

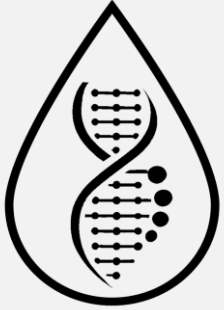
**CZ-SK webinár k výzve TWINNING 2026  
5.2.2026**

**Projekt FORGENOM II**

Doc. RNDr. Tomáš Szemes, PhD.  
Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave



Funded by  
the European Union



FORGENOM II

# FORGENOM II

FOSTERING EXCELLENCE IN ADVANCED GENOMICS AND PROTEOMICS RESEARCH AT  
COMENIUS UNIVERSITY IN BRATISLAVA



SCIENCE PARK  
Comenius University  
Bratislava

EMBL



# History

- Decision to submit the project based on prior experience.
  - Previous **scientific collaborations** with international partners.
  - Previous **project-based collaborations** with international partners.
- 
- ▶ 1st attempt: FORGENOM
  - ▶ Call: HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-03 – submitted 18. January 2022
  - ▶ Results: NON-SUCCESSFUL! (Total score: 11, treshold = 10)
  - ▶ 2nd submission:
  - ▶ Call: HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02 – submitted 28. September 2023
  - ▶ Results: SUCCESSFUL! (Total score: 13,50, treshold = 10)
  - ▶ Official announcement: 29 January 2024

= DO  
NOT  
GIVE UP!

# Key facts

- ▶ Project number: 101160008
- ▶ Project name: Fostering Excellence in Advanced Genomics and Proteomics Research at Comenius University in Bratislava
- ▶ Call: HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02
- ▶ Topic: HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02-01
- ▶ Type of action: HORIZON Coordination and Support Actions
- ▶ Duration: 1.5.2024 – 30.4.2027 (36 months)
- ▶ Participants

1	UNIVERZITA KOMENSKEHO V BRATISLAVE	741 575 €
2	EUROPEAN MOLECULAR BIOLOGY LABORATORY	370 800 €
3	UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA	386 050 €
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 498 425 €</b>

# 1st evaluation - shortcomings

## EXCELLENCE

- Insufficient detail linking actions to challenges.
- Training content and personnel expertise not specified.
- Coordination and support measures too general.
- Access to new research areas and mobility interactions unclear.
- Gender equality addressed partially; clinical study balance not considered.

## IMPACT

- Long-term success uncertain; impact on objectives not detailed.
- Trainings, visits, and meetings lack specific topics.
- Hackathons and Biomed Living Lab not sufficiently explained; roles and relevance unclear.
- Plans for researcher mobility and commercialization are limited.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- Budget for Work Package 4 (broad clinical research component) is not entirely convincing.
- WP2 work plan does not explain why 8 months are needed to develop the scientific strategy.
- Topics of study or mentoring visits are not specified.
- Deliverables and milestones for WP4 lack specifics to demonstrate their merits.
- Work plan is unclear on how specific WP4 tasks (joint research project) will be carried out and which methodology will be used.
- Risks are not classified on a low-medium-high scale (minor shortcoming).



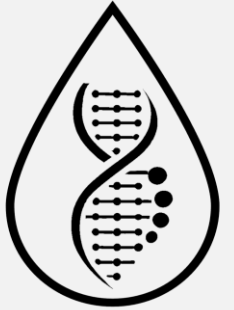
**LESSONS  
LEARNED**

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

- Improve access to excellence at **Comenius University (CU)**
- Enhance the research profile of the institution and its staff
- Focus areas: **genomics, bioinformatics, proteomics**
- Achieved through targeted **networking, mentoring, and training**
- In collaboration with leading institutions: **EMBL** and **University of Milano-Bicocca (UNIMIB)**



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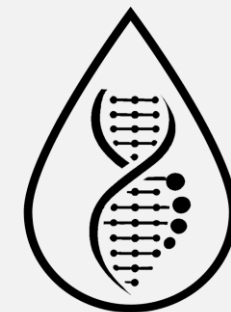
# „Enhancing Genomic Research in Slovakia“



