



Annual report and accounts 2025

The Stroke Alliance for Europe is registered in Belgium (ASBL 0661.651.450) with registered office at Rue Washington 40, Brussels 1050, Belgium.
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Welcome letter from our President

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As President of SAFE, I am proud to look back on 2025 as a year of strong progress and renewed ambition for stroke in Europe.

Throughout 2025, SAFE continued to raise the profile of stroke where European decisions are made, with our priorities clear: research, prevention, access to treatment and life after stroke. We supported the update of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe, strengthened our visibility and that of stroke in Brussels, and kept building a collaborative, engaged community of national stroke support organisations. Our European Life After Stroke Forum brought together people with lived experience, researchers and clinicians to share learning and shape better solutions - a clear sign of the growing interest and support for this area of stroke in Europe.

Our members remain the driving force behind everything we do. Your leadership, experience and commitment - whether through peer support, advocacy, education or awareness - bring our mission to life every day. Thank you for the expertise you share and the difference you make for people affected by stroke in every part of Europe.

I also want to thank our funders and supporters. Your investment enables SAFE to do its work. On behalf of the SAFE Board, thank you for your continued trust and partnership.

As we look to 2026, my hope is that we turn this progress into improvements for everyone affected by stroke - reducing inequalities in access to stroke services, strengthening prevention and raising expectations for life after stroke support. We will continue working with European partners to keep stroke high on the health agenda, grow our community, and ensure that lived experience remains at the centre of policy, research and practice. In addition, I hope we continue to strengthen our member organisations, ensuring everyone affected by stroke has access to the support they need to thrive in the years ahead.

Thank you for being part of SAFE - and for everything you do to move us closer to a Europe united against stroke.

With warm regards,

Professor Hariklia Proios
President, Stroke Alliance for Europe

Our strategy 'United against stroke'

Our vision

We want a Europe where preventable stroke is eliminated, death and disability is minimised and every person affected by stroke lives their best life possible

Our mission

Over the next five years and beyond, our mission is to reduce the incidence and impact of stroke in Europe, by bringing together and empower SSOs to deliver campaigns, advocacy, education, research and raise awareness.

Our goals

1. That everyone affected by stroke is supported by a national stroke support organisation
2. A substantial reduction in preventable stroke through acting on risk factors and symptoms
3. Making stroke a European health, care, social and research priority
4. Equality of stroke care in each European country through implementation of comprehensive national stroke strategies
5. Maximise our effectiveness by being a professional, ethical, financially stable and sustainable organisation

In 2025, we made strong progress in advocating for stroke at European level. We supported the update of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe, strengthened the visibility of stroke in Brussels, and continued to build a collaborative and engaged community of national stroke support organisations.

We continued to prioritise stroke prevention and life after stroke. This includes expanding public awareness through strokeprevention.info, delivering the European Life After Stroke Forum (ELASF), and establishing the new European Life After Stroke Task Force.

Goal 1: That everyone affected by stroke is supported by a national stroke support organisation

Our role: we will build capacity in European stroke support organisations by producing tools, training, information and by providing members meeting opportunities.

Members' meetings

We met with over 50 representatives from 30 member organisations in Prague. We discussed key challenges and how members could support each other, we followed up with a member's survey and a board away day discussion. This will help us identify priority projects in 2026.

Together with the World Stroke Organization and the Canadian March of Dimes, we continued our work on the *Collaborative Space*, bringing stroke organisations together globally to share knowledge on topics such as caregiving, how our organisations are measuring success and impact, and communications challenges after a stroke.

Goal 2: A substantial reduction in preventable stroke through acting on risk factors and symptoms

Our role: we will raise awareness of signs and symptoms of stroke and provide up-to-date information on the importance of primary and secondary stroke prevention.

We continue to host strokeprevention.info as an accessible, trusted resource for the public, stroke survivors, healthcare professionals and policymakers, helping people understand both primary and secondary prevention.

Along with three of our members, we took part in a Delphi research project, which developed 11 consensus statements on secondary prevention including the burden of recurrent stroke, treatment and lifestyle interventions, management of stroke care and future needs to enhance SSP.

Goal 3: Making stroke a European health, care and research priority

Our role: we will ensure that stroke and the stroke survivor voice is clearly represented in the work of relevant European/EU bodies (such as European Parliament, European Commission, Council of Ministries, Presidencies of the European Union and in Horizon Europe stroke projects) and World/WHO groups.

