

A close-up photograph of a woman with a headscarf smiling, with another person's arm around her shoulder. The woman is wearing a grey cable-knit sweater. The background is blurred.

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

The voice of national and regional cancer leagues in Europe

The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) is a non-profit umbrella organisation bringing together 34 national and regional cancer leagues, united in the fight against cancer.

Our members are trusted, non-profit cancer organisations providing the public with essential information, support, and care.

ECL does not accept any support from the tobacco industry, or any other companies that produce products that are deemed harmful to health.

Our vision is a Europe free of cancer.

Our mission is to advocate for improved cancer control and care in Europe by facilitating collaboration between cancer leagues and shaping EU and pan-European policies.



www.cancer.eu

Looking back, moving forward

Dear members, colleagues, and friends,

We are proud to present the 2024 Annual Report of the Association of European Cancer Leagues – a reflection of our collective dedication to face cancer challenges across Europe.

This past year has reminded us of the power of our community. It is evident that despite the changing political landscape, ECL has grown stronger, thanks to the incredible dedication and efforts from our network of member leagues across the continent. Together, we have cemented ECL's position as a leading voice in the common actions against cancer, advocating for prevention, supporting patients, and ensuring that no one has to face this devastating disease alone.

Across Europe, cancer leagues continue to be a vital lifeline for many – offering information, support, and hope. And at the European level, the efforts of valued colleagues from member leagues have allowed us to raise our collective voice even louder. Together, we have pushed for better policies, advocated for patient rights, and helped shape decisions that truly impact lives.

There are many achievements we can be proud of. In 2024, ECL strengthened its leadership in tobacco control by publishing new policy recommendations on novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products. Thanks to our advocacy efforts, the priorities of European Cancer Leagues were reflected in the European Parliament's position on the EU pharma package – a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make EU pharmaceutical legislation more patient-centric. And to ensure that the voice of the cancer community is heard at key EU fora, ECL joined EU Commission initiatives like the Health Technology Assessment Stakeholder Network and the Critical Medicines Alliance.

To support cancer patients and survivors, we worked tirelessly to include the right to be forgotten in the Code of Conduct for Access to Financial Services. While we were disappointed to that the Code was not finalised, we remain committed to this cause.

Our work to keep cancer as a top priority in the political agenda also continued. ECL successfully launched the 2024–2029 mandate of the MEPs Against Cancer Interest Group, ensuring that cancer stays a priority in the European Parliament and beyond.

ECL's network has continued to grow as well. In 2024, we were proud to welcome two powerful new members to the ECL family: the Hellenic Cancer Federation (ELLOK), based in Greece, and Fundacion ECO, based in Spain. Over the past year, we have also strengthened our collaboration with members through bilateral meetings and by developing a Member Engagement Plan, presented at the 2024 Annual Meetings in Rome, which will guide our joint efforts throughout 2025.

To our members, colleagues and partners: thank you for your unwavering commitment and dedication to reduce the burden of cancer. Together, we continue to save countless lives in Europe and beyond.



Ramon Reyes, President
Association of European
Cancer Leagues



Wendy Yared, Executive Director
Association of European Cancer
Leagues

Governance

The Executive Board

The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) is led by an Executive Board composed of representatives from our member organisations. This dedicated team is responsible for shaping ECL's strategic direction, driving organisational development, and strengthening relations with cancer leagues and other partners across Europe.

Board members serve on a voluntary basis and do not receive remuneration for their roles. They are elected by the General Assembly of member leagues.

The current Board was elected in November 2023. New members of the Board were elected during the Annual General Assembly in October 2024.



Ramon Reyes, President
Spanish Association Against Cancer



Daniela Giangreco, Vice President
Italian League Against Cancer



Marc Michils, Treasurer
Stand Up To Cancer Flanders



Neda Ferencic Urban
Croatian League Against Cancer



Juha Pekka Turunen
Cancer Society of Finland



Cristiana Fonseca
Portuguese League
Against Cancer



Dorine Manson
Dutch Cancer Society

The Secretariat

The ECL Secretariat is based in Brussels and is managed by the Executive Director. The ECL office serves as the main hub for communication among member organisations, leads advocacy efforts with EU institutions, coordinates workshops and events, and engages in EU-funded projects.