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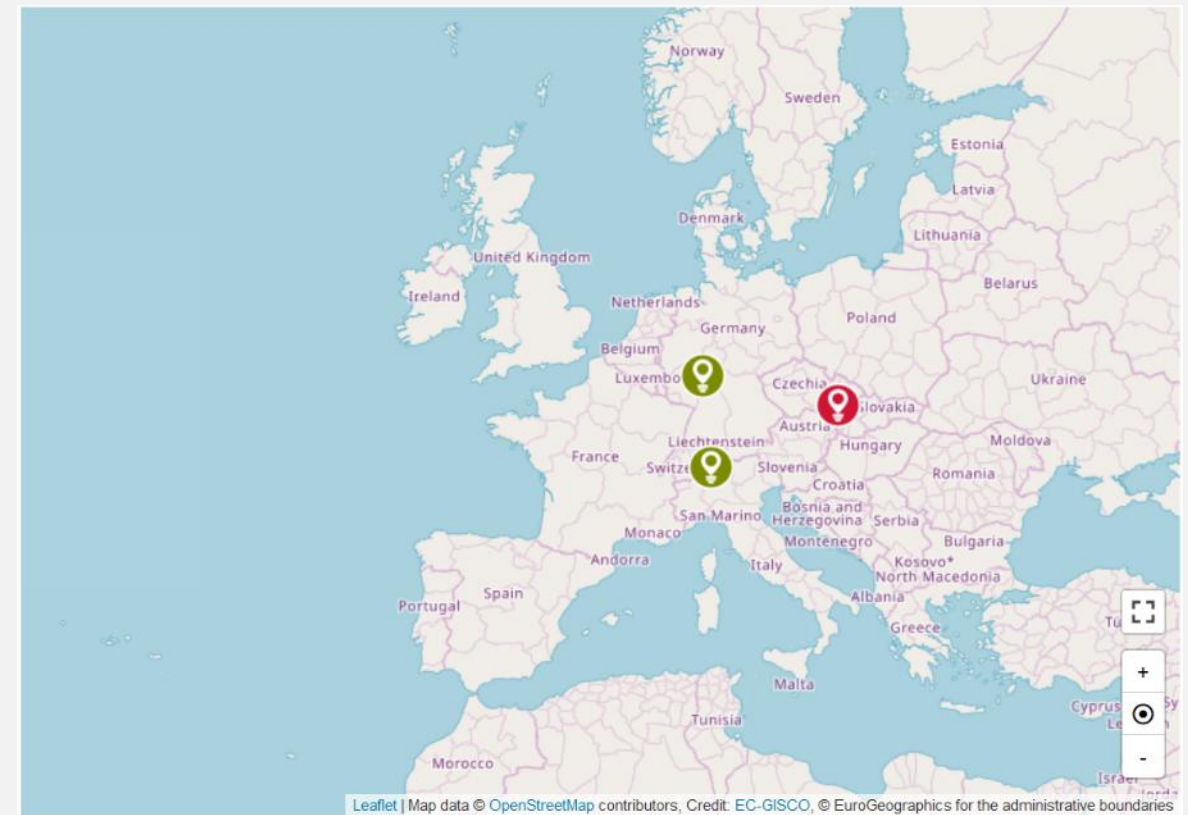
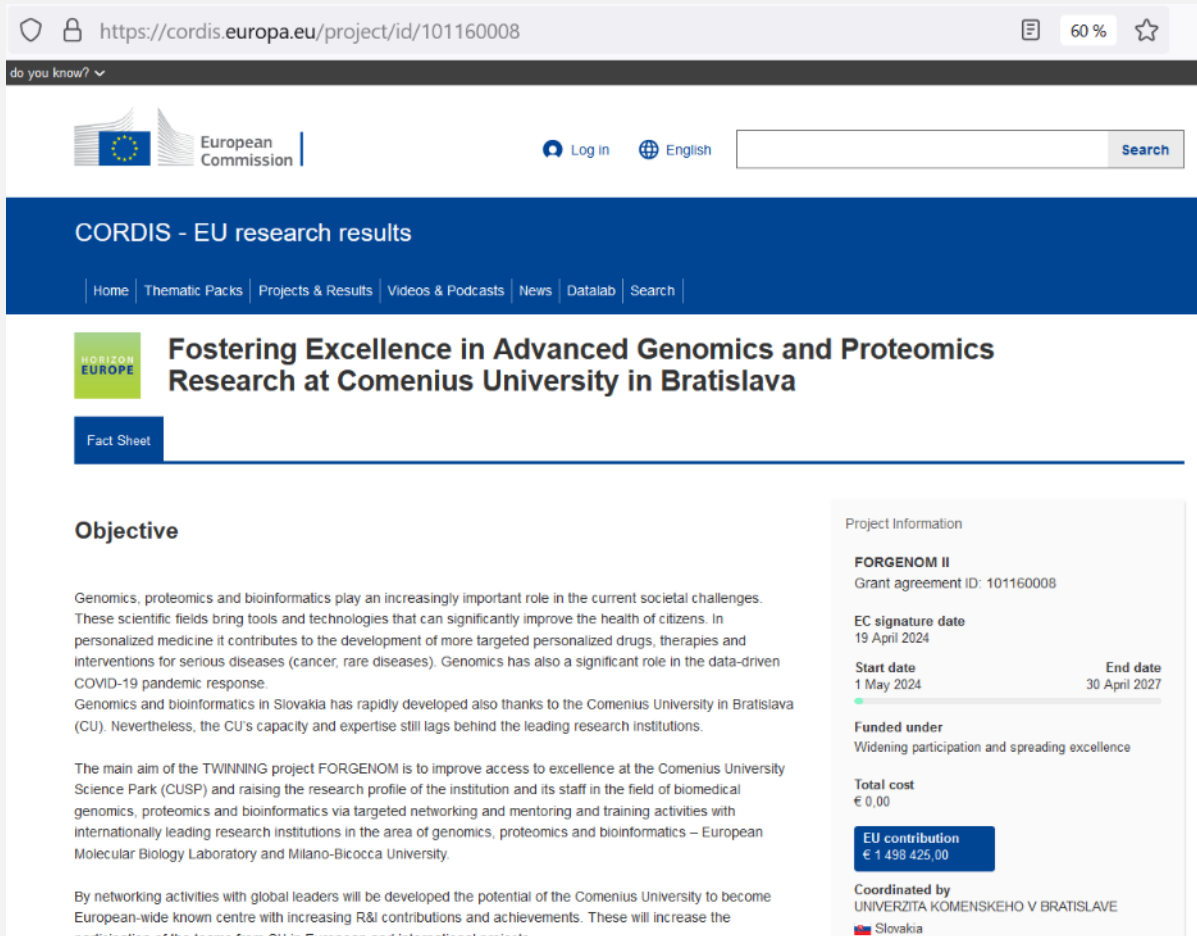
## Enhancing Genomic Research in Slovakia

