walls Foundation, the event features competitions for emerging talents and science startups on 7 November. The Falling Walls Circle on 8 November allows global leaders to discuss grand challenges, culminating in the recognition of the Falling Walls Science Breakthroughs of the Year on 9 November. This gathering underscores Berlin’s status as a key hub for science and innovation.



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## About ELIAS

ELIAS, under the coordination of the University of Trento, is dedicated to positioning Europe as a leading force in Artificial Intelligence (AI) research, driving sustainable innovation and economic growth. Our foundation is built upon the European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems ([ELLIS](#)), a highly acclaimed institution with international recognition. ELLIS serves as the backbone, offering a network where researchers can form collaborative teams to pursue external funding for research, training, mobility, infrastructure, and policy initiatives.

In ELIAS, we build upon ELLIS' legacy, refining and expanding its excellence criteria. Our goal is to support AI researchers and emerging talents at every stage of their careers. Through this framework, ELIAS creates a Network of Excellence that connects academia with industry, positioning Europe as a hub where AI research not only drives sustainable innovation but also contributes to a cohesive society that respects individual preferences and rights.

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## Contact:

Aygun Garayeva, PR Manager, ELIAS

Nicu Sebe, Coordinator, ELIAS

[elias-coordination@unitn.it](mailto:elias-coordination@unitn.it)