

# Belgian Heart League 2023



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# About us

## Our mission:

Reduce cardiovascular mortality through free prevention accessible to all.

## Why do we do this?

Cardiovascular disease remains one of the leading causes of death in Belgium, with 30,000 Belgians still dying from it every year.

- Almost 1 in 4 Belgians has high blood pressure,
- 1 in 3 is overweight or obese,
- 1 in 4 smokes daily,
- More than 1 in 3 adults is not physically active enough,
- A large majority of people over 40 have high cholesterol levels.
- Around 1 million Belgians suffer from diabetes
- Around 220,000 suffer from heart failure, and many are unaware of it.

## How can we help?

### RAISING AWARENESS

Cardiovascular diseases  
**Through** our prevention campaigns, Heart Weeks, congresses and free screening days

### INFORM

The general public about risk factors

**Via** our brochures, Coeur & Artères magazine, our website and the Reanim application

### SUPPORT

Patients and their families

**Through** our hotline, information campaigns and contacts with heart patient clubs.

**Sans les donateurs, nous ne pourrions pas accomplir notre mission.**

**En effet, la Ligue Cardiologique Belge ne reçoit aucune subvention de l'État.**

**C'est votre générosité qui permet de mener à bien nos actions depuis plus de cinquante ans.**

# Belgian Heart League : Activity Report for the year 2023

## Partner in visibility :

### International collaborations :

- ♥ European Heart Network
- ♥ World Heart Federation
- ♥ Familial Hypercholesterolemia Europe Foundation
- ♥ Global Heart Hub
- ♥ European Alliance for Patient Access

### National collaborations :

- ♥ Alliance pour une société sans tabac/Alliantie voor een Rookvrije Samenleving
- ♥ Génération sans tabac/ Generatie Rookvrij
- ♥ Diabete Liga / Association du Diabète
- ♥ Stichting Tegen Kanker / Fondation contre le cancer
- ♥ Belgian Alliance for Cardiovascular Health

### Media Collaborations :

- ♥ MediaHuis (Gazet van Antwerpen, Belang van Limburg, Nieuwsblad, De Standaard).
- ♥ DPG Media
- ♥ VRT
- ♥ Rossel (Le Soir, Sudpresse, Soimag)
- ♥ IPM group (Paris Match)

## Link with notaries :





Since 2022, we are a member of the national campaign Testament.be and have thus contact with people interested in our cause. We are present on the events organized by Testament.be to be in contact with our legacy members. We also finetuned the brochure to encourage legacies to our association and sent those to every notary in Belgium.

## Link with our community :

### Social Media

Social Media has become mandatory when trying to pass some messages to the general public (especially the younger generation). The BHL had to improve its presence on the internet to make sure to be heard. Initiatives have been taken in that matter:

- ♥ Daily management of our Instagram account to reach younger people and use the marketing of influencers in our campaigns;
- ♥ Daily content posted on our Facebook account to grow an engaged community;
- ♥ Regular use of our LinkedIn account (important to reach companies and healthcare professionals).

-  Facebook: from 2100 to 2469 followers
-  Instagram: from 681 to 910 followers
-  LinkedIn: from 835 to 1277 followers
-  Youtube: 19.598 viewing of our videos

### Website

The website is continuously updated (content & look). Articles, webinars and podcasts are regularly posted as "news" on our website.

It is possible to donate money online (Stripe), to order our brochures & posters, and to subscribe to the magazine via our website.

### Newsletters

We started a digital newsletter in 2022, sent out to our community on a monthly basis. In 2022, we went from 0 to 4.028 members. This year, we increased up to 6.731 subscribers . We have sent 12 newsletters in each language during the year, with scientific and vulgarized content.

Apart from that, we have sent 27 specific mailings to different target groups for our events (medical webinars, patient webinars, Please Stand Up & Move, etc.).



