



Introduction New ERN GUARD-Heart Network Manager Mari Murel

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I'm Mari Murel, and I'm excited to introduce myself as the new **Network Manager** for ERN Guard-Heart. Although I'll officially start in September, I've already started easing into the role since June by shadowing the Coordination team at **Amsterdam UMC**.

Over the past four years, I've been navigating the world of ERNs through my work as **Coordinating Project Manager for the ERICA project** (the Coordination and Support Action for ERN Research). Alongside ERICA, I've also been closely involved in other ERN-relevant initiatives such as **ERDERA** and **JARDIN**, which aim to strengthen research and data infrastructures across ERNs. I look forward to bringing these connections and opportunities into closer alignment with the goals of the ERN Guard-Heart network.

During my time with ERNs, I've had the privilege of working closely with the **Endo-ERN** network, and I've become increasingly enthusiastic about the unique role ERNs play in improving care for people living with rare diseases. It's been incredibly rewarding to witness the development of these networks—each one finding its rhythm, gaining structure, and building awareness. I've had the unique opportunity to collaborate with several networks—ERN Guard-Heart among them—and I'm now looking forward to focusing my energy and experience on supporting this network's further development. ERN Guard-Heart is already active and growing, and I'm excited to contribute to its journey toward becoming a fully established expert network. Before joining the ERN community, I worked as a **public health and environment researcher** at the **Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)** and as a **policy and research officer** at the **European Partnership for Supervisory Organisations in Health Services and Social Care (EPSO)** in The Hague. These roles gave me valuable experience in managing international consortia, building collaborative partnerships, and organizing cross-border networking activities.

My academic background is in **Environmental Health and Epidemiology**, with a strong focus on sustainability. I'm Dutch, but I was born in Estonia to an Estonian mother and Dutch father, studied in Utrecht, and now live in The Hague with my Swedish partner, Klas. So I already have a very international heart. My Nordic roots have given me a deep love for winter sports—especially cross-country skiing. I'm a certified **NSKIV N3 cross-country ski trainer** and give lessons with **RW Rottemeren**. Since the Netherlands doesn't offer much snow, I train on roller-skis and take every opportunity to travel to Sweden or nearby countries when winter arrives. If you ever want to talk about skiing—or join a lesson—feel free to reach out! I'm always happy to connect over shared topics closed to my heart.

I'll also be participating in the upcoming General Assembly in Madrid, and I'm very much looking forward to meeting many of you there in person! ❤️

