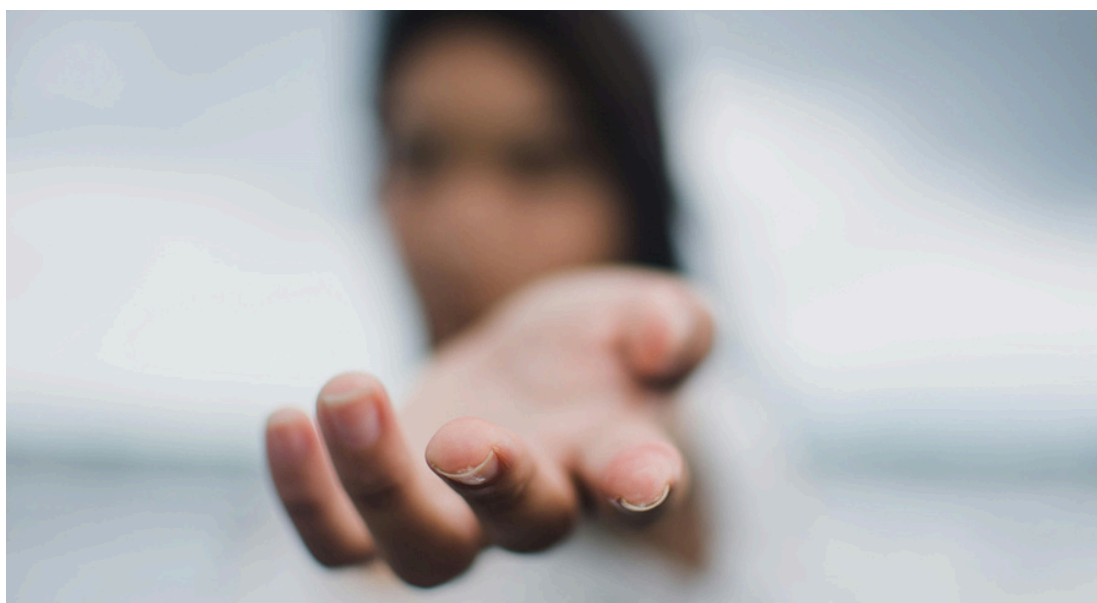




LONELY-EU

NEWSLETTER



Our First Anniversary

LONELY-EU officially launched in February 2025, and we are now one year old. The consortium is up and running and we have our first research deliverable.

You can read more about it in the Section on Deliverables.



- Our First Anniversary
- NRW Loneliness Forum in Brussels
- Research Deliverable: EU Loneliness Explorer
- Hogere Hotelschool The Hague
- Loneliness in the European Parliament Strasbourg
- Loneliness at Omroep Max
- The LONELY-EU Policy Brief Series
- La Table de Aude

Comments or Questions?

If you have any comments or questions, please reach out to us via the [Contact form](#) or via e-mail: info@lonelinessineurope.eu.



NRW Loneliness Forum in Brussels

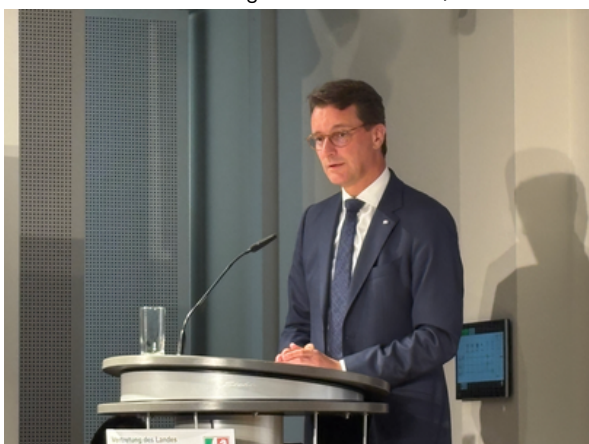
On the 1st of October 2025, the second Loneliness Forum was held at the Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) to the European Union in Brussels. The event was moderated by Judith Merkies and Prof. Dr. Maike Luhmann introduced the LONELY-EU project and its goals.

The programme featured opening remarks by NRW Minister President Hendrik Wüst , a keynote address by EU Commissioner Glenn Micallef, and a panel discussion with Evelyn Regner (Member of the European Parliament), Alastair Hannaford (WHO Youth Council), Tim Kramer (founder of Vereint Bochum), and Maike Luhmann. It was great to have both our Patrons, Hendrik Wüst and Evelyn Regner together at this event.

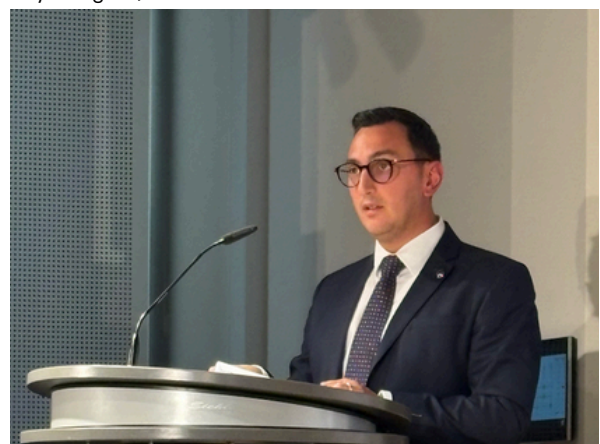
The forum aimed to bring together science, practice, public administration, and politics, while raising awareness of loneliness and helping to reduce the stigma surrounding it. You can watch the recording of the event via [this link](#).



from left to right: Judith Merkies, Alastair Hannaford, Evelyn Regner, Tim Kramer and Maike Luhmann.



North Rhine-Westphalia
Minister President Hendrik Wüst.



Glenn Micallef, European Commissioner for
Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport.



Research Deliverable: EU Loneliness Explorer

We created a comprehensive and accessible overview of the data that already exist on loneliness and social isolation across Europe and the UK.

We systematically identified hundreds of datasets, documented how loneliness is measured in each of them, and organized this information into a single, searchable database. This resource allows researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to quickly understand what data are available, how comparable different measures are, and where important gaps remain.

To make this information easy to explore, we also developed an interactive online tool that lets users browse and filter the database according to their interests.



LONELY-EU

EU Loneliness Explorer

[Click here for the EU Loneliness Explorer](#)[Home](#)[Database](#)[Analytics](#)[User Guide](#)[Legend](#)

Hogere Hotelschool - The Hague Netherlands



LONELY-EU participated as a mentor organisation and "Challenge Commissioner" in the first-ever Challenge Expo: We Are What's Next at Hotelschool The Hague held on the 16th of January 2026.

.During the visit, 24 student projects focused on loneliness interventions within the hospitality sector were assessed and provided with final feedback.

You can see a [video impression here](#).

Loneliness in the European Parliament Strasbourg

AK EUROPA, the Brussels office of the Austrian Chamber of Labour and MEP Evelyn Regner organized an event on the 9th of July 2025 called 'New Living and Working Environments. The Psychological and Social Consequences. The event was held in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Thanks to the drive of Evelyn Regner (one of our two patrons), we see more and more interest from the European Parliament for this important topic.

Hans Rocha IJzerman gave a speech in which he highlighted, that while full research findings are forthcoming, global data already reveal three urgent priorities:

- First, economic insecurity fuels disconnection. Low income, job instability, and financial stress restrict opportunities for connection—from affording transportation to having time for social life.
- Second, disconnection among young people is structural—not digital. It's not screens driving disconnection, but insecure work, housing precarity, and the loss of safe, social spaces. Early opportunities to connect—in schools, jobs, and communities—lay the foundation for civic trust.
- Third, work shapes our capacity to connect. Long hours, precarious contracts, and isolating environments make it harder to build and maintain relationships. But connection at work doesn't happen by chance—it must be built into workplace structures through inclusive practices, protected time, and supportive norms.

Importantly, these risks rarely exist in isolation. LONELY-EU will make these overlapping vulnerabilities visible, helping policymakers see how disconnection accumulates across life domains.



among others Evelyn Regner (3rd from right) and Hans Rocha IJzerman (1st from right)



Loneliness at Omroep Max

Omroep Max is a Dutch public broadcaster that has a focus on people aged 50 years and older, but the programs appeal to everyone. Last November, Judith Merkies appeared on the program Tijd Voor Max to talk about loneliness and the LONELY-EU project.



