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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Global Stroke Bill of Rights: “I have the right to...”**

*World Stroke Organization launches Global Stroke Bill of Rights*

**ISTANBUL and BASEL | 22 October 2014** Stroke specialists, stroke survivors, neurologists, leading medical professionals and advocates gathered last evening at the Opening Ceremony of the 9<sup>th</sup> World Stroke Congress to identify strategies to combat the second most common cause of death worldwide. A highlight of the Opening Ceremony was the launch of the Global Stroke Bill of Rights. The document identifies the aspects of care that are important for all stroke survivors and caregivers from across the world. The document was created because of the urgent for: increased stroke awareness among the population and government; a global policy on stroke prevention, improved health services and long term support for survivors; scaled-up advocacy, i.e., putting a face to the fight against stroke in as much as other diseases have; a call-to-action reference document to be used by stroke advocates.

WSO President Stephen Davis states “it is now time that all stroke patients and caregivers around the world have their own Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights forms the basis to ensure that every patient has access to all elements of appropriate stroke care, to optimize their best chance of survival and recovery. The WSO is calling on governments, ministries of health and healthcare systems, with the support of key opinion leaders and stroke advocates, to rise to this challenge and ensure that the Bill of Rights is fully supported and implemented.

There are 17 million people who suffer a stroke each year. Stroke is the leading cause of disability worldwide. Every other second, someone, be it an adult or a child, a man or a woman, young or old, suffers a stroke. Despite these shocking statistics, many people affected by stroke are unable to access treatments, rehabilitation and support that would provide them with the greatest chance of a good recovery and a healthier, more productive and independent life.

The fight against a disease that claims a life every six seconds is gaining momentum as more people take direct action to ensure that stroke can be beaten. The Stroke Bill of Rights was developed by a group of stroke survivors and caregivers from each region of the world. They were supported by a larger group of survivors and caregivers and by thousands more from different countries, cultures and language who completed surveys to understand if there are any differences in different parts of the world. Their responses demonstrate what is considered to be important in stroke recovery is consistent regardless of where people affected by stroke live.

The European Stroke Organisation is joining the World Stroke Organization and its members and partners worldwide to help ensure that this important human rights document receives the attention that it deserves.

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### About the European Stroke Organisation

The European Stroke Organisation (ESO) is a Paneuropean society of stroke researchers, national and regional stroke societies and lay people organisations that was founded in December 2007.

The aim of the European Stroke Organisation (ESO) is to reduce the incidence and impact of stroke by changing the ways that stroke is viewed and treated. This can only be achieved by professional and public education, and by making institutional changes. The ESO provides assistance in achieving this goal and in harmonising stroke management across the whole of Europe.

The ESO's major objective is to improve and optimise the management of stroke in Europe by providing medical education to healthcare professionals and the lay public in Europe.

Prof. Kennedy Lees, Professor of Cerebrovascular Medicine at the University of Glasgow and Director of the Acute Stroke Unit in the Western Infirmary in Glasgow, is the president of the European Stroke Organisation.

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### About the World Stroke Organization

The World Stroke Organization (WSO) was established in October 2006. WSO's mission is to reduce the global burden of stroke through prevention, treatment and long-term care.

As the lead international body for stroke, WSO aims to accomplish its mission by:

- Fostering the best standards of practice
- Increasing stroke awareness among the population and among health professionals
- Preventing subtle cerebrovascular disease leading to gait disorders, imbalance, vascular cognitive impairment, and behavioral changes
- Influencing policies for stroke prevention and improved health services
- Providing education in collaboration with public and private organizations
- Facilitating stroke research advocacy for people with stroke
- Fostering the development of systems and organizations for long-term care and support of stroke survivors and their families.

With individual and organizational members worldwide, including stroke support groups, WSO is the global voice for stroke. WSO is the only international NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO). Prof. Stephen Davis, MD, FRCP, Edin FRACP, from Melbourne, Australia, is the president of the World Stroke Organisation.