Advocacy

In 2025, we worked to raise the profile at the EU level. In partnership with European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health, we met with the EU Health Commissioner, Olivér Várhelyi; we attended the launch of the new CVH MEP group with SAFE members; and we attended the EACH CVH summit with members and was a panellist on the programme

We also organised and held our event, *Closing the Gaps in Stroke Care: A Call to Action for Europe - putting stroke at the heart of the EU Cardiovascular Health Plan*, hosted by MEPs Jerkovic and Kelleher; we responded to EU CVH plan consultation and launch. We did this work in partnership with the European Stroke Organisation.

We also continue to be a strategic partner in the Brain Health Mission, which advocates for national brain strategies to improve care for neurological and mental health conditions across Europe.

European Life After Stroke Forum

Our third ELASF took place in Prague, covering topics such as mental health, vision, secondary prevention and stroke in women. We increased attendance to 316 delegates (from 175 at the ELASF 2023 in Barcelona) and abstract submissions to 131 (from 41 in Barcelona). Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 98% satisfaction.

The event was generously supported by Bayer, BMS-Pfizer, Boehringer Ingelheim, Daiichi Sankyo, Ipsen, Novo Nordisk and Merz, and endorsed by key European and international stroke and rehabilitation bodies. A special thanks to Professor Anita Arsovska and Associate Professor Nicola Hancock, co-Chairs of the Scientific Committee, and Seren Events, our conference organiser partner.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues, thanks for organising such a wonderful conference. Lovely country, great venue, full programme of interesting speakers. Everything was flawless, as expected!"

"One of the (many) brilliant things about this conference is the absolute commitment to people with lived experience as equal research partners in every aspect of stroke care, education and research."

The fourth ELASF will take place in Stockholm in March 2026 - more details are on the ELASF website (www.elasf.org). Looking ahead, ELASF in 2027 will be held in Krakow.

Promoting EU-funded stroke research

We played an active role in EU-funded stroke research projects, helping communicate information to stroke survivors, families and clinicians across Europe. 21 members took part in Brain Awareness Week and 16 took part in World Stroke Day dissemination activities.

Projects included:

1. EAST-STROKE - A treatment strategy to prevent recurrent strokes in patients with acute ischemic stroke and atrial fibrillation
2. POC4Triage - A research project that will enable faster stroke diagnosis and better outcomes
3. RES-Q+ - A comprehensive solution of healthcare improvement based on the global registry of stroke care quality
4. TRUSTroke – Using AI to improve life after stroke for stroke survivors
5. UMBRELLA - A research project aiming to revolutionise stroke care – Faster diagnosis, precise treatment, better recovery and improved stroke prevention
6. Validate - Using AI to improve stroke outcomes

Goal 4: Equality of stroke care in each European country through implementation of comprehensive national stroke strategies

Our role: we will mobilise key stakeholders to work with their governments to deliver a comprehensive stroke plan in each country.

SAPE Stroke Services Tracker launch

On European Stroke Awareness Day in May, we launched the new SAPE Services Tracker data with ESO, our members and SAPE national coordinators. The findings expose ongoing inequalities in stroke care across Europe, despite encouraging improvements in acute treatments and service organisation.

Data from 43 countries show some nations - such as Moldova, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and Wales - are making strong progress. However, many still face serious gaps in access to stroke unit care, follow-up and life after stroke support.

This data reinforces the urgent need for targeted action to ensure equitable care for all stroke-affected individuals.

Stroke Action Plan for Europe update

As co-chairs of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe (SAP-E) implementation committee with the European Stroke Organisation, we supported the review and update of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe, which was published in January 2026.

Established the first European Life After Stroke Task Force

We also established the first European Life After Stroke Task Force which will address the issues of life after stroke outlined in the SAP-E.

International conferences

We attended both the ESO Conference in Helsinki and the World Stroke Congress in Barcelona, we hosted a stand and promoted our work on the Stroke Action Plan for Europe, the ELASF and stroke.prevention.info. In addition, we were invited to present at the Stroke Society of Malta stroke conference.

