



ANNUAL
ACTIVITY
REPORT

2024

Presidium	4
1. MEMBERS AND NETWORKS	5
Members	6
Networks	6
2. PROJECTS	7
Inclusive First Aid (INFA, Concluded)	8
SEE (ongoing)	9
Assistance to Ukraine (ongoing)	10
Aid deliveries	10
Kyiv's Deputy Mayor at the Samaritan Forum 2024.	10
3. ADVOCACY	11
Position on the Social Economy.	12
Memorandum ahead of the Elections of the European Parliament	13
Obstacles to cross-border emergency services	14
Revision of the Driving Licences Directive.	14
4. EVENTS	15
Samaritan Forum 2024 and 30-year anniversary of Samaritan International	16
Samaritan Youth Contest 2024	17
5. FACTS AND FIGURES 2024	18

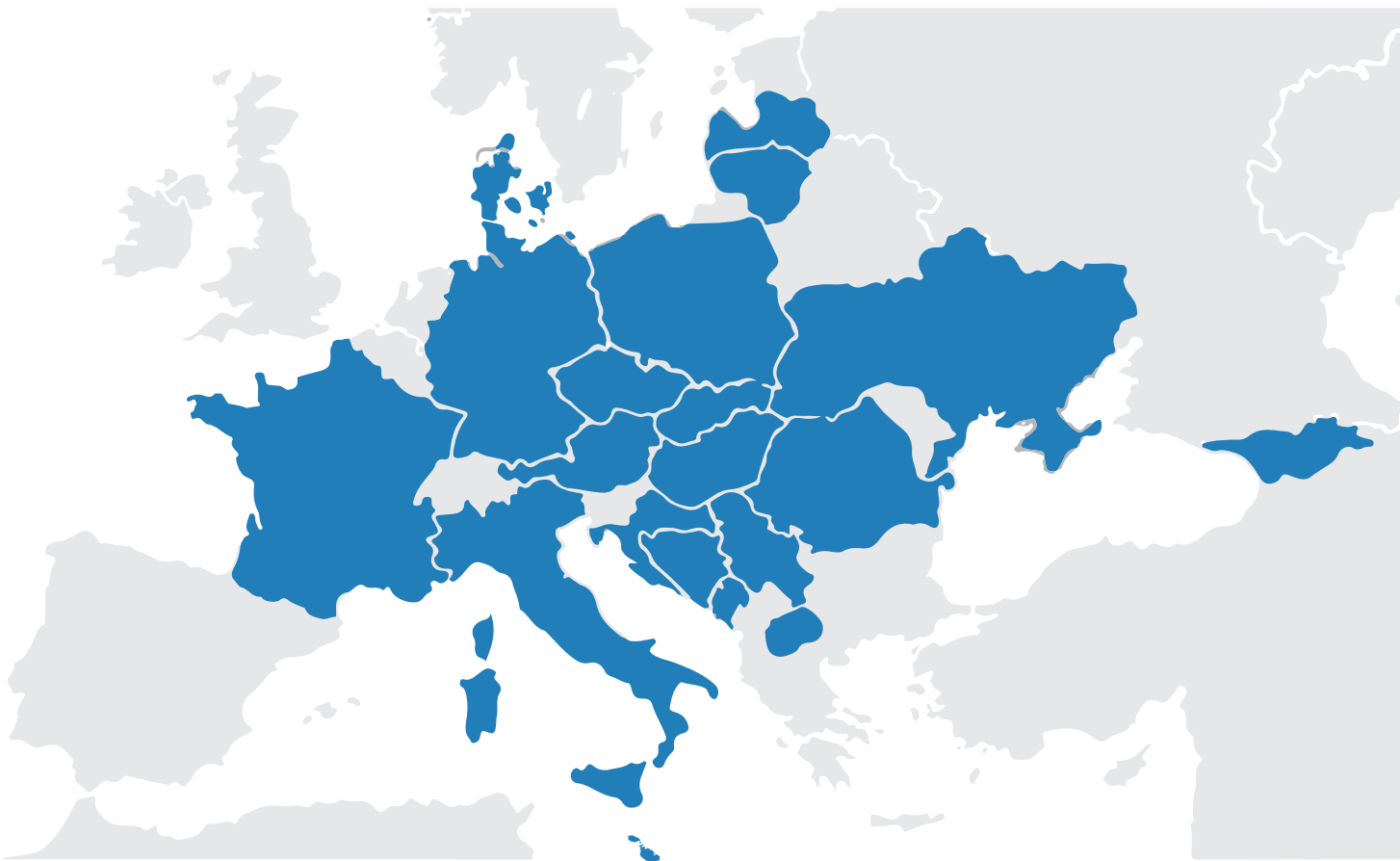
Dear Readers,

Looking back on 2024, the Samaritan International network has continued to push forward many initiatives in advocacy as well as practical collaboration. Together, we have worked on promoting inclusive first aid, empowering volunteering, and took the European Parliament elections as an occasion to reiterate our call for social cohesion and resilience through strong volunteering organisations as well as a continued implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the role civil society has to play in it.

