

NEWSLETTER #3

European Lighthouse of AI for Sustainability

ELIAS

Welcome to the **February 2025 edition** of the ELIAS Biannual Newsletter.

The ELIAS project continues to make significant progress in AI research and innovation, building on the accomplishments of recent months. In this edition of our newsletter, we're excited to share key updates, milestones, and upcoming plans.

Over the past six months, we've made strides with groundbreaking **research, impactful collaborations, and major events** that have furthered our mission. From expanding our network of Fellows and Scholars to launching new initiatives, we are shaping the future of AI through **scientific excellence, sustainability, and interdisciplinary engagement.**

Looking ahead, we share a preview of what's to come: exciting opportunities, new activities, and continued developments that will drive our collective impact. We are grateful for your ongoing support and involvement in this journey, and we look forward to the progress we'll achieve together.

Stay tuned for more updates, and thank you for being part of the ELIAS community!



HIGHLIGHTS

»»» 🌟 ELIAS MOBILITY PROGRAM 🌟



For young scientists looking to advance their careers in Europe, the **ELIAS Mobility Program** provides a unique opportunity to engage in cutting-edge research.

Designed for PhD students and postdocs, the program facilitates **exchanges within the ELLIS and ELIAS networks**, enabling collaboration with top academic and industry leaders across Europe on AI and sustainability projects.

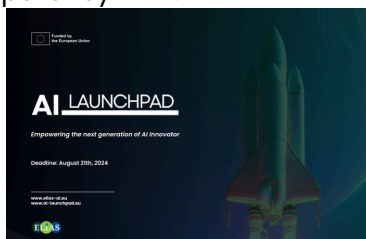
We provide **financial support to European-based PhD students** and postdocs who are eager to collaborate with leading institutions. **Applications are welcomed year-round.**

Don't miss the chance to engage in cutting-edge research and contribute to groundbreaking AI and sustainability initiatives. [Learn more](#)

»»» 🌟 ELIAS EXPANDS THE ELLIS NETWORK WITH NEW FELLOWS AND SCHOLARS 🌟

ELIAS continues to advance Sustainable AI by expanding the ELLIS network with new **Fellows and Scholars**. These appointments promote interdisciplinary research, scientific excellence, and a focus on diversity and transparency in AI.

The ELIAS network initially included 21 ELLIS Fellows, with **nine serving on the ELLIS Board** and ten as **Research Programme Directors**.

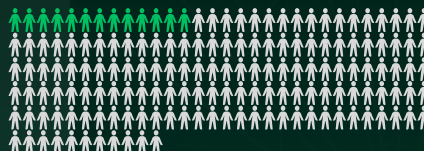


In 2024, **13 new Fellows and Scholars were appointed, representing 8% of accepted nominations**. This expansion strengthens ELIAS's global reach, with new appointments from underrepresented regions like **Poland** and **Greece**, and boosts key AI areas like **Human-Centric AI** and **Multimodal Learning Systems**. Congratulations to the new Fellows and Scholars! Their contributions will help solidify Europe's leadership in AI innovation. [Explore the full details. Check out the infographic.](#)

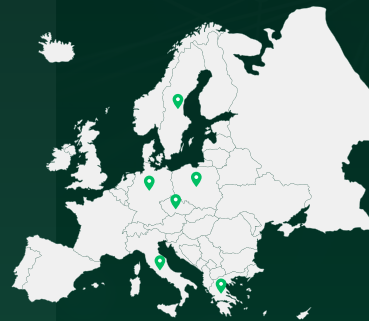
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **24 applications funded, including 9 from external (non-ELIAS) applicants**
- **22 PhD students and 2 postdocs**
- **Research exchanges spanning 11 countries, involving 12 ELIAS partners as sending or hosting institutions**
- **The program further supported an additional cohort of 11 PhD students from 6 ELIAS partners attending the ELLIS Doctoral Symposium (EDS24) in Paris, last August**
- **Collectively, the exchanges amount to 6 years of mobility!**

STATISTICS



Of these 13 newly appointed ELLIS Fellows and Scholars in ELIAS, **30.8% (4) are female**.

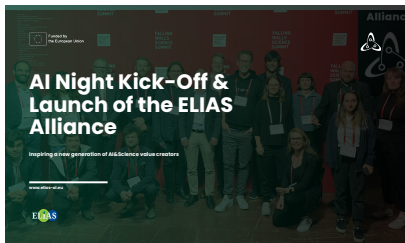


The 13 newly appointed ELLIS Fellows and Scholars span six countries: **Sweden, Greece, Germany, Italy, Czech Republic, and Poland.**

HIGHLIGHTS

>>> 🌟 ELIAS ALLIANCE OFFICIAL LAUNCH 🌟

On November 8, 2024, the [ELIAS Alliance](#) was officially launched at the Falling Walls AI Night in Berlin, unveiling the first eight [ELIAS Nodes](#) across Europe in [Amsterdam](#), [Barcelona](#), [Cambridge](#), [Copenhagen](#), [Munich](#), [Potsdam](#), [Tübingen](#), and [Zurich](#).