In 2024, ECL's team included nine full-time staff members, three part-time colleagues, and 1 consultant, working together to coordinate our efforts in Brussels and beyond.

- **Wendy Yared** – Executive Director
- **Geoffrey Furlonger** – Chief Operations Officer
- **Roxana Albu** – Chief Scientific Officer
- **Ivonne Leenen** – Communications and Events Officer (since October 2024)
- **Toma Mikalauskaitė** – Policy Lead
- **Alba Gil** – Policy Officer (since September 2024)
- **Nico Latteur** – Policy and Projects Officer
- **Arianna Khatchadourian** – EU Project Manager
- **Helena Ros** – EU Projects Manager
- **Michał Kubo** – EU Projects Manager (since April 2024)
- **Florence Boivin** – Interim Office Manager (part-time)
- **Patricia Pinto** – Youth Ambassadors Programme Coordinator (part-time)
- **Leyla Mehmetbeyli** – Youth Ambassadors Programme Deputy Coordinator (part-time)

We gratefully thank the team members who have since moved on from ECL: Bea Arranz, Sara Bertucci, Tanja Gohlert, Meritxell Mallafré-Larrosa, and Anamarija Tomacic.

Our members

The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) is the voice of national and regional cancer leagues in Europe. We are a network of 34 cancer leagues and societies across 28 European countries, united in the fight against cancer.

Our members are trusted, non-profit cancer organisations providing the public with essential information, support and care. ECL's strength is in our members.

Belgium

Foundation Against Cancer Belgium
Stand Up To Cancer Flanders

Croatia

Croatian League Against Cancer

Cyprus

Cyprus Anti-Cancer Society
Cyprus Association of Cancer Patients
and Friends

Czech Republic

League Against Cancer Prague

Denmark

Danish Cancer Society

Estonia

Estonian Cancer Society

Faroe Islands

Faroese Cancer Society

Finland

Cancer Society of Finland

France

French League Against Cancer

Germany

German Cancer Society

Greece

Hellenic Cancer Federation

Hungary

Hungarian League Against Cancer

Iceland

Icelandic Cancer Society

Ireland

Irish Cancer Society

Israel

Israel Cancer Association

Italy

Italian League Against Tumours

Luxembourg

Cancer Foundation Luxembourg

Malta

Emanuele Cancer Research Foundation
Malta

The Netherlands

Dutch Cancer Society

Poland

Polish Cancer League

Portugal

Portuguese League Against Cancer

Romania

Romanian Cancer Society

Slovakia

League Against Cancer Slovakia

Slovenia

Association of Slovenian Cancer Societies

Spain

Spanish Association Against Cancer
Catalan Federation Against Cancer
Fundacion ECO

Switzerland

Swiss Cancer League

Sweden

Swedish Cancer Society

Turkey

Turkish Association for Cancer Research
and Control

United Kingdom

Cancer Research UK

Cancer Focus Northern Ireland



Working groups

Member organisations of the Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) work together on a range of key issues along the whole cancer continuum to prevent the disease, encourage early detection and provide the best possible support for people affected by cancer.

Cancer control experts within the ECL network participate in three dedicated working groups, where they regularly meet to share best practices, foster collaboration, and contribute to shaping ECL's strategic priorities.



The **ECL Prevention and Early Detection Working Group (P&ED WG)** connects cancer control experts from cancer leagues to strengthen and coordinate prevention efforts across Europe.

The group focuses on areas that significantly impact cancer risk, including tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, air pollution, and exposure to harmful chemicals. In addition, the P&ED WG works to promote equitable access to HPV vaccination and cancer screening programmes for all. Through these collaborative efforts, the group aims to reduce the overall burden of cancer and protect public health across Europe.



The **ECL Access to Medicines Task Force (A2MTF)** unites health advocates and researchers from cancer societies across Europe to ensure that all cancer patients have access to safe, effective, and affordable medicines and treatments.

