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Editorial, Anthony Polychronakis, City of Rotterdam, Project coordinator
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Editorial: Building Skills for Europe's Ageing Future

Europe is entering a new demographic era. The recently published European Demography Report highlights how population ageing, declining birth rates and increasing longevity are reshaping healthcare, long-term care and social cohesion. These trends will also influence the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), where investment in people, skills and resilience will be central to Europe's future.

*In this context, **SACRED – Sharing And Caring for at-Risk Elderly with Dementia or Disabilities** demonstrates how Erasmus+ can contribute to one of Europe's key priorities: preparing healthcare students and professionals to deliver high-quality, person-centred care for older people living with dementia, disabilities and multimorbidity.*

*During its first phase, the project delivered three major research reports—on evidence-based interventions, needs assessment and gap analysis—and created an open European database featuring more than 20 good practices. SACRED has now reached another important milestone with the development of its co-created **E-Learning Platform** (featured in this newsletter), which, together with the project's research and database, will be freely available to universities, vocational education providers, healthcare organisations and public authorities across Europe.*

Over the coming months, partners will test and validate these resources to ensure they effectively support education, professional development and more integrated, person-centred care. By making its results openly accessible, SACRED seeks to promote knowledge exchange, innovation and the wider adoption of good practices beyond the consortium.

The partnership will continue this work at its next meeting in Tenerife (24–26 November 2026) before presenting the project's final results at the Brussels Final Conference in 2027. We warmly invite educators, healthcare providers, public authorities and civil society organisations to explore the project's resources, contribute additional good practices and participate in the testing of the E-Learning Platform.

Preparing for demographic change requires more than innovation alone. It requires investing in people, strengthening skills and building lasting European cooperation to improve the quality of care for current and future generations.

Introduction:

In May, our consortium meeting took place in Treviso, Italy. At first glance, the idea of a Transnational Project Meeting (TPM) may seem outdated. With today's digital tools, there may appear to be little need to travel to other countries and cities to meet consortium partners and discuss project progress.

However, there is more to transnational collaboration than exchanging updates. Developing a deeper understanding of other cultures depends on context, shared experience, and the gradual building of relationships. It also creates opportunities: opportunities to listen, to connect ideas, and to strengthen collaboration.

During our working sessions in Treviso, it became clear that being together in one place helped raise both productivity and output. As our community of practice continues to develop, physical proximity can create a supportive environment in which trust, exchange, and joint learning grow naturally.

This insight is closely connected to the SACRED online learning platform, where the importance of supportive communities will be a central theme. The Treviso meeting reminded us that it is not only about content and technology. It is also about people, relationships, and communities that make meaningful learning and support possible.



Anthony Polychronakis, City of Rotterdam, SACRED project coordinator



*Otto Trienekens, Field Academy Rotterdam,
SACRED Consortium meeting Treviso EnEA, 20, 22 May 2026*



Building Dementia- and Disability-Friendly Communities: The Veneto Region's Integrated Approach to Community Care

Paola Roma

Regional Minister for Social Services, Family, Longevity, Sports and Housing Policies, Veneto Region

I was delighted to gain my first insight into the SACRED project during the 4th Transnational Project Meeting, held in Treviso, Italy, from 20 to 22 May 2026. The opportunity to meet the project partners and exchange ideas confirmed the importance of this European initiative, which aims to strengthen the knowledge and skills of healthcare students and professionals in caring for older adults living with dementia, disabilities and other complex care needs.

Following these inspiring discussions, the **Veneto Region is pleased to contribute its experience to the SACRED database of best practices and to the project's innovative e-learning platform.** In particular, I would like to share our approach to community care, which we believe may help to pave the way for building more inclusive, integrated and resilient care systems across Europe.

Community care is one of the defining challenges facing European health and social systems. As our population ages, **there is an increasing need to develop care models** that enable older people, including those living with dementia, to remain active, independent and connected to their families and communities for as long as possible. Achieving this goal requires integrated policies that bring together healthcare, social services, housing, local authorities, civil society and citizens themselves

The Veneto Region has embraced this vision through a community welfare model that combines professional health and social care services with the invaluable contribution of formal and informal carers, families and local communities. Family caregivers are recognised as essential partners in the care pathway and are supported through personalised care plans, respite services, financial assistance and educational initiatives. At the same time, municipalities, Local Health and Social Care Authorities (ULSS), voluntary organisations, social cooperatives and third-sector associations work together to strengthen neighbourhood support networks, mutual-help groups and intergenerational initiatives that reduce isolation and foster social cohesion.

Promoting active ageing is another cornerstone of our regional strategy. Programmes encouraging senior volunteering, digital inclusion, age-friendly neighbourhoods, co-housing initiatives and community participation help older adults remain socially engaged while reinforcing the resilience of families and local support networks. These initiatives contribute not only to healthier ageing but also to more inclusive and dementia-friendly communities.

An equally important pillar of our approach is **housing**. We recognise that adequate housing is far more than a physical space: it is a fundamental determinant of health, wellbeing, autonomy and social participation. Through the **Abitare Futuro** ("Living the Future") strategy, the Veneto Region is developing an integrated vision that connects public housing, social housing and private-sector initiatives to address demographic ageing, evolving family structures and growing housing inequalities.

Our objective is to provide affordable, accessible and sustainable housing solutions that enable older adults, people with disabilities and other vulnerable citizens to continue living safely within their own homes and neighbourhoods. Supporting ageing in place not only improves quality of life but also strengthens family caregiving, preserves community relationships and reduces unnecessary institutionalisation. A home is where care begins, but it is also where social connections, independence and dignity are maintained.