Key activities for 2026 to progress goals 1-4

- We will develop our plan for SSO capacity building based on the dedicated workshop at the Prague ELASF and 2025-member survey results, and regular Collaborative Space meetings.
- In partnership with the ESO, we will launch the 2024 SAP-E Stroke Services Tracker data on European Stroke Awareness Day and the updated SAP-E along with supporting advocacy tools.
- We will work to ensure stroke remains a priority in the European cardiovascular health agenda, the EACH CVH plan and attending MEP group meetings. A new communications plan will be developed with members to boost participation and visibility.
- We will host the ELASF 2026 in Stockholm and plan for ELASF 2027 in Krakow.
- We will develop the European Life After Stroke Task Force to provide leadership on life after stroke services in Europe. We will launch a lived experience network to support our work.
- In prevention, we will expand our online resources and visibility.

Goal 5: Maximise our effectiveness by being a professional, ethical, financially stable and sustainable organisation

Our role: we will ensure that we are an effective organisation by having a committed and engaged board and 'staff', good governance and the financial resources in place to support our work.

Our governance

SAFE has functioned as a legally registered, non-profit-making association in Belgium (ASBL) since 2004. The principles which govern SAFE are outlined in our constitution.

General Assembly

The General Assembly is comprised of all the ordinary member organisations of SAFE and its principal responsibilities include electing the board and its officers, approving budgets and annual accounts.

Board

SAFE is governed by a board that can comprise no fewer than five and no more than 11 members. The board has four Officer positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

The 2025 SAFE board:

Officers:

- Hariklia Proios, Greece, President
- Hrvoje Jurlina, Vice President, Croatia
- Marina Charalambous, Cyprus, Secretary
- Nenad Nikolic, Serbia, Treasurer (elected at the General Assembly)

Members at large:

Sarah Belson (United Kingdom), Maja Bozinovska (North Macedonia), Liliana Curea (Romania), Dorina Dobрева (Bulgaria), Birgitte Forchammer (Denmark) (elected at 2025 GA) and Marianne Tangen (Norway)

The Board held four meetings in 2025, two virtual and two face-to-face in Prague and Barcelona. Its role is to monitor implementation of SAFE's strategic plan, provide policy and procedural direction and to supervise the finances.

Staff

Our team coordinate our work - Arlene Wilkie, Director General, Sandra Jackson, Secretariat and Anna Scott, Communications Manager.

Fleishmann Hillard has provided advocacy strategic and operational support. Joe Korner has provided support for our advocacy tools.

Our members

Our members are patient support or stroke support organisations throughout Europe dedicated to raising awareness of stroke issues in their country and providing long-term support and information to stroke survivors for as long as they need.

Belgium, Belgische Vereniging tegen cerebrovasculaire accidenten

Bulgaria, Association for Stroke and Aphasia

Bulgaria, Heart to Heart Foundation

Catalonia, Federacio Ictus de Catalonia

Catalonia, Fundacio Ictus

Croatia, HDPMU, Croatian Stroke Society

Cyprus, Cyprus Stroke Association

Czech Republic, Sdružení CMP

Czech Republic, CEREBRUM

Denmark, Hjernesagen – The Danish Stroke Association

Estonia, Eesti Insuldipatsientide Selts, Estonian Stroke Patients Society

Georgia, Medical Foundation "Mkurnali"

Germany, Stiftung Deutsche Schlaganfall-Hilfe

Greece, Hellenic Action / Alliance for Stroke

Hungary, Nemzeti Stroke Liga

Iceland, HEILAHEILL

Ireland, Irish Heart Foundation
 Israel, Neeman Association for Stroke Survivors
 Italy, Associazione Lotta Ictus Cerebrale (ALICe)
 Luxembourg, BLËTZ, asbl
 Netherlands, Hersenletsel.nl
 North Macedonia, Stroke OHRID
 Norway, Norsk forening for slagrammede
 Poland, Fundacja Udaru Mozgu, Stroke Foundation
 Portugal, Portugal AVC
 Romania, ALIA – The Association for a Fight Against Stroke
 Serbia, Moždani udar, Stroke Association Serbia
 Slovenia, Združenje bolnikov s cerebrovaskularno boleznijo
 Spain, Freno al Ictus Fundacion
 Sweden, STROKE förbundet
 Turkey, Turkish Cerebrovascular Diseases Society
 United Kingdom, Different Strokes
 United Kingdom, Stroke Association
 United Kingdom, Chest Heart Stroke Northern Ireland
 Ukraine, Victory over Stroke, Ukrainian Association of Stroke Patients