2024 was also a special year in that both our largest regular events, the Samaritan Contest and the Samaritan Forum took place over the summer, instead of in alternating years – a delayed consequence of event cancellations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We also were able to welcome our 22nd member organisation to the network – Malta Rescue Corps, an organisation of mostly young first aid and paramedical volunteers.

In this report, you will find an overview of our activities in this eventful year.





Presidium

The current presidium of Samaritan International as of 31 December 2024



Knut FLECKENSTEIN
(President)



Andris BERZINS
(Vice-President)



Dr. Ivo BONAMICO
(Vice-President,
Secretary General)



Reinhard HUNDSMÜLLER
(Vice-President)



Mirka MOZER
(Vice-President)



Renata PENAZZI
(Vice-President)



Dr. Fabrizio PREGLIASCO
(Vice-President)



Edith WALLMEIER
(Vice-President)



Barbara ZYCHOWSKA
(Vice-President)

1 MEMBERS AND NETWORKS



Members

The members of Samaritan International as of 31/12/2024 are:



ALFA Centar Alfa Centar (AC, Montenegro)



ANPAS Associazione Nazionale Pubbliche Assistenze (ANPAS, Italy)



ASB Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB, Germany)



SAMARITERBUND Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Österreichs (ASBÖ, Austria)



ASSR Asociácia Samaritánov Slovenskej Republiky ASSR, Slovakia)



Secouristes Français CROIX BLANCHE Fédération des Secouristes Français – Croix Blanche (CB, France)



ASCR Asociace Samaritánů České Republiky (ASCR, Czech Republic)



DANISH PEOPLE'S AID Dansk Folkehjælp (DPA, Denmark)



CDI Институт за развој на заедницата (CDI, North Macedonia)



LIETUVOS SAMARIECIU BENDRIJA Lietuvos Samarieciu Bendrija (LSB, Lithuania)



FSR Federatia Samaritenilor Romani (FSR, Romania)



IDC Inicijativa za razvoj i saradnju (IDC, Serbia)



LATVIJAS SAMARIESU APVIENIBA Latvijas Samariešu apvieniba (LSA, Latvia)



Srce “Srce” – Udruga djece s teškoćama u razvoju, osoba s invaliditetom i njihovih obitelji (SRCE, Croatia)



SSU Спілки Самаритян України (SSU, Ukraine)



PHF Pompiers Humanitaires Français (PHF, France)



SFOP Samarytańska Federacja Organizacji Pożarządowych (SFOP, Poland)



SSK საქართველოს სამარიტელთა კავშირი (SSK, Georgia)



USB Országos Szamaritánus Társaság Szövetsége (USB, Hungary)



WEISSES KREUZ Landesrettungsverein Weißes Kreuz – Associazione Provinciale di Soccorso Croce Bianca (WK, Italy)



MALTA RESCUE CORPS Malta Rescue Corps (MRC, Malta)



ŽENE SA UNE Žene sa Une (ZSU, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Networks

Samaritan International is a member of the following networks, as of 31/12/2024:





2 PROJECTS

Inclusive First Aid (INFA, Concluded)

INFA was a best practice exchange project co-financed by Erasmus+ on teaching first aid to persons with disabilities

The SAM.I. organisations have, for quite some time, noted a demand for inclusive courses or accessible courses that take the support needs of people with certain types of disability into account. The conviction that everybody can and should learn first aid does of course also include persons with disabilities. The first aid training organisations are always looking for a way to better offer courses to persons with disabilities, even if this poses didactical challenges.

Many first aid trainers in SAM.I. have thus found practices to realise this - flexible and creative solutions to teach persons with disabilities in first aid – either simply in instances where someone with a disability showed up at their course or in other cases in dedicated courses, often requested by service providing institutions.

These existing practices were exchanged and, in collaboration with several disabled people's organisations (DPOs), critically discussed in terms of whether and under which circumstances they could be a generally recommended practice. The project's discussion results were compiled into a best practice catalogue, which is meant to support other trainers who wish to offer courses for persons with disability but need inspiration on how to approach the topic.

The project timeframe of INFA ended with the year 2024. A key gap that was identified in INFA was that no formal train-the-trainer education exists when it comes to preparing first aid trainers to conduct courses for trainees with disabilities. The SAM.I. partners, together with two of the DPOs that consulted INFA, have agreed to seek a follow-up project grant to address this gap.



More information
on INFA



SEE (ongoing)

Social Cohesion by Empowering Volunteering During Emergencies (SEE) is a project co-financed by the EU's CERV program about joint emergency response by organised and spontaneous volunteers.

SEE recognizes that the increasing frequency of disasters is stretching the resources of organised and skilled volunteers thin. At the same time, citizens are increasingly offering their help in spontaneous shows of solidarity. In the face of the effects of climate change, these offers for support can no longer be regarded as mere additional challenge for the skilled personnel on the site of an emergency, but has to be seen as a resource. However, a complex balancing of interests and motivations is required to offer meaningful and useful tasks for spontaneous volunteers and, at the same time, not damage the recognition and other motivations for engagement of the organised volunteers, who have dedicated their time long-term and reached a professional level of skills. SEE will conduct a participatory process via town hall meetings and citizens' panels in several model communities. The goal is to find approaches that enable volunteerism as a form of active citizenship for both spontaneous and organised helpers, in a way that fosters and maintains this engagement while applying everyone's abilities in meaningful ways that contribute to the alleviation of emergencies.

The project held its first meeting in Autumn of 2024 and will run until 2026.



More information



Assistance to Ukraine (ongoing)

AID DELIVERIES

Ever since the Russian attack on Ukraine in February 2022, the SAM.I. member organisations have been coordinating their aid and support. With the Samaritan Association of Ukraine, we have a strong and committed partner organisation on-site in Kyiv, through which SAM.I. and its member organisations organised numerous deliveries and distribution of aid goods. On top of these deliveries to SSU, SAM.I. members fulfilled direct requests for aid materials from other NGOs and institutions on-site.



KYIV'S DEPUTY MAYOR AT THE SAMARITAN FORUM 2024



© Barbara Bechtloff / ASB

A big honour and expression of our close cooperation with the Ukrainian Samaritans SSU, was the participation of the Vice-Mayor of the city of Kyiv, Maryna Khonda, who took it upon herself to join the Samaritan Forum despite the intensified attacks on her city. She gave a gripping account of the situation and daily life in Kyiv, but also pointed out how the Samaritans of Ukraine (SSU) continue the provision of social services in the face of adversity and the impressive solidarity expressed between Ukrainians, as well as from the international community.

New ideas for future projects and joint cooperations between the city of Kyiv, the Ukrainian Samaritans, and the Samaritan International network were exchanged.

3 ADVOCACY

Advocacy

In 2024, SAM.I. was actively engaged in many policy initiatives at the European level through participation in consultations, development of position papers, meetings with EU decision makers and networking with other civil society networks. The main topics of our work in 2024 were the following:



© European Commission

POSITION ON THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

With our joint position in reaction of the Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions of 27 November 2023, Samaritan International welcomed especially the provision that Member States had to adopt or update social economy strategies within 24 months, while emphasising the importance of a transparent and sincere involvement of social economy stakeholders.

Another crucial and longstanding demand of Samaritan International remains the definition of a public benefit status at European level. A common European public benefit status would substantially facilitate the application of supportive national financial and tax treatment (where applicable), as well as cross-border donations.



MEMORANDUM AHEAD OF THE ELECTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Ahead of the elections for the European Parliament in June 2024, Samaritan International published its election memorandum titled “Social resilience needs to become a priority” and sent a catalogue of questions to the European parties as well as the main groups in the European Parliament.

Samaritan International called for a stronger prioritisation of building a socially resilient society through:

- Support of engaged citizens and and qualified volunteers;
- Embracing civil society organisations for successful civil protection;
- Emphasizing competences and qualifications beyond the labour market;
- Swiftly implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights;
- Promoting a mindset shift towards a truly social economy;
- Facilitating civil society beyond EU borders.

Samaritan International President Knut Fleckenstein and Secretary-General Ivo Bonamico further met with MEP Iraxte García Pérez, the chair of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D) and MEP Dennis Radtke, spokesperson of the German EPP delegation on employment and social policy, to discuss the priorities of Samaritan International and to hand over a copy of the Memorandum.



More info



OBSTACLES TO CROSS-BORDER EMERGENCY SERVICES

Samaritan International gave input to the Committee of the Regions opinion on obstacles to cross-border emergency services. The many issues that can potentially arise in cross-border emergency responses range from technical obstacles, financial questions, recognition of professional competences, legal responsibilities in cases of accidents, required driving licenses, language barriers, etc. These issues are not exclusively encountered in cross-border emergencies, but also in the field of disaster response and civil protection. In light of these diverse challenges, Samaritan International considers that a European strategy on reducing obstacles to cross-border emergencies is necessary.



AI generated illustration

More info



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REVISION OF THE DRIVING LICENCES DIRECTIVE

Samaritan International's advocacy work on the revision of the Driving Licences Directive was a continuation from our advocacy campaign in 2023. The inclusion of an explicit provision for driving licences valid for the driving of ambulances, was considered a major milestone for the SAM.I. network. Both in the Council General Approach and the European Parliament's report, the maximum vehicle weight of an ambulance has been increased to 4,25t, for which a regular B licence is valid, which is an important enabler for civic engagement and active volunteers in the emergency sector.

Samaritan International will continue to advocate for its position as the negotiations between the European Parliament and Council advance.

More info



4 EVENTS

SAMARITAN FORUM 2024 AND 30-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF SAMARITAN INTERNATIONAL

The 11th International Samaritan Forum took place on 23-24 May 2024, at a crucial time just before the elections of the European Parliament. Hosted by ASB Germany in Cologne, the Forum brought together about Samaritans and external guests from 15 European countries. While the main thematic focus of this year's edition was on social services and social policies, international cooperation and solidarity was a key element in all contributions.

A special guest was Katarina Barley, ASB president and vice-president of the European Parliament, who highlighted the EU's social ambitions and achievements, but also identified where efforts need to be increased. Her speech was backed up by the results of a study carried out by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS). David Rinaldi presented innovative ideas on how to push the social agenda further and how to ensure that social outcomes are considered across all policy areas.

As a milestone in international cooperation, Samaritan International celebrated its 30th anniversary in Cologne. From its founding four member organisations in 1994, the network has been constantly growing and counted at the anniversary 21 members from 19 European countries.

The next Samaritan Forum is scheduled to take place in 2027.



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The full program is available for download on the Samaritan International website



SAMARITAN YOUTH CONTEST 2024



Samaritan International held its biennial first aid youth competition from 18-21 July. 19 teams from 12 organisations and 11 different countries competed in Zabljak, Montenegro at the 9th Samaritan Contest. This year's competition was jointly hosted by Samaritan International's members Alfa Centar (Montenegro), IDC (Serbia) and CDI (North Macedonia). The 2024 Contest was the result of an even wider international cooperation than usual, as the referees for the first aid stations came from additional SAM.I. members. It was also the first Contest where a guest team was admitted to compete, with Dollar Academy (Scotland) joining the event.



The youths competed in two age categories (12-15 and 16-21) and had to display their competences in four staged accident scenarios as well as additional games and tasks that were not directly first aid related.



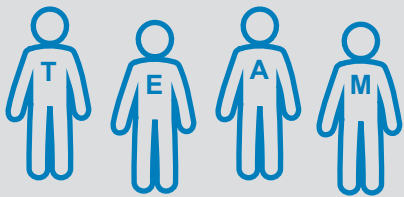
The objective of the Contest is not only to motivate the participating organisations to continuously improve their First Aid training and to learn from each other, but equally important to create a platform for cross-border contacts and friendships among the young participants.

The next Samaritan Contest is scheduled to take place in 2026 in Austria.



5 **FACTS** **AND** **FIGURES** **2024**

22



MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

20



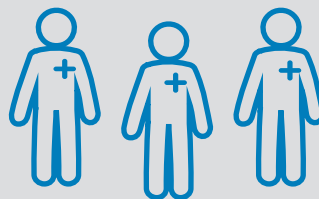
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

ALMOST

3 MILLION



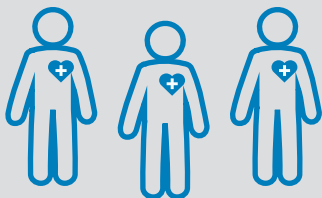
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS



50.000

EMPLOYEES

150.000



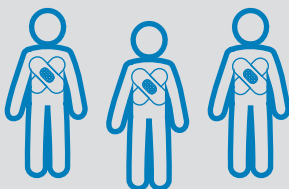
VOLUNTEERS

1 MILLION



MEDICAL TRANSPORTS

400.000



BENEFICIARIES OF SOCIAL SERVICES

OVER

100.000



PEOPLE TRAINED IN FIRST AID

30.000



PEOPLE IN INTERNAL STAFF AND VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

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