The A2MTF is committed to advancing such access by championing greater availability, accessibility, affordability, and transparency in the way medicines are developed and priced. These principles are key pillars for building sustainable and equitable healthcare systems across Europe.



The **ECL Patient Support Working Group (PSWG)** aims to improve the quality of life of those touched by cancer, including patients, survivors, and carers. The group advocates for fair access to financial services and encourages initiatives that support patients and survivors' return to work, rehabilitation, and supportive care.

By bringing together cancer care experts from cancer leagues across Europe, the PSWG serves as a collaborative hub for sharing best practices, developing guidelines, and creating resources that respond to the evolving needs of those impacted by cancer.

Who we work with

Our network

ECL is a proud member of several European and global non-profit organisations, and collaborates with a wide range of partners in cancer and public health.



We are also active partners in several coalitions and networks:



Rare Cancers Working Group

Who we work with



ECL is an accredited regional non-State actor with the WHO Regional Committee Europe.

We are an official member of various WHO/Europe initiatives, including the WHO/Europe Access to Novel Medicines Platform.



ECL closely collaborates with the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) to promote the European Code Against Cancer, a set of 12 recommendations on how to reduce people's risk of cancer at the individual level.



We closely collaborate with and are a member of various stakeholder fora at the EU level:

- European Commission's Critical Medicines Alliance
- European Commission's HTA Stakeholder Network
- European Medicine Agency's Patient and Consumer Working Party

A year in review: Highlights from 2024

A new strategic vision leading up to 2030

With more than 2,7 million new cancer cases and 1,9 million deaths each year, being united against cancer is more important than ever before. ECL members adopted a new six-year strategy at the General Assembly in 2023. This strategy defines the organisation's direction for the new European legislative cycle and addresses the needs and interests of its members, guided by ECL's scope, mission and core values.

The four fundamental pillars of the ECL strategy for 2024 – 2030 are:

- To advance holistic cancer prevention, by motivating the EU institutions to take all necessary steps to enable healthy choices for all during the new EU legislative cycle.
- To ensure that all European citizens have access to relevant screening programmes and are diagnosed at an early stage, and to promote research for new diagnostics methods.
- To achieve equal access to affordable medicines for all cancer patients.
- To improve the quality of life for those touched by cancer in Europe.

Annual Meetings 2024

ECL members gathered in Rome, Italy on 29 – 31 October for the 44th edition of the ECL Annual Scientific Conference and General Assembly. This year's edition was kindly hosted by the Italian League Against Tumours (LILT).

The Annual Scientific Conference is the main networking event for cancer leagues and prominent cancer advocates and experts from all over Europe. This year's Annual Scientific Conference, held at the Italian Ministry of Health, saw prominent speakers representing cancer leagues, registries and societies, research institutions, and medical societies. ECL members and invited guests engaged in thought-provoking discussions on key topics like tertiary prevention, artificial intelligence in oncology, the role of cancer leagues and registries in policymaking, and the right to be forgotten beyond cancer.

ECL welcomed two new members during its General Assembly: the Hellenic Cancer Federation (ELLOK), based in Greece, and the ECO Foundation, based in Spain. ECL members furthermore voted in two new members to the Executive Board: Dorine Manson (Dutch Cancer Society) and Cristiana Fonseca (Portuguese League Against Cancer).



Honouring the former European Health Commissioner for her leadership in the fight against cancer

In October 2024, ECL awarded Stella Kyriakides, former European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, with the ECL Honorary Award in recognition of her efforts to intensify Europe's fight against cancer.

ECL's Honorary Award is awarded annually to recognise individuals who have made an exceptional contribution to advancing cancer prevention, treatment and research.

"I am truly humbled and deeply honoured to receive the European Cancer Leagues Honorary Award. The European Cancer Leagues do incredible work for cancer policy across Europe, by connecting national cancer societies working for patients, thereby amplifying and strengthening their voices. It's a mission that could not be closer to my heart as my own cancer experience has always been a big part of my journey."



Stella Kyriakides
Former European Commissioner for
Health and Food Safety

Preventing cancer before it starts

Cancer causes one in four deaths in the European Union. The good news? Over 40% of all cancer cases can be prevented. By tackling key risk factors like tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and pollution – while also promoting HPV vaccination – we can save countless lives.