To support these objectives, the Veneto Region has strengthened its investment in **affordable housing and urban regeneration through the 2021–2027 European Regional Development Fund Programme**. These investments reflect our commitment to integrating housing policy with health and social welfare planning, recognising that sustainable communities depend upon both high-quality services and appropriate living environments.

Particular attention is being given to key workers, including healthcare and social care professionals employed within our regional services. **By expanding access to affordable housing for these essential professionals, we aim to address the growing challenge of intermediate housing needs, improve workforce retention and ensure that those who provide care can continue to live and work within the communities they serve. This is not simply a housing policy; it is an investment in the sustainability of community-based care.**

For people living with dementia, integrated community care is especially important. Dementia-friendly communities promote dignity, inclusion and autonomy by combining health and social care with supportive neighbourhoods, accessible housing and active community participation. Effective dementia care therefore extends beyond clinical treatment to embrace coordinated policies that support families, strengthen local networks and create environments in which people can continue to participate meaningfully in everyday life.

The SACRED project reflects these same values. By developing an innovative e-learning platform for healthcare students and professionals, it will help prepare the future workforce to deliver integrated, person-centred care for older adults living with dementia, disabilities and other complex care needs. Equipping professionals with the knowledge and competencies required to work across disciplines and sectors is essential for building resilient, compassionate and sustainable care systems throughout Europe.

The experience of the Veneto Region demonstrates that high-quality dementia care depends upon strong partnerships between healthcare, social services, housing providers, local authorities, voluntary organisations and families. Only through this integrated approach can we ensure continuity of care, promote healthy and active ageing, support caregivers and enable people to remain safely and meaningfully connected to their homes and communities throughout every stage of life.

As European regions continue to learn from one another, initiatives such as SACRED provide an invaluable opportunity to share knowledge, strengthen professional education and promote innovative models of community care.

Together, we can build a future in which every older person receives care that is not only clinically effective, but also compassionate, inclusive and firmly rooted within the communities where they live.



Highlights from the SACRED Transnational Partner Meeting; Treviso, 20–22 May 2026

Oscar Zanutto, Sara Ceron and Giorgia Coldebella (EnEA)

In May, our consortium meeting took place in Treviso, Italy. At first glance, the idea of a Transnational Project Meeting (TPM) may seem outdated. With today's digital tools, there may appear to be little need to travel to other countries and cities to meet consortium partners and discuss project progress.

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EnEA, a public institution based in Treviso, promotes innovative health and social care to improve the quality of life of older adults and vulnerable people. In the SACRED project, EnEA leads the implementation and evaluation activities while coordinating pilot actions and dissemination, guided by the principles of **knowledge, awareness, sharing and care**.

The partners of the SACRED project gathered in Italy for the 4th Transnational Project Meeting, hosted in the elegant setting of *Villa Langenigo-Zucchelli* in Treviso, a historic 17th-century villa and current home of EnEA's Innovation and Development Office. The partners worked side by side to shape the SACRED e-learning platform, while also taking part in two study visits across the Veneto region.



Oscar Zanutto, Giorgia Coldebella (EnEA)



IRCCS San Camillo, Venezia Lido

The three-day meeting focused on defining the content and structure of the platform, planning the upcoming pilot activities to test its effectiveness, and discovering EnEA's **Specialised Dementia Center** through a dedicated presentation. Furthermore, partners had the opportunity to visit the **IRCCS San Camillo**, a highly specialised hospital and research institute on the Venice Lido.

The meeting was enriched by the visit of **Paola Roma**, Regional Minister of Social Affairs, Housing and Sport of Veneto and **Gino Gerosa**, Regional Minister of Health of Veneto, who expressed great interest in the SACRED project.



Welcoming, Paola Roma, Regional Minister for Social Services, Family, Longevity, Sports and Housing policies, discovering the Specialised Dementia Center, and setting the ground for the pilot phase of the project.



Study visit at IRCCS San Camillo, welcoming Gino Gerosa, Regional Minister for Health and Social Planning of the Veneto Region

Let's take a look at the key highlights from each day of the meeting!



DAY 1

Wednesday, 20 May 2026

Building the e-learning platform together



The meeting opened in Treviso with a deep dive into the heart of the SACRED project: the e-learning platform. Designed to train healthcare students and professionals, the platform focuses on the care of older adults living with dementia and/or various types of disabilities. SACRED's ambition is to create a digital, accessible, and high-quality learning environment that equips caregivers across Europe with practical skills and evidence-based knowledge.

Throughout the day, partners shared progress on the training modules currently under development. Discussion quickly became dynamic and collaborative, especially when exploring how to make the training more engaging through interactive features, such as quizzes and multimedia elements.



DAY 2

Thursday, 21 May 2026

Welcoming the Social Minister of the Veneto Region, discovering the Specialised Dementia Center, and setting the ground for the pilot phase of the project

An extensive program and inspiring moments characterised the second day of the meeting!



Paola Roma, Regional Minister for Social Services, Housing and Sport of the Veneto Region

The partners were honoured by the visit of **Paola Roma**, Regional Minister for Social Services, Housing and Sport of the Veneto Region, who came to meet the partners and learn more about SACRED project. The Minister expressed strong interest in the initiative and emphasised the importance of integrated approaches to ageing and dementia care. She underlined the need to connect health services, social support and community engagement, while also opening the door to potential future collaborations and regional experimentation, aimed at sharing and scaling up the good practices.

