

ELLIS Doctoral Symposium 2022: 150 PhD students and leading AI researchers discuss the latest findings in Alicante

Alicante, 04 of October, 2022. – It was the highlight of the year in the ELLIS PhD Program: 150 PhD students from 18 countries gathered at the [ELLIS Unit Alicante in Spain](#) for the second ELLIS Doctoral Symposium ([EDS22](#)). Focusing on ‘AI for Good’, the five-day event marked a unique opportunity for young researchers to meet with world-renowned machine learning experts and innovative tech companies to discuss the latest research in a field that will help tackle some of the greatest challenges of the 21st century.

Climate change, healthcare and algorithmic fairness: Modern AI plays a vital role in many areas of our lives, and the science in this field is advancing rapidly. To foster cooperation and exchange in the scientific community, ELLIS puts a strong focus on organising networking and training activities for its PhD students. The Doctoral Symposium is the main event of the program which also offers summer schools and workshops throughout the year.

The program of this year’s EDS consisted of a broad mix of expert talks, panel discussions, poster and tooling sessions highlighting some of the most recent AI scientific challenges and breakthroughs. For many of the participants it was the first opportunity to attend a larger conference in person after the COVID-19 pandemic, and to connect with representatives from top technological companies, such as Bosch and Intel, as well as with local PhD students and academics.

AI for Good by world-renowned researchers

One of the highlights of the event was the high-level list of keynote speakers which included some of the most renowned European scientists focusing on ‘AI for Good’: Virginia Dignum (Wallenberg Program on Humanities and Society for AI, Autonomous Systems and Software (WASP-HS) & Umeå University), Emilia Gomez (Joint Research Centre, European Commission & Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Krishna Gummadi (Max Planck Institute for Software Systems), Emmanuel Letouzé (Data-Pop Alliance & Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Christopher Markou (University of Cambridge), John Shawe-Taylor (University College London), Irina Shklovski (University of Copenhagen), and Mihaela van der Schaar (University of Cambridge). They introduced students to their current research work and engaged in many fruitful discussions.

Lama Nachman (Intel) explained how the field can move from Human/AI competition to Human/AI collaboration, while Mihaela van der Schaar outlined how to go beyond interpreting static predictions and one-size-fits-all example explanations. Virginia Dignum, Emilia Gomez, Krishna Gummadi and Irina Shklovski presented their vision of the future of Algorithmic Fairness in a panel discussion, Emmanuel Letouzé gave a presentation on ‘Reviewing and Rewriting

the Data Revolution', and John Shawe-Taylor explained how to apply AI in Education and Disaster Recovery.

"ELLIS Alicante is very proud to have successfully organised and hosted this event and to see the ELLIS network in action. The symposium brought together scientific expertise with upcoming research talent, generating a vibrant and stimulating experience for all that took part. Overall, there was a remarkable level of scientific excellence and we can rest assured that the next generation of AI leaders in Europe is on its way thanks to the opportunities provided by the ELLIS network.", says Nuria Oliver, Scientific Director of the ELLIS Unit Alicante and ELLIS Vice-President.

Connecting PhD students with innovative technology companies

What kind of opportunities lie ahead when students finish their PhD? The career fair at the EDS offered a glimpse into the varied career paths in the field of modern AI. Students could connect with representatives from 18 technology companies such as Bank Sabadell, Intel, Bosch, artea.com, KPMG and Invenia labs (full list [here](#)), gaining valuable insights into how AI is employed across a variety of industries and businesses. But networking opportunities were not restricted to the lecture hall or job fair: A packed social program, with activities ranging from sports on the beach, an exclusive dinner at the castle and a boat trip to Tabarca, turned the symposium into an experience that its participants will not soon forget.

"The ELLIS Doctoral Symposium in Alicante was a great experience! In addition to the insightful keynotes by amazing speakers, it was the perfect opportunity to get in touch with other PhD students within the ELLIS network. The poster sessions allowed me to gain insights into the diverse areas that students within the network are working in and created the opportunity to foster potential collaborations across disciplines. The social events supplemented the main conference perfectly and provided a space to interact with attendees outside of a research setting which helped strengthen connections. Overall it was a great scientific and networking event and this being my first in-person conference made it even more special," says Aditya Gulati, PhD Student of the ELLIS Unit Alicante.

EDS 2022 was the first ELLIS doctoral conference in Spain

The [ELLIS Unit Alicante](#) is located in the Science Park of the University of Alicante and organised the EDS 2022 in cooperation with the ELLIS PhD Program. The event was the first ELLIS doctoral conference in Spain and was supported by several volunteer helpers and a variety of organisations among which were the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and Cooperation, the Generalitat Valenciana (Regional Ministry of Innovation, Universities, Science and Digital Society), Casa Mediterráneo, the City Council of Alicante, the Banco Sabadell Foundation, the European program ELISE, the University of Alicante and the Alicante Science Park, Bosch, Qualcomm, INTEL and Ângela Impact Economy.

ELLIS PhD Program – New round of application starts in October 2022

The [ELLIS PhD Program](#) offers outstanding young researchers from all over the world a unique entry point to cutting-edge machine learning research by connecting them to leading scientists across Europe and by offering them a variety of networking and training activities. The [next round of applications will be opened in October 2022](#).

The ELLIS PhD Program has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under [ELISE](#) Grant Agreement No. 951847.

More information

More information about the ELLIS PhD Program:
<https://ellis.eu/phd-postdoc>

More information about the next round of applications starting in on 4 October:
<https://ellis.eu/news/ellis-phd-program-call-for-applications-2022>

More information about the ELLIS Unit Alicante:
<https://ellisalicante.org/eds2022>

Find impressions of the event at [@ELLISALicante](#), [#EDS22](#) and [@ELLISforEurope](#).

press release



About ELLIS Alicante | www.ellisalicante.org/ia

ELLIS Alicante is a non-for-profit foundation focused on **ethical Artificial Intelligence (IA) research** in the area of the relationship between people and intelligent systems. Our name, The **Institute of Human-Centered AI**, defines what and how we want to play our role in this 21st century society: we firmly believe in the power of technology as a generator of progress and universal well-being. We aim to be the European and world benchmark for **AI research by and for people** and are the only ELLIS unit dedicated exclusively to this area. We are part of the European network of excellence in Artificial Intelligence ELLIS (European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems - www.ellis.eu). We are the only Spanish ELLIS Unit, the only one created from scratch, with the spirit of a scientific startup, the only one devoted exclusively to this research area. At ELLIS Alicante, we address three areas of fundamental research: 1) **AI that understands us**; 2) **AI that interacts with us**; 3) **AI that we trust**.

ELLIS Alicante is led by Dr. Nuria Oliver (www.nuriaoliver.com), a world renown AI expert who is devoting her scientific work to AI for Social Good.

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