



ANNUAL  
ACTIVITY  
REPORT  
2025

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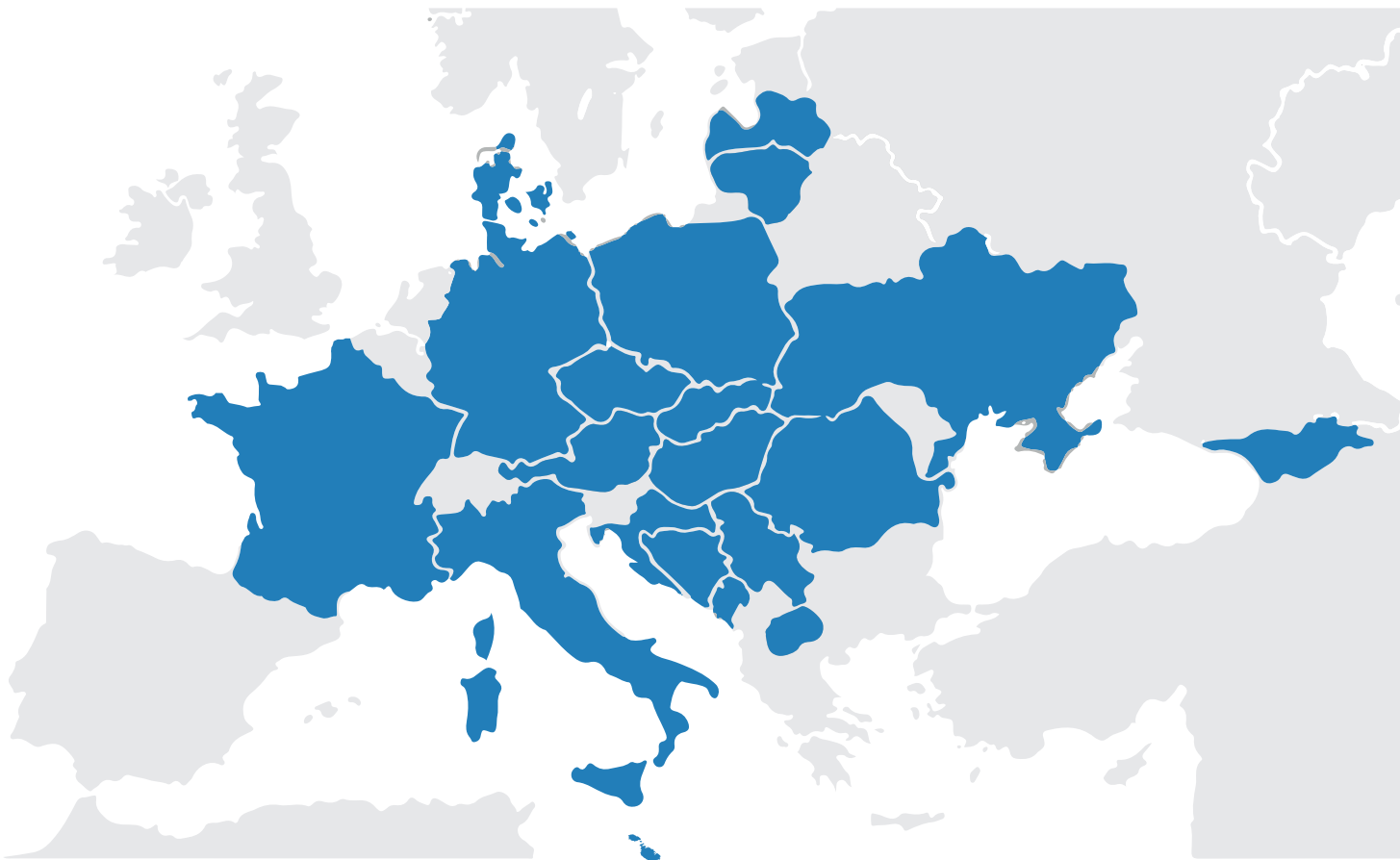
## Dear Readers,

Over the past year, our network has once again demonstrated the strength that emerges when committed organisations across Europe work together. From advancing inclusive first aid in our new project TIFA over exploring new approaches to volunteer engagement in project SEE, to supporting Ukrainian refugees and contributing to the opening of the Kyiv Social Center, 2025 has shown how deeply our members embody the principles of active help from citizens for citizens. Equally, our advocacy work at the European level has ensured that the voices and experiences of civil society are reflected in key policy debates that shape the social fabric of our continent.

