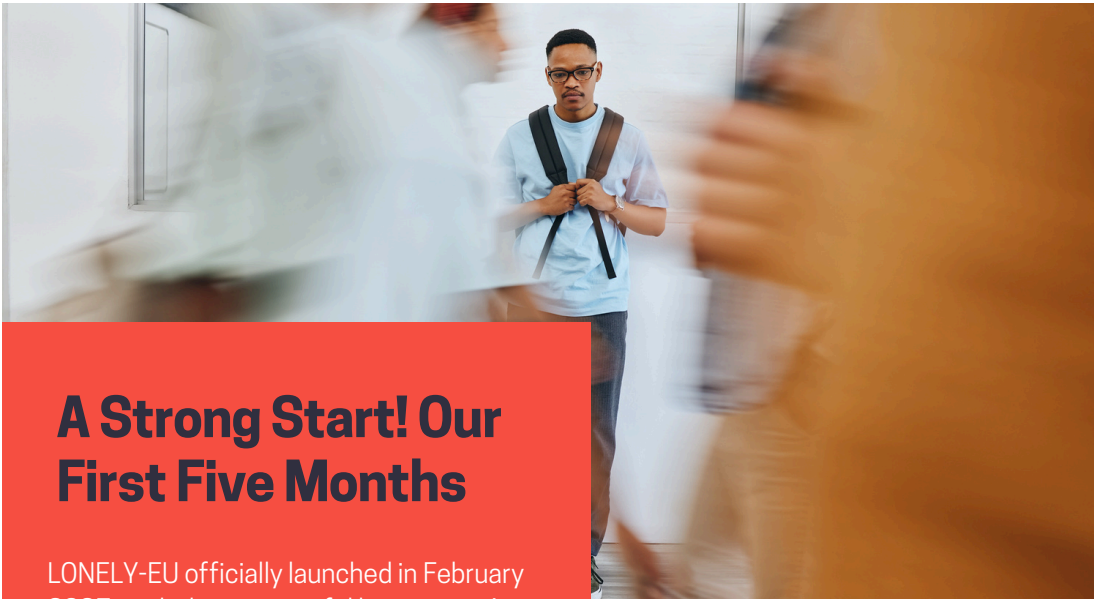




LONELY-EU

NEWSLETTER



A Strong Start! Our First Five Months

LONELY-EU officially launched in February 2025, and what a powerful beginning it's been! With our consortium now fully active, we've spent the first quarter building strong internal connections, mapping out our project, and engaging with global loneliness researchers.

The kick-off event, hosted at Vrije Universiteit (VU) Amsterdam, was a highlight. This vibrant gathering of researchers, policy experts, and external partners from across Europe and beyond set the tone for our collaboration: open, ambitious, and grounded in shared commitment.

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Do you work on loneliness? Are you part of a project or initiative tackling isolation in Europe? We want to hear from you!

Please share your news, publications, or events with us via email [info@lonelinessineurope.eu].

Call for Contributions





Chaired by Judith Merkies

Evidence-to-Action Advisory Board

The E2A (Evidence to Action) Board is a visionary advisory group helping transform cutting-edge research into real-world impact across Europe. Chaired by political and policy expert Judith Merkies, the Board brings together influential voices from science, policy, media, business, and technology.

Our members insights help shape policies that affect millions of Europeans experiencing social isolation and loneliness.

[Read More on our website](#)



February at VU
Amsterdam

Members

Our Board Members

- Patrick Bernard
- Stefano Benzoni
- Lara Fleischer
- Peg Fong
- Edward Garcia
- Eveline Huber
- Katarina Ivankovic
- Ron Ivey
- Niina Junntila
- Massimo Komatz
- Jill Litt
- Chris Mikton
- Phil McAulliffe
- Hannah Masters
- Łukasz Okruszek
- Thomas Pfluger
- Pamela Qualter
- Béatrice d'Hombres
- Peter Tinneman

[Find our Board Member Profiles
on our Website](#)



Lonely-EU Launch Event

The official launch event at the VU was more than just a meeting, it was a celebration of ideas and collaboration. It brought the Dutch research community and organisations together around the issue of loneliness and created a shared space for learning and collaboration.



Who's Who? Meet the Team

Our consortium is made up of leading researchers, practitioners, and communicators working across Europe to understand and combat loneliness. Meet the Work Package Leaders (WPLs) shaping the direction of the project:

Prof. Dr. Maike Luhmann



Ruhr University Bochum (Germany) | Project Coordinator & WP Leader

Maike is the coordinator of LONELY-EU. In addition to coordinating research and network activities within the consortium and she will lead the development of interactive databases.

Rob Blaauboer



Fioti (Netherlands) | WP Leader - Communication

Rob brings creative and practical expertise from the media world. His role is to translate academic research into actionable tools, digital platforms, and public engagement campaigns that foster social connection.

Prof. Patrizia Catellani



Catholic University of the Sacred Heart - Milan (Italy) | WP Leader - Social psychology and Advanced Statistical Modeling

Patrizia will help to identify the socio-economic causes and consequences of loneliness using probabilistic models optimized by machine learning techniques.

Prof. Katarzyna Growiec



SWPS University (Poland) | WP Leader - Social psychology and Quantitative methods

Katarzyna directs the work on demographic and socio-economic disparities in loneliness, focusing on marginalized populations and gendered experiences.

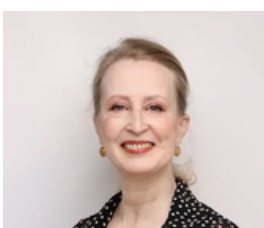
Dr. Hans Rocha IJzerman



Annecy Behavioral Science Lab (France) | WP Leader - Experimental Methods

Hans is a behavioral scientist specializing in social connection, social isolation, and loneliness. He co-leads the development of a monitoring framework to assess loneliness across the European Union.

Judith Merkies



Vrije Universiteit (Netherlands) | WP Leader - Policy Expert

Judith is leading the formulation of evidence-based policy recommendation, through the establishment of the Evidence-to-Action (E2A) Board and the SIL network. She focuses on bridging research and policy to tackle social isolation and loneliness.

Prof. Cristiano Vezzoni



University of Milan (Italy) | WP Leader - Longitudinal Surveys & Comparative Research

Cristiano is an expert in survey methods and political sociology at the University of Milan, will collaborate on creating a monitoring framework to assess loneliness across the European Union.



Theme Week - Loneliness in Hannover

Almost a week ago we had the pleasure to be invited to the Volkswagen foundation theme week on loneliness.

In the beautiful Schloss HerrenHausen in Hanover there were 4 symposia at the same time.

The symposium that we attended was organized by our consortium leader Maike Luhmann from the Ruhr University Bochum. The title of this symposium was :” The Next Big Questions on Loneliness: Integrating National and International Perspectives on Research and Policy Priorities”.



Judith Merkies and Evelyn Regner MEP (AT, S&D)



Schloss HerrenHausen in Hanover



Maike Luhmann discussing the Ideas



LINDA Magazine dedicates entire issue to Loneliness

LINDA, the Netherlands' leading women's magazine, dedicated its landmark 250th edition to the theme of loneliness. Loneliness is often seen as a personal issue, but it's actually a widespread societal challenge that affects not just individuals, but society in general.

For this special edition, Lonely-EU's Policy Expert Judith Merkies was interviewed to discuss the growing challenge of loneliness.

Judith emphasized that loneliness doesn't discriminate, it can affect anyone, regardless of age, background, or circumstance.

The edition also features Queen Máxima of the Netherlands, who shares her own reflections on loneliness and highlights the efforts of the Oranje Fonds in addressing it.