The second day was also crucial for planning the project's upcoming pilot activities, which are aimed at validating the e-learning platform and its training methodology. The pilot phase will officially start in September 2026, involving 96 learners across Europe. The training will target both healthcare students and professionals, taking place across six locations: Rotterdam (NL), Treviso (IT), Syros (GR), Valencia (ES), Flanders (BL), and Tenerife (ES).

In the afternoon, partners met two psychologists from the EnEA's **Specialised Dementia Center**, who presented their daily activities to support people living with dementia and their families, highlighting how they provide specialist advice and personalised care for those experiencing cognitive decline and their caregivers.

A very special highlight of the day was a live musical performance by **Willem Philipsen**, representing the City of Rotterdam, who played the official SACRED project song for all the partners!

EnEA's Specialist Dementia Centre (SDC)



Psychologists from the centre, came to present the activities carried out by the SDC on a daily basis, and the SACRED partners followed the presentation actively, showing keen interest and recognising the added value of the centre.

In summary, the **Dementia Specialised Centre** is a service offered by EnEA that provides specialist advice and personalised care plans for people with cognitive decline and their families. The SDC adopts a *person-centred approach*, focusing on the individual rather than solely on their difficulties, and utilises an *interdisciplinary team* to ensure comprehensive and tailored support.

The centre offers a wide range of services aimed at improving patients' quality of life and supporting carers. These include *information and guidance sessions* on services available in the local area, *psychological support*, *neuropsychological assessments*, *individual cognitive stimulation programmes*, *motor assessments and treatments*, as well as *speech and language therapy and dysphagia interventions*. Furthermore, the SDC promotes *group activities*, such as motor, artistic and cognitive workshops, conducted in small groups to encourage interaction and participation.

Collaboration is a fundamental element of the SDC's approach. The centre *works in synergy with local authorities* such as AULSS2 (Treviso Local Social and Health Care Unit) and Treviso City Council. Through these partnerships, various initiatives are carried out, including the Alzheimer's Cafés, cognitive screening campaigns for people over 65, and support programmes such as the 'Labirinti di cura' (Labyrinths of Care), designed to help carers manage stress and provide daily care.

Among the services developed with AULSS2 is the *High-Level Alzheimer's Home Care Service* (SAPAD), which offers personalised family counselling and psychological support, as well as neuropsychological assessments for behavioural and psychological disorders associated with dementia. Respite centres also play an important role by providing support to carers and training for volunteers.

The presentation also highlights Treviso's commitment to becoming a '*dementia-friendly*' community. Since 2022, the city and neighbouring municipalities have been promoting awareness-raising and inclusion initiatives, such as the Alzheimer Fest, training for law enforcement officers, educational activities in schools, guided museum tours and awareness campaigns in everyday settings, such as supermarkets.

Overall, the DSC represents a comprehensive and collaborative care model, aimed at supporting people with dementia and their families, whilst promoting awareness and inclusion within the community. This study visit was an important opportunity for the SACRED consortium and CSD professionals to exchange views and experiences in the field of older adults' care.



DAY 3 Friday, 22nd May 2026

IRCCS San Camillo, study visit

The final day of the meeting brought the partnership to the beautiful Venice Lido for a second study visit at the **IRCCS San Camillo**. This highly specialised hospital and research institute is recognised by the Italian Ministry of Health for its excellence in both clinical work and research, particularly in the rehabilitation and treatment of neurological conditions. During the visit, researchers from the *Neuropsychology Laboratory* and the *Integrated Research Laboratory on Ageing and Neurological Disorders* guided the group through their ongoing activities, showcasing experimental approaches and advanced rehabilitation practices that deeply inspired the partners.



The entire experience was further enriched by the presence of the Regional Minister of Health of the Veneto Region, **Gino Gerosa**. The Minister expressed great appreciation for the SACRED project, reaffirming the Region's commitment to supporting innovative health initiatives and improving dementia care.

From left to right:
Oscar Zanutto, EnEA Treviso,
Otto Trienekens, Field Academy Rotterdam,
Regional Health Minister Gino Gerosa, Veneto Region

The Day 3 study visit to IRCCS San Camillo was not only an opportunity to discover cutting-edge neurorehabilitation research, but it also hosted a dedicated **stakeholder co-design workshop** as part of the **CO-CREATOR project** (*Citizens Network for Research: Co-creating ORRI Engagement in Clinical Research*), funded under the [REINFORCING](#) Horizon Europe programme.

CO-CREATOR aims to establish a permanent **Citizens Network for Research** ([Rete Cittadini per la Ricerca](#)) at IRCCS San Camillo, embedding Open and Responsible Research and Innovation (ORRI) principles into the hospital's clinical research workflows and creating a transferable model for other European institutions.



During the workshop, SACRED partners and stakeholders were invited to actively contribute as external voices, sharing **insights and feedback on the Citizens Network model**, key elements to consider for its **transferability** across different institutional and national contexts, and **suggestions for improvement**. The session provided a valuable cross-project perspective, bringing together the lived experience of an active European partnership with the participatory ambitions of CO-CREATOR.

*Dr. Otto Trienekens, Field Academy Rotterdam and
Dr. Julie Vanderlinden, Odisee University of Applied Sciences Belgium*

The inputs collected will directly inform the co-design process and the development of the **ORRI Tool**, a modular, openly accessible resource designed to help European institutions replicate the Citizens Network model and bring research closer to society.



