



EUROPA DONNA

The European Breast Cancer Coalition

Annual Report

2024

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BUILDING BRIDGES

From Building Bridges to Empowering Action

"Building Bridges" has always been more than a theme for us—it is the essence of who we are. As Europe's oldest and largest patient organisation, Europa Donna has long been a connector of people, knowledge, and purpose. In 2025, we move from building bridges to **walking across them together**, driven by a clear vision: real networking, deep integration, and education without borders.



This year marks a turning point. Our high-level **policy event in Cyprus** promises to be more than a gathering—it is a **launchpad for action**. Here, policymakers, patient advocates, healthcare professionals, researchers, and civil society will come together not only to share ideas but to align strategies. It's where lived experience meets political will, and where the next phase of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan can be shaped through real patient input. Cyprus will be the stage for a new chapter in our collective work—one that puts community and cooperation at the centre of change.

That spirit of collaboration has been steadily built over the past years. In 2023, we took important strides through events like our **Pan-European Conference in Zagreb**, where more than 200 advocates from 47 countries stood united under the powerful message: "Breaking Barriers Starts with Us." The energy and commitment shown there reaffirmed what we've always known - **we are stronger together**.

In 2024, we brought that message to life by launching a comprehensive **mapping of our national Fora** - a project now bearing fruit. This mapping has revealed not only the diversity of our network but also its shared challenges and strengths. With this knowledge, we can now offer tailored support, cluster interests, and foster deeper collaboration across regions. **Real integration** is no longer a goal - it's a reality in motion.

Our network is now more connected than ever, not just in spirit but in infrastructure. The new **EmpowerED platform**, launching this year, is a true milestone. It embodies everything we stand for: **independent accessible high-quality knowledge** available to every advocate, from Lisbon to Lviv, from Reykjavik to Sofia. EmpowerED will be a space where expertise flows freely, where breast cancer advocates can learn, connect, and grow - no matter where they are. It will offer focused modules on breast cancer epidemiology, prevention, risk factors, treatment, policy advocacy, patient representation in research, national campaigning, and more. This is education that empowers, breaking down barriers of geography and language to unite our voice across borders.

We've seen how important this kind of connection can be. Our **virtual Roundtables** have become vital moments of learning and exchange, tackling topics from sexuality to surgery, lymphoedema to metastatic breast cancer. They bring our members together in real time, offering insight, encouragement, and shared solutions. It is these kinds of moments that continue to build our collective strength - and EmpowerED will now take that impact even further.

In everything we do, we are guided by our past. From our beginnings, we have worked to ensure women's voices are heard in every room where decisions are made, from the clinics to the European Parliament. We remember the moment in 2023 when our **Cancer Currency campaign** reached EU Commissioner Kyriakides, herself a former Europa Donna president. The standing ovation that followed the call to "See Me, Count Me, Treat Me, Support Me, Act Now" was not just a moment of recognition, it was a moment of promise. And in 2025, we continue to hold policymakers to that promise.

Our **Advocacy Training Course**, now welcoming participants from beyond Europe thanks to collaborations like that with the ABC Global Alliance, reflects our growing global role. Breast cancer knows no borders and neither should advocacy. By training future leaders, we are planting seeds of change around the world, sharing the model we've honed over decades.

As we step into this new year, we do so with humility, pride, and unwavering determination. The challenges are still many: inequalities in care persist, patient needs evolve, systems remain slow to change. But we are persistent, patient and perseverant.

Let 2025 be the year we turn connection into action, and bridges into bold new roads. Our story is still being written and it is one we write together.

Marzia Zambon

CEO, Executive Director

ED 2024 PROGRAMMES

POLICY

► European Commission World Cancer Day Event

Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety and former Europa Donna President, hosted an event to mark World Cancer Day on 31 January in Brussels and our current President, Stella Mastora, had the honor of representing the European Breast Cancer Coalition at this historic meeting.

Titled “Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan – Joining forces”, the event brought together patients, healthcare professionals, and pertinent experts to discuss the positive influence of Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan (EBCP) since it was adopted 3 years ago on improving the well-being of individuals affected by this disease and in closing the care gap. The Commissioner reiterated the importance of equality in health and of putting people first. Several speakers embraced these messages by underlining the urgency of involving patients and reducing the existing inequalities in cancer care.

In advocating vigorously for EBCP implementation, Europa Donna joins forces with EU bodies, together with other patient representatives’ organisations.

► High-Level Conference on Ending Discrimination Against Cancer Survivors

Past President Tanja Spanic represented Europa Donna, speaking about how our Coalition advocates for the rights of breast cancer survivors at the High-Level Conference on Ending Discrimination Against Cancer Survivors on 15 February in Brussels, organized by Françoise Meunier, Founder of the European Initiative on Ending Discrimination Against Cancer Survivors.

This important event addressed the financial challenges cancer survivors encounter after beating cancer. Speakers included cancer survivors, EU and national policymakers, legal experts, and representatives from insurance companies. Topics discussed were barriers and challenges in obtaining insurance or loans, and sharing best practices to eliminate discrimination against cancer survivors in the EU.

► Launch of the Lancet Commission Report

In recent decades, advances in breast cancer have led to a fall in breast cancer deaths of over 40% in some high-income countries. However, the burden still looms large worldwide.

