

# BELGIAN BRAIN COUNCIL



## IN THIS EDITION

Altruistic data association. The German, Croatian, French, Hellenic and Spanish Brain Councils join us

The BBC new look website is also in German

The BBC Symposium May 14-15, 2024: program, speakers, sponsors

How does Covid affect the brain?

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News from our members and partners

## 1. The German, Croatian, French, Greek and Spanish Brain Councils join us

Our mission is to inform research and support evidence-based public policy. Many other European associations have also joined this exciting initiative. We are delighted to announce that the Presidents of the German, Croatian, Spanish, Hellenic and French Councils have officially signed the letter of intent to join the Brain Data Hub initiative, launched by the Belgian Brain Council. The Brain Data Hub is behind the creation of Europe's first data-driven altruism organization in the field of brain and mental health.



## 2. The BBC website has a new look and is also in German

Since 1919, Belgium's borders have been modified by the acquisition of 854 km<sup>2</sup> of German territory, resulting in the presence of a German-speaking population in Belgium, known as the German-speaking Community of Belgium (in German: Deutschsprachige Gemeinschaft Belgiens). The Belgian Constitution recognizes these three linguistic communities, guaranteeing linguistic and cultural rights to citizens belonging to these communities. It was therefore obvious that the BBC, as a national association, should carry out its mission for citizens belonging to the 3 communities.

The BBC website can now be read in 4 languages. It expresses our respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and facilitates collaboration with partners in other countries, helping us to achieve our objectives more effectively.

Ana Ruivo, EU4EU intern, and Camille Czernok, HIECS student, renovated the site's graphics.



## 3. The BBC symposium

The BBC symposium on May 14 and 15, 2024 will inaugurate the Altruistic Data Association.

Find out more about the program and speakers  
(<https://www.braincouncil.be/symposium>).

Block these dates today. The booking form will be available from March 2024.

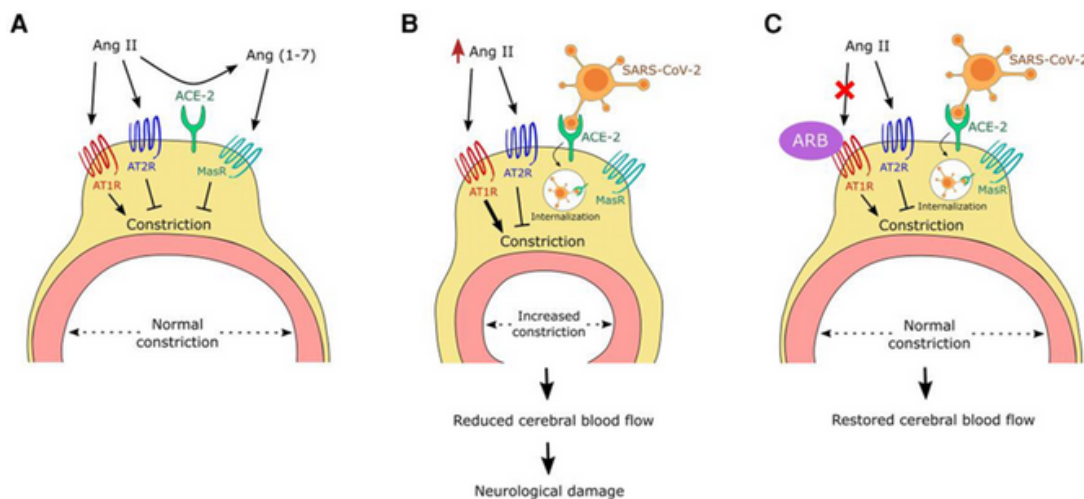
## 4. How Covid affects the brain

We thought it would be useful to retrace some of the milestones that have marked the evolution of knowledge about the mode of action of COVID-19 on the brain, and in particular COVID LONG. This work has been carried out by retracing the course, between January 2021 and November 2023, of the articles and notes mentioned in 11 BBC newsletters,

- January 2021, newsletter 36, highlighting a review article by a team from the Karolinska Institute that underlines the need to be vigilant about neurological complications in patients infected with SARS-CoV-2.
- In February 2021, the NIH raised a budget of \$1.15 billion for COVID LONG research (see BBC newsletter n°39, April 2021).
- July 2021, our July/August issue n°42, explains how the virus, thanks to its spikes and an RBD (Receptor Binding Domain) sequence, infects cells.
- On September 11, 2021, the BBC organized a COVID LONG webinar in French and Dutch, lasting over 1 hour 45 min, featuring 8 speakers from different backgrounds and viewed over 1,000 times. The webinar can still be viewed by [clicking here](#).
- November 2021, in its newsletter 44, the BBC analyzes the KCE report: Needs and follow-up of patients with COVID LONG published on October 26, in which it appears that the COVID LONG diagnosis is not clearly established.
- January 2022, in its newsletter 44, the BBC cites the Sciansano study ([see here](#)) published on December 21, 2021, which shows that 47% of patients suffer from COVI LONG.
- In February 2022, in its Newsletter 46, the BBC reprinted an article published in the journal PNAS on August 21, 2021, showing an analogy between COVID LONG and chronic fatigue (ME/CFS).
- March 2022, in its newsletter 47, mentions the following advances:
  - PASC a new term for COVID LONG
  - The effect of vaccines on disease
  - COVI LONG for children
  - COVID and stroke
- May 2022, newsletter 48 reports on the Nature article demonstrating morphological differences between the brains of COVID and non-COVID patients.
- September 2023, NIH (finally) launches clinical trials for COVID LONG treatments (see newsletter no. 58 of September 2023)
- December 2023, this newsletter n°61 reprints an article published in March 2023 by a team from Bristol Medical School which, by demonstrating that, in the hamster, the COVID virus is responsible for the contraction of brain vessels (see figure), opens the way to a neuropathological explanation of the effect of COVID/SARS-CoV-2. This contraction limits blood flow and can be inhibited by losartan. Losartan, an Ang-II receptor blocker (ARB) commonly used to treat hypertension, protects against tissue damage by restoring balance to the renin-angiotensin system and limiting tissue damage resulting from reduced blood flow in COVID-19.

**Ref :** SARS-CoV-2 targets pericytes to restrict blood flow within the brain

J Scott Miners, Robert A Fisher, Seth Love, Brain, Volume 146, Issue 2, February 2023, Pages 418-420, <https://doi.org/10.1093/brain/awac481>



## 5. BAW 2024, March 11-17

### Call for projects

Like every year, the BBC is celebrating Brain Awareness Week. As a reminder, the BBC supports our members' events up to a maximum of €1,000 per project. BAW 2023 events in Belgium can be found [here](#).

For 2024, send us your programs and we will distribute them through our newsletters:

- Madame Mormal, from the Association des aidants proches, is organizing a Stress and burn-out conference on Tuesday March 12, 2024, at the Château du Karreveld, given by psychiatrist Dr Philippe Corten.



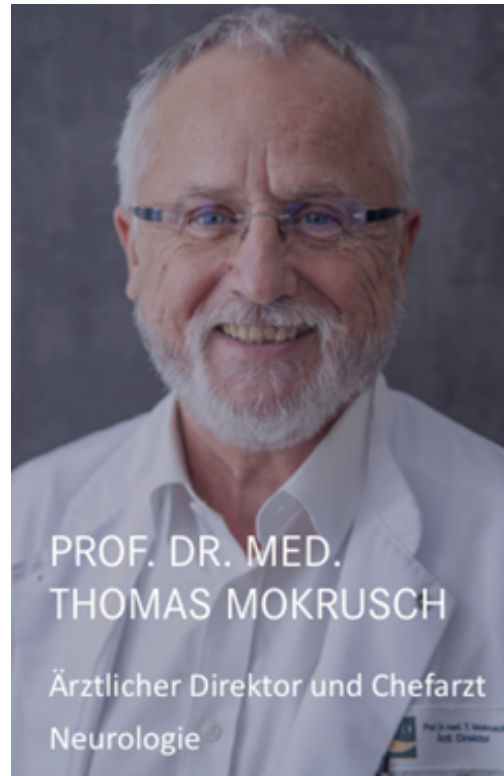
## 6. News from our members and partners

