



European Lighthouse of AI for Sustainability

Press Release – 9 October, 2026

ELIAS Alliance Expands Pan-European Network with Eight New Regional AI Innovation Nodes

New regional innovation ecosystems from Delft, Finland, Franconia, Jülich-Aachen- Cologne, Lausanne, Manchester, Sweden and Trentino-Südtirol join the Alliance to accelerate European AI sciencepreneurship.

Stuttgart, Germany – 9 October 2026 — Yesterday, at the **Frontier AI Innovation Summit** held at Messe Stuttgart, the [ELIAS Alliance](#) for *European Leadership in Innovation with AI and Science* officially announced a major expansion of its pan-European network. Eight new Nodes — **Delft, Finland, Franconia, Jülich-Aachen-Cologne, Lausanne, Manchester, Sweden and Trentino-Südtirol** — have formally joined the Alliance, doubling its reach across leading European research and innovation ecosystems.

The announcement was presented during a dedicated high-level session of the summit, which co-located the annual All Hands Meeting of the German AI Excellence Centers with the ELIAS Alliance FRONtier AI Summit. Co-organised with the Tübingen AI Center, the flagship event showcased how European fundamental AI research is being translated into technological sovereignty, high-growth startups, and secure open-source infrastructure, particularly in emerging fields such as agentic AI.

The expansion marks a key milestone in the development of the ELIAS Alliance. Following the public launch of its eight inaugural Nodes in November 2024 ([Amsterdam](#), [Barcelona](#), [Cambridge](#), [Copenhagen](#), [Munich](#), [Potsdam](#), [Tübingen](#), and [Zurich](#)), the Alliance has established an operational European network connecting scientific excellence in AI with entrepreneurship, technology transfer, and regional venture creation. The addition of these eight new Nodes extends this infrastructure to key deep-tech communities across Europe.

“Europe’s position in AI depends on whether research, talent and startups can move freely between its strongest hubs, and the ELIAS Alliance makes that concrete. In Amsterdam, the ELIAS Node has brought together partners across the local AI ecosystem to make it easier for frontier AI startups to grow and scale. Through the Alliance, we can now draw on the facilities and expertise of our partners in Potsdam and Tübingen, and open up Amsterdam’s ecosystem to them in return.” — **Jan-Willem van de Meent**, Associate Professor at the [University of Amsterdam](#), Director of the [Amsterdam ELLIS Unit](#), and Head of the [ELIAS Node Amsterdam](#)





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Connecting frontier AI research with innovation

The expansion creates a deeply interconnected network uniting leading academic institutions, ELLIS (European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems) units, startup incubators, venture builders, and industrial partners across nine European countries.

The new nodes were selected following a competitive open call launched in May 2026, evaluating regional ecosystems demonstrating outstanding scientific rigor, institutional support, dedicated operational capacity, and active engagement from non-academic advisors and deep-tech entrepreneurs.

“ELIAS is coordinated from Trento, and the creation of the Trentino-Südtirol Node gives us a unique opportunity to connect the Alliance’s European mission with the complementary strengths of Trentino and South Tyrol. By bringing together the University of Trento, Fondazione Bruno Kessler and the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano with HIT, NOI Techpark and the School of Innovation, the Node creates a shared pathway from frontier and open-source AI research to entrepreneurial education, technology transfer and deep-tech ventures. Through the ELIAS network, these regional strengths can contribute to—and benefit from—a truly European ecosystem for AI innovation.” — **Nicu Sebe, Professor at the [University of Trento](#), Coordinator of [ELIAS](#) and Spokesperson for the ELIAS Node Trentino-Südtirol**

The growing network provides a framework for sharing opportunities, expertise and activities across Europe, while enabling Nodes to build on the unique strengths of their local ecosystems. One example is the AI Launchpad, developed under the leadership of the ETH AI Center. By August 2026, it had connected ten European innovation hubs and supported more than 20 startups, helping research-driven teams access mentors, industry contacts, markets and investors beyond their home region.

“The newly established ELLIS Unit Sweden is proud of becoming a member of the ELIAS Alliance. We are looking forward to strengthening the Nordic ecosystem through the collaboration with our EU colleagues and specifically through the Launchpad activities. This is a long-term commitment and will require collaboration on many different topics, but we like challenges!” — **Danica Kragic, Professor at [KTH Royal Institute of Technology](#), Director of the [ELLIS Unit Sweden](#), and Head of the ELIAS Node Sweden**

ELIAS Alliance at the FRontier AI Summit

Held on October 7–8 at the Congress Center of Messe Stuttgart, the Frontier AI Innovation Summit brought together around 500 researchers, policymakers, and founders. Keynote speakers — including Raia Hadsell (Google DeepMind), Veronika Eyring (connAIx), Katja Schwarz (World Labs), and Mary-Anne Hartley (EPFL/LiGHT) — addressed critical pathways for sovereign European AI.

Programme highlights included the dedicated workshop “From Science to Entrepreneurship” led by Isabelle Siegrist (ETH Zurich, ELIAS) to provide actionable





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strategies for academic founders and the presentations from the incoming Nodes showcasing their regional ecosystems and collaboration goals to the broader AI community. The Alliance's Mentorship Corner connected PhD students with experienced founders and technology-transfer practitioners from the Nodes through individual 30-minute sessions, helping researchers explore how their work could lead to applications, collaborations or new ventures. Interactive sessions throughout the summit further facilitated cross-border dialogue on open-source foundation models, sustainable technology transfer, and joint AI innovation.

"Our goal is to enable Europe's AI talent to build world-class technology that gets adopted at scale. When frontier research leads to widely used products, companies, and open infrastructure, it creates a virtuous circle of talent, innovation, and pluralistic value creation across Europe." — **Matthias Bethge**, Director of the [Tübingen AI Center](#), Co-founder of [ELLIS](#), and Head of the [ELIAS Alliance](#)

Building a stronger European innovation network

With the addition of eight new Nodes, the ELIAS Alliance enters its next phase as a broader European innovation network. The new Nodes will join its community activities and develop opportunities for collaboration with existing Nodes. Alongside the established AI Launchpad, the Alliance is developing an Open Pipeline to make foundation-model research more collaborative and reusable, and exploring an Innovation PhD approach that connects doctoral research with real-world challenges and entrepreneurship.

The ELIAS Alliance is part of the [ELIAS – European Lighthouse of AI for Sustainability](#) project, funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe programme (Grant Agreement No. 101120237). The Alliance builds on close links with the ELLIS community and aims to strengthen Europe's capacity to turn frontier AI research into sustainable innovation and value creation.

About ELIAS

Coordinated by the University of Trento, [ELIAS](#) aims to position Europe as a global leader in AI research, driving sustainable innovation and economic growth. Rooted in the European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems (ELLIS), ELIAS supports AI researchers at all career stages through a broad network that fosters collaboration, training, mobility, and policy development. ELIAS champions a vision of AI that not only accelerates technological advancement but also upholds **ethical values**, promotes **societal well-being**, and contributes to **environmental sustainability**.

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ELIAS Alliance Members

Node: Amsterdam

- [Innovation Center for Artificial Intelligence](#) | [Innovation Exchange Amsterdam](#) | [LAB42](#) | [Thematic Technology Transfer Artificial Intelligence](#) | [University of Amsterdam](#)

Node: Barcelona

- [Barcelona Supercomputing Center](#) | [Computer Vision Center](#) | [ESADE Ramon Llull University](#) | [UAB Research Park](#) | [Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya](#) | [Universitat Pompeu Fabra](#)

Node: Cambridge

- [AI@CAM](#) | [Cambridge Innovation Capital](#) | [Deeptech Labs](#) | [Innovate Cambridge](#) | [University of Cambridge](#)

Node: Copenhagen

- [Beta.Health Innovation Platform](#) | [Copenhagen Business School](#) | [Pioneer Centre AI](#) | [University of Copenhagen – UCPH Lighthouse](#)

Node: Delft

- [Delft University of Technology](#) | [Mondai House of AI](#)

Node: Finland

- [Aalto University](#) | [Business Tampere](#) | [CSC – IT Center for Science](#) | [ELLIS Institute Finland](#) | [Tampere University](#) | [University of Turku](#)

Node: Franconia

- [Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg](#) | [Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg – CAIDAS](#) | [Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg](#) | [Technische Universität Nürnberg](#) | [Universität Bayreuth](#)

Node: Jülich – Aachen – Cologne (JAC)

- [CIMONA](#) | [Forschungszentrum Jülich](#) | [Jülich AI Factory](#) | [Jülich Supercomputing Centre](#) | [LAION e.V.](#) | [RWTH Aachen University](#) | [RWTH AI Center](#) | [RWTH Innovation](#) | [STARTPLATZ](#) | [University of Cologne](#) | [GATEWAY](#)

Node: Lausanne

- [Entrepreneurship Education Hub](#) | [EPFL AI Center](#) | [EPFL Startup Launchpad](#) | [Swiss Data Science Center](#)





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Node: Manchester

- [Bionow](#) | [Christabel Pankhurst Institute](#) | [Industrial Biotechnology Innovation Catalyst](#) | [The Cambridge X Manchester Partnership](#) | [The University of Manchester](#) | [Turing Innovation Catalyst](#) | [University of Manchester Innovation Factory](#)

Node: Munich

- [Helmholtz Munich](#) | [Institute for Applied Artificial Intelligence](#) | [Ludwig Maximilian University](#) | [Nucleate Cluster](#) | [Technical University of Munich](#) | [Technical University of Munich – UnternehmerTUM](#)

Node: Potsdam

- [Hasso Plattner Institute – Engine](#)

Node: Sweden

- [Chalmers University of Technology](#) | [ELLIS Unit Sweden](#) | [KTH Innovation](#) | [KTH Royal Institute of Technology](#) | [Linköping University](#) | [Uppsala University](#)

Node: Trentino–Südtirol

- [Fondazione Bruno Kessler](#) | [Fondazione Hub Innovazione Trentino \(HIT\)](#) | [Libera Università di Bolzano](#) | [NOI Techpark](#) | [Università di Trento – Department of Information Engineering and Computer Science](#) | [Università di Trento – School of Innovation](#)

Node: Tübingen

- [Cyber Valley](#) | [DEEP – Institute for Deep Tech Innovation](#) | [ELLIS Institute Tübingen](#) | [ESB Business School](#) | [Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems](#) | [Tübingen AI Center](#) | [University of Tübingen](#)

Node: Zurich

- [ETH AI Center](#) | [ETH Student Project House](#) | [Sciencepreneurship](#) | [Talent Kick](#)