ECL is taking action to raise awareness, reduce exposure to cancer risk factors, and advocate for strong, health-protective policies across Europe. Highlights from 2024 include:

- ECL policy recommendations on regulating novel and emerging nicotine and tobacco products (May 2024).
- World No Tobacco Day webinar during the European Week Against Cancer, which included speakers from WHO/Europe, Smoke Free Partnership, the French National Cancer Institute, the Belgian FPS Health, and ECL's Youth Ambassadors programme.
- World Cancer Congress digital session: Cervical Cancer Elimination – Local and European Experiences for Global Learnings.



Making cancer treatment accessible for all

ECL promotes equal access to life-saving cancer medicines and care across Europe by promoting availability of life-saving treatments, advocating for their fair pricing and challenging inequalities in access to essential cancer care.

Throughout the year, ECL continued to advocate for an EU pharmaceutical legislation that puts patients first and to champion for joint procurement of cancer drugs.

Highlights from 2024 include:

- Membership in the Critical Medicines Alliance set up by the European Commission (as of February 2024).
- ECL position on the Hospital Exemption in the revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation (February 2024).
- ECL policy recommendations on the draft European Parliament ENVI committee reports on the EU pharmaceutical package (February 2024).
- Joint call of public health organisations ahead of the EU Parliament elections in June 2024 (April 2024).
- Call on EU member states to keep the regulatory data protection period at six years and to provide further incentives for better and accessible medicines (June 2024).
- Call on EU member states to increase access to medicines and their affordability through reduced regulatory protection periods and modulated incentives (September 2024).
- Membership in the Health Technology Assessment Stakeholder Network set up by the European Commission (as of October 2024).

Supporting people touched by cancer

People living with and after cancer are at the heart of our work. With over 12 million cancer survivors in Europe, ECL works to improve the quality of life for cancer patients, survivors and carers.

We advocate for fair access to financial services and support initiatives that support patients' return to work, rehabilitation, and supportive care.

• ECL policy recommendations on the draft European Parliament ENVI committee reports on the EU pharmaceutical package (February 2024).

- Joint call of public health organisations ahead of the EU Parliament elections in June 2024 (April 2024).
- Call on EU member states to keep the regulatory data protection period at six years and to provide further incentives for better and accessible medicines (June 2024).
- Call on EU member states to increase access to medicines and their affordability through reduced regulatory protection periods and modulated incentives (September 2024).
- Membership in the Health Technology Assessment Stakeholder Network set up by the European Commission (as of October 2024).

Highlights from 2024 include:

- Participation in development of Code of Conduct for Access to Financial Services.
- International Workers' Day Campaign (May 2024).
- World Cancer Congress session on the Right to be Forgotten (September 2024).

EU projects and Joint Actions

ECL actively contributes to numerous EU-funded research and public health initiatives. In partnership with over 70 partners – including cancer leagues, research institutes, public health organisations, university hospitals, and academic experts – we work to drive progress in cancer prevention and care across Europe.

By using our strong network of partners and fostering connections between researchers, policymakers, and key stakeholders, we help ensure that the findings from **EU-funded projects** are translated into real-world impact. Our core contributions to these projects include stakeholder engagement, policy recommendations, strategic communications, and dissemination of results.

ECL is also proud to participate in several **EU Joint Actions** – collaborative initiatives that unite national health authorities, public institutions, and other key stakeholders from multiple EU member states to address specific challenges in cancer prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or care.