On 16 April, a new Lancet Breast Cancer Commission report was launched, aiming to highlight overlooked aspects of the disease and issue a roadmap for meaningful change. As a member of this Commission and co-author of the report, Europa Donna’s Past President Tanja Spanic was one of the illustrious speakers at its official launch event in Cambridge, UK and shared her insights in a panel discussion along with others including long-time ED collaborator Dr. Fatima Cardoso on what should be different in breast cancer care 5 years in the future and how this should be achieved. Former ED President and current European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides also addressed Europe’s Beating

Cancer Plan and possible synergies with the Lancet Breast Cancer Commission in an impassioned speech.

► Time To Accelerate: Together Against Cancer Event and Manifesto

On 17 April, at the Time to Accelerate: Together against cancer” event organized by the European Cancer Organization (ECO) and together with other relevant academic and scientific institutions that took place in Rome at the Italian Senate, a manifesto of recommendations for the future of European cancer policy during the next Commission European Union 2024 - 2029. Europa Donna’s Executive Director Marzia Zambon brought the patient advocacy perspective; she said “it is indeed time to accelerate, with estimates showing that by 2040 cancer cases in EU will have risen by 21% with respect to 2020. It is high-time all stakeholders (research facilities, medical societies, policy makers, national and international health institutions, pharma and patient reps) sat around a table to quantify, explore and anticipate the growing oncological burden in Europe”.

► European Union Breast Cancer Roundtable

The EU Breast Cancer Roundtable, chaired by Robert Mansel and hosted by the International Centre of Parliamentary Studies, convened in Brussels on 23 April, drawing stakeholders from patient organizations like Europa Donna, the scientific community, and pharmaceutical industry, with Martina Fontana, Europa Donna’s Policy and Research Officer, in attendance. With around 25 participants, the Roundtable opened with a video speech from MEP Elena Kontura, who emphasised the need for swift action to address delays in screening and treatment and stressed the goal of providing breast cancer screening to 90% of eligible EU citizens. Key topics included lifestyle interventions for risk reduction, enhancing survivorship support, and improving data collection efforts. Discussions also touched on strategies for faster diagnosis, concerns about the affordability and efficacy of new cancer drugs, disparities in access to psychological and palliative care services, and the need for improved access to radiation therapy. Martina Fontana highlighted the importance of patient representatives in research and clinical trials for patient-centred outcomes.

► Transforming Breast Cancer Together

ED participates in the Transforming Breast Cancer Together (TBCT) initiative, which was established when influential policy makers and organisations strongly committed to breast cancer began to collaborate in 2017. On 30 April, this multi-stakeholder group organised a virtual meeting with Justine Kubera, Assistant to MEP Ondřej Knotek (Renew Europe). Europa Donna’s Policy and Research Officer, Martina Fontana, represented ED and the patient organisations of TBCT on the call. During the meeting, Martina introduced TBCT’s mission to shape and support European and national policy on breast cancer and its support of patient groups’ efforts to implement the Right to be Forgotten legislation nationally. TBCT is actively seeking the support of new MEPs, including men, to chair and champion the initiative.

ED 2024 PROGRAMMES

European Commission Conference on Cancer Survivorship: Advancing on the right to be forgotten

On 14 May, the European Commission conference entitled Cancer Survivorship: Advancing on the right to be forgotten - Stocktaking of progress and challenges took place in Brussels, Belgium. Europa Donna's President Stella Mastora was one of four speakers who gave best practice examples of national policies and initiatives on the right to be forgotten. Stella recounted ED's experience developing a voluntary code and legislation on the right to be forgotten in Cyprus and their fight to get the best version of it passed. Due in no small part to ED Cyprus's relentless efforts, the legislation was signed into law and Cypriots now enjoy the right to be forgotten.

Europa Donna Appointed to the HTA Stakeholder Network

On 28 October, Europa Donna was appointed to the European Commission Health Technology Assessment Stakeholder Network and will proudly be represented by Executive Director Marzia Zambon. The aim of the HTA Stakeholder Network is to facilitate dialogue between stakeholder organisations and the Member State Coordination Group on Health Technology Assessment and its subgroups. Europa Donna is honoured to join in this important endeavour.

European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer

ED representatives collaborate in the European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC)'s European Guidelines on breast cancer screening and diagnosis, which are updated regularly.

Europa Donna as an organization has been a stakeholder in the ECIBC initiative from its outset, and has actively contributed to the design, development and update of the European Guidelines. As a member of the ECIBC quality assurance workgroup, ED's Executive Director Marzia Zambon collaborated with dedicated professionals to develop comprehensive breast cancer guidelines for cancer screening diagnosis and care and quality assurance measures. This initiative not only aims to enhance breast cancer care but also served as a pilot for guidelines targeting colorectal and cervical cancers.

In early 2025, the ECIBC is due to launch its Quality Assurance Scheme for Breast Cancer Services, a pivotal resource designed to standardize and elevate breast cancer care across Europe, enhancing breast cancer screening coverage and improving access to quality ensured care.

EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

EBCC-14

Europa Donna celebrated its 30th anniversary as The European Breast Cancer Coalition at the 14th European Breast Cancer Conference (EBCC-14) in Milan, held 20-22 March, a conference it has co-organised since its inception. This biennial event brings together scientists, researchers, clinicians, patients and patient advocates to further multidisciplinary collaboration for progress in breast cancer. Europa Donna is an equal partner in organising and designing the EBCC sessions and topics to be covered with societies of researchers and clinicians, the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC) and the European Society of Breast Cancer Specialists (EUSOMA). This format ensures a truly multidisciplinary approach and special attention to the perspective of the patients, the real protagonists of breast cancer.