As we move into 2026, we remain committed to strengthening social resilience, enabling active citizenship in the form of volunteerism, and supporting people in need—wherever our help is required. I look forward to continuing this important work together with all of our member organisations.

*Ivo Bonamico*

Dr. Ivo Bonamico  
Secretary General



## Presidium

The current presidium of Samaritan International as of 31 December 2025.



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

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## Members

The members of Samaritan International as of 31/12/2025 are:



## Networks

Samaritan International is a member of the following networks, as of 31/12/2025:



# 2 PROJECTS

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## TIFA (ongoing)

Training Module Inclusive First Aid (TIFA) is an Erasmus+ project to develop a training for first aid courses for persons with disabilities that started in November 2025. It follows up on the earlier project INFA, that first approached the topic by exchanging and critically discussing best practices on how to teach first aid to persons with disabilities. The lack of formal trainer education was identified as a major gap in INFA, as all previous solutions ultimately relied on the confidence and experience of individual first aid trainers.

TIFA addresses this gap. Over the course of two years, the consortium, consisting of two Disabled People's Organisations as well as several SAM.I. members active in first aid and/or social services, will develop and test a training module. This training module will be suitable for use as a further education course for first aid trainers and could, prospectively, also become part of the initial curricula for first aid trainers.

The project held its first meeting in early December 2025 and will continue its work in spring 2026.

More information  
on TIFA





## 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



## ISI by volunteers (ongoing)

Integrated, Smart Inclusion by volunteers (ISI) is a project co-financed by the ESF+'s Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) strand and aims at facilitating active and participatory integration for Ukrainian refugees. Training volunteers to become local integration coaches will offer flexible and adjustable integration support to Ukrainian refugees, adapted to their needs. Through the local coaching and activity offer, which will be implemented by the trained volunteers, meeting spaces for Ukrainians and the local population are created to foster a two-directional integration. The training module to be developed throughout the course of the project will include one part jointly conceptualised by the project partners, including themes such as communication, psycho-social care and intercultural skills. This part will be complemented by a locally developed "knowledge hub", mapping locally available support offers from language courses, to employment support and cultural offers. Having completed the training, volunteers are equipped to empower Ukrainian refugees in the areas where they need support, as well as competent in the many facets required for successful integration and social inclusion, including the facilitation of encounters between the local population and Ukrainians.

The project is currently in the phase of training module development. The first trainings of volunteers will take place in spring of 2026.

More  
information



## Assistance to Ukraine (ongoing)

### KYIV SOCIAL CENTER

An international consortium consisting of members of Samaritan International members (ASB, ASBÖ, LSA and WK) supported a project by Ukrainian Samaritan organisation SSU and the City of Kyiv to build a social services centre for persons affected by the war. Naturally, this includes rehabilitation services for injured former personnel of the Ukrainian armed forces as directly affected persons, but also support to their extended families or persons otherwise in need of a variety of social services or rehabilitation after an injury caused by Russian attacks. An existing structure, a former movie theatre, was completely renovated in the process to enable a central hub for practical rehabilitation services as well as consultation about available social and other city services for affected people.

The project was concluded in December 2025 with the official opening of the centre.

Despite the end of the project, aid for Ukraine is ongoing. Several Samaritan organisations keep directly supporting SSU in their work by means of aid deliveries.



# 3 ADVOCACY

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## Advocacy

In 2025, 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 2025 were the following:

### POSITION ON PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Samaritan International participated in the public consultation of the European Commission on the evaluation of the Public Procurement Directive.

In its position Samaritan International welcomed the planned revision as an opportunity to strengthen socially responsible public procurement.

The main identified shortcomings of the current Directive were the following:

- The potential of socially responsible public procurement as a strategic tool is not utilised enough by the Member States. The lack of data availability, both on the national and at EU-level, makes effective monitoring and evaluation impossible;
- Except for the 'horizontal social clause', any provisions on socially responsible public procurement are optional. Therefore significant differences exist between Member States;  
Even though the 'horizontal social clause' includes a mandatory adherence to collective agreements, the provision lacks proper implementation and monitoring. It is important that the respect of collectively agreed wages is strictly enforced;
- The distinction between emergency ambulance services and patient transport ambulance services is not practical, creates legal uncertainty and disadvantages non-profit organisations offering these services. The ECJ ruling (C-424/18) only increases the legal uncertainty and clearly demonstrates that an objective separation of these services is not possible;
- The maximum duration of three years for reserved contracts in the field of social services is not sufficiently long to make the necessary investments and ensure qualified staff and volunteers to provide high-quality services.





