

Stroke Action Plan for Europe National Coordinator Meeting

**20-22 March, 2023
Riga, Latvia**

Participant report compiled by Nune Yeghiazaryan, National Coordinator for Armenia



Organising Committee

Prof. Hanne Christensen, Chair of SAP-E Steering Committee
Dr. Francesca Romana Pezzella, Co-Chair of SAP-E Steering committee
Arlene Wilkie, Co-Chair of SAP-E Steering committee
Dr. Melinda Roaldsen, SAP-E Chief Operations Officer

Steering Committee Members and National Coordinators from following countries were present in person:

Nune Yeghiazaryan (Armenia)
Sigrid Schwarz (Austria)
Sylvie De Raedt (Belgium)
Dimitar Maslarov (Bulgaria)

Dorina Dobрева (Bulgaria)
Dimitar Taskov (Bulgaria)
Jancic Ervin (Croatia)
Aleš Tomek (Czech Republic)
Peter Vögele (Denmark)
Riina Vibo (Estonia)
Janika Kõrv (Estonia)
Hariklia Proios (Greece)
András Folyovich (Hungary)
Fisnik Jashari (Kosovo)
Aleksandras Vilionskis (Lithuania)
Maria Mallia (Malta)
Elena Simeonovska Joveva (North Macedonia)
Elena Lichkova (North Macedonia)
Gordana Dimeska (North Macedonia)
Anna Czlonkowska (Poland)
Adam Kobayashi (Poland)
Ana Catarina Fonseca (Portugal)
Ana Nunes (Portugal)
Elsa Azevedo (Portugal)
Gustavo Santo (Portugal)
Stanislav Groppa (Republic of Moldova)
Cristina Tiu (Romania)
Željko Živanović (Serbia)
Ivan Milojevic (Serbia)
Zuzana Gdovinova (Slovakia)
Vladimir Nosal (Slovakia)
Mia von Euler (Sweden)
Sarah Belson (UK)
Fiona Quigg (Northern Ireland)
Bert Vrijhoef (Netherlands)
Melinda Roaldsen (Norway)
Robert Mikulik (Czech Republic)
Hanne Christensen (Denmark)
Arlene Wilke (UK)
Francesca Romana Pezzella (Italy)
Peter Kelly (Ireland)
Simona Sacco (Italy)
Grethe Lunde (Norway)
Thorir Steingrimsson (Iceland)
Jattinder Khaira (England)
Rubina Ahmed (England)

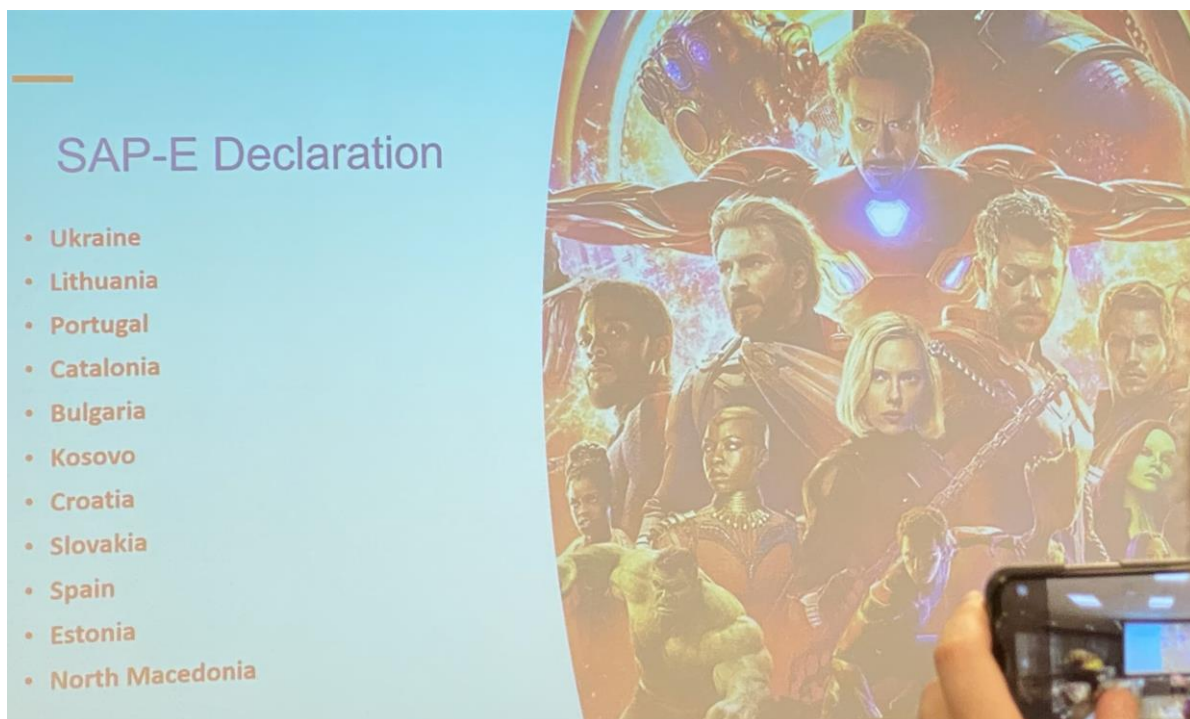
Monday, 20 March - Day 1

The meeting started with evening kick-off meeting and networking, which was very much vivid due to very interesting and funny game all the participants and organisers were playing: jeopardy with dedicated topics about the Stroke Action Plan, National Coordinators, stroke care principles and of course Riga and Latvia. After very tense battle between North, West, East and South regional teams the winner was friendship.