*Study visit IRCCS San Camillo, with Enrico Dal Pozzo, IRCCS San Camillo, Regional Minister for Health,
Gino Gerosa and Mario Bassano Director IRCCS San Camillo*



Focus On: The SACRED E-Learning Platform

Jonas Bernitt (AFEDEMY)

The SACRED project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme, aims to strengthen the skills of healthcare students and professionals working with older people living with dementia and multimorbidity. At the heart of the project sits its main deliverable: a co-created, freely accessible E-Learning Platform (ELP) that brings together evidence-based knowledge, practical tools and interactive learning experiences from across Europe. Work Package 3 (WP3) is dedicated entirely to designing, building and testing this platform, and over the past year, it has moved from a first concept to a rapidly growing body of content!



Modules of the SACRED e-learning platform

The development process of the e-learning platform

Work on the platform began with its technical conception in Moodle, giving the team a working prototype to design around from day one. At the [Transnational Project Meeting in Valencia](#), Spain (24–26 November 2025), the actual work on the platform began. Guided by the Veldacademie, the consortium ran design-thinking workshops that moved through the classic empathise–define–ideate–prototype–test cycle, translating the [evidence based interventions](#), [needs assessment](#), and [gap analysis](#) of WP2 into a shared structure of modules and lessons for the e-learning. Moreover, ideas for the inclusion of interactive reflection tasks like quizzes, fill-the-gaps, branching scenarios, and more have been discussed.

From early 2026, partners were able to start by defining learning objectives for each lesson, and a comprehensive design plan was created. In this context, every partner selected the topics of the

platform where they have the most expertise, aiming for good-quality learning materials. From March 2026, the partners officially started creating content according to their area of expertise.

A following milestone was the [Transnational Project Meeting in Treviso](#), Italy (May 2026), where the consortium presented each other the content, tested the growing platform hands-on, and discussed which interactive elements would work best for each type of content. From June to July 2026, the development of interactive elements and assessment quizzes took place, using dedicated templates for self-learning and group-learning formats on our e-learning platform. Currently, the consortium is entering a structured EU peer-review phase, in which every partner presents and cross-checks the modules they have developed.



The SACRED E-learning

The SACRED e-learning platform runs on Moodle, a learning environment already familiar to many universities across Europe. Rather than designing everything on paper first, the team set up an early draft version in Moodle, giving the consortium a real space to test and refine ideas from the start. The finished platform will bring together seven modules, each made up of two to four lessons that learners can work through at their own pace and to whatever depth they need. A built-in accessibility tool allows text size, spacing, colours and contrast to be adjusted. To be usable throughout Europe, the platform will be available in multiple languages.

One choice worth highlighting: SACRED doesn't split learners into separate tracks. Students and professionals use the same platform and draw on the same evidence-based content, each simply choosing their own pace and level of depth. The content follows a clear theoretical baseline, guided by the STIP-Method and a modified Kirkpatrick framework, taking learners from understanding a topic and reflecting on their own attitude through to applying it in everyday care practice. The created modules cover practice-relevant ground: from the fundamentals of dementia and multimorbidity, through person-centred and integrated care, communication and relational skills, to informal caregiving, interprofessional collaboration and non-pharmacological interventions. An overview of all included modules and lessons of the e-learning can be seen below.

 1 Introduction to dementia and multimorbidity	1.1	Physical, psychological and emotional dimensions of Dementia
	1.2	Diseases and disabilities related to dementia (multimorbidity)
	1.3	Early detection
	1.4	Care systems
 2 Visions of care and dedicated approaches (+ Autonomy)	2.1	Holistic care approaches (integrated / person-centred care)
	2.2	Reflecting biographic specificities
 3 Personalised integrated care planning	3.1	Foundations of care planning
	3.2	Shared decision making
 4 Emotional & behavioural challenges – relational competencies	4.1	Emotions / behavioural challenges
	4.2	Methods for handling emotions / behavioural challenges
	4.3	Verbal and non-verbal communication strategies and techniques
	4.4	Self-care for professionals
 5 Interprofessional collaboration & coordination	5.1	Roles, responsibilities & collaboration in interdisciplinary teams
	5.2	Effective communication techniques in interdisciplinary teams
 6 Informal caregiving & community facilities	6.1	Recognising and relieving the burden of informal care
	6.2	Recognising different kinds of care
	6.3	Community care
 7 Non-pharmacological interventions	7.1	Non-pharmacological interventions (evidence-based)
	7.2	Non-pharmacological interventions (practice + value-based)

Modules and lessons of the SACRED e-learning platform

Looking at the actual content on the platform, every lesson combines two types of interactive elements. Learners work through self-learning exercises individually, such as crosswords, drag-the-words tasks, image hotspots or short timelines, and then move into a group-learning activity like a roleplay, a discussion forum or a shared poster creation task. This combination of individual and collaborative learning is meant to keep the platform practical and engaging, not just informative. Each module closes with a Foundational and an In-Depth quiz, which form the basis for SACRED's

certificates and open badges. In the picture below, you can get an overview of all interactive elements (self- + group-learning) that will be included on the e-learning platform.