A unique international clinical study that compares personalised risk-based screening strategies (based on women's risk of developing breast cancer) to standard screening.

www.mypebs.eu

January 2018 – June 2026



Grant Agreement 755394, under the Horizon 2020 Programme of the European Union



A cross-border project aiming to reduce inequality by improving the offer of cervical cancer screening to vulnerable and underserved groups.

www.cbig-screen.eu

March 2021 – February 2026



Grant Agreement 964049, under the Horizon 2020 Programme of the European Union



EU CanScreen aims to promote sustainable, high-quality screening programmes for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers, as well as recommended screenings for lung, prostate, and gastric cancers.

www.dypede.gr/eucanscreen

June 2024 – May 2028



Grant Agreement 101162959, under the EU4Health Programme of the European Union



PAINLESS uses an evidence-based and innovative approach to investigate a novel, cost-effective, and home-based intervention to manage cancer-related pain using neuromodulation.

www.palliativeprojects.eu/painless

March 2021 – February 2026



Grant Agreement 101057367, under the Horizon Europe Programme of the European Union



The PIECES project develops and tests the PCP Integrated Implementation Toolkit, designed to guide and support implementers in selecting, adapting and implementing primary cancer prevention programmes, improving their reach and effectiveness.

www.pieces-project.eu

June 2023 – May 2027



Grant Agreement 101104390, under the Horizon Europe Programme of the European Union



BUMPER contributes to the design and development of the EU mobile app for cancer prevention, a digital health literacy tool based on the European Code Against Cancer (ECAC).

www.bumper.cancer.eu

November 2022 – April 2025



Grant Agreement 101079924, under the EU4Health Programme of the European Union



The CanScreen-ECIS project aims to develop and pilot a new cancer screening data management system to be integrated in the existing *European Cancer Information System (ECIS)*.

www.canscreen-ecis.iarc.who.int

September 2022 - February 2024



Grant Agreement 101056947, under the EU4Health Programme of the European Union

Flagship initiative: MEPs Against Cancer

ECL is proud to host the secretariat of the MEPs Against Cancer (MAC) interest group, uniting Members of European Parliament from across the political spectrum and EU member states to promote ambitious action against cancer.

Since its inception in 2005, the MAC group has played a key role in keeping cancer a top health priority on the EU's political agenda, positively impacting the lives of millions across Europe.

Following the 2024 European Parliament elections, ECL relaunched the MEPs Against Cancer group for the new legislative term, welcoming both returning and newly elected members. MAC now counts 30 members and is led by its leadership team: Chair Romana Jerkovic (S&D) and Vice-Chairs Loucas Fourlas (EPP), Giorgos Georgiou (The Left), and Tilly Metz (Greens/EFA).

"As Chair of MEPs Against Cancer, I will focus on further advancing Europe's Beating Cancer Plan by prioritising prevention, equitable access to treatment, and comprehensive support for cancer survivors. Through the European Parliament's oversight role and collaboration with diverse stakeholders, we will work toward meaningful improvements in cancer care across Europe."



Romana Jerković
Chair of the MEPs Against Cancer Interest Group

Flagship initiative: ECL Youth Ambassadors Programme

The ECL Youth Ambassadors Programme empowers young health advocates to raise awareness about cancer prevention, promoting the European Code Against Cancer. Since its launch in 2015, this flagship ECL initiative has united Youth Ambassadors from over 30 countries across Europe.

Throughout the year, our Youth Ambassadors organised impactful activities, events and online campaigns. In 2024, ECL supported 41 Youth Ambassadors.

In September 2024, ECL Youth Ambassadors came together for the annual YA Summer School. During a two-day online event, our young health advocates were invited to participate in workshops on AI and cancer prevention, the European Code Against Cancer, and a design thinking workshop conducted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).



Financial report

The Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL) was audited by an external, independent agency for the financial year 2024 (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024).

Operational income and charges

Turnover: Membership fees	224.309,00
Unrestricted grants / donations	60.000,00
European Commission grants	524.907,48
Other income	2.234,48

Total income **811.450,96**

Services and other goods	-543.194,56
Remuneration and social security costs	-613.073,21
Depreciation and write-off on receivables	-6.127,84