- **Jean Schoenen**, our past President and founder of BBC, receives the "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the European Headache Federation at their congress in Barcelona on December 7, 2023.





- **The German Brain Council has elected a new president:** Dr. Thomas Mokusch was most recently Medical Director and Head of Neurology and Rehabilitation at the MediClin Hedon Clinic in Lingen (Lower Saxony), as well as at two other clinics, and now heads the federal association NeuroRehabilitation. He holds an apl chair at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and is an honorary professor at Weifang Medical University. The BBC congratulates Professor Thomas Mokusch on his appointment as President of the GBC.



- The Takeda Academy regularly organizes meetings (virtual or otherwise) for the heads of patient associations. These meetings are designed to help them manage their associations. This December, there will be a virtual session on "How to write an impactful press release". We are planning a session in French on the 7th and in Dutch on the 13th.

- [Registration for December 7](#)

- [Registration by December 13](#)



- The **information morning** on end-of-life issues will take place on **Saturday December 2** at Le Beau Vallon in Namur.

To register, send us an e-mail to [info@huntington.be](mailto:info@huntington.be)



## BCNBP presents its activities:

**14/12/2023** : Prof. Vincent Haufroid : 'Pharmacogenomics and TDM' - 19.00 - 21.00 pm  
**07/12/2023** : BCNBP virtual National Day 'Catatonia' and Belgian's Got Talent

For more details click [here](#)



## Call for entries

Become an official Expert Patient and help make a difference! Are you passionate about sharing your experience and knowledge to help others meet the same challenges? Then here's your chance to become an official Expert Patient and make a positive impact on the lives of your fellow citizens!

- Hoofd-Stuk offers training with certificate! More info [here](#)



**B**elgian  
**A**ssociation for  
**S**leep research and  
**S**leep medicine

- BASS is organising a course on CBT-I, cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia, in Dutch for psychologists.

[17 November BASS Autumn Meeting in Namur](#)



On this occasion, our President, Laurence Ris, was invited to present the BBC and its interactions with member scientific societies. See programme [here](#)

## Support Our Actions I

**BECOME A MEMBER  
DEVENEZ MEMBRE  
LID WORDEN**  
30€ at BE87 7512 0194 0094 with name + email

**BBC ACCOUNT : BE87 7512 0194 0094**

**Composition of the Executive Committee for the period  
2021-2022**

**Chairman:** Professor Laurence RIS

**General Secretary:** Professor Roland Pochet

**Vice-Chairmen:** Dr Gianni Franco, Baron Charles van der Straten-Waillet

**Treasurer:** Baron Charles van der Straten -Waillet

**Secretary:** Mrs Lia Le Roy

**The BBC is on the following social networks:**



12 videos about different BBC activities/meetings/webinars are visible on UTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/@BBCBelgianBrainCouncil>



**BBC acts as a host organization for the EU4EU Programme within its Erasmus+ projects**

## Dates to remember

**November, 21**

Leuven Brain Institute  
Science Day

[link](#)

**December, 7**

European Headache  
Federation Barcelona

**December, 16**

22th Belgian Stroke Council  
Symposium Leuven

**March 11-17, 2024**

Brain Awareness Week

**May 08-09, 2024**

10th NBCs Academy in Pula  
(Croatia)

**May 14-15, 2024**

BBC International Symposium:  
Are data the future for a better  
Brain and Mental Health?