ELIAS nodes are designed to recognise and accelerate locally developed AI and science-based innovations while serving as integral parts of **the ELIAS Alliance**. These nodes serve as collaborative hubs, driving AI innovation, fostering entrepreneurship, and creating new opportunities for research, sustainability, and cross-border collaboration.

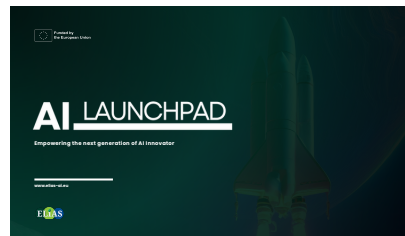
The event underscored the alliance's commitment to advancing AI-driven solutions with a focus on sustainability, in partnership with the ELLIS Society. Key initiatives such as the [AI Launchpad](#) accelerator and **Open Sci foundation model project** were introduced. Speakers like **Matthias Bethge** (Co-head of the Tübingen Node) and **Jessica Montgomery** (Co-head of the Tübingen Node) highlighted the alliance's pivotal role in connecting academia, industry, and entrepreneurship to address real-world challenges and foster sustainable growth.

[Recap Article](#)

 [ELIAS Alliance: Inspiring a new generation of AI&Science value creators](#)

>>> 🌟 KICK-OFF OF AI LAUNCHPAD 🌟

We are excited to announce that the **AI Launchpad** kicked off its **pilot edition in September 2024** as part of ELIAS' mission to bridge entrepreneurial and academic hubs across Europe. This pan-European accelerator program fosters collaboration and supports the growth of AI startups by providing a structured pathway from research to market.



Currently piloting with **its first batch of nine startups**, the program is hosted at six European hubs: **DTU Skylab (Denmark)**, **KTH Innovation (Sweden)**, **Campus Founders (Germany)**, **XPLORE (Germany)**, **INiTS (Austria)**, and **ETH AI Center (Switzerland)**. Since its launch, participating teams have been engaged in a 12-week local accelerator program, gaining mentorship, resources, and support to build VC-fundable AI startups. In early 2025, they will take part in **a 2-week Market Entry Exchange (March 3–14, 2025)** at another accelerator location to expand their network and market access. The program will culminate in **a closing event on May 16, 2025, at DTU Skylab**, where teams will present their startups to investors, industry leaders, and AI experts.

Following the successful start of the pilot, we are already preparing for the **next edition of the AI Launchpad, set to kick off later this year**. To further strengthen Europe's AI ecosystem, we plan to **expand our network by integrating additional hubs**, creating even more opportunities for AI entrepreneurs to connect, grow, and bring their innovations to market. Find out more and stay updated on the program's developments at [AI Launchpad](#).

PAST EVENTS

>>> [AI ETHICS AND EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY: INTERDISCIPLINARY AND INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP @ AI ACTION SUMMIT](#)

Together with [IRCAI, International Research Centre on Artificial Intelligence under the auspices of UNESCO](#), Centre for Internet and Society at CNRS, and 3IA Côte d'Azur, ELIAS supported and co-organised a workshop on **AI Ethics and Education for Democracy at AI Action Summit**, co-led by IRCAI's Director **John Shawe-Taylor** and **Vanessa Nurock**, Professor of Philosophy at Côte d'Azur University. This event, held at the CNRS Site Pouchet in Paris, brought together AI and ethics experts to discuss **how we can strengthen democracy in the age of AI**. The discussions aimed to explore how we can ensure that AI does not jeopardize democracy and how we can cultivate a democratic, AI-enabled education. The event highlighted ongoing research and insights from the [Journal of Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Development \(JAISD\)](#), deepening the dialogue on AI's role in a democratic future. [Recap Article](#).

>>> [ELIAS-ELLIS-VISMAC WINTER SCHOOL 2025](#)

In late January, we hosted the **ELIAS-ELLIS-VISMAC Winter School** in Brunico Italy, focused on the intersection of **AI and Sustainability**. This event featured world-class lectures from ELLIS Fellows and renowned experts, covering topics such as large-scale foundation models, self-supervised learning, and machine learning for sustainable solutions. Participants had the unique opportunity to gain hands-on experience in model training, guided by **Dr. Andrea Pilzer from the NVIDIA AI Technology Center**, and were able to access cutting-edge computing infrastructure. We thank all the speakers, participants, and industry partners who contributed to making the Winter School a resounding success!

>>> [IDEAHACK 2024](#)

The inaugural IDEAHACK 2024 was held in Warsaw, Poland, bringing together entrepreneurs and scientists as part of the ELIAS project. The hackathon challenged participants to create AI-driven solutions for sustainability. **With 57 participants across 14 teams**, the event fostered collaboration, idea exchange, and the development of platforms aimed at connecting researchers, entrepreneurs, and investors.