EBCC-14 welcomed almost 1800 participants, including researchers, clinicians, advocates and patients, from 74 countries in its unique multidisciplinary format.

MBC was the focus of the EBCC-14 Manifesto "Addressing Disparities in Access to Innovation for Patients with Metastatic Breast Cancer Across Europe", seconded by conference participants. Recommendation number 1 is to increase the visibility of MBC and facilitate involvement of people with MBC in trials, the workplace and everyday life. Keynote speaker for the session was European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides, and a past President of Europa Donna. She highlighted the fact that women with MBC are not part of the "pink campaigns" and there is a need to shed light on women with MBC and bring them to the centre of campaigns.

There is also a need for cancer registries that include data for women with MBC, and for standard definitions. She outlined Europe's Beating Cancer Plan which is tackling these unmet needs in MBC and the entire breast cancer pathway, from prevention to end of life.

This year's EBCC Arts and Humanities Prize was a reminder of the face and body of MBC and the greater purpose of the gathering. Chosen by Europa Donna, the winner was the project "A Brave Woman", involving a true-to-life statue modelled from Cecile, a woman with incurable MBC, and erected in front of the Norwegian parliament to open the eyes of passersby and parliamentarians to this issue. A video chronicling the statue's creation and Cecile's story were also produced.

At each EBCC, Europa Donna hosts 2 to 3 sessions on topics of importance to breast cancer advocates integrating the scientific programme with policy, access or risk factors. Three Europa Donna sessions at EBCC-14 focused on practical applications of the data and what matters to patients: reducing breast cancer risk, equal access to innovation in breast cancer treatment, and working after a breast cancer diagnosis. Europa Donna board members and members chaired and participated in sessions throughout the conference.

A special 30-year celebration luncheon welcomed Europa Donna advocates and friends at the conference venue, with Commissioner Stella Kyriakides as the guest of honour, alongside Dr Alberto Costa, one of the founders of Europa Donna. Commissioner Kyriakides expressed her joy and gratification with being part of the Europa Donna family, one that has grown to include women from 47 member countries across Europe.

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EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

► Europa Donna Educational Event

Some 87 Europa Donna members from 28 countries stayed on after EBCC-14 to attend Europa Donna's Educational Event: "30 Years of Educating Breast Cancer Advocates" on 23 March, which brought key speakers from the conference to sum up the main findings and key takeaway messages presented at the conference for the advocates present.

Matteo Lambertini, a medical oncologist from Genova, Italy, gave an overview of the data on early and late breast cancer therapy. One of the main findings came from the KEYNOTE-756 trial showing that adding immunotherapy to chemotherapy before and after surgery was beneficial in women with high-risk oestrogen-receptor-positive and HER-2-negative breast cancer.

Isabel Rubio, a breast surgical oncologist from Madrid, Spain, summed up data on surgery, primarily regarding de-escalating/optimising therapy. This includes a study identifying women who can be spared having any axillary lymph nodes removed, including sentinel nodes, thus removing the risk of lymphoedema.

Orit Kaidar-Person, a radiation oncologist from Ramat Gan, Israel, emphasised the need for multidisciplinary teamwork, particularly between the surgeon and radiologist. She applauded studies of omitting radiotherapy after lumpectomy in low-risk tumours, saying, "If we don't need it, don't give it." She added that in women needing radiotherapy after a mastectomy, there is no consensus on the ideal type and timing of breast reconstruction: it must be personalised as each patient is different.

Ximena Montano, a Europa Donna Board Member and researcher from London, UK, outlined the clinical trial process and the role of advocates in each.

Ines-Maria Vaz Duarte Luis, a medical oncologist from Paris, France, and a specialist in survivorship, described the concept and need for "co-creation" in research, where patients are partners through the process. She described using this approach in the EU-funded PragmaTIL project aiming to decrease the toxicity of tumour-infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) adoptive cell therapy in various cancer types.

Neil Bertelsen, from Health Technology Assessment International (HTAi), summed up his talk on patient involvement in HTA, emphasising that HTA bodies compare new therapies with existing ones and report on the viability of the new approach, whereas policymakers decide on reimbursement. The new EU HTA Regulation comes into effect for oncology in January 2025. He encouraged advocates to identify and contact the HTA body in their country. Tanja Spanic, Europa Donna Board Member, described how Europa Donna Slovenia did this in her country.

Anne May, Lead Researcher for the PREFERABLE project, reported the results of the PREFERABLE-EFFECT study, in which Europa Donna was a partner. It found that twice-weekly supervised exercise sessions, involving balance, resistance and aerobic exercises for 9 months improved

quality of life scores and decreased fatigue in people with MBC.

Christine Boers-Doets, a side effects expert from the Netherlands, described and demonstrated some techniques to prevent or decrease side effects of the various breast cancer therapies, such as the right amount of water for mouth rinsing to avoid oral mucositis. She said some 80% of side effects can be managed by the patients themselves. This can help them stay on therapy given than many discontinue therapy due to side effects.

Antonio Di Meglio, a medical oncologist at Gustave Roussy, France, summed up the data he presented at EBCC-14 on the benefits of exercise in breast cancer prevention, and during and after therapy. He suggested that physicians should take the lead in prescribing exercise programmes for their patients because it has been shown that exercise adherence is higher when advice comes from the doctor.