At the General Assembly both Finland, Aivoliitto ry and France Vaincre l'AVC were removed as members of SAFE, because the organisation had ceased to exist and had not paid membership fees respectively

Our finances

Message from the Treasurer

Income

In 2025, our total income was € 649,891 compared to €531,959 in 2024:

- Membership income was €60,983 up from €54,762 in 2024.
- We received €472,250 in sponsorship from Bayer, BMS-Pfizer Alliance, Daichi Sankyo, Boehringer Ingelheim, Ipsen, Merz Therapeutics and Novo Nordisk (€368,091 in 2024).
- The European Life After Stroke Forum generated €28,575 (€47,912 in 2024, this included Irish subvention which we did not receive in 2025).
- Donations and consultation income came to €12,334, an increase from €1,832 in 2024, as we received €5,000 donation from Medtronic and the SAFE did more consultation work this year.
- We also received €75,750, this is up from the €59,362 we received in 2024, as more of our members are taking part in the EU research dissemination activities.

In addition, from 2024, we brought forward €504,292 for EU research projects and SAFE project work in 2025, and €339,019 for reserves and unrestricted funds.

We are extremely grateful to all our supporters for their continued support and recognition of SAFE's work on behalf of its members and people with lived experience of stroke in Europe.

Expenditure

In 2025, total expenditure was €621,287 (an increase from €560,115 in 2024):

- Project costs were €305,668 (up from €252,117 in 2024). These costs include those for the European Life After Stroke Forum, the event we held in Brussels and our advocacy work for the Stroke Action Plan for Europe.
- Staff costs totalled €193,862 (similar to the €190,071 in 2024).
- Expenditure on EU research projects was €82,999 (similar to the €82,467 in 2024). This covers the costs for SAFE time and approximately 25 SAFE members taking part in Brain Awareness Week and World Stroke Day research dissemination.
- Core costs were €38,758 (similar to the €35,460 in 2024).

Surplus and our plans

As a result, we recorded a surplus of €872,552 From this:

- We hold €250,000 in reserves.
- €201,228 is set aside for our EU research activities over the next four years.
- We plan to spend €374,678 in 2026 on projects including the European Life After Stroke Forum, the Stroke Action Plan for Europe and the new European Task Force. We also hold €46,646 in unrestricted funds.

In summary

Our financial position remains strong and stable, giving us the confidence to deliver on our ambitious plans for the year ahead. With careful planning and continued support from our partners, we are well placed to grow our impact across Europe in 2026 and beyond.

Consolidated statement of financial activities year end 31st December 2025

	2025	2024	2023
Income	(Euro)	(Euro)	(Euro)
Membership fees	60,983	54,762	54,940
Industry	472,250	368,091	441,226
ELASF fees and subvention	28,575	47,912	10,432
Donations and consultancy	12,334	1,832	1,715
European research projects	75,750	59,363	139,804
Total income	649,891	531,960	648,117
Brought forward			
EU resesearch projects and SAFE projects	504,929	515,773	429,921
Reserves and unrestricted	339,019	356,330	359,018
Brought forward	843,948	872,103	788,939
Expenditure			
Project costs	305,668	252,117	343,599
Staff costs	193,862	190,071	175,337
European research projects	82,999	82,467	17,373
Core costs	38,758	35,460	28,643
Total expenditure	621,287	560,115	564,954
Total funds carried forward	872,552	843,948	872,102
Assets			
Cash at bank 31 Dec	911,637	834,358	803,019
Accounts receivable	455	35,000	69,084
Total assets	912,092	869,358	872,103
Deferred charges			-
Current liabilities	39,540	25,410	
Total funds carried forward	872,552	843,948	872,103
Carried forward funds allocation			
Research (liability)	201,228	186,325	238,921
Projects (liability)	374,678	318,604	276,852
Total EU and SAFE projects carried forward (liability)	575,907	504,929	515,773
The reserves (equity)	250,000	250,000	250,000
Unrestricted (equity)	46,646	89,019	106,330
Total reserves and unrestricted (equity)	296,646	339,019	356,330
Total carried forward	872,552	843,948	872,103

