

FALLING WALLS LAB MADRID, SPAIN

The organisers are Independent partners of the Falling Walls Foundation.

May, 29th 2026

Salón de Actos CSIC, Madrid
C/ de Serrano 117, 28006, Madrid

Organizers



Concept

**The Falling Walls Foundation founded
Falling Walls Lab in 2011 to:**

CONNECT

aspiring innovators

DISCOVER

and develop talents

SUPPORT

interdisciplinary dialogue and international cooperation

DEVELOP

new ways of scientific communication

BUILD

new and strong networks

Timeline

- 09:45** Arrival for jury and participants
- 10:00** Jury Briefing / Arrival for the public
- 10:30** Welcome and introductory remarks
- 11:00** Pitches (1-8)
- 11:45** Networking break
- 12:15** Pitches (9-15)
- 13:15** Jury session / Networking break
- 13:45** Award Ceremony / Group picture
- 14:00** End of event

Introductory remarks

Maria Margarete Gosse

Ambassador of Germany to Spain

Borja Franco

Academic of Young Academy of Spain

Sarina Kessler

Director of the German Academic Exchange Service

Antonio Vicente Ferrer

President of the Spanish Society of Biochemistry and Molecular
Biology

M^a Concepción García

Vice Rector for Continuing Education, Employability, and
Entrepreneurship at the Complutense University of Madrid —
Compluemprende

Jury

Georg Schulze Zumkley

He is a career German diplomat and currently serves as Counselor for Economic Affairs and Science at the German Embassy in Madrid. He began his career as a corporate lawyer and joined the diplomatic service in 2003. He has held positions in Berlin, Beijing, Washington D.C., and the German Bundestag. He studied international law and languages in Passau and at King's College London, and earned a doctorate in international and European law from the University of Potsdam in 2006.

María Ángeles Serrano

She is a Principal Software Engineering Manager at Microsoft, leading teams to improve the reliability and user experience of services like Azure DevOps.

With over a decade of leadership experience, including at Vodafone, she specializes in digital transformation and operational resilience. An MIT xPRO scholar in AI Strategy and Leadership, she promotes innovation, engineering excellence, and diverse high-performance teams. She is also a DAAD alumna.

Isabel Varela Nieto

She is a Research Professor at CSIC and a leading expert in the molecular and genetic bases of hearing loss. Her work combines basic and translational research to advance therapies for deafness, with over 150 publications and leadership of numerous projects. She is also a former President of the Spanish Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (SEBBM) and has served as advisor to the CSIC presidency.

Eduardo Díaz Sánchez

He is a physicist from the University of Salamanca and MBA from IE, is Director of the Technology-Based Entrepreneur Unit at Fundación madri+d.

With over 25 years of experience, he has worked in public policy, innovation, and technology transfer. He was Strategy Consultancy Manager at Socintec and has also been a lecturer and software engineer in the electronics and aerospace sectors.

Borja Franco Llopis

He is a Full Professor at UNED whose research explores representations of otherness in Europe. He has led major Spanish research projects and co-coordinated the award-winning COST Action on Islamic legacy narratives. He currently coordinates the Spanish team of the CIRCE Marie Curie project and has published key works on Islamic representation and cultural memory. He is a Fellow of the Young Academy of Spain and Young Academy of Europe.

Judith Morales Fernaz

She is Deputy Director for Research of the National Museum of Natural Sciences (MNCN-CSIC), from January 2024. Her main research themes: animal social behaviour and the mechanisms underlying its plasticity. Essentially, she is interested in questions such as how flexible decision rules are in social interactions, and how this flexibility is shaped by ontogenetic effects and environmental changes.

María Inmaculada López Núñez

She is a Full Professor at Complutense University of Madrid and Director of Compluemprende. Her research focuses on entrepreneurial behavior and the cognitive and emotional processes behind misinformation, identity, and political polarization, while promoting innovation and entrepreneurship within the university.