

Joint Statement

ESO and SAFE commemorate European Stroke Awareness Day
9 May 2023

Europe is failing to provide adequate stroke care and support

The scale of stroke care crisis is laid bare by new data release

New data collected as part of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe (SAP-E) Stroke Service Tracker reveals the gross inequity of access to care and support for stroke patients and stroke survivors across Europe.

The SAP-E was launched in 2018 to provide a framework for European governments to improve stroke care and support for all European citizens. As part of this plan, data from 36 countries across Europe, covering 12 key areas of improvement, has been collected in and is available via the [SAP-E website](#).

Key findings from the data show:

- There is inequity in access to stroke care throughout Europe, and insufficient access to care in many high-income countries. This is the case for acute care, and to an even larger degree for rehabilitation and life after stroke support.
- National and/or regional data is crucial in planning, organising and documenting access to care. However, the majority of European countries lack both the national or regional registries to monitor key information on stroke and the National Stroke Plans to anticipate needs and provide standards for care.
- The burden of stroke is predicted to increase but despite this, most countries do not have a plan for primordial or primary prevention.

“To reduce the burden of stroke, with its grave effects on both individuals and societies, governments must prioritise implementing an adequate organisation of medical and support services through the establishment of National Stroke Plans and setting up national and regional registries to monitor quality, outcomes, and access to stroke care.”

— Prof. Hanne Christensen, Chair of the SAP-E

“This data shows a woeful lack of equitable access to stroke care and support across Europe. This is not good enough. Our governments must do more to prevent stroke, and when they do occur, ensure that every citizen has access to physical and emotional care and support in hospital as well as the ongoing long-term support that each stroke survivor and carer needs when they return home.”

— Arlene Wilkie, Director General of SAFE

Urgent action is needed by each country to implement and fund a national stroke plan that covers the entire chain of stroke care, from prevention and acute care to rehabilitation and long-term support.

For more information, visit www.actionplan.eso-stroke.org.

The SAP-E Head Office can be contacted at StrokeActionPlan@eso-stroke.org.

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 that was 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.

For more information about ESO, please visit www.eso-stroke.org.

About SAFE

The [Stroke Alliance for Europe \(SAFE\)](#) is an international non-profit 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.