

## Stroke Alliance for Europe and the European Stroke Organisation at the EU parliament with the European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health: report

In December 2023, SAFE and ESO travelled to Strasbourg to attend a two-day event at the European Parliament to raise the profile of stroke and cardiovascular disease in Europe.



The event, which was arranged by European Alliance for Cardiovascular Health (EACH), was set up as an exhibition that highlighted the number of CVD events and the associated costs in each EU country.



## Stroke in Europe

- Stroke is the second most common cause of death in the European Union (EU) and a leading cause of adult disability
- Approximately 1.1 million strokes occur each year
- 460,000 people die of stroke every year
- Almost 10 million people are living with the impact of stroke
- Up to 50% of stroke survivors will suffer long term disability
- Worldwide 1 in 4 people will have a stroke in their lifetime
- More than 80 percent of strokes can be prevented
- 7 million disability-adjusted life years are lost in the EU due to stroke
- Stroke causes huge costs to healthcare budgets and societies. The costs related to stroke in the EU were recently estimated as high as €60 billion in 2017 and are predicted to increase to €86 billion in 2040

SAFE and ESO attendees joined forces to meet with their country MEPs\* to discuss stroke and CVD issues, solutions and next steps in their countries. They also highlighted the EACH call for a cardiovascular health plan in their discussions and encouraged the MEPs to sign a pledge and take part in an interview to show their support for the CVH plan.



As part of the event, Diana Wong Ramos, was one of four presenters who shared her experience of stroke to the MEPs and guests.



The EACH call for a CVH plan complements the current work of SAFE and ESO. It also complements both the EU Commission's recently published '[Healthier Together](#)' [NCD initiative](#) (which includes key priorities for stroke and for CVD) and the key principles of the Stroke Action Plan for Europe.

The overall vision for a future CVH plan should be:

*By 2030, premature and preventable deaths in Europe from CVD related causes, will be reduced by one third, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal Target 3.4. Every person living in Europe will have access to high quality cardiovascular risk assessments throughout their life course, and all CVD patients will have access to a care pathway that focuses on their needs and goals.*

\*Meetings held

- Hrvoje Jurlina, Mozdani Val (stroke support organisation), Croatia – met with Karlo Ressler, Tomislav Sokol and Željana Zovko
- Diana Wong Ramos, Portugal AVC (stroke support organisation), Portugal – met with Carlos Zorrinho, Carlos Coelho and Maria da Graça Carvalho
- Iliana Curea, ALIA - The Association for a Fight Against Stroke (stroke support organisation), Romania – met with Eugen Tomac, Vlad Marius Botoș, Alin Mituța, Marian Jean Marinescu, Cristian Busșoi, Nicolae Stefanuță, Vlad Gheorghe, Tudor Ciuhodaru, Dragoș Pîslaru, Ramona Strugariu, Ioan Rareș Bogdan, Victor Negrescu and Dacian Cioloș
- Michael Brinkmeier and Kathrin Krause, Stiftung Deutsche Schlaganfall-Hilfe (stroke support organisation), and Silke Walter (ESO representative), Germany – met with Katrin Langensiepen, Axel Voss and Markus Ferbe
- Dorina Dobрева, Association for Stroke and Aphasia (stroke support organisation), Bulgaria – met with Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Radan Kanev, Andrey Kovatchev and Petar Vitanov
- Birgitte Forchhammer, Hjernesagen (stroke support organisation) and Hanne Christensen (ESO representative), Denmark – met with Marianne Vind, Pernille Weis, Bergur Løkke Rasmussen, Karen Melchior. (Follow up meeting with Christen Schaldemose in January)
- Francesca Romana Pezzella, (ESO representative), Italy – met with Matteo Adinolfi, Alessandra Moretti, Elisabetta De Blasis and Raffaele Stancanelli





In conclusion, SAFE and ESO travelled to Strasbourg to raise the profile of stroke. They spoke to 35 MEPs – possibly the greatest number of conversations at the EU level we have had about stroke at one time. All attendees have followed up with their MEPs to encourage them to share the photos and interviews to their followers and constituents.

Over the coming months, we will continue our work with MEPs in the build-up to the MEP elections in 2024 as well as launching the updated Stroke Action Plan for Europe in the Autumn of 2024.