- **Genomics, proteomics & bioinformatics** address major societal challenges (personalised medicine, pandemic preparedness incl. COVID-19)
- **FORGENOM II** strengthens research capacity at **Comenius University (CU), Bratislava**
- Tackles key gaps in:
  - international collaboration
  - access to advanced know-how
  - use of state-of-the-art approaches
- Boosts **scientific excellence, research quality, visibility & competitiveness** through targeted **twinning activities**:
  - career development
  - knowledge transfer
  - capacity building & networking
- Long-term impact via cooperation with **EMBL** and **University of Milano-Bicocca**



**FORGENOM II**

# FORGENOM II



# 5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

## ► **SO1: Scientific Excellence & Innovation Capacity**

- Targeted twinning for career & institutional development
- Comprehensive scientific strategy
- Exchange of best practices & networking with advanced partners
- Increased mobility of researchers (expert visits, staff exchange)
- schools, joint workshops & conferences
- Joint scientific publications



## ► **SO2: Research management**

- Upgrade research management unit at CUSP
- Mentoring, tailored trainings & webinars
- Expert visits
- Soft skills development. Key topics: Horizon Europe grant management; Open science & data management; Ethics & research integrity; Gender Equality in Research



## ► **SO3: Technology Transfer & Industry Collaboration**

- Professionalisation of technology transfer services
- Strengthened academia-industry collaboration (focus on SMEs)
- Increased awareness of IPR protection
- Improved career permeability between sectors
- Mentoring, trainings, webinars & best practices
- Soft skills development



# 5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

## ► **SO4: Research & Innovation**

- Development of genomics, bioinformatics & proteomics domains
- Collaboration with excellent international partners
- Exploratory research in: Precision medicine; Non-invasive cancer prevention, diagnostics & monitoring; Proteomic approaches to disease characterisation & treatment.
- Expected outcomes: Identification of cancer biomarkers; Computational genomics for novel treatment options; Community building & networking in bioinformatics.

