

MIND & LIFE
EUROPE

ACTIVITIES REPORT
2016

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES 2016

2016 marked the fourth year of Mind & Life Europe activities. It was a year of consolidation and deepening as well as planning and execution. After Sander Tideman, Managing Director, and Ute Brandes, Operational Manager, joined the team, MLE held the first Hub meeting of the European Neurophenomenology, Contemplative Neuroscience, and Embodied Cognition Network (ENCECON), the third successful European Summer Research Institute (ESRI) at the Fraueninsel, Chiemsee, Germany, and the exceptional and inspiring Power & Care Dialogue and Public Talk with the Dalai Lama in Brussels, Belgium; we also co-sponsored the conference with the Dalai Lama at the University of Strasbourg, France and administered the Francisco J. Varela Research Awards 2016.

With these events and vibrant programs we are setting the stage for the next phase of development for Mind & Life Europe. Mind & Life Europe is making plans to establish more hubs in fundamental and applied research fields, in the domains of contemplative education and health care and - building upon the success of the recent Power & Care Conference in Brussels – on caring economics and leadership for societal change.

European Neurophenomenology, Contemplative Neuroscience, and Embodied Cognition Network – 1st session

The first European Neurophenomenology, Contemplative Neuroscience, and Embodied Cognition Network (ENCECON) meeting took place from 6-10 June 2016 near Bordeaux, France and brought together leading researchers and contemplatives for in-depth dialogue. This is to be the first of a series of ENCECON network meetings to foster and create a large and active European community of contemplative scientists and to contribute with the use of empirically derived scientific data and theories. It is through this fundamental work that MLE can bring its work to bear on mainstream neuroscience and help to create a new generation of caring and responsible scientists.

The meeting was organized by Mind & Life Europe in cooperation with the Department of Social Neuroscience from the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig (Tania Singer), the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London (Elena Antonova), the Mood Disorders Centre at the University of Exeter (Thorsten Barnhofer) and the Neuroscience Research Center (INSERM U1028 - CNRS UMR5292) at Lyon 1 University (Antoine Lutz).

Please follow this link to the [ENCECON REPORT](#)

European Summer Research Institute – 2016

The 2016 ESRI edition, our third, was held in August at the Abbey of the Fraueninsel in Chiemsee, Germany, as in the past years. We are indeed lucky to have found such an incisive, delightful and efficient host in the person of Sister Scholastica, director of the Abbey.

The theme of this year's event was *'Contemplative Training: from Physiological Plasticity to Societal Changes'* and the content drew on research in both the sciences and the humanities, including neuroscience, psychology, clinical psychology, anthropology, philosophy, religion, and contemplative studies. We investigated processes of change arising from mental training as practiced in the contemplative traditions, looking at change particularly on a physiological level, in terms of neuroplasticity and epigenetics, but also more broadly in terms of philosophies of change, critical life periods of change, and societal change including work on fostering mindfulness and compassion in institutional contexts.

The annual European Summer Research Institute (ESRI) provides an intensive one-week summer school/retreat environment where about 120 scientists, educators, professionals and researchers working in the field of contemplative science can assemble as a community to share ideas, experiences, and knowledge from their lives and work. With its unique format, the ESRI facilitates cross-disciplinary dialogue, and collaboration to advance the training of a new generation of interdisciplinary scholars and researchers.



Photo © MLE

Power & Care Dialogue

Power & Care was a two and a half day Mind & Life Dialogue with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other great minds and thought leaders, who enriched and inspired our common future through the viewpoints of science, social science, and the world's contemplative traditions. This unique dialogue took place from September 9-11, 2016, in Brussels, Belgium.

Mind & Life Europe hopes that this inspiring conference will be a significant catalyst for the formulation of new research ideas and for imagining societal and governance structures that will contribute to a better world.

Each day nearly 2.000 people attended the Power and Care Dialogue and an average of 485.000 people followed each of the five sessions by live-stream, which is an aggregate of over 2.4 million viewers.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama was inspired by the Dialogue and very pleased with his visit to Brussels. He strongly encouraged Mind & Life Europe's Chairperson Amy Cohen Varela and Managing Director Sander Tideman to continue these programs for the advancement of contemplative science in Europe. In particular, he urged us to expand the Mind & Life Europe network to include more participants from Eastern and Southern Europe, and generously agreed to join us at future events.

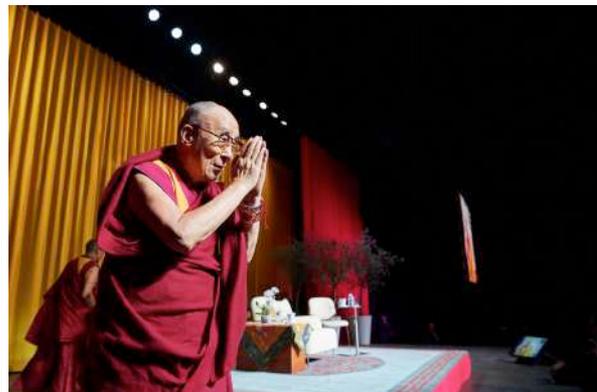


Photo © Olivier Adam for MLE

Public Talk

The Public Talk of His Holiness the Dalai Lama was held on Sunday afternoon, September 11th, 2016 at Brussels Expo. The title of the talk was '**Individual Engagement and Global Responsibility**'. A sold-out crowd of 10.000 people

attended this public event with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It was also live-streamed and viewed by nearly a million people.