## “Coeur & Artères” - “Hart & Slagaders” (March, June, October, December 2023)

As every year, 4 numbers of our public edition magazine were issued in 2023. It is a way to stay close to our members and to give them more information on current topics on cardiology as well as on what we do.

We continued to distribute it in hospitals (cardiology waiting rooms) and send it to our members. We also continued our collaboration with *Trilogic*, a company which distributes our magazine in the waiting rooms of 6000 general practitioners. The magazine is now printed in 15.000 copies (7.500 of each language).

Some articles are published on a monthly basis on our website and our social media, to share the content more widely and to attract more people to our website.



## Raising Awareness :

### Information of the general public on CVD and risk factors

Our first and main mission is to provide information on CVD and risk factors to the Belgian public. We do so:

- ♥ by giving free access to our leaflets and posters (that we distribute as broadly as possible)
- ♥ by sharing daily content on our social media and website
- ♥ by organizing private or public conferences given by our speakers (members of our Scientific Committee)



### Please Move for a Healthy Heart - 5th edition (May 2023)

According to the World Health Organization, each year 3.2 million deaths are attributable to a sedentary lifestyle. This makes physical inactivity the fourth most deadly risk factor in the world. This situation was worsened by COVID and lockdowns.

Based on these observations, we launched a new edition of our Please Move for a Healthy Heart campaign, which invited all Belgian (companies & individuals) to stand up and fight against sedentary lifestyles. This new edition offered free stretching sessions and useful tips & tricks to everyone during 2 weeks, for every fitness level.

#### Results:

- ♥ 23 articles in the press
- ♥ 50 Belgian companies participated (19.074 employees reached)



## Atherosclerosis Awareness Month (June 2023)

The Belgian Heart League helps prevent cardiovascular diseases and deaths via several actions such as general disease awareness campaigns.

Atherosclerosis is a disease which is not well known by the general public, although it is a 'silent' killer that is one of the most important causes of death in Belgium.

A campaign towards the general population was thus created, with a strong presence on social media as well as in the press.

We focused for the first time on a fully digital campaign. We created videos with KOLs, each video received more than 200k views! The campaign was also mentioned in our magazine Coeur & Artères / Hart & Slagaders distributed in GPs offices and hospitals.

### Results:

- ♥ 3 TV interviews
- ♥ 3 radio interviews
- ♥ 3 printed articles and ads
- ♥ 10 digital articles

## 45th Heart Week (25 September - 01 October 2023)

Theme: *Slechte gewoontes verouderen uw hart – Les mauvaises habitudes vieillissent votre cœur*

Since 1969, the Week of the Heart is an annual national campaign about CVD and risk factors,. It always takes place in the last full week of September and has deals with a theme that changes every year. Hospitals, medical centers, patient associations, companies and municipalities organise activities, information and screening stands during the week. This gives great visibility to the campaign and enables many people to be touched by its messages.

Each year, the campaign also benefits from an important media attention (paper, digital, radio, television). Since a few years, the campaign is also present on Social media, aiming to get the attention of the younger generation.

This year, the cardiologists decided to tackle the bad habits of the Belgians: sedentary lifestyle, smoking, unhealthy food and alcohol intake. All these lifestyle risk factors can have a dramatic impact on your cardiovascular health.



Therefore, we created:

- ♥ A brochure
- ♥ A poster
- ♥ Digital items
- ♥ A dedicated webpage
- ♥ A 28-pages magazine on the topic
- ♥ 2 webinars for patients on the topic
- ♥ 2 newsletters on the topic
- ♥ 2 videos on our campaign, used on all social media
- ♥ A radiospot (most NL and FR radiostations)
- ♥ Stickers for hospitals to consult our website
- ♥ Tool to calculate your heart age



As every year, this campaign was also the occasion for the BHL to talk about heart diseases in general, and to stimulate Belgians to protect their hearts from modifiable risk factors.