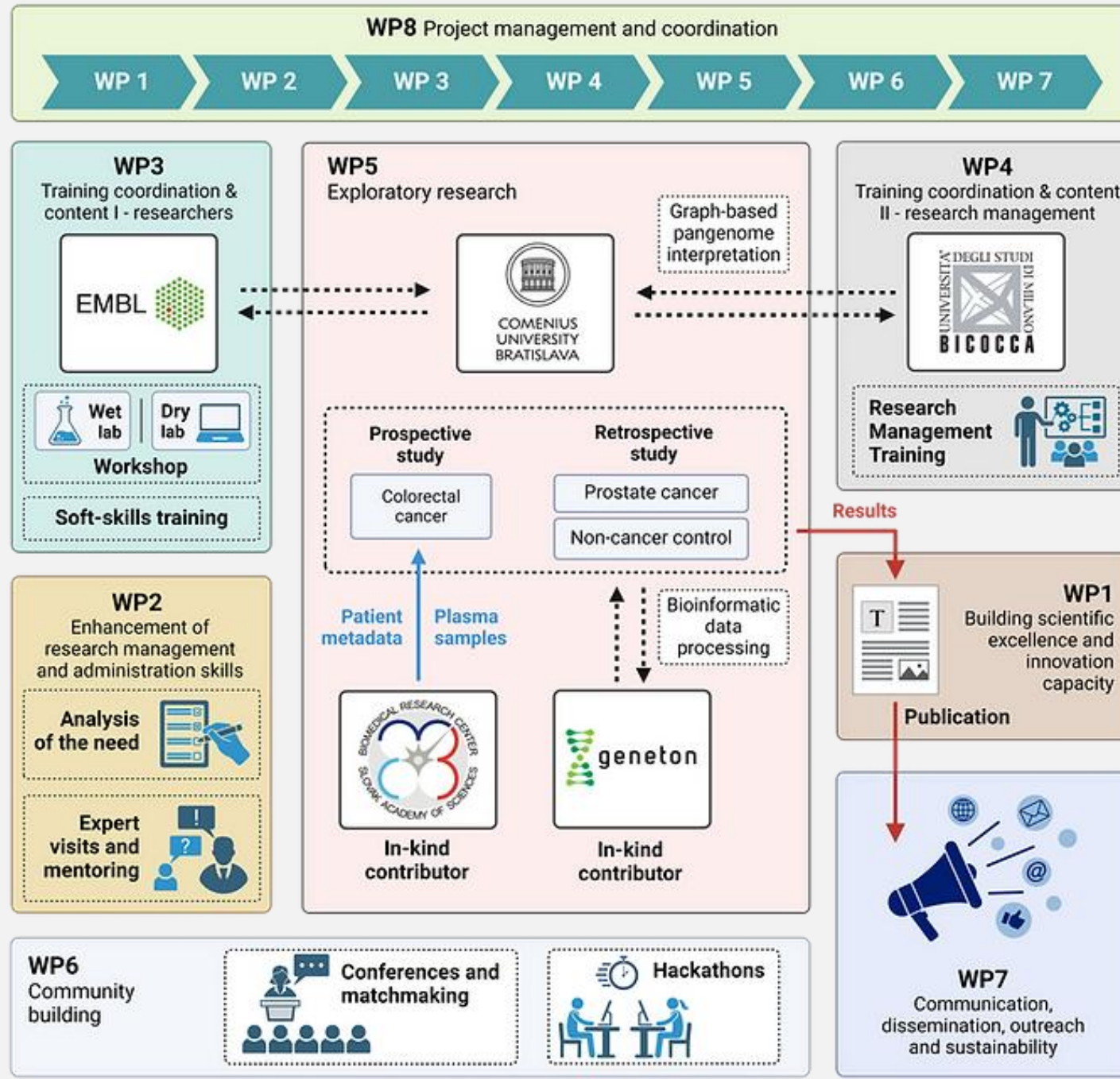


## ► **SO5: Outreach & Visibility**

- Outreach to expert community & general public
- Increased awareness of FORGENOM II and its achievements
- Enhanced international visibility & attractiveness of CUSP
- Engagement of diverse stakeholder groups
- Promotion of genomics & proteomics for societal and health challenges
- Strengthening public trust in science



# FORGENOM INTERVENTION LOGIC



# 8 PROJECT WORK PACKAGES

## ► **WP1 Building scientific excellence and innovation capacity** (led by EMBL)

- Development of a comprehensive **scientific strategy for CUSP**
- Transfer of best skills and know-how from advanced partner institutions
- Strengthening **scientific excellence**, international profile & visibility of CUSP
- Practical actions to improve scientific performance in: genomics, proteomics, bioinformatics
- Research visits to leading partner institutions
- Co-supervision of PhD students & targeted mentoring
- Active participation in international conferences (*led by CU*)
- Coordination of **peer-reviewed publications** (*led by EMBL*)



## ► **WP2 Enhancement of research management and administration skills** (led by UNIMIB)

- Strengthening the operation of the **research management unit**
- Improved know-how in **research funding opportunities**
- strong focus on **Horizon Europe**
- Tailored workshops, mentoring & training
- designed according to research professionals' needs
- Development of a **strategy for effective R&D cooperation**
- Technology Transfer Guidelines to support: efficient technology transfer; collaboration with the private sector
