

Press release

How are nutrition, the gut microbiome and mental health connected?

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Brussels, 2 July 2026 — Mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression affect millions of people across Europe and are increasingly recognised as closely linked to diet, nutrition, social inequalities and broader lifestyle factors. A new Horizon Europe-funded research project, [NUTRIMIND \(“Understanding Mental Health and Nutrition in Europe”\)](#), launched at the beginning of June, aims to explore how nutrition, dietary choices, the gut microbiome, and lifestyle factors might interact with mental health. The project will examine these relationships from childhood through older adulthood using data from multiple European population cohorts.

During the four-year project researchers, health experts, data scientists, citizen scientists and stakeholder engagement specialists from across Europe will work together to understanding of links between diet, the gut microbiome, and mental health. NUTRIMIND brings together 16 organisations, coordinated by the European Food Information Council (EUFIC), with expertise spanning nutrition science, mental health, microbiome research, artificial intelligence, citizen science, public health, food data and behavioural sciences.

NUTRIMIND aims to improve understanding of these interactions by combining existing data from large-scale cohort analyses, dietary and biomarker data, microbiome and multi-omics approaches, AI-supported modelling, and citizen engagement activities.

The project will:

- Analyse and integrate existing data from European cohorts and studies
- Explore dietary and lifestyle factors associated with positive mental health outcomes
- Identify nutrition- and microbiome-related signatures associated with mental health trajectories
- Strengthen evidence for prevention-focused approaches to mental health
- Support development of practical tools, recommendations and policy guidance

A strong emphasis will also be placed on stakeholder engagement and co-creation through a Community of Practice involving citizens, researchers, healthcare professionals, policymakers and others to ensure that project outputs are relevant, inclusive and accessible.

*“Whilst growing evidence points to connections between nutrition, the gut microbiome and mental health, important knowledge gaps remain,” said **Giacomo Sini**, NUTRIMIND project coordinator. “NUTRIMIND will bring together large-scale European data, advanced analytical approaches and citizen engagement to better understand these relationships and support future evidence-based strategies for prevention and public health.”*



Picture: NUTRIMIND consortium partners at the project kick-off meeting in Wageningen, the Netherlands, 2–4 June 2026

The NUTRIMIND consortium met in Wageningen, the Netherlands, for its official kick-off meeting on 2-4 June 2026, hosting a three-day programme of scientific, technical and operational workshops. The consortium includes partners from Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Austria, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Serbia and the United Kingdom, representing universities, research institutes, NGOs and SMEs.

EUFIC coordinates NUTRIMIND and contributes its expertise in science communication and stakeholder engagement. As coordinator, EUFIC will support collaboration among project partners, communication with the European Commission, the development of the Community of Practice, and the project's communication, dissemination and exploitation activities. Through NUTRIMIND, EUFIC aims to contribute to a better understanding of the complex intersection between diet, the gut microbiome and mental health, and to support the development of evidence-based recommendations, tools and policy guidance.

ENDS

Notes to editors

For interview requests or any other information, please contact [Lorena Vargas](mailto:Lorena.Vargas@eufic.org) at or media@eufic.org.

For more information

A dedicated NUTRIMIND website will be launched in August 2026 to share project updates, resources, outputs and opportunities for stakeholder engagement. Updates will also be shared through the project's social media channels, including LinkedIn and Bluesky.

Consortium partners

European Food Information Council (EUFIC) — Belgium
EuroFIR AISBL — Belgium
CAPNUTRA (third party linked to EuroFIR) — Serbia
Wageningen University (WU) — Netherlands
Quadram Institute Bioscience (QIB) — United Kingdom
University of Surrey — United Kingdom
Institut Jožef Stefan (JSI) — Slovenia
University College Cork (UCC) — Ireland
Swiss Nutrition and Health Foundation (SNHf) — Switzerland
CIBER — Spain
IISPV — Spain
Ghent University (UGent) — Belgium
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UCSC) — Italy
IIASA — Austria
Sciensano — Belgium
Europroject OOD — Bulgaria

About NUTRIMIND

NUTRIMIND is an EUfunded project exploring how nutrition, the microbiome and lifestyle influence mental health. Bringing together big data, multiomics, AI-supported analysis of complex biological and behavioural datasets and citizen science, NUTRIMIND will generate evidence to support future personalised nutrition and mental health approaches, as well as policy-relevant insights, or support development of practical tools, recommendations and policy guidance.

About EUFIC

The European Food Information Council is a consumer-oriented non-profit organisation that makes science on food and health more accessible and easier to understand. EUFIC provides evidence-based information to support informed decision-making on food, nutrition, health, and sustainability.

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