### Results:

- ♥ 5 TV interviews
- ♥ 11 radio interviews
- ♥ 5 printed articles and ads
- ♥ 37 digital articles
- ♥ 56.000 visits to the website
- ♥ 42.000 tests «calculate your heart age» carried out on website



We also organised activities all over Belgium (screening stands, information sessions, conferences, walks, etc.) and many institutions participated:

- ♥ 60 activities in hospitals, communities, medical centers, etc...
- ♥ 50k brochures distributed



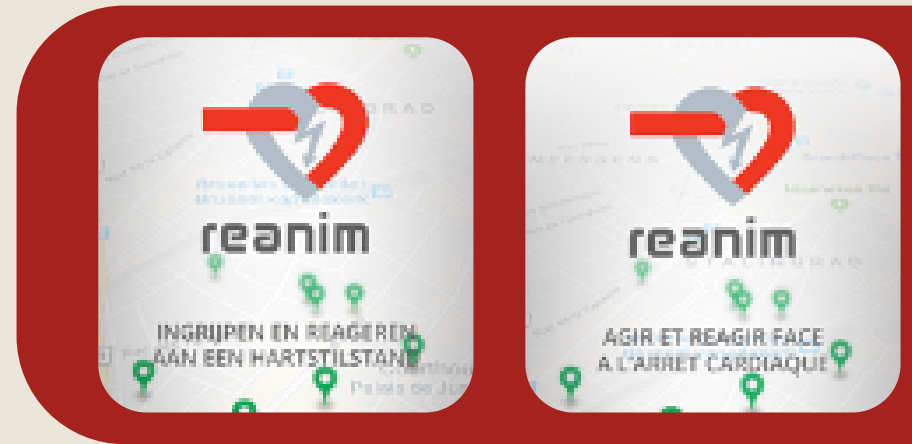
### **Collaboration with Belgian Volley League :**

We created a video together with Martin Perrin, a volleyball player who suffered a cardiac arrest on the field. Together with the support of the Belgian Volley League we were able to present this at their press conference to create awareness on cardiac arrest in the national volleyball clubs.

## Reanim

Reanim is a free app which enables its users to locate the closest defibrillators in case of emergency. People who are trained in first aid might register themselves as *Chevaliers du Coeur/ Hartridders* to help a person in distress close to them if needed.

App will be reviewed for campaigns in 2024.



## Fundraising Campaign (December 2023)

We prepared a campaign in both languages to encourage people to donate money to the BHL. The goal of this campaign was to direct the end-of-the-year generosity of the Belgians towards our association.

## Policy Actions

### Collaboration with BACH

We need to implement health objectives into a Belgian Cardiovascular Health Plan. An action at the Chamber of Representatives on November 9th was held to get political awareness and support. The plan is put forward by the newly formed Belgian Alliance for Cardiovascular Health (BACH).



As being part of BACH, the first multi-stakeholder collaboration of universities, prevention organizations, scientific associations, and industry companies, we participated in the awareness action in the Chamber of Representatives in Brussels. We were glad to see many MP's show their heart for the Belgian Cardiovascular Health Plan.

More follow-up actions will follow on a national and European level in 2024 with the elections upcoming.

## Early Screening

Early screening of the cardiovascular risk factor is essential to detect issues at the start and prevent bigger cardiac problems to arrive. Therefore, we organize screening sessions where we test blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, BMI, and lifestyle (smoking, eating, sleeping, sports).

In total, we organized 15 screening sessions in 2023 (on top of all the screenings organized by our partners during the week of the heart), among 3 who were organized with partner companies (AXA & Rekenhof/Cours des Comptes). In total 2.546 persons were tested!

