

## **PRESS RELEASE**

*Grenoble, 14 March 2022*

# **UGA hosts international conference on policies, research and action against social isolation**

**Université Grenoble Alpes is holding the first national meeting on policies, research and action against social isolation on Friday, 18 March 2022 from 9:00 am on the Saint-Martin-d'Hères campus, Grenoble.**

This international event, organized with the support of the Ministry of Solidarity and Health and endorsed by the French Presidency of the European Union, will bring together scientists and public actors as well as representatives of European and international organizations to discuss the challenges of social isolation, its impact on health and more generally on our societies.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has made us acutely aware of the challenges of isolation." explains Yassine Lakhnech, president of Université Grenoble Alpes. "However, the situation of social isolation has been under study for several years by scientists. Their work shows that social isolation has undeniable consequences on our health. Many countries throughout Europe and the world have already set up working groups and multisectoral action plans to address these health issues. In light of what we have experienced over the past two years, it is important to encourage a similar approach in France and UGA can be a driving force on these issues thanks to the work that has already been undertaken by its research teams."

Based on the work of scientists and feedback from experiences conducted in Europe, this event will allow a framework to emerge for the development of a multisectoral plan in terms of social ties, mobilizing different actors. The objective is to set up mechanisms to monitor the factors and impacts of loneliness and social ties at the national level and subsequently at the European level.

The event will be livestreamed, the link will be [online soon](#).

### **Section 1: Raising awareness and sharing of prior experiences in research and policy frameworks**

9.00 - 9.15 Opening of the day and overview by Dr. Hans Rocha IJzerman, organizer of the event.

9.16 – 9.25 **How will the World Health Organization tackle loneliness?** Video from Dr. Etienne Krug, Director of the Department for Social Determinants of Health at the World Health Organization

9.26 - 9.55 **How social connection influences health.** Presentation by Prof. Julianne Holt-Lunstad, Professor at Brigham Young University

9.56 - 10.15 Coffee Break

10.16 - 11.15 **Moderated interview with Dubravka Šuica, the European Union's Vice President for Commissioner for Democracy and Demography.** *Interview led by Judith Merkies and Edward Garcia, with input from the audience.*

11.16 - 11.35 **How to set up a national surveillance system for loneliness.** Presentation by Prof. Andrew Steptoe, Head of the Department of Behavioural Science and Health at University College London.

11.36 - 11.55 **Reducing loneliness in the UK: What does the UK campaign teach us?** Presentation by Paul Cann, Co-Founder of the UK Campaign to End Loneliness.

11.56 - 12.05 **The United Kingdom's Experiences and Future Outlook** - Video from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) Nigel Huddleston of the The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

#### LUNCH BREAK 12.05 - 13.05

### **Section 2: Creating a French surveillance system of loneliness and social connection and creating multi-sectorial French working group for social connection**

13.06 - 13.35 **How can we reduce loneliness? The introduction of a systemic, socioecological framework.** Presentation by Edward Garcia, Director of the Global Initiative for Loneliness and Connection.

13.36 - 14.15 **What possibility exists for surveillance of loneliness and social connection in France?** Roundtable Discussion with input from the audience.

14.16 – 14.45 **Which actors will commit to participating in a working group on social connection?** Outlining and committing to key development steps and oversight needed for the development of a France-specific strategic action plan. *Roundtable Discussion with input from the audience.*

#### COFFEE BREAK 14.45 – 15.15

### **Section 3: International Evidence Frameworks for Practitioners**

15.16 - 15.35 **Interventions to tackle loneliness across the EU** Presentation and discussion by Minna Nurminen and Elizabeth Casabianca from the Joint Research Centre of the European Union.

15.36 – 15.55 **What are the gaps in evidence for social isolation interventions? How can we build up the future evidence base?** Presentation by Dr. Christopher Mikton, Technical officer at the World Health Organization.

### **Section 4: Wrapping up the event**

15.56 – 16.40 Outlining and committing to key development steps needed to develop European Union-wide surveillance mechanisms as well as working groups for loneliness and social connection for the development of an EU-wide strategic action plan.

16.41 - 17.00 **Closing of the day.** Prof. Yassine Lakhnech, President of Université Grenoble Alpes

## **Practical information**

Amphithéâtre, la Maison de la création et de l'innovation, MaCI 339 avenue Centrale 38400 Saint-Martin d'Hères

The presentations are in French or English, with instantaneous translation available to all participants.

## **ABOUT US**

### **Université Grenoble Alpes - UGA**

A multidisciplinary institution located in the heart of the French Alps, Université Grenoble Alpes is renowned for its scientific and technological research activities, aimed at providing essential training to students and faculty and at addressing societal issues. One of the top 150 universities in the world in the Shanghai ranking, the university's impact is brought to life through its nearly 60,000 students, 10,000 of whom international, and more than 7,700 staff spread over several campuses. Working in tandem with its research partners and drawing on the presence of its considerable scientific resources, UGA has developed its research and innovation policy on an international scale. We push the boundaries of knowledge by providing support to its disciplines and encouraging cooperation and dialogue between them to build the interdisciplinarity required to tackle the socio-economic and cultural issues we face today.

<https://www.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/>

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