## 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 and 2024 ending at EU-level with the adoption of the revision by the European Parliament and the Council. Samaritan International welcomes the possibility for Member States to allow the driving of ambulances and other emergency or civil protection vehicles of up to 5t with a B-licence.

This is a necessary step forward, as modern equipment makes ambulances heavier, but they are often driven by trained and qualified volunteers. A requirement of a C-licence would hinder the civic engagement possibilities of many volunteers.

Samaritan International's member organisations will continue to advocate at the national level to ensure that the Member States make use of the new provision.



## CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY

Samaritan International participated in the preparation of the Civil Society Strategy with a position paper, raising the following points:

- Adequate funding, unbureaucratic access to funding, funding security and a strong enabling framework are essential for a strong civil society;
- The value of structured and qualified volunteering needs to be better recognised, not only for the tasks the volunteers fulfil, but for its value to social cohesion through the promotion of civic engagement, democratic and social skills;
- CSOs in civil protection, disaster preparedness and response need a better European integration, as well as supporting national policies to use their full potential;
- CSO networks that bring together member organisations from the EU and its neighbours should be recognised for and supported in their important role for foreign policy.



## CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE NEW EPSR ACTION PLAN

Samaritan International participated in the preparation of the new European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) Action Plan with a position paper, raising the following points:

- The ESF+ is a crucial funding source for CSOs in the social sector and must be safeguarded in the next MFF rather than merged into National and Regional Partnership Plans;
- A strong social Europe and social cohesion must be recognised as a precondition for preparedness and resilience and thus strongly safeguarded against competing policy priorities;
- Skills need to be defined in a broader way to comprise civic and social skills beyond labour market relevance;
- The root causes of the persisting labour shortage in the social service sector need to be addressed as a priority by the new Action Plan;
- Swift implementation of the Council Recommendations on Long-Term Care and additional measures are needed to make accessible, affordable and high-quality long-term care a reality.

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## NGO Campaigns

In 2025, Samaritan International participated in several campaigns led by other CSO networks to amplify our voice towards the European institutions and decisionmakers.

## CIVIL SOCIETY STATE OF THE UNION

Civil Society Europe (CSE) led the work on the Civil Society State of the Union 2025. As the European Commission President delivers their assessment on the state of affairs in the European Union each year, it is crucial that civil society complements this picture with its own perspective.

In recent years, the decline of democracy, human rights and the rule of law continued across the European Union, and the world. Our democratic structures are being eroded; migration policies are being reformed with restrictive and inhumane approaches; social rights are put to question and set on a course of disappearance; actions to counter climate change are being purposefully reversed and halted; digitalisation is developing without the right safeguards and inclusive measures; and our global world order is shifting in ways that put in question safety and security at a measure we have not seen since the last century.

All of these processes have a significant impact on the well-being of European citizens, in the present and the future. The challenges in them require solutions that center the view of those who represent and work with citizens directly: civil society organisations.

The report is structured in 6 chapters, of which the chapters on a socially just EU and on human-centred security and resilience policies are of key concern for Samaritan International.



# Civil Society State of the Union

2025



Co-funded by  
the European Union



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## DEFENDING CIVIL SOCIETY

Also led by Civil Society Europe and supported by 600 civil society organisations, we issued a joint statement to counter disinformation to defend public funding for civil society, after the European Commission's LIFE program came under attack.

The statement called on all democratic forces to oppose false narratives and disinformation around the role of civil society organisations, to protect our unique role in European democracy and to support public funding for civil society. Civic participation is an essential pillar of our shared European values. It further called on decision-makers to ensure a robust legal framework in which civil society and citizens organisations can thrive and play their role in interacting with policy-makers in order to have a more fully informed decision-making process.

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## SAFEGUARDING THE ESF+

The European Association of Service providers for Persons with Disabilities (EASPD) led the campaign to safeguard the ESF+ including a joint statement "Keep what works: 8 success factors for a future ESF+".

The campaign was launched in response to the Commission's proposal within the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), to merge the ESF+ with other policy areas into National and Regional Partnership Plans.

The statement highlights eight primary success factors of the European Social Fund+, including

- Guaranteed funding for employment, training & social initiatives
- Multi-level governance, through shared management between the EU and its regions
- Earmarking for social inclusion, to ensure funding also reaches the most excluded
- Simplification and flexibility for end-beneficiaries, to make EU Funds more attractive
- Enabling conditions, to align funds with international legal frameworks
- The partnership principle, to ensure EU funds meet local needs
- Funding for local initiatives, instead of solely large-scale projects
- Focus on long-term priorities and reforms, rather than short-term investments only.

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# 4 EVENTS

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# TRAINING ACADEMY ON THE EUROPEAN SEMESTER

In September 2025, Samaritan International co-organised a training academy on the European Semester in Brussels.

The Training Academy brought together members from both networks for two days of intensive training, exchange, and strategy building on one of the most influential EU governance processes: the European Semester.

Despite its abstract and complex nature, the Training Academy succeeded in breaking down the process into concrete steps for engagement, both on European and on national level.

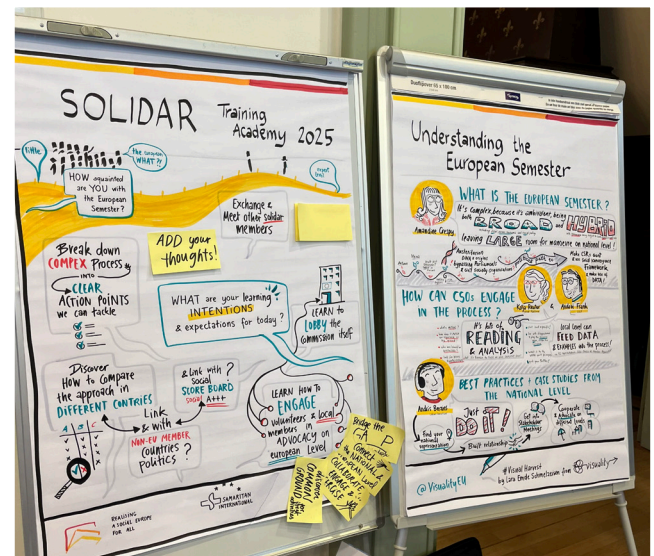


## WHY THE SEMESTER MATTERS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

The European Semester is the EU's annual cycle of economic and social policy coordination. Though highly technical, it has profound implications for social rights, welfare systems, education, and labour markets. Increasingly, access to EU funding, including the Recovery and Resilience Facility, is tied to compliance with Semester outcomes.

The Training Academy provided members with the tools to read and follow the Semester critically, engage at the right moments, and connect EU-level processes with national struggles for social justice.

As a result of the Training Academy, a toolkit was produced to help members to actively engage in the Semester process.



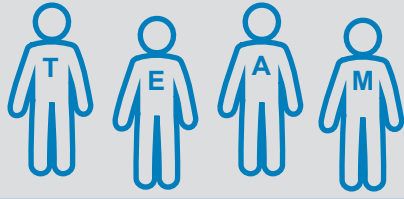
More info:

# **5** **FACTS AND FIGURES 2025**

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MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

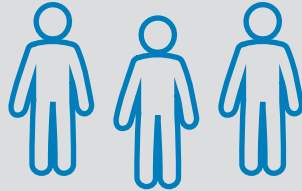
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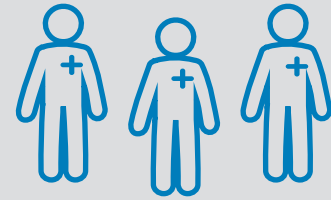
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

ALMOST

3 MILLION



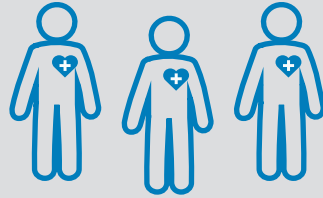
INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS



50.000

EMPLOYEES

150.000



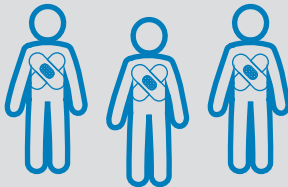
VOLUNTEERS

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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