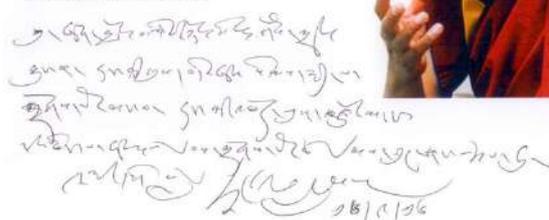
Photos © Olivier Adam for MLE

Strasbourg September 2016

On September 16th, 2016 Mind & Life Europe co-sponsored a '**Body-Mind-Science**' conference with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the University of Strasbourg, organized by the Fédération du Bouddhisme Tibétain, and the University of Strasbourg. A number of Mind & Life Europe Board members and Association members were speakers at this dialogue with the scientific and scholarly community, which was centered on contemporary neuroscience and Buddhist and western philosophy.

An audience of just over 140 University staff members were gathered (by invitation only), although another 1.300 students and staff were watching elsewhere in the building via a live webcast. The livestream total was 2.500 people.

My Religion Is Kindness



'Whoever acquaints with meditation & loving compassion will have good physical health, peace of mind, more friends and be surrounded by smiles. So I request all my friends to pay attention to this.'

~ Buddhist monk Dalai Lama, September 16, 2016.

These three September events had a Facebook live views total of nearly 5.5 million, more than 60.000 live stream views and over 36.5 million people were reached by Facebook overall.

Varela Grants Program

The Mind & Life **Francisco J. Varela Research Awards** for young scientists, named after Mind & Life co-founder and neuroscientist Francisco Varela, is an essential feature of our overall strategy for building an interdisciplinary understanding of the mind and its processes. These awards are a key vehicle for increasing the number of exemplary scientists, scholars and clinicians involved in contemplative sciences and thereby seeding and supporting new research proposals and applications, most developed through collaboration.

Mind & Life Europe has received generous funding from the Hershey Family Foundation for the 2016 MLE Varela Awards. The awards program was administered for the second time in conjunction with the Mind & Life Institute and the recipients will be announced in February 2017.

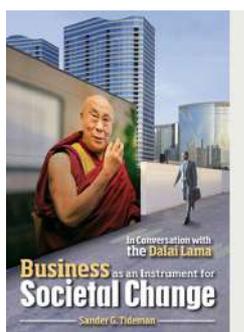
Publications & Presentations



'Mind & Life — Early Dialogues' with His Holiness the Dalai Lama is a 80-minute documentary directed by Franz Reichle & Juliette Forster.

Ethics – Identity – Experience

The systematic exploration of consciousness has a longstanding tradition stretching over hundreds of years in Tibetan philosophy. Since 1987, the Mind and Life Institute has been conducting regular dialogues between Western scientists and scholars and the Dalai Lama on topics such as healing and destructive emotions, the notion of the self, the state of consciousness during sleep, dreaming and dying, etc. These dialogues open up new paths of knowledge that link Western scientific and Tibetan Buddhist thought revealing new landscapes of contemplation and research for those searching for solutions to the complex problems we face today. This documentary film chronicles the inception and early years (1987-2000) of the Mind and Life Institute.



Managing Director Sander Tideman published a book on dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, held over a period of twenty years, covering topics of business, economics, leadership and societal change.

Title: '**Business as Instrument for Societal Change; In Conversation with the Dalai Lama**'.

Sander Tideman and several members of the Mind & Life Europe Board and Association also participated and/or were speakers at various conferences, including the Mind & Life Institute's Summer Research Institute in New York (June 12-17) and the International Symposium on Contemplative Science in San Diego (November 10-12).

Board and staff

New Board Members

In October 2016 Mind & Life Europe was pleased to announce the appointment of three new Board Members: Dr Astrid Lunkes, Cornelius Pietzner and Prof. Andreas Roepstorff. All three have been familiar with the Mind & Life community for a long time, and MLE looks forward working with them to further our vision and work.



Dr Astrid Lunkes

Director of Scientific Portfolio Management and Strategy at Helmholtz Zentrum München - Research Institution of the Federal Republic of Germany



Cornelius Pietzner

Chairman at Alterra Impact Finance, Switzerland and former Managing Director of Mind & Life Europe



Prof. Andreas Roepstorff

Professor at the School of Culture and Society & Department of Clinical Medicine as well as Director of the Interacting Minds Centre at Aarhus University, Denmark

The Board

Amy Cohen Varela (President), Tania Singer (Vice President), Charles-Antoine Janssen (Treasurer), Matthieu Ricard (Secretary), Roshi Joan Halifax, Astrid Lunkes, Cornelius Pietzner, Andreas Roepstorff, Wolf Singer.