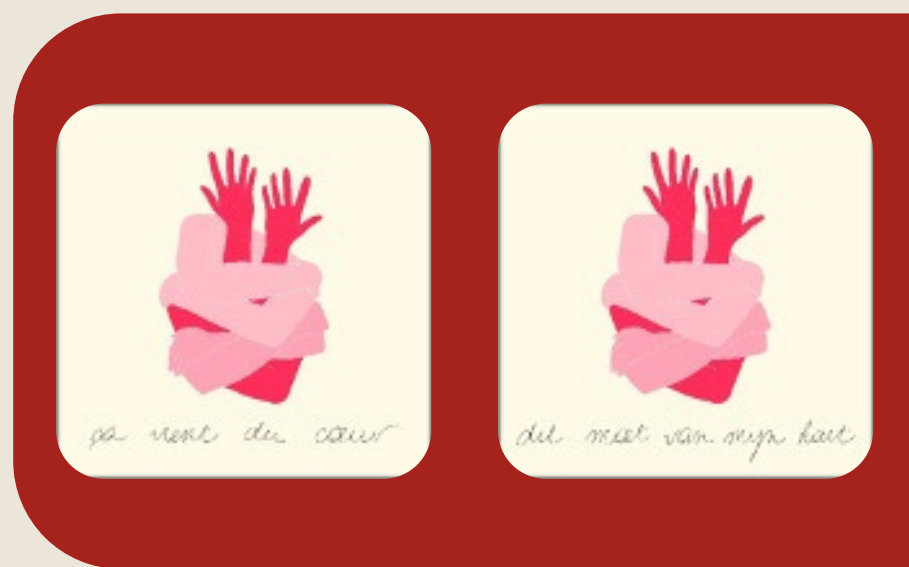


Where	When	How many people screened
AXA (BP)	March	208
Seraing	19/03	209
Police de Bruxelles	13/03	79
Pelt	04/05	220
20 km de Bruxelles	28/05	435
Gent	14/06	180
Federal Parliament	15/06	170
Namur	27/06	193
Fosse-la-Ville	08/10	200
Rekenhof	19/10	129
AXA (chol)	October	223
Durbuy	08/11	50
Beringen	13/11	88
Anderlecht	14/11	60
Brugge	29/11	102

## Supporting patients

### Continuing our podcast series (all year long)

- ♥ French series: « *Ça vient du cœur* »
- ♥ Dutch series: « *Dit moet van mijn hart* »



Victims of cardiovascular diseases tell their own story in a podcast. The aim is to do prevention through storytelling, and to show that cardiac patients have very different profiles (CVD can happen to anyone).

In 2023, 2 French podcasts and 6 Dutch podcasts were created.

### Webinars for patients :

A successful project of patient webinars was continued in 2023.

We created 6 different sessions during the year:

- ♥ Hartfalen: Dr. Mathias Dupont
- ♥ Insuffisance cardiaque: Anne-Cathérine Pouleur
- ♥ Atherosclerose: Ernst Rietzsche
- ♥ Athéroclérose: Fabian Demeure
- ♥ Roken: Thomas Vanassche
- ♥ Fumer: Laurence Galanti

