

## Press release

### **Declaration for Action on Stroke launches on European Stroke Awareness Day**

**An appeal is launched today (11 May 2021) for Health Ministries across Europe to sign the Declaration for Action on the Stroke Action Plan for Europe to tackle one of the leading causes of death and disability.**

Led by The European Stroke Organisation (ESO) and Stroke Alliance for Europe (SAFE), the initiative aims to encourage European countries to show their commitment to improving stroke prevention, treatment, care and support, by signing the Stroke Action Plan for Europe Declaration and add their voice to the fight against stroke across Europe.

It is estimated that over one million people in Europe have a stroke and 460,000 die as a result of a stroke every year and almost 10 million people are living with the impact of stroke. It is estimated that the number of people living with a stroke will rise by 26% within the next generation. Stroke causes large costs to healthcare budgets and societies. The costs related to stroke in Europe were recently estimated as high as €60 billion and are predicted to increase to rise to €86 billion, a 44% increase, by 2040.

Hanne Christensen, Professor of Neurology and Chair of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe says, 'Stroke can be prevented and treated due to the significant discoveries over recent decades, however, there is still a significant gap between knowledge and the delivery of stroke services in spite of the high cost-effectiveness of stroke care. All stroke patients across Europe should have access to the best possible evidence-based care to ensure the best quality of life post stroke. Implementation of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe will help us achieve this.'

Francesca Romana Pezzella, Stroke Neurologist and Stroke Action Plan for Europe co-chair adds, 'The Stroke Action Plan for Europe gives us a unified approach for stroke treatment and management to help us tackle inequalities in stroke care across European countries, which have been made worse by the coronavirus pandemic.'

The impact of stroke can be reduced by appropriate investment and organisation of services for prevention, treatment, support and care. To coordinate efforts to reduce the burden of stroke across Europe, the Stroke Action Plan for Europe was launched in 2018 by ESO and SAFE, representing stroke experts and patients from across Europe.

Arlene Wilkie, SAFE Director General and Stroke Action Plan for Europe implementation co-chair says, ‘Stroke is the biggest cause of adult disability in Europe and impacts on all aspects of life – economic, social, medical, physical and mental health. Immediate attention is needed to ensure that disruptions to stroke care due to COVID-19 do not feed into the health service crisis caused by the pandemic.’

The aim of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe is to improve the entire stroke care pathway, from prevention and early treatment, to support and after-care. It will improve outcomes for patients and carers and will be highly cost effective for all countries in Europe. The Stroke Action Plan for Europe will also help reduce the burden of other non-communicable diseases. For example, implementation of appropriate prevention strategies for stroke will also reduce the incidence of dementia, heart disease, diabetes and obesity, which will have a significant impact on wellbeing, life expectancy, and healthcare costs.

ESO and SAFE have recently launched an implementation plan for the Stroke Action Plan for Europe reaching out to all 53 countries in the European region. The implementation plan will be adapted to each country to ensure its effectiveness, will help establish National Stroke Plans, and will provide tools to improve stroke prevention, treatment, support and care, including an online learning hub for stroke and a listing of evidence-based basic care elements.

Annual national summary data on the 12 Key Performance Indicators outlined in the Declaration, will be collected to allow for benchmarking both over time and within countries. This will provide each country with the knowledge and data it requires to continue to improve its implementation of its national plan.

Visit <https://actionplan.eso-stroke.org/>

For more information contact:  
ESO Head Office  
[esoinfo@eso-stroke.org](mailto:esoinfo@eso-stroke.org)

## Notes to editors

### The Stroke Action Plan for Europe

To reduce the burden of stroke and address its long-term consequences, the European Stroke Organisation (ESO) and the Stroke Alliance for Europe (SAFE) published the Stroke Action Plan for Europe (SAP-E) 2018-2030. In consultation with 70 experts who reviewed the best practice evidence and current state of stroke care, the resulting plan sets out targets and recommendations across the whole care pathway that countries and healthcare systems across Europe can implement by 2030.

The SAP-E focuses on seven domains: primary prevention, organisation of stroke care; acute stroke care; secondary prevention, rehabilitation, evaluation of outcomes and life after stroke.

The SAP-E is a framework to drive healthcare policy, patient-focused care local stroke management and research priorities.

The SAP-E includes four targets for 2030:

1. To reduce the number of strokes in Europe by 10%
2. To treat 90% or more of all patients with stroke in Europe in a dedicated stroke unit as the first level of care
3. To have national plans for stroke incorporating the whole chain of care from primary prevention through to life after stroke
4. To fully implement national strategies for multisector public health interventions to promote and facilitate a healthy lifestyle and reduce environmental, socio-economic and educational factors that increase the risk of stroke.

### About ESO

The European Stroke Organisation (ESO) is a pan-European society of stroke researchers and physicians, national and regional stroke societies and lay organisations founded in 2007. The aim of ESO is to reduce the burden of stroke by changing the way that stroke is viewed and treated. This can only be achieved by professional and public education, and by making institutional changes. ESO serves as the voice of stroke in Europe, taking action to reduce the burden of stroke regionally and globally.

[www.eso-stroke.org](http://www.eso-stroke.org)

### About SAFE

The Stroke Alliance for Europe (SAFE) an international non-profit-making organisation formed in 2004 in Brussels, Belgium. It is the voice of stroke patients in Europe, representing a range of stroke support organisations from more than 30 European countries.

SAFE's goal is to decrease the number of strokes in Europe by advocating for better prevention, access to adequate treatment, post-stroke care and rehabilitation.

For more information about SAFE, please visit [www.safestroke.eu](http://www.safestroke.eu).