From left to right, Judith Merkies and Rafael van der Vaart (screenshot with thanks to Omroep MAX)

The LONELY-EU Policy Brief Series

We are excited to announce the LONELY-EU Policy Brief Series! This series will be a growing collection of short reports focusing on solutions against social isolation and loneliness.

Who is this for?

Our policy briefs target anyone who is interested in learning more about loneliness and all those who aim to develop evidence-based solutions.

We will have two lines of policy briefs:

- Policy update: focuses directly on the policy side of loneliness.
- Research update: summarizes scientific evidence and proposes actionable recommendations for policy and beyond.

When does it start?

The first four policy briefs were published in March and are described on the next pages.

What's next?

We already have several additional policy briefs planned which will be published over the course of the next months. If you have requests for specific topics or are interested in contributing, get in touch with us.



Kick-starting the Dialogue : The Evidence-to-Action Board in LONELY-EU



Our first policy brief is about the Evidence to Action (E2A) Board.

What does the board do?

The E2A Board brings together researchers, policymakers and practitioners to ensure that evidence on social isolation and loneliness is usable for policy design, monitoring and evaluation.

In other words, it helps us to create the best policy recommendations.

You can download this policy brief via [this link](#).

Guidelines for formulating evidence-based policy recommendations on Social Isolation and Loneliness



We have published our second policy brief, on formulating evidence-based policy recommendations on social isolation and loneliness. This policy brief provides practical guidelines for formulating evidence-based policy recommendations within the LONELY-EU project.

The guidelines are designed to help policymakers and policy advisors work with research evidence in a transparent, realistic, and usable way.

They do not prescribe policymakers specific interventions. Instead, they clarify how evidence can inform policy choices, while acknowledging uncertainty, context, and implementation constraints.

You can download this policy brief via [this link](#).



Europe's Loneliness Measurement Challenge: Building Evidence-Based Infrastructure



Our third policy brief concerns the measurement of loneliness across Europe. Comprehensive psychometric evaluation across all 27 EU countries (N=25,646) reveals that current measurement instruments vary dramatically in quality. Without reliable measurement infrastructure, we cannot determine whether interventions reduce loneliness, which approaches work best, or whether the crisis is worsening or improving.

Europe urgently needs investment in completing the EU SIL Index (under development, expected 2026-2027) to achieve both comparability and comprehensive content coverage, alongside systematic measurement infrastructure including annual data collection, quality assurance protocols, and Eurostat integration.

You can download this policy brief via [this link](#).

The LONELY-EU Evidence Quality Rating System : A Framework for Reliable Loneliness Measurement in EU Policy



The fourth Policy Brief tackles the problem that Europe has lacked transparent quality standards for evaluating loneliness measurement instruments.

While many reliable measures exist, policymakers face dozens of options—single-item questions, brief scales, comprehensive inventories—without clear guidance on which measures are best suited for specific policy purposes. EU policymakers need transparent guidance on which measurement instruments produce trustworthy, comparable data across member states.

The LONELY-EU traffic light rating system evaluates measures across three critical dimensions—cross-EU comparability, construct validity, and content coverage—enabling evidence-based instrument selection.

You can download this policy brief via [this link](#).



La Table d'Aude

Our colleague Hans Rocha IJzerman had the chance to experience something really special: La Table d'Aude in the 14th arrondissement of Paris — part of La République des Hypervoissins, a community-led initiative spearheaded by Patrick Bernard that redefines what it means to be neighbours.

They started at 7 a.m., unloading two trucks full of tables and chairs. Around 30 people worked side by side to transform Rue de l'Aude into an open-air dining space. By noon, 170 tables were set, 1,000 plates were ready, and the street was filled with people — elderly locals, newly arrived migrants, families with children, long-time residents, and volunteers. Everyone brought food: quiches, oysters, potatoes, couscous, and dishes from around the world. Emmaüs Solidarité served coffee and cake. Children played, stories were told, and lots of great music was played / enjoyed.

What struck Hans most was how naturally people from all backgrounds connected — not through structured “activities” but simply by sharing food, stories, and effort.



From left Hans Rocha IJzerman , Patrick Bernard.



Setting up the table.



Lunch is served.