- Preparation of an **Exploitation Plan**
- commercial exploitation opportunities
- research-based exploitation pathways



# 8 PROJECT WORK PACKAGES

## **WP3 & WP4 – Training Coordination & Content**

- **WP3 – Training for Researchers (led by EMBL)**
- Development of tailored **training plans for researchers**
- Delivery of specialized training events
- Focus on scientific excellence & career development
- Quality assurance of training activities
- **WP4 – Training for Research Management (led by UNIMIB)**
- Development of **training plans for research management staff**
- Delivery of targeted training events
- Capacity building in research management & administration
- Ensuring quality and relevance of trainings



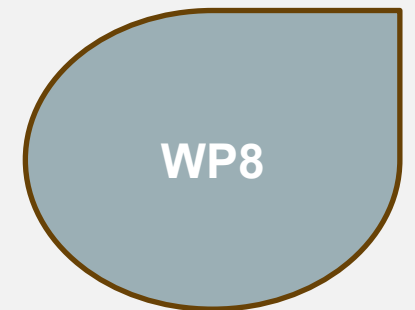
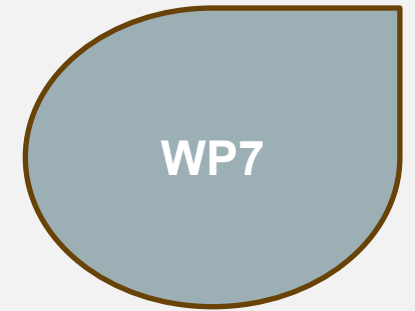
# 8 PROJECT WORK PACKAGES

- **WP5 – Exploratory Research (led by CU)**
- Exploratory research in **precision medicine**
  - Focus on **non-invasive methods** for: cancer prevention; diagnostics; disease monitoring
- Development of **novel treatment options**
  - based on proteomic approaches
- Joint testing of innovative research approaches
- Strengthening partner engagement & long-term cooperation
- **WP6 – Community Building (led by CU)**
- Building a professional community in genomics, proteomics, bioinformatics
- International interaction with the expert community
- Networking activities via the **FORGENOM Open Office**
- Key community-building actions: summer school; hackathons; conferences; matchmaking events.