SELF-LEARNING ELEMENTS			GROUP-LEARNING ELEMENTS		
ELEMENT		DESCRIPTION	ELEMENT		DESCRIPTION
	Single + Multiple Choice	Select one or more correct answers.		Discussion forum	Exchange ideas, ask questions and discuss topics in a structured forum.
	Drag- the words	Complete a sentence or paragraph by dragging missing words.		Poster creation	Create a poster to present information, insights or findings collaboratively.
	Crosswords	Fill in the crossword to find the correct words.		Design your own workshop	Design a workshop on a given topic and present the structure, activities and outcomes.
	Information Hotspot	Click on hotspots in an image or diagram to view information.		Roleplay	Take on roles in a simulated situation to practise communication, decision-making and problem-solving.
	Find the Hotspots	Click the correct areas in an image.			
	Interactive video (with information)	Watch the video and access additional information during playback.			
	Video Interview	Watch the interview to learn from expert or practitioner insights.			
	Scenario simulation (branching scenario)	Make choices that lead to different branches and outcomes.			
	Timeline	Explore a sequence of events in chronological order.			
	Submission of document (plan / essay / etc.)	Upload and submit a document as part of the activity.			
	Self-assessment survey	Complete a self-assessment survey via HSP Quiz.			

Interactive elements of the SACRED e-learning platform

Next steps

Regarding the current development, we are in the middle of the peer-review phase: partners are reviewing each other's content, interactive elements and quizzes to ensure consistency, quality and alignment with the learning objectives across all modules. This autumn, the focus shifts to co-creation workshops in all project pilot sites (Rotterdam, Brussels, Valencia, Tenerife, and Syros). In this framework, students, professionals and informal caregivers will test the platform directly and help refine both content and interactive elements ahead of the technical finalisation and translation phases.

Want to participate?

Interested in testing the SACRED E-Learning Platform with us? We would love to hear from you – please get in touch with the SACRED team to find out how you or your organisation can get involved in the upcoming co-creation workshops: contact@sacredproject.eu

For more information about SACRED, you can keep on exploring our [website](#). If you want to stay tuned about the project progress, also consider following our social media channels!



Partner Spotlight Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (RUAS)

Interview with Judith van Zwienen, MSc, Researcher, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, and Prof. Ton J.E.M. Bakker, MD, PhD, Elderly Care Physician, Psychogeriatrician and Professor.

The SACRED consortium brings together three higher education institutions with complementary expertise: **Odisee University** (Belgium), **Universitat de València – Polibienestar (UVEG)** (Spain), and **Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences (RUAS)** (the Netherlands), one of the five largest universities of applied sciences in the country's central urban region.

In this edition, we speak with **Judith van Zwienen, MSc**, a researcher at Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, who represents RUAS in the SACRED project alongside Prof. Ton J.E.M. Bakker, MD, PhD, an elderly care physician, psychogeriatrician, and professor. They share how RUAS contributes its expertise to developing innovative educational resources that support integrated, person-centred dementia care across Europe.

One of the project's main outcomes will be an innovative e-learning platform co-created with students, professionals, and older adults. The platform will include open online courses covering topics such as dementia, person-centred care, integrated care planning, interprofessional collaboration, non-pharmacological interventions, behavioural and emotional challenges, and the European dimension of dementia care.



Judith van Zwienen, and Prof. Ton J.E.M. Bakker



1. What motivated RUAS to take an active role in the SACRED project, and what is your specific contribution?

We believe that high-quality dementia care starts with well-prepared professionals who are able to work across disciplines and in close collaboration with older adults and their informal caregivers, based on scientific evidence. As a university of applied sciences, we combine education, practice-oriented research, and strong partnerships with healthcare organisations. This makes SACRED a natural fit for us.

Our contribution focuses on translating scientific evidence and practical expertise into educational resources. Together with our European partners, we help ensure that the learning materials are evidence-based, practice-oriented, and applicable in daily dementia care. We bring in expertise from integrated, person-centred care, including the STIP Method. We also involve students, healthcare professionals, and older adults in the co-creation and testing process. In this way, the

educational resources are not only scientifically sound, but also relevant and meaningful for everyday practice.



2. RUAS is leading the development of several learning modules. Which ones are they, and what are the key messages, practical skills, and learning experiences participants can look forward to?

RUAS leads the development of several lessons that focus on integrated, person-centred dementia care, including prevention and treatment. These include lessons on holistic and integrated care, biographical approaches, clinical reasoning and stepped-care planning, shared decision-making, and non-pharmacological interventions for behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia.

Rather than offering theory alone, the lessons support participants in developing practical competencies and skills. Learners will practise analysing complex care situations, working with realistic case studies, collaborating across professional disciplines, and involving older adults and their informal caregivers in decision-making and care planning. They will also become familiar with evidence-based non-pharmacological interventions and learn how to tailor support to the individual needs, preferences, life story, and context of each person with dementia.



3. Looking beyond the project's lifetime, how will RUAS continue to build on its outcomes, and what opportunities do you see for other European regions to adopt and benefit from the project's educational resources and good practices?

For RUAS, SACRED is not the end of the journey, but a foundation for further innovation in dementia education. We aim to integrate the educational resources into our regular bachelor's and master's programmes, as well as into post-graduate professional education and, where relevant, vocational education and training pathways. We are continuing professional development activities and collaborations with healthcare organisations. The learning materials can also support interprofessional education, enabling students from different disciplines to learn with, from, and about each other.

Because the materials are openly available, evidence-based, and co-created with end users, they can be adapted to different healthcare systems and educational contexts across Europe. Healthcare systems may differ between countries, but the principles of person-centred care, interprofessional collaboration, shared decision-making, and meaningful support for informal caregivers are widely relevant.

We therefore hope that SACRED will inspire other European regions to adopt, adapt, and further develop these educational resources. In this way, the project can contribute to stronger dementia care through international collaboration, shared learning, and sustainable implementation in both education and practice.