The hackathon wrapped up with **NerdNet winning PLN 15,000, HERbata securing PLN 10,000, and Odkluczacze taking PLN 5,000**. Beyond being a competition, IDEAHACK 2024 served as a vibrant showcase of innovation and collaboration. It demonstrated the transformative potential of AI in uniting diverse sectors to address pressing challenges. [Recap Article](#)

[IDEAHACK 2024 - The First Sciencepreneurship Hackathon in Poland](#)

>>> [AI + ENVIRONMENT SUMMIT 2024](#)

On October 2, the **AI + Environment Summit** was held at Innovation Park Zurich, bringing together leading voices in AI and environmental sustainability. Attendees engaged in stimulating discussions on AI-driven solutions for a greener future. The event featured **Matthias Bethge and Nina A. Peters** from the Tübingen AI Center, who spoke about the transformative potential of the ELIAS Alliance in **bridging academia and business** to invest in talent, support entrepreneurship, and drive long-term sustainability through innovation and value creation.

>>> [ROMANIAN AI DAYS](#)

On September 26-27, members of the ELIAS Consortium members participated in the **Romanian AI Days** at the **University POLITEHNICA of Bucharest**. This event focused on advancing AI research in Romania and strengthening international AI networks. Nicu Sebe, ELIAS Project Coordinator, delivered a keynote on "**Cross-modal Understanding and Generation of Multimodal Content**". The event also featured a poster session showcasing ongoing research within the ELIAS project, further highlighting the international collaboration within the AI research community.

RESOURCES

The ELIAS website offers a comprehensive overview of our project's achievements and developments. Check out our resources page for:

»»» SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

[read more](#)

»»» PUBLIC REPORTS

[read more](#)

»»» OPEN SOFTWARE & DATASET

[read more](#)

»»» MEDIA RESOURCES

[read more](#)

Dive into our ELIAS Scientific Publications for the last six months to discover noteworthy contributions, demonstrating our dedication to advancing AI research.

🌟 RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT 🌟

We are pleased to celebrate the publication of a pioneering study in The Royal Society Open Science, conducted by researchers from the ELLIS Alicante Foundation and Fondazione Bruno Kessler (FBK), with support from the ELIAS project.

This large-scale research explored the "**attractiveness halo effect**" in the digital space, revealing how beauty filters influence perceptions of attractiveness, intelligence, and trustworthiness. The study sheds light on the role of **cognitive biases in shaping digital interactions and the broader societal impact of technology on our perceptions.**

A huge congratulations to the incredible team behind this study: Aditya Gulati, Marina Martínez-García, Daniel Fernández, Miguel Ángel Lozano, Bruno Lepri, and Nuria Oliver.

Read more: [The Impact of Beauty Filters on Perceptions and Cognitive Biases](#)

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

>>> ELIAS 1ST OPEN CALL

ELIAS is offering funding of up to €60,000 for SMEs, startups, and NGOs working on AI-driven solutions that promote sustainability and create societal impact.

Why Apply?

- **Up to €60,000** in funding for AI/ML applications on sustainability
- **Visibility** through ELIAS events, community, and online channels
- **6-month collaboration** with top AI researchers & innovators

Who Should Apply?

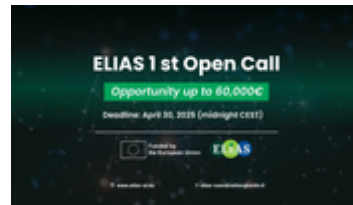
We are looking for AI projects in:

- ◆ Methodology | ◆ Software/Tools | ◆ Benchmarks

Deadline: April 30th (midnight CEST)

[Read more](#)

We will also host a **Q&A session at the end of March**, open to all interested parties. More details coming soon!



>>> THEME DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABILITY & AI

Join us **on March 7, 2025**, for the **1st Theme Development Workshop**, organised by ELIAS, on **Sustainability & AI in Bucharest, Romania** (hybrid event). This workshop will explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can tackle environmental challenges, promote sustainable societies, and ensure trustworthy AI, with a focus on ethical policies.

[Check out the agenda](#)

Date & Time: March 7, 2025 | 09:00 – 12:45 (GMT+2)

Location: Bucharest, Romania (Hybrid Event)

Registration is free but required.

[Click here to register](#)



>>> 2025 ELLIS WINTER SCHOOL ON FOUNDATION MODELS (FOMO)

The **University of Amsterdam** will host the **2nd ELLIS Winter School on Foundation Models (FoMo)**, offering a unique opportunity to delve into the complexities of foundation models and showcase Europe's distinct approach beyond the dominant Big Tech narrative.

Groundbreaking insights and innovative methodologies are emerging from both European academia and industry, shaping the future of AI in a way that reflects the region's strengths and vision.

You can read the overview of the first ELLIS Winter School on Foundation Models in 2024 [here](#).



Stay up to date with ELIAS: Follow us on [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Youtube](#) to stay informed about our activities, initiatives, and opportunities for engagement.

With kind regards,
ELIAS Team



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