Staff

Sander Tideman (Managing Director)

Ute Brandes (Operations Manager)

Patrick Oliver (Strategic Partnerships)

Board meetings

The MLE Board conducted several meetings during the course of the year: February 5-6 in Paris, May 1 in Brussels, August 28 in Chiemsee and November 12 by conference call.

Association Membership

In 2016, Mind & Life Europe expanded its membership, electing a number of new members to the Association (Verein). We now have 37 illustrious members, representing the field of contemplative science in Europe!

OUTLOOK 2017

World Economic Forum

Mind & Life Europe will host a private session on 'The Corporate Mind', at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on January 17th, 2017. In a dialogue with Matthieu Ricard and Sander Tideman, business leaders and scholars will explore how to best cultivate the cognitive and emotional resources to enhance the health, resilience, well-being and engagement of people in the workplace. The session on 'The Corporate Mind' is intended as the first in a series of meetings to bridge the world of contemplative science and organizations.

Contemplative Phenomenology Hub

This meeting, entitled 'The Experience of the Present Moment' and organized by Mind & Life Europe Association members Michel Bitbol, Natalie Depraz and Claire Petitmengin, is the official launch of MLE's Contemplative Phenomenology hub. It will take place on June 12-16, 2017 in Nemours, France.

The aim of this 5-day workshop is to offer 20-30 graduate students and professionals (psychotherapists, cognitive psychologists, trainers in mindfulness therapies etc.) in-depth insight into first-person approaches with direct application to the experience that unfolds during contemplative practices.

Investigating the contemplative experience, as it is lived and potentially reported by practitioners, is a project that is valuable from an epistemological, practical and ethical standpoint, and a natural partner in the neurophenomenology program.

Workshop participants will probe, with the help of a team of specialists from Europe and beyond, into various aspects of first-person inquiry, especially those that are relevant for contemplative disciplines: *Philosophical phenomenology and lived experience*, *Cross-interactions between contemplative approaches and empirical first-person approaches*, and *Buddhist phenomenology*.

European Summer Research Institute – 4th session

The ESRI 2017 will take place again in the Abbey of Frauenwörth on the Fraueninsel, Chiemsee, Germany, from July 27th – August 2nd, 2017.

The theme of this year's edition will be '**Exploring Experience**' and will delve into the question of lived experience: how do we recognize and mobilize it to deepen our understanding of mind? "What it is like" to think and feel in a richly embedded, inter-subjective, and changing world? What concepts, tools and teams do we need to access meaning and inter-subjective understanding and to use them as guides for interventions and programs in areas like health care, social justice and organizational design? These topics appear especially relevant in times where fear and anxiety may shape our perception of reality.

The ESRI Planning Committee chaired by Mind & Life Europe Board Member Andreas Roepstorff. He is accompanied by Fabienne Picard, John D. Dunne and Nathalie Legros.

Activities

Throughout the coming year we will expand our network, facilitate new research through the establishment of new "hubs" in the fields of education, healthcare, and social change, promote research networks and give young people access to the emerging field of contemplative science, translate the findings and benefits into media (a book on '**Power & Care**' is in the making) and facilitate specific programs. We are also planning for new dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. For this we need to raise substantial funds as the projected and initiated activities will not occur without financial support.

MIND & LIFE ACTIVITIES – TWO YEAR OVERVIEW

Since our community works across the globe, Mind & Life Institute and Mind & Life Europe have agreed to present our respective activities in a common timetable.

Please note that the activities for 2018 are tentative and subject to change.

2017

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE	ORGANISER
January 19	Private event on the Corporate Mind, in partnership with World Economic Forum, intersection of contemplative science with organizations (invitation only).	Davos, Switzerland	MLE
January 22	Film premiere of 'Mind & Life – Early Dialogues' at the Solothurn Film Festival.	Solothurn, Switzerland	Solothurn Film Festival
May 19-21	Contemplative Science & Management	Budapest, Hungary	MLE
June 5-11	Summer Research Institute (SRI)	New York, USA	MLI
June 12-16	HUB Contemplative Phenomenology	Nemours, France	MLE
July 27- August 2	European Summer Research Institute (ESRI)	Chiemsee, Germany	MLE

2018

WHEN	WHAT	WHERE	ORGANISER
Spring	Conference/Hub on topic of contemplative science and education	Barcelona, Spain	MLE
Early summer	Summer Research Institute (SRI)	New York, USA	MLI
August 5-11	European Summer Research Institute (ESRI)	Chiemsee, Germany	MLE
Fall	International Symposium for Contemplative Studies (ISCS)	USA	MLI

Thank you

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our donors and friends for their generous and steadfast support. Mind & Life Europe is grateful for the

engagement of so many people, and we look forward to deepening and expanding our work in the year to come.

With our best wishes,



Amy Cohen Varela
Chair of the Board



Sander Tideman
Managing Director