# 8 PROJECT WORK PACKAGES

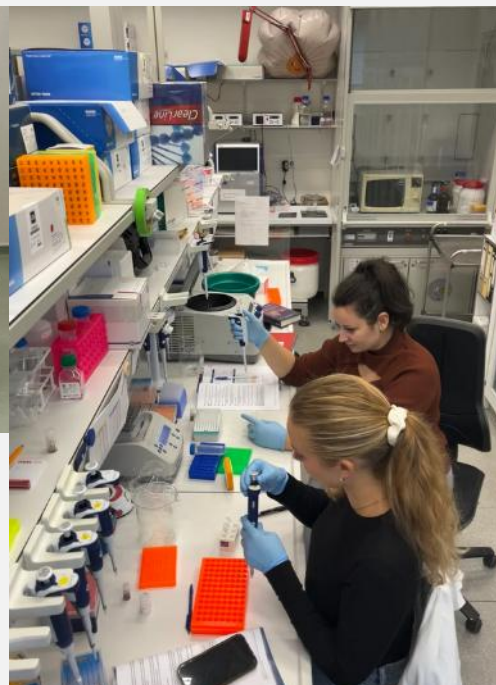
- **WP7 – Communication, Dissemination, Outreach & Sustainability (led by CU)**
- Strong communication & dissemination of project results
- Outreach to expert community & practitioners; general public & citizens
- Increased engagement in project activities
- Promotion of interest in science & **trust in science**
- Strengthening the social dimension of life sciences
- Special focus on **gender equality in life sciences**
- Sustainability of FORGENOM: long-term operation strategy; **Business plan** development
- **WP8 – Project Management & Coordination (led by CU)**
- Overall project and financial management
- Coordination of work packages & tasks
- Ensuring excellence, innovation & quality of results
- Key management activities: contractual issues, project monitoring, internal & external reporting, consortium meetings, data management, support of smooth project implementation



**Kick-Off Meeting Bratislava 29.-30. May 2024**



**Research visits**



**Summer school, Italy, July, 2025**



**European Researchers'Night**



**WET LAB and bioinformatics workshops**



# 2 PROJECT REVIEWS

Review No	Timing	Location
RV 1	7 November 2025	hybrid
RV 2	36 – April 2026	hybrid



Horizon Europe (HORIZON)

HORIZON-WIDERA-2023-ACCESS-02  
Twinning

Progress Report



# UPCOMING INITIATIVES – [www.forgenom.com](http://www.forgenom.com)

Podme spoločne prepájať

- **systémové riešenia,**
- **inštitucionálne skúsenosti,**
- **príbehy vedkýň,**

a vytvoríme priestor pre otvorenú diskusiu v neformálnej atmosfére.

## Rodová rovnosť vo výskume

výzvy, nástroje a osobné skúsenosti

**25. 2. 2026 | 14. 00 hod. – 16. 30 hod.**

Vedecký park UK v Bratislave, Illkovičova 8, Bratislava

- otvoríme diskusiu o aktuálnom stave rodovej rovnosti vo výskume na Slovensku,
- predstavíme si konkrétne nástroje a iniciatívy (GEP, návratové schémy, ocenenia),
- zviditeľníme osobné skúsenosti vedkýň v rôznych kariérnych fázach,
- podporíme networking a spoluprácu medzi inštitúciami.

Podujatie je organizované v rámci projektu FORGENOM a je doplnkovým podujatím k Medzinárodnému dňu žien a dievčat vo vede.



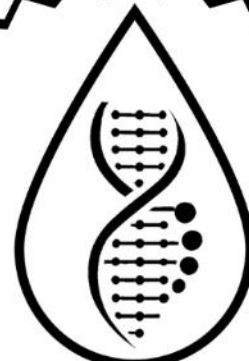
**NEXTSTEP  
SCIENCE  
CONFERENCE 2026**

**HLAVNÝ  
PARTNER**

Annual  
workshop –  
March 2026



**VEDECKÝ PARK**  
Univerzita Komenského  
v Bratislave



**FORGENOM II**

EMBL



Central-Eastern European Symposium on Free Nucleic

10-11 September 2026, Bratislava, Slovakia



Project  
conference –  
September  
2026

**Forgenom**  
[www.forgenom.com](http://www.forgenom.com)



Thank you for your attention

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