Operating profit **-350.944,65**

Financial income and charges

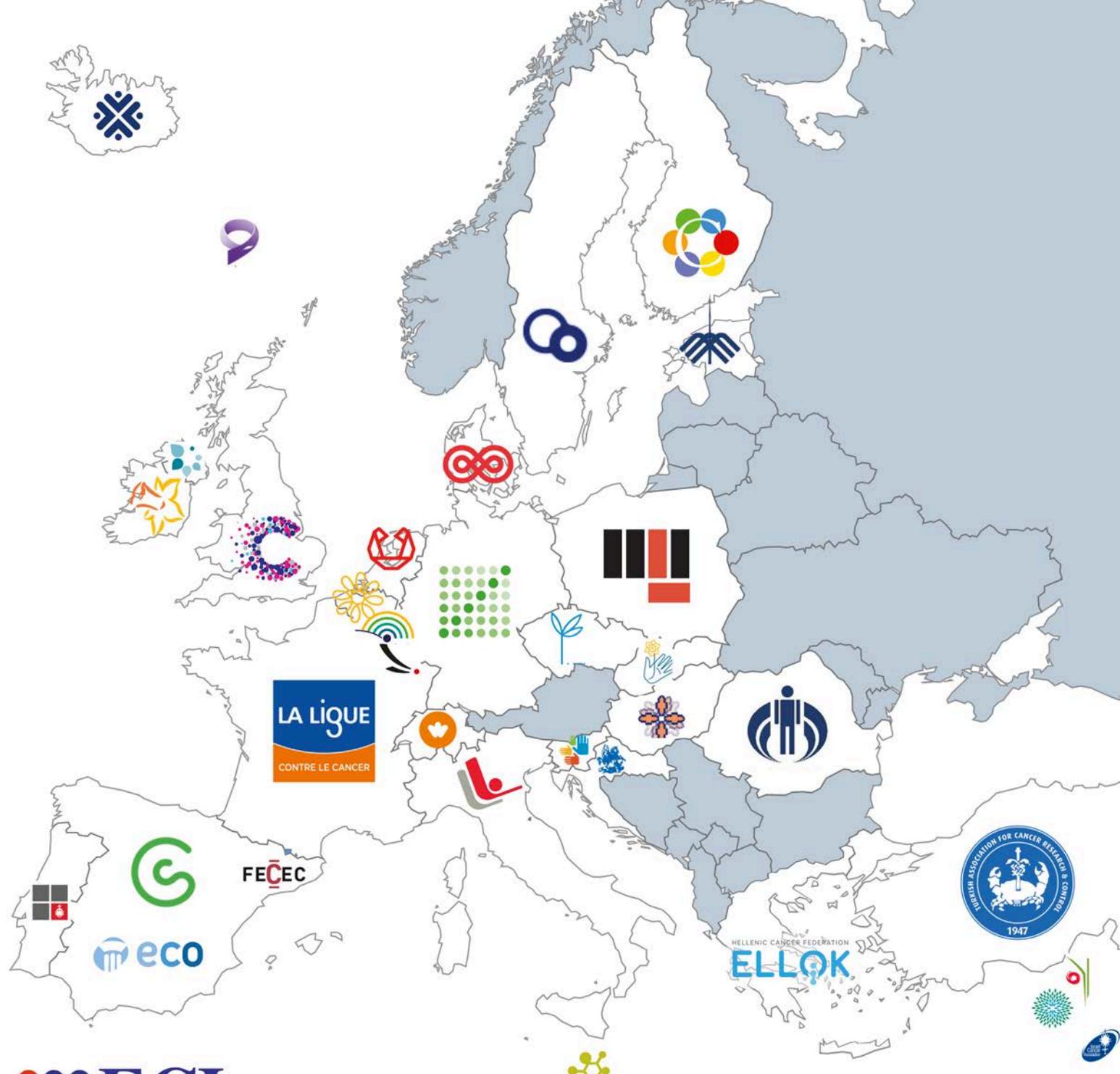
Financial income	584,37
Financial charges	-542,83

Balance **-350.903,11**

Other incomes and charges

Other incomes	1.500,00
Other charges	-474,21
Withholding tax on financial income	0.00

Revenues in excess of expenses **-349.877,32**



The **Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)** is a non-profit umbrella organisation made up of 34 national and regional cancer leagues advocating for improved cancer control and care across Europe. Our vision is a Europe free of cancer.

✉ ECL@cancer.eu

🏠 www.cancer.eu

✉ @cancerleagues

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