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Judith van Zwienen, and Prof. Ton J.E.M. Bakker



The EMBRACE Memory Association Innovative Community Care in the Cyclades, Greece

Dr Apostolos Efkarpidis (General Hospital of Syros)



embrace memory

ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS, CAREGIVERS, AND PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA
AND NEURODEGENERATIVE BRAIN DISEASES OF CYCLADES

A Brief Introduction to the "Embrace Memory" Association

The "**Embrace Memory**" Association was founded in 2025 with a vision to create a stigma-free society, where every person with memory impairment or other neurodegenerative brain diseases, and every caregiver, has a voice and receives the support they need and deserve.

The Association, with its healthcare professionals, researchers, and experienced caregivers, cooperates with the University of Athens, the University of West Attica, the INTRINSIC program, the General Hospital of Syros, the Municipalities and the South Aegean Region. The Association currently has approximately 350 members.

Our mission is to support people with memory impairment, caregivers and their families through information and education, prevention and psychosocial support, awareness and destigmatization of society, the establishment of support structures and services throughout Greece, with a particular focus on Syros and the Cyclades, with the ultimate goal of improving their quality of life.

Dementia is not only an issue affecting older adults; it is also a social and intergenerational challenge that concerns us all.

The Association implements a range of voluntary strategic initiatives that address the needs of different groups within the community and concern:

- a) those who have already been diagnosed with memory impairment and/or dementia, as well as their caregivers,
- b) people aged 60 years and over who wish to assess their memory as part of preventive screening,
- c) young people,
- d) parents and all citizens in general.

These actions are part of the co-funded by the South Aegean Regional Operational Programme 2021–2027, entitled: "**Actions to empower and support people with dementia, caregivers and their families**"

The actions are as follows:

1

Development of a Dementia Registry and Needs Assessment Database in Syros and the Cyclades, as well as their caregivers.

Through a simple, anonymous questionnaire, we record, with the informed consent of participants or, where appropriate, their legal representative, people with memory impairment, the needs of people with memory impairment who already have an existing diagnosis of dementia and/or other

neurodegenerative diseases of the brain, as well as their caregivers, creating the basis for targeted interventions through data analysis.

2 Free preventive memory screening for people aged 60 and over (Syros & Cyclades).

The Association offers free of charge the possibility of early detection of memory disorders, prevention and information disorders, with the use of appropriate psychometric tools and a special team of collaborators.

3 Education & Empowerment of Caregivers and Interested Citizens.

The association will create educational programs for integrated care for elderly people with dementia and will provide practical care tools, through a multidisciplinary approach, as well as psychoeducation and the strengthening caregivers' psychological resilience.

4 Awareness Raising in Schools and the Community.

The association runs intergenerational activities in schools, information meetings for parents and teachers, and educational materials aimed at destigmatization, social inclusion and the creation of a dementia-friendly community.

The members of the Board of Directors of the "Embrace Memory" Association are: Mr Apostolos Efkarpidis, Ms Athanasia Korotzidou, Mr Marinos Makryonitis, Ms Petrina Xanthaki, Ms Anna Petrou, Ms Christiana Karamanou, Ms Eirini Antonaka and Ms Margaro Denaxa.

The "Embrace Memory" Association represents an important opportunity to enhance the development, implementation, and impact of the SACRED Erasmus+ project. Through its network of healthcare professionals and community partners, it provides an additional setting to disseminate and apply SACRED's innovative tools and training in practice.

The "Embrace Memory" Association wishes to establish partnerships with European and international networks related to its subject and to contribute by participating in European programs.

"We warmly thank the SACRED program and its esteemed partners for the opportunity to present ourselves."

On behalf of the Board of Directors

The President

Apostolos Efkarpidis, PhD in Public Health Policy

"The Embrace Memory Association represents an important opportunity to enhance the development, implementation, and impact of the SACRED Erasmus+ project. Through its network of healthcare professionals and community partners, it provides an additional setting to disseminate and apply SACRED's innovative tools and training in practice".

Miltos Sakellariou, Social Cooperative Altera Vita, Cyclades Greece.



SACRED on the Move in Europe



Update from ANRIMAC Applied Sciences

SACRED at INTERPSIQUIS 2026: Shaping the Future of Dementia and Disability Care

At the **XXVII International Virtual Congress of Psychiatry, Psychology and Mental Health (INTERPSIQUIS 2026)**, the SACRED project was presented through the participation of **ANRIMAC**, the Spanish project partner based in San Cristóbal de La Laguna, Tenerife, represented by **Dr. Angela Rita Martín Caballero**. The contribution addressed one of Europe's most pressing healthcare challenges: ensuring high-quality, person-centred care for the growing number of older adults living with dementia and disabilities.

Under the title *Ageing, Illness and Care in the Digital Era: The SACRED Project, an Innovative Initiative to Empower Care and Enrich Lives*, Dr. Martín Caballero presented a scientific paper integrating the perspectives, knowledge and expertise of SACRED partners across Europe. The presentation highlighted SACRED's innovative tools, including its e-learning platform and database of good practices, which are designed to support both current and future caregivers by providing access to evidence-based knowledge, practical resources and shared European experiences that contribute to improving the quality of care.

The paper incorporated contributions from **Anthony Polychronakis** (SACRED Project Coordinator, Municipality of Rotterdam), **Dr. Julie Vanderlinden** (Odisee University of Applied Sciences, Belgium), **Elena Curtopassi** (ELISAN Network), **Sara Cerón** (EnEA, Italy), **Miltos Sakellariou** and **Apostolos Efkarpidis** (Altera Vita, Greece), and **Silvia García García** (Polibienestar Research Institute, Universitat de València, Spain).

The contribution explored the challenges associated with population ageing and the increasing prevalence of dementia and disability, identifying existing gaps in care while showcasing examples of good practices implemented across Europe. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of empowering formal and informal caregivers through education, interdisciplinary collaboration and accessible digital learning solutions that strengthen both professional competencies and person-centred care.

A common message emerged throughout the presentation: addressing the future challenges of dementia and disability care requires more than clinical expertise alone. It demands multidisciplinary cooperation, continuous professional development, accessible training opportunities and innovative solutions that preserve the dignity, autonomy and human dimension of care.

The role of digital technologies was also emphasised as a means to support—not replace—the relationships at the heart of care. By facilitating access to evidence-based knowledge, promoting

the exchange of good practices and supporting lifelong learning, digital tools can contribute to more resilient, integrated and person-centred health and social care systems.

In this context, the presentation also highlighted the **INTRINSIC programme**, an integrated psychogeriatric care model delivered through telemedicine, developed by **Professor Antonis Politis** (Department of Psychiatry, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece) and his team, including **Apostolos Efkarpidis, Anna Petrou, Eleftheria Aggeletaki, Christina Kasapa and Maria Kalogera**. As an innovative example of digital health in practice, INTRINSIC demonstrates how telemedicine can enhance integrated psychogeriatric care by improving access to specialised services, strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration and ensuring continuity of care for older adults. The programme exemplifies how digital innovation can reinforce—not replace—the human relationships that underpin effective care, while supporting healthcare professionals, caregivers and families through accessible, evidence-based services. As such, it reflects and reinforces the core values and objectives of the SACRED project, demonstrating how digital solutions can empower carers, promote integrated care and ultimately improve the quality of life of older adults living with dementia and disabilities.

Through its contribution to INTERPSIQUIS 2026, SACRED reaffirmed its commitment to European collaboration, knowledge exchange and innovation in dementia and disability care. The presentation demonstrated how bringing together expertise from different countries and disciplines can help build more inclusive, resilient and person-centred health and social care systems, while supporting the professionals, caregivers and families who play a vital role in enhancing the lives of older adults across Europe.



Update from Odisee University of Applied

Bridging the Gap in Multimorbidity: From Epidemiology to Real-World Settings

03-04 June 2026
CSS Auditorium 35.01.06, Gammeltoftsgade 15
University of Copenhagen
Copenhagen Denmark

EUPHA CHRONIC DISEASES DSMP VIDENS- OG FORSKNINGSCENTER FOR MULTIMORBIDITET OG KRONISKE SYGDOMME REGION ZEALAND UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN novo nordisk fonden



Empowering Integrated Dementia Care

A Needs Assessment of the SACRED Project Across Six European Pilot Sites

Aims

To enhance integrated, non-pharmacological care for older adults with dementia and multimorbidity through the development of an e-learning platform for healthcare students and professionals

Methods Needs assessment

- Conducted across six European pilot sites (Rotterdam, Syros, Flanders, Treviso, Tenerife, and Valencia)
- Mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative focus groups and interviews
- Sample: 57 professionals, 34 students, and 31 older adults

Results

- Professionals and students generally understand the principles of integrated care
- Significant gaps remain in training related to emotional and behavioral management interdisciplinary collaboration, and psychotherapeutic approaches
- Older adults expressed appreciation for personalized care and involvement in decision-making but highlighted challenges in coordination among providers and occasional feelings of isolation
- Systemic barriers to delivering integrated care, including resource shortages, communication gaps, and limited support for informal caregivers

Education: e-learning

- Need for practical, interactive, and emotionally engaging learning tools
- Modules on integrated care principles, communication strategies, caregiver involvement, psycho-emotional support, and ethical considerations, supported by real-world case studies and simulations
- Next steps (2026-2027): development of the e-learning, testing and dissemination

This study underscores the importance of **tailored, non-pharmacological interventions and interdisciplinary education** to improve dementia care outcomes and quality of life for older adults

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Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Update from ELISAN

SACRED Engages European Stakeholders at the ELISAN General Assembly 2026

The SACRED project was presented at the ELISAN (European Local Inclusion and Social Action Network) General Assembly 2026, held in Valencia, Spain, from 15–17 June 2026.

The General Assembly was held jointly with the Inclusive Cities for Sustainable Families Signatories Meeting, supporting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). The event brought together more than 150 representatives from local and regional authorities, universities, healthcare organisations, and civil society, providing an excellent opportunity to engage with key stakeholders working in the fields of ageing, dementia, disability, and social inclusion.

During the Assembly, **Oscar Zanutto** (EnEA, Italy) and **Miltos Sakellariou** (Social Cooperative Altera Vita, Greece, and ENSEL Coordinator) presented the latest developments of the SACRED project, focusing on two of its key outputs: the Database of Good Practices and the SACRED e-learning platform.

Participants were invited to explore and contribute to the Database of Good Practices, which already features more than 20 innovative, person-centred initiatives from across Europe. Stakeholders were encouraged to share examples from their own organisations, helping to expand this European repository of effective practices and promote knowledge exchange across countries.

The Assembly also provided an opportunity to demonstrate the SACRED e-learning platform. Participants were encouraged to test the training modules, provide feedback on their content and usability, and explore how the platform could be integrated into their own organisations, educational programmes, and continuing professional development activities. By supporting its wider adoption, SACRED aims to contribute to the continuous training of healthcare students and professionals through accessible, evidence-based learning resources.



The positive response from participants confirmed the value of involving a broad network of stakeholders in the development and dissemination of SACRED's results. Their contributions to the Database of Good Practices and their future use of the e-learning platform will help ensure that the project's resources continue to support high-quality, person-centred care for older adults living with dementia and disabilities across Europe.



Karel Haga,
Chair Advisory Board.

Dialogue with the Advisory Board, SACRED moves from development towards sustainable implementation

Since 2024, the Erasmus+ SACRED consortium has brought together care organisations, research groups and universities from Italy, Spain, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands. Led by the Municipality of Rotterdam, the project is developing an e-learning programme for students and professionals supporting older people with dementia, comorbidity and impairments. SACRED runs until mid-2027, with its Advisory Board acting as a critical friend throughout the process.

At the consortium meeting in Treviso in May 2026, the Advisory Board was impressed by both the quantity and quality of the work produced. Despite cultural and linguistic differences, partners have collaborated effectively and achieved valuable interim results. The project's sharper focus on dementia is timely: the number of people living with dementia in Europe is expected to rise substantially, while most will continue to live at home in their own communities. The Board particularly welcomes the inclusion of community care and informal care in the learning modules. Effective support requires professionals from different disciplines to share knowledge, coordinate their work and focus on both the person with dementia and their informal caregiver. A uniform lesson format and a matrix covering all modules now make it possible to identify useful overlap, gaps and connections across the programme. Cultural, linguistic and contextual differences between countries nevertheless remain an important consideration. As development progresses, implementation and long-term embedding are becoming increasingly urgent. Partners in Rotterdam, Brussels, Tenerife, Treviso and Syros intend to introduce relevant parts of the package within their own educational or care settings. However, local implementation alone may not provide the scale needed for lasting impact.

The Advisory Board therefore recommends involving influential stakeholders in education, dementia care and professional practice in every partner country. In the Netherlands, SACRED modules could be incorporated into lecturer training, higher professional education and vocational programmes. Connections with platform organizations and dementia case managers could further support adoption. Combining education, research and practical action learning would help professionals at different qualification levels develop a shared language and strengthen community-based dementia care. Because Erasmus+ funding ends in 2027, future ownership, accreditation, evaluation and continued development must be addressed now. A possible SACRED 2 programme could support further European implementation. More broadly, the Board advises Erasmus+ to reserve greater time and funding for the sustained implementation of valuable project outcomes, not only their development.



Karel Haga, chair of the SACRED Advisory Board



EU News

The EU Demography Report / Upcoming Events

New European Commission Report Highlights the Need to Adapt to Demographic Change

The European Commission has launched its report, "**Demographic Transformation in the EU: Understanding Change and Adapting to its Consequences**," highlighting one of Europe's most significant long-term challenges: a rapidly ageing population, declining birth rates, and shifting population patterns.

The report emphasises that demographic change is not only a statistical trend but a transformation that affects healthcare, long-term care, housing, employment, education, and social inclusion. As the number of older people continues to grow, the demand for person-centred health and social care, including dementia and disability support, will increase substantially.

Rather than viewing demographic ageing solely as a challenge, the report encourages policymakers and communities to adapt by investing in healthy ageing, lifelong learning, accessible environments, digital inclusion, and resilient care systems. It also stresses the importance of reducing inequalities between regions and ensuring that all generations can participate fully in society.

For projects such as **SACRED**, these findings reinforce the importance of developing innovative, inclusive approaches that support older adults, people living with dementia, and persons with disabilities, while strengthening the capacity of professionals and communities to respond to Europe's changing demographic landscape.

Read the full report here: [Demographic Transformation in the EU: Understanding Change and Adapting to its Consequences](#).



"Tackling demographic change is not something that leaders can postpone. Demographic change is happening now and we have an opportunity to address it head on".

*Dubravka Šuica
European Commissioner for the
Mediterranean, responsible for
demography*

Upcoming Opportunities and Invitations

29 September 2026 – Belluno, Italy

The Municipality of Belluno, led by Mayor *Oscar De Pellegrin*, is pleased to invite the SACRED consortium and interested stakeholders to participate in an ELISAN meeting, organised in collaboration with the European Network of Social Authorities (ENSA). The meeting will focus on the themes of the House of Abilities and the Right to Stay, exploring innovative approaches to inclusive communities, demographic resilience, and territorial cohesion.



3 – 4 December 2026 – Lombardy, Italy

The Fondazione Elisabetta Germani, represented by its Director *Ivan Scaratti* and an associated partner of the SACRED project, is pleased to invite the SACRED consortium to a two-day meeting in Milano and Cremona, including a study visit, organised in the framework of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD). Entitled "Abitare, Crescere, Convivere – Building Homes, Growing Together, Living Together," the event will bring together practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and project partners to exchange experiences and good practices on inclusive housing, independent living, community-based care, and innovative models that enhance the quality of life and social inclusion of persons with disabilities and older people.



Cremona historic skyline with the Torrazzo.

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Greetings from the SACRED partnership!



“Waiting for you for the next SACRED Transnational Partner meeting in San Cristobal de la Laguna, Tenerife, from the 24th to the 26th of November 2026!”, Dr Angela Rita Martina Caballero, ANRIMAC

Stay connected!



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