During the Europa Donna Educational Event, advocates had two opportunities to put the exercise data into practice with guided sessions of Pilates and Body Mind connection.

► Europa Donna MBC Advocacy Webinar

Our MBC Advocacy Webinar took place on Friday, 7 June with 44 enthusiastic and engaged advocates taking part in the day, including 3 guest advocates from our partner ABC Global Alliance.

Expert speakers leading the informative sessions and subsequent conversations included medical oncologist Dr. Alexandru Eniu, President of ABC Global Alliance Dr. Fatima Cardoso, lead researcher for the PREFERABLE Project Anne May, Global Medical Consulting Lead for VML Health Sarah-Jane Barker, and Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Oncology Liz Meade.

The morning session took a deep dive into research – both how it has evolved over time and breaking news in biomarkers and targeted treatment. After this, exciting results on the positive effects of exercise on QoL, fatigue and other side-effects in people with MBC were explained at the conclusion of the groundbreaking study, PREFERABLE, in which Europa Donna was a partner.

The importance of building MBC awareness through communication campaigns like Europa Donna's The Cancer Currency was also addressed, and participants learned about shared decision-making and then role-played on the topic, identifying challenges and coming up with implementable solutions.

► 17th Breast Health Day

On 15 October, Europa Donna celebrated its 17th Breast Health Day by encouraging women and men of all ages to take steps towards breast health through a charming new video highlighting the importance of making daily healthy lifestyle choices. Breast Health Day at ED is a coalition-wide event where member countries highlight the day by organizing local awareness activities..

This initiative is aligned with the European Union's mission

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EDUCATION HIGHLIGHTS

to improve the member states' ability to address cancer. This includes Europe's Beating Cancer Plan (EBCP), which has prevention as its first pillar and outlines key strategies to tackle the 40% of cancer cases in Europe that are preventable.

► Europa Donna Advocacy Leader Conference

On 16 November in Milan, 70 experienced breast cancer advocates came together for ED's biennial Advocacy Leader Conference—a full day of expert insights, engaging discussions, and skill-building opportunities.

Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, opened the conference with an inspiring recorded keynote, emphasizing the ongoing need for strong breast cancer advocacy.

Breast cancer survival has reached historic highs, thanks to 30 years of progress in public health and care. Thomas Hofmarcher, Research Director at the Swedish Institute for Health Economics, and Silvia Deandrea, President of the Federation of the Associations of Oncological Screening (FASO), explored advancements in personalized treatments and early diagnosis that have significantly improved outcomes. However, challenges remain in addressing disparities in screening access, therapy availability, and survival rates across countries. The need to consider broader patient-relevant outcomes beyond survival was also highlighted.

Gabe Sonke, Professor of Clinical Oncology at the Netherlands Cancer Institute, presented major innovations in early-stage breast cancer treatment that are improving cure rates and reducing side effects. He stressed the critical role of collaboration with patients in achieving these advances.

Biomarkers now play an essential role in tailoring treatment, though patient awareness remains low. Fatima Cardoso, President of ABC Global Alliance, underscored the importance of educating patients about cancer types and biomarkers. These measurable indicators help predict risk, guide treatment, and monitor responses. She also discussed the future potential of digital patient-derived avatars for more precise, individualized care.

Integrating new data with clinical trials using mathematical models and AI offers promising tools for tackling complex oncology challenges. Michail Ignatiadis, Director at the Institut Jules Bordet, and Isabel T. Rubio, Head of Breast Surgical Oncology at Clinica Universidad de Navarra, explored how AI is already enhancing cancer detection, reducing diagnostic errors, and supporting treatment decisions. AI tools also help address workforce shortages and predict outcomes. The EU-funded CINDERELLA project, with Europa Donna on its External Advisory Board, is developing an app to help patients visualize post-surgery results, aiding informed decision-making.

Oncology research is becoming more patient-centred. Ines Vaz-Luis, Senior Oncologist at Gustave Roussy Institute, introduced the co-creation approach, where patients actively shape research from the start. She presented PATH-FOR-YOUNG, an EU-funded project supported by Europa

Donna, that demonstrates how patient involvement leads to more inclusive and effective studies. Co-research enhances trial design, builds trust, and supports better adherence.

In the afternoon, a moving video by Lesley Fallowfield, Director of Psychosocial Oncology at the University of Sussex, offered heartfelt advice for families and friends of advanced breast cancer patients—sometimes, listening and offering a hug is enough.

The conference concluded with a workshop led by Tamás Bereczky, focusing on identifying and overcoming barriers to equitable breast cancer treatment.

► ED Online Roundtables

Throughout 2024, a series of Educational Roundtables were organised with our 47 member countries, featuring expert guests conducting training sessions and interactive best-practice exchanges.

Some 45 enthusiastic advocates came together on 20 February for an online Roundtable on Nutrition Tips for Side-Effect Management led by Europa Donna Switzerland's National Delegate, 5-year breast cancer survivor and clinical nutrition expert, Ingrid Kobler, RD. Stressing the importance of being consistent, finding balance and listening to our bodies, Ingrid covered how people can use easy-to-follow nutrition techniques to combat short- and long-term breast cancer treatment side-effects, and generally how those living with and beyond breast cancer can boost their nutrition status and well-being using strategies such as working with a registered dietitian/nutritionist, using a food scanner, including particular foods and drinks to a daily diet and staying active. She added that there is no one-size-fits-all solution; the future of nutrition will be in the personalization of nutrition plans.