### Patient Alliance :

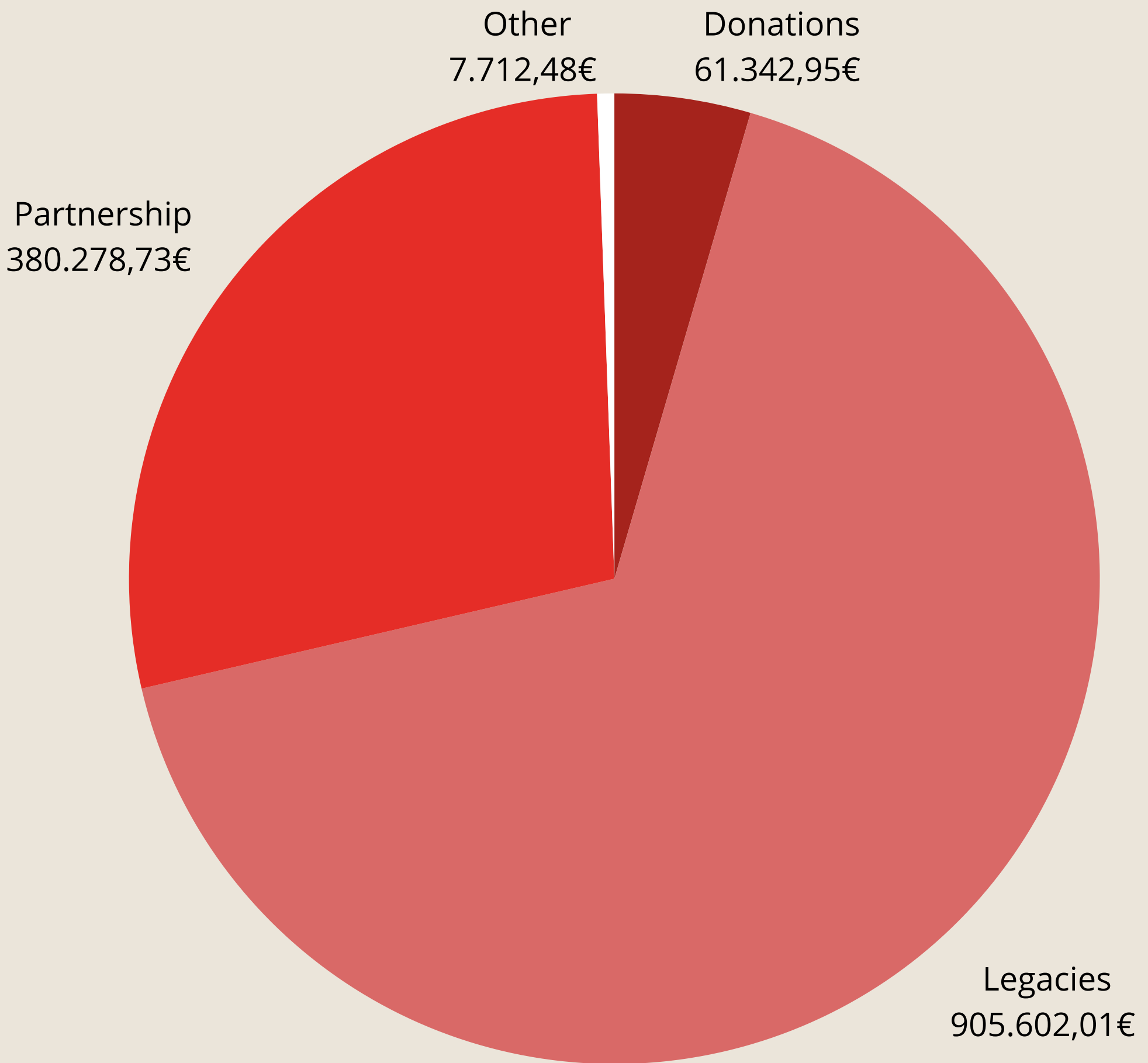
In November, we created the Patient Alliance (PA) of the Belgian Heart League. The PA is a group of patients, both NL and FR, with different cardiovascular diseases represented. The goal is to increase the patient voice in the internal and external processes of the BHL.

Internally, we want to increase the patient share in developing new materials, campaigns, events, etc.

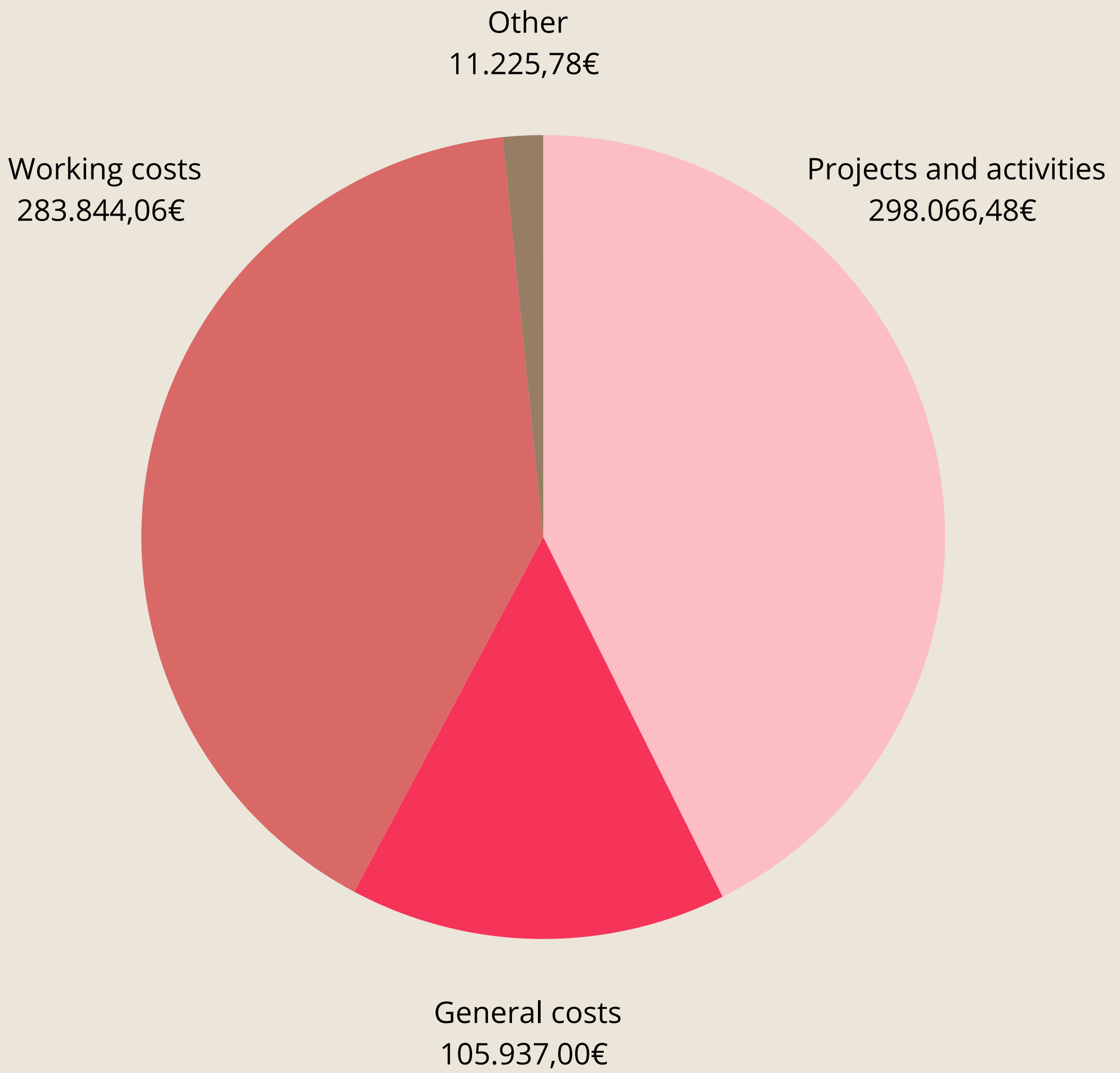
Externally, we want to increase the patient voice in the national media, towards policy makers and to guide our industry partners.



IN



# OUT



## Scientific Events :

Prevention and information of the Belgian population are essential to reduce the number of cardiovascular diseases. In this context, and for several years already, we have chosen to inform general practitioners about the most important news in cardiology, because they are the first line of contact for the majority of Belgians when it comes to their health.

We organized 2 webinars for the medical community in 2023 :

### Telemedicine :

As telemedicine is a hot topic in medicine, we decided to do a webinar for GPs to discuss the latest developments in telemedicine in cardiology.

### Atherosclerosis :

Linked to our atherosclerosis campaign, we organized a webinar for GPs to explