



## ESB Newsletter - February 18, 2026

### Obituary Professor Luigi Nicolais

Dear ESB members,

We are deeply saddened to share the news of the passing of Professor Luigi Nicolais, an eminent biomaterials scientist and a long-standing, committed member of our Society. A chemical engineer by training, Professor Nicolais was professor emeritus at the University of Naples Federico II, where he devoted many years to teaching and research, and became widely recognized for his contributions to composite materials and biomaterials, including bioceramics.

Within the European Society for Biomaterials, Professor Nicolais was a highly regarded colleague and an engaged contributor to our community. He received the George Winter Award in 2000, one of the Society's highest scientific distinctions, which honors sustained and influential research in biomaterials. His impact on the field was further acknowledged through his election as a Fellow of the International Union of Societies for Biomaterials Science and Engineering, reflecting his international standing and leadership.

Beyond his scientific achievements, Professor Nicolais played an important role at the interface of research, innovation and public life. He served as Minister for Reforms and Innovation in Public Administration, as a member of parliament, and as President of the National Research Council (CNR), where he worked to promote Italian research and to strengthen its global visibility. Colleagues often recall his commitment to bridging academic research and industrial application, and his conviction that technological innovation is essential for social and economic progress.

With his passing, the biomaterials community has lost a generous mentor and a thoughtful advocate, and many of us have lost a dear friend. We extend our sincere condolences to Professor Nicolais' family, friends, and colleagues at this difficult time.

The ESB Council

**Luigi Nicolais**  
9 February 1942 – 12 January 2026



Professor Emeritus of Materials Engineering and Polymer Technologies at the University of Naples Federico II, Luigi Nicolais was/is a globally recognized expert in technology transfer, innovation policies, and research valorisation. With over 40 years of leadership experience in academia, industry, and public administration, he has served as President of the Italian National Research Council (CNR) and as Italian Minister for Public Administration Innovation. Lately, he served as the Italian National Representative in the "European Innovation Council (EIC) and European Innovation Ecosystems" configuration of the Horizon Europe on behalf of the Ministry of University and Research (MUR), actively promoting European innovation initiatives and fostering the integration of advanced technologies into industrial and societal contexts. Within this context, he was always supporting biomaterials research strategy in decision-making tables. Unfortunately, some health issues did not allow him to share his view by his lecture, at the ESB2025 in Turin, entitled, Shaping the future: Biomaterials in the Era of Twin Transitions and Technological Sovereignty.

His contributions to the field and to the ESB was recognized by the George Winter Award in 2000, his election as a Fellow of the International Union of Societies for Biomaterials Science and Engineering and Fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering.

Pioneer of polymer-based composites and biomimetic structures, authored over 600 scientific publications in leading international journals and inventor of more than 50 patent families, he has made significant contributions to advancing materials science and polymer technologies. His career has been distinguished by a strong commitment to public-private partnerships, the acceleration of technology commercialization, and the mentorship of future innovation leaders.