Europa Donna held its second online Roundtable of 2024 on 22 April, which featured an intensive 90 minutes of Social Media Training, outlining the importance of developing an online presence for breast cancer advocacy and providing a how-to with useful tips on digital communication. Leading this highly interactive course were Europa Donna Head Office's Creative and Communication Strategist Laureline Bertrand and Europa Donna Serbia's Sara Bojanić. Sara noted that social media is about community building; at its best it fosters support, friendship and understanding.

Europa Donna hosted another Roundtable on 2 September for its members focused on patient advocacy and the critical role of patient involvement in clinical trials. Medical Oncologist and Clinical Researcher of the prestigious Gustave-Roussy Institute Ines Vaz-Luis led the discussion on the importance of integrating patient perspectives in clinical research from their inception to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of trials. Ines provided examples of protocol researcher/patient representatives co-creation efforts which led to redefining the outcomes and endpoints of a project. This is not the state of the art yet, she admitted, but it is definitely the future of successful research.

Finally, on 11 December ED's Executive Director Marzia Zambon led a lively conversation on Engaging with Industry and Raising Funds with 35 advocates in attendance.

ED 2024 PROGRAMMES

RESEARCH

■ Europa Donna Involvement in Research

Europa Donna actively promotes the advancement of breast cancer research and seeks to ensure that all women fully understand any proposed treatment options, including entry into clinical trials and their right to a second opinion. As part of our commitment, we regularly take part in advisory and scientific research committees. In 2024, ED Representatives took part in numerous research projects. ED Executive Director Marzia Zambon and Tanja Spanic represented ED in BIG (Breast International Group) Scientific Committee meetings. Europa Donna's Executive Director Emeritus and Senior Policy Advisor Susan Knox was active on the Steering Committees for the MINDACT and AURORA Trials and ED's Past President Tanja Spanic was on the Steering Committees for the POSITIVE, OLYMPIA and Eubreast Trials. Board member Elizabeth Bergsten Nordström and Tanja Spanic sat on the Steering Committee of the EBCTCG Early Breast Cancer Trialists Collaborative Group, and Elizabeth was on the Ethics Committee of the IBCSG International Breast Cancer Study Group. Moreover, ED is the patient advocacy representative on the following Horizon projects that have been funded and continued/started their work in 2024: Former ED Board member Paola Mosconi is the ED Representative on the Ethics and Data Monitoring Committee of the MyPEBS (My Personal Breast Screening) Trial; ED Board member Antonella Moreo sits on the Scientific Advisory Board of INSPIRE (INnovative tools for Safety Pharmacology for Integrated cardiovascular safety assessment to REduce adverse events and late-stage drug attrition) and she is on the External Advisory Board for CARDIOCARE - (An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Management of the Elderly Multimorbid Patient with Breast Cancer Therapy Induced Cardiac Toxicity).

ED was a consortium member on the PREFERABLE Trial (Project on Exercise for Fatigue Eradication in Advanced Breast cancer to improve quality of life) which ended on 30 June this year; The results of this randomized controlled clinical trial were highlighted in a brochure published by Europa Donna as part of this European Union-funded project that is available on the ED website. They show that people with metastatic breast cancer can experience a significantly better quality of life with significantly less fatigue; they can also have less pain and other disease symptoms and treatment side-effects if they take part in a supervised exercise programme as part of their treatment.

Furthermore, ED Board member Ximena Montano alternating with Marzia Zambon continued to sit on the External Advisory Board for the IMI (Innovative Medicines Initiative) project OPTIMA (Optimal treatment for patients with solid tumours in Europe through Artificial Intelligence) in 2024.

With regard to Europa Donna's Horizon Europe EU projects, Ellen Verschuur sits on the External Advisory Board of the 4D PICTURE Project (Design-based Data-Driven Decision-support Tools: Producing Improved Cancer Outcomes Through User-centred Research). Moreover, Marzia Zambon and Europa Donna's Policy and Research Officer Martina Fontana represented Europa Donna on the SmartCARE Project (ended in December

2024), led by ECO (European Cancer Organisation), which developed a cancer survivor smart card - in the form of a mobile app - to improve the health and wellbeing of cancer survivors throughout Europe, and Marzia and Tanja Spanic represent Europa Donna on the DEFINITIVE project (Diagnostic HER2DX-guided trEatment For patieNts with early-sTage HER2-positIVe breast cancer), kicked off in December 2023 in which ED is a Work Package leader. Two other new Horizon Europe projects Europa Donna has joined are CINDERELLA, in which an app will be created to improve shared decision-making with patients with Marzia Zambon sitting on the External Advisory Board, and IBeChange, an integrated platform to promote positive behavioral change to promote primary cancer prevention with Martina Fontana sitting on the Advisory Board.

In addition to the projects highlighted above, Europa Donna actively supports other innovative initiatives, including: Toolbox 3 Project, an international initiative identifying optimal uses for AI in early breast cancer care, which culminated in a consensus meeting in Lucerne on 7-8 November; MELIORA Project, which aims to empower women at risk, patients, and survivors through AI-driven personalized lifestyle interventions; the PRECEDENT (imProving REporting of loCoregional therapies in nEoaDjuvant brEast caNcer Trials) project with Fiorita Poulakaki serving on the Steering Committee; and the EUROPA Trial, a multidisciplinary project dedicated to older adults affected by low risk breast cancer, with Tanja Spanic on the Steering Committee.