Then group of National Coordinators enjoyed a meal together, which was outstanding end of the first day.

Tuesday, 21 March - Day 2

The Chair of SAP-E Steering Committee, Hanne Christensen, greeted all National Coordinators in Riga for the first in-person meeting, which was very needed in order to build up the team spirit and make possible to share practical information and status of different countries and create short term goals for future. The meeting was planned in the format of plenary meetings with informative presentations and shared experiences and break-out sessions in regional groups. Then the Co-Chair of SAP-E Steering Committee, Arlene Wilkie, introduced the general aspects of advocacy, also pointed out the qualities stroke advocates should have. The short history of SAP-E, as well as National Coordinators' tasks and tools, which are designed to help them, were presented by Co-Chair of SAP-E Steering Committee Francesca Romana Pezzella. She also gave a list of countries where the SAP-E Declaration has been signed by the government.



After a short coffee break, different countries started to present the situation in their own countries and share their experience and their success. The National Coordinator from Austria, Dr. Sigrid Schwartz, reported solid data from the National Austrian Registry and their efforts in trying to fulfill

SAP-E requirements. National Coordinator from Kosovo, Dr. Jashari Fisnik, presented the history of success in signing the SAP-E Declaration, which was very helpful in registering trombolytic agents in the country and starting thrombolysis for patients with stroke. There were two presentations from Bulgaria: very solid data were presented from the RES-Q registry by Dr. Dimitar Maslarov and Dr. Dimitar Taskov, and a very impressive and emotional talk was given by Dorina Dobрева, President of the local SSO in Bulgaria and carer of patients with stroke, who had major input for signing the SAP-E declaration in Bulgaria.

Another big group of National Coordinators from Portugal presented the current national situation: There are 10 thrombectomy ready hospitals throughout Portugal, 1 per 1,000,000 population; 32 primary stroke units and 9 stroke ready hospitals. There are major efforts together with ESO and Angels towards accreditation of the stroke centers. It was noted also the “stroke goes to school” raising awareness programme and an upcoming meeting in the health committee of the Parliament dedicated to stroke problems in Portugal.

SSO leader and National Coordinator of North Macedonia, Gordana Dimeska, presented the raising awareness sessions they had throughout the years among public and medical and non-medical staff, as well as research projects and an upcoming nurse education programme.

The sessions after lunch were conducted in regional groups: countries were divided into 4 geographical groups of North, South, East and West. Each group was asked to brainstorm on certain topics of organisation and timing of acute stroke care, subacute care: early mobilization, secondary prevention, and life after stroke. Moderators of each topic generated an overview afterwards.

At the end of the day the group had dinner together in the Riga city centre, where we had excellent networking opportunities.

Wednesday, 22 March - Day 3

The day was started with the announcement of the results of regional spokespersons elections. Gustavo Santo (Portugal), stroke neurologist, Centro hospital e Universitario de Coimbra, Portugal was elected from West; Ales Tomek (Czeck Republic) Cerebrovascular section of Czech National Society was elected from East; Aleksandras Vilionskis (Lithuania) Head of Stroke Center at Republican Vilnius University was elected from North and Hrvoje Budincevic (Croatia) consultant neurologist, subspecialist in intensive care medicine and cerebrovascular disorders was elected from South.

The future plans for years 2023 and 2024 were announced, as well as 7 domains of future webinars during coming year.

The very touching presentation from stroke survivor followed: she shared her story of successful rehabilitation and support, which helped her overcome severe disease.

In the life after stroke session, Arlene Wilkie spoke about medical and societal support for the patient after a stroke and unmet needs of stroke survivors. There are certain unmet needs among stroke survivors and among stroke survivor careers. Common problems are sleep, emotional issues, vision, sexual problems etc. Dr. Rubina Ahmed presented the National Stroke Programme from Great

Britain, focusing mainly on life after stroke and was followed by a presentation from the National Coordinator from Denmark, Peter Vögele, presenting the rehabilitation discharge plan in their country and organisation of rehabilitation in 3 levels: from basic to specialised depending on the patients' needs.

The National Coordinator from Estonia, Dr. Janika Korv, presented the current situation in the country. The successful project for care pathway development with integration of stroke coordinator and stroke nurse was presented and also tools, like webpage and app, which make patients' journey through the disease easier.

Dr. Francesca Pezzella touched on the more legislative changes happening in Italy and in their regions. Caregivers are somehow phantom, since they are not acknowledged by society. An important initiative which established a definition of carer and defined a wide range of services for them, was put in place in the Emilia-Romagna region in 2014, which became more and more common throughout Italy and became national law in 2019,

After short break, regional group meetings were started dedicated to the life after stroke topic: National Coordinators were asked to brainstorm on the most important LAS interventions on an individual level, as well as on a country level, and how to facilitate the transition of stroke patients from hospital to primary sector. The results of intensive discussions were presented by moderators after lunch break.

Participant departures started directly after final session.

In summary, the first in-person SAP-E National Coordinator Meeting was of enormous importance and success for several reasons:

Firstly, the meeting venue selection was optimal and we really enjoyed the location and the beautiful city of Riga. It was also a real pleasure to be among a team of people who share the same spirit and vision on the stroke situation in Europe. Lastly, the meeting gave an immense amount of energy, plans, strategic thinking and networking with healthcare professionals, stroke carers, and stroke survivors.