The SAFE HEARTS PLAN Meeting: Young Scientists Engaging with Europe’s Cardiovascular Health Plan brings European cardiovascular health policies closer to early-career researchers

02/06/2026

On 11 June 2026, the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Cardiovasculares Carlos III (CNIC) will host **SAFE HEARTS PLAN: Young Scientists Engaging with Europe's Cardiovascular Health Plan**, an international initiative led by the CNIC, the AstraZeneca Foundation, and the European Society of Cardiology (ESC). The event is specifically designed to connect early-career researchers with the European health policy landscape and to explore how scientific research can contribute to prevention, innovation, implementation, and the generation of real societal impact.

The scientific programme will be structured around four major strategic areas aligned with the core pillars of the European Union's forthcoming **SAFE HEARTS PLAN**. Discussions will address cardiovascular prevention and the control of risk factors; the potential to transform healthcare offered by early detection, artificial intelligence, and digital tools; health inequalities in cardiovascular disease and the challenges faced by the most vulnerable populations; and, finally, the mechanisms required to translate scientific evidence into effective public policies that improve cardiovascular health across Europe.

One of the distinguishing features of the meeting will be the active participation of early-career researchers from the CNIC–MSCA COFUND Cure Heart and Brain programme, who will intervene as speakers and moderators across the thematic sessions. COFUND Cure Heart and Brain is a European postdoctoral training programme coordinated by the CNIC and co-funded by the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, aimed at training international early-career researchers in translational cardiovascular research, biomedical innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The goal is to provide a practical experience of interaction between biomedical researchers, public health professionals, and European policymakers, while also fostering the training of a new generation of researchers with a translational outlook and the ability to engage with European regulatory and institutional frameworks.

The meeting will bring the SAFE HEARTS PLAN closer to those who will lead biomedical research in the coming decades, fostering dialogue between science, innovation, and public policy. Participants will address some of the main cardiovascular-health challenges facing Europe, including prevention and risk factors, artificial intelligence and digital health, health inequalities, and the integration of scientific evidence into decision-making.

The SAFE HEARTS PLAN Meeting will be opened by **Dr. Valentín Fuster**, Director General of CNIC; **Dr. Marina Pollán**, Director of the Carlos III Health Institute; and **Laura Colón**, President of AstraZeneca Spain and the AstraZeneca Foundation. The event will feature participation from representatives of European institutions, scientific societies, public bodies, industry, and patient organisations.

Panellists:

- Kitti Almer: Cardiovascular Policy Consultant at the European Society of Cardiology (ESC)
- Héctor Bueno: Senior Cardiologist, CNIC researcher, and member of the Committee for the Development of the Spanish Cardiovascular Health Strategy
- Borja Ibáñez: Scientific Director at the CNIC and interventional cardiologist at Fundación Jiménez Díaz University Hospital
- José Luis Peñalvo: Director of the National Centre for Epidemiology (Centro Nacional de Epidemiología, CNE), Carlos III Health Institute
- Cristina Pérez Herreras: Director of Corporate Health at Banco Santander
- Javier Sánchez-González: Clinical MRI Scientist at Philips for Southwest Europe Philips
- Folkert Asselbergs: Director of the Amsterdam Heart Center, Professor at University College London and the University of Amsterdam, and Chair of the Artificial Intelligence Committee of the European Society of Cardiology
- Aleida Alcaide: Director General for Artificial Intelligence at the Ministry for Digital Transformation and Public Administration
- Laura Dubreuil Vall: Director of Innovation in Emerging Technologies at AstraZeneca

- Fátima Sánchez Cabo: Head of the Systems Computational Biomedicine Laboratory and the Bioinformatics Unit at the CNIC
- Sonya Babu-Narayan: Clinical Director at the British Heart Foundation (BHF)
- Juan Carlos Julián Mauro: Managing Director of the Federación Nacional de Asociaciones para la Lucha Contra las Enfermedades del Riñón (ALCER)
- Natalia Skogberg: Researcher at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)
- María Rubini: Cardiologist and senior researcher in ischaemic heart disease and sex and gender studies at the CNIC
- Rikke Vibeke Nielsen: Representative of the Royal Danish Embassy in London
- Benedetta Armocida: Scientific Coordinator of the Joint Action on Cardiovascular Diseases and Diabetes (JACARDI)
- Andreas Heddini: Vice President of Medical Affairs for Europe and Canada at AstraZenecs
- Birgit Beger: Chief Executive Officer of the European Heart Network (EHN)
- Antonio Parenti: Director of Public Health, Cancer, and Health Security at the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety of the European Commission

The symposium also involves several European institutions and organisations linked to cardiovascular health, public health, prevention, and healthcare innovation:

- European Society of Cardiology (ESC)
- European Heart Network (EHN)
- JACARDI
- Fundación Pro CNIC

In addition, several European programmes and projects related to cardiovascular prevention, implementation, and digital health will participate:

- MSCA Brain and Heart, the CNIC's European postdoctoral training programme co-funded by the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
- RESILIENCE
- GRACE (Innovative Health Initiative, IHI)

The event will be held in a hybrid format from the AudAZ venue in Madrid and will be livestreamed, enabling participation from researchers and professionals across Europe.

Registration link

Source URL:https://www.cnic.es/en/noticias/safe-hearts-plan-meeting-young-scientists-engaging-europes-cardiovascular-health-plan