As a continuation of the ongoing ECIBC initiative, Marzia Zambon is still representing ED on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Patient-Reported Indicator Survey (PaRIS) Breast Cancer patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) Working Group; this initiative aims at developing and implementing standardised patient-oriented measures of health-care performance.

ED 2024 PROGRAMMES

COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

WECAN Training, Retreat and Academy

Cristina Guerrero Paez of ED Netherlands represented Europa Donna in an intensive two-day WECAN Evidence-Based Advocacy Workshop on 18 - 19 January in Munich. Designed to equip trainees with knowledge in evidence generation, participants collaborated on a hands-on learning project to create a scientific poster. ED is making a concerted effort to get more of our advocates involved in research and clinical trials oversight, and this excellent workshop provided valuable insights.

On 10 – 11 April, Marzia Zambon and Tanja Spanic participated in the WECAN yearly retreat which was held in Barcelona. The Retreat is a yearly gathering of the 22 European umbrella cancer organisations cooperating in this network to discuss joint plans and projects, governance and structure, update each other on research projects, and to share the program and agenda of the WECAN Academy programme and agenda.

Each year, Europa Donna sends an increasing number of advocates to the WECAN Academy annual training course designed to empower cancer patient advocates on crucial topics such as Advocacy Tools & Skills, Healthcare Systems, Policy & Access and Research & Data. From 11 – 14 July, numerous Europa Donna advocates including Board member Ximena Montano, Teresa Saracino from the Head Office and 4 national members took part in the training in Barcelona, Spain.

Fast-Track EUCAPA Training on HTA

ED Policy and Research Officer Martina Fontana attended a training programme in Health Technology Assessment (HTA) for patients and patient representatives hosted by EUCAPA (European Capacity Building for Patients) from 5 – 7 March at UMIT Tirol University in Hall in Tirol, Austria. In this comprehensive training programme, patients and patient representatives were equipped with the skills, tools, insights, and expertise they need to engage in joint clinical assessments and scientific consultations within the EU HTA regulation. They took a deep dive into HTA, HTA methods and processes, and patient involvement in patient-centred healthcare.

EUSOBI Breast Imaging Research Course

On 19 March, Europa Donna's Vice President Fiorita Poulakaki spoke on How to perform research in clinical practice at the EUSOBI (European Society of Breast Imaging) 2024 Breast Imaging Research Course, which took place prior to EBCC-14 in Milan, Italy. Imaging now plays a vital role across all facets of breast-related research, encompassing everything from developing technology to validating it and implementing it clinically. It covers the full spectrum of the medical journey, from predicting risks and conducting screenings to monitoring therapies and post-treatment follow-ups. This course focused on effectively conducting imaging research, considering the perspectives of various stakeholders involved.

EPF AI Leadership Meeting and AGM

The European Patient Forum (EPF) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Brussels on 13 - 14 April, inviting its full members to participate. Europa Donna was ably represented by Board member Ximena Montano.

The meeting kicked off with a dedicated focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and positive versus negative aspects of its use in the healthcare system. The upcoming EU elections were also discussed, with a stress placed on the imperative for advocacy endeavors to ensure that health remains a central concern for policymakers.

ESMO Breast Cancer Congress

From 15 to 17 May, Europa Donna's Vice President Fiorita Poulakaki and Past President Tanja Spanic attended the ESMO Breast Cancer Congress in Berlin, Germany. ESMO Breast is an annual, multidisciplinary meeting for researchers and clinicians with a focus on innovation and patient care. On 16 May, Fiorita, a breast surgeon, presented on Quality of Life after Axillary Surgery: Lymphedema and beyond. She spoke about using a multidisciplinary approach, with de-escalation of treatments.

EUSOMA Webinar

On 22 May Europa Donna's Executive Director Marzia Zambon participated in a EUSOMA-led webinar on European Guidelines for the Management of B3 Breast Lesions. Earlier in 2024, EUSOMA, together with EUSOBI, ESP (BWG), and ESSO, published the "European Guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of breast lesions with uncertain malignant potential (B3 lesions)". Following up on these guidelines, the webinar presented real clinical cases on this topic, concentrating on the importance of adequate classification and multidisciplinary discussion to ensure proper diagnosis. Marzia Zambon, co-author of the Guidelines for the section regarding communication and risk factor management, spoke about the specific challenges of doctor-patient communication when dealing with the uncertainties of a B3 lesion diagnosis.

British Breast Group Meeting

At the British Breast Group Meeting in Manchester on 27 - 28 June, Europa Donna Vice-President Dr. Fiorita Poulakaki presented the Manifesto from EBCC-14 and discussed the pressing issue of inequalities in access to innovative treatments for metastatic breast cancer across Europe. Fiorita's presentation also featured Europa Donna's The Cancer Currency Campaign, which resonated deeply with the audience, motivating and moving attendees to join in raising awareness of the challenges faced by people living with MBC

ESMO 2024

The European Society of Medical Oncology Congress (ESMO) was held in Barcelona this year, with a record-breaking presence of more than 34,000 participants from 149 countries. The Patient Advocate Track Sessions covered crucial topics for breast cancer patients, such as the importance of a person-centred approach throughout

ED 2024 PROGRAMMES

COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

every phase of the cancer journey, how to deal with the fear of recurrence, the unexpected challenges of survivorship, access to new oncology medicines and advancing health equity in cancer care. ED Board Member Tanja Spanic serves as Chair of the ESMO Patient Advocates Working Group and was instrumental in the incredible success of the patient track sessions, choosing the topics and reaching out to top notch speakers from leading European Institutions as well as the WHO.

Tanja also spoke at and chaired several ESMO sessions. During the Patient Advocacy Session centred around the future of cancer care driven by patient expertise, she spoke about the increasing involvement of patients in research. Tanja also mentioned the latest EU-funded DEFINITIVE and Path-for-Young Research projects in which Europa Donna participates as a consortium member.

16th Nordic Conference on Breast Cancer

Breast cancer organizations from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands gathered in Copenhagen for the 16th Nordic Conference on Breast Cancer on 20 – 22 September. This biennial event brings together member organizations of the Europa Donna Coalition, and this year's focus was on uniting efforts to ensure the highest quality care and services for people diagnosed with breast cancer. Europa Donna's Executive Director Marzia Zambon spoke about this organisation's commitment to strengthening collaboration and amplifying our collective voice across Europe.

International Invasive Lobular Breast Cancer Symposium

Europa Donna Board member Tanja Spanic addressed the topic of the need for patient-partnered research in her presentation at the International Invasive Lobular Breast Cancer Symposium, which was held in Leuven, Belgium, from 23 to 25 September. The principles of successful patient involvement in cancer research include a shared vision: strategy, level and timing of involvement, communication, understanding and relationships, resources, knowledge and skills, methods and approaches, ethical and legal aspects.

BREASTANBUL 2024

The BREASTANBUL 2024 Conference, held in Istanbul, Turkey on 10 - 12 October, dedicated a panel to the intersection of mental health and cancer care. This EORTC-led discussion emphasized the pivotal role of healthcare providers in addressing the psychological needs of patients and caregivers. Europa Donna Vice President and breast surgeon Fiorita Poulakaki highlighted the importance of compassionate communication, especially when delivering difficult news to patients. She called for approaches that avoid anxiety and trauma, instead aiming to empower, inform, and support patients and their families in navigating the cancer journey.

World Health Summit

At the World Health Summit taking place on 14 October in Berlin, Europa Donna joined global voices in a panel

discussion titled "Time to Act on Women's Health: Turning Commitment into Impact." Marzia Zambon, ED Executive Director, and Fatima Cardoso, President of ABC Global Alliance, participated in the panel highlighting critical issues such as equitable healthcare access, early detection, and the essential role of women in health advocacy. They emphasized the importance of addressing social determinants like education, income, and access to care, which disproportionately impact women and heighten gender disparities worldwide. The panellists called on health authorities to take active steps toward translating potential solutions into actionable outcomes for women's health.

ECO Report on Women and Cancer

November 4th saw the publication of the ECO report on Women and Cancer: More than 12 million reasons for action! in which Europa Donna took part as contributor.

The report highlights key challenges faced by women in health and cancer care. Breast, colorectal, and lung cancers are the most common cancers among women in Europe. A cancer diagnosis often disrupts relationships, with affected women being 40% more likely to divorce. Women, who are often caregivers, earn 12.7% less than men on average and face a higher risk of poverty due to uneven support systems across countries. In healthcare, where women make up 70% of the workforce, men still hold most leadership positions, and women earn 20% less on average.

For too long, healthcare policies across Europe have overlooked the specific needs and conditions of women. The paper identifies 16 core recommendations to combat gender disparities in cancer care, including: an end to irresponsible gendered marketing by the tobacco and alcohol industries; access to breast and gynaecological cancer screening, conducted according to European guidelines, as an undisputed women's right; and guarantee that all women of childbearing age diagnosed with cancer are provided with fertility preservation counselling and services.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITIES

During 2024 **EUROPA DONNA** served on the following committees:

Research and clinical trials

- ▮ BIG Scientific Committee
- ▮ MINDACT Steering Committee
- ▮ AURORA Steering Committee
- ▮ OLYMPIA Trial Steering Committee
- ▮ POSITIVE Trial Steering Committee
- ▮ Eubrest Trial Steering Committee
- ▮ PRECEDENT Trial Steering Committee
- ▮ EUROPA Trial Steering Committee
- ▮ Early Breast Cancer Trialists' Collaborative Group (EBCTCG) Steering Committee
- ▮ Horizon 20/20 Projects: CardioCare, INSPIRE, MyPEBS, PREFERABLE
- ▮ Horizon Europe Projects: 4D Picture, SmartCARE, DEFINITIVE, CINDERELLA, IBeChange
- ▮ IMI Project: OPTIMA External Advisory Board, Cancer Outcomes through User-Centred Research
- ▮ IBCSG Ethics Committee
- ▮ OECD PaRIS PROMS Working Group

During 2024 **EUROPA DONNA** participated in the following organisational activities:

Policy

- ▮ European Commission World Cancer Day Event
- ▮ High-Level Conference on Ending Discrimination Against Cancer Survivors
- ▮ Time to Accelerate: Together Against Cancer Event and Manifesto
- ▮ European Union Breast Cancer Europe Roundtable
- ▮ European Commission Conference on Cancer Survivorship: Advancing on the right to be forgotten
- ▮ European Patients' Forum
- ▮ Europe's Beating Cancer Plan
- ▮ Transforming Breast Cancer Together virtual meeting
- ▮ ECIBC (ED is a stakeholder)
- ▮ Appointment to the HTA Stakeholder Network

ED Conferences and Meetings

- ▮ EBCC-14 (co-organised with EUSOMA and EORTC)
- ▮ Europa Donna Educational Event
- ▮ Europa Donna MBC Advocacy webinar
- ▮ Four Europa Donna Roundtables (virtual) with Europa Donna members

Other Meetings

- ▮ WECAN Training, Retreat and Academy
- ▮ European Patients' Forum AGM and AI Leadership Meeting
- ▮ ESMO Breast Cancer Congress
- ▮ ESMO 2024
- ▮ Fast-Track EUPACA Training on HTA
- ▮ EUSOBI Breast Imaging Research Course
- ▮ Launch of the Lancet Commission Report
- ▮ EUSOMA Webinar
- ▮ Lagos Breast Cancer Support Meeting
- ▮ British Breast Group Meeting
- ▮ 16th Nordic Conference on Breast Cancer
- ▮ International Invasive Lobular Breast Cancer Symposium
- ▮ BREASTANBUL 2024
- ▮ World Health Summit

Publications/Videos

- ▮ 2023 Annual Report
- ▮ Breast Health Day leaflet
- ▮ Breast Health Day Video
- ▮ PREFERABLE Project results publication
- ▮ ED General Brochure
- ▮ Highlights from ED's MBC Advocacy Webinar
- ▮ Highlights of the 14th European Breast Cancer Congress & Europa Donna Educational Event
- ▮ Ten editions of ED Electronic Newsletter
- ▮ Two MBC Advocates Speak Out Videos

FINANCIALS

Our annual financial statement has been prepared by an independent auditor and is posted on our website at www.europadonna.org.

Balance Sheet as of 31 December 2024

2024

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS		
Net Fixed Assets		12,280
- Plant machinery and equipment	12,280	
Current Assets		1,547,955
- Trade debtors	51,817	
- Cash at bank and in hand	1,464,310	
- Accrued Income	31,828	
TOTAL ASSETS		€ 1,560,235
LIABILITIES		
Reserve Fund		1,423,488
- Surplus or loss for the year	325,863	
- Extraordinary Reserve	1,097,625	
Creditors		28,885
- Amounts payable within one year	28,885	
Accrued charges and deferred income		107,862
- Withholding taxes	24,353	
- Accrued charges	30,869	
- Owed as Severance	52,640	
TOTAL LIABILITIES		€ 1,560,235

FINANCIALS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

2024

INCOME

Turnover	942,256
- Membership dues	16,313
- Grants and donations	918,839
- Meeting registrations	-
- Reimbursements	7,104
Financial Income	26,099
Other financial income	26,099

TOTAL INCOME

€ 968,355

OPERATING CHARGES

Services & Office Expenses	82,523
- Administrative overhead	70,649
- Fees (audit, legal, insurance)	11,874
Salaries (employees & related costs)	307,693
Activity Expenses	245,882
- Publications, websites	7,114
- 16th Pan-European Conference	707
- Advocacy Leader Course	66,706
- Board meetings	9,160
- Breast Health Day	7,894
- Membership fees	2,528
- Other meetings	13,309
- Public Affairs Activities	1,139
- Staff Training	1,179
- Digital Enhancement	12,251
- EBCC-14	67,693
- The Cancer Currency MBC Campaign	6,738
- ED Educational Event	29,680
- ED MBC Webinar	7,945
EU Funded Projects	11,838
- DEFINITIVE	7,264
- Path-for-Young	414
- PREFERABLE/Other	4,160
Depreciation & Write-Offs	4,856
- Office equipment	4,856
Financial Charges	1,539
- Bank costs	1,028
- Other financial costs	511
Surplus/Loss of the Period	325,862
- Transfer to/from reserves	325,862

TOTAL CHARGES

€ 968,355

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ED wishes to acknowledge and express appreciation for the ongoing support of our Executive Board, our faculty members and scientific advisors for their generous contribution of time and effort on behalf of breast cancer advocacy. We would also like to commend our individual National Fora for their continuing commitment to our common advocacy goals, especially the implementation of the EU guidelines. The strength of our organisation emanates from our National Fora whose ongoing work and efforts are outstanding and become more impressive each year.

On behalf of the entire ED breast cancer advocacy community, we would like to express our appreciation to all of our sponsors who have provided us with unrestricted educational grants to carry out our advocacy work on behalf of all of the women of Europe.

GRANTS FROM NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS



GRANTS FROM CORPORATIONS

OVER € 50,000



€ 25,001 - 50,000



€ 25,000 and UNDER



OTHER FUNDING

We would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to VML Health for the provision of pro-bono creative communications services in 2024 for our The Cancer Currency project

We gratefully acknowledge DeLaval for its generous donation as a result of its fundraising campaign

In addition, EUROPA DONNA - The European Breast Cancer Coalition received funding in 2024 for its role in the following European Union projects:



DEFINITIVE has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101136953.



PREFERABLE has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 825677.

To safeguard the totally independent and autonomous voice of ED on breast cancer issues, we are guided by our Sponsorship Policy in all matters concerning financial support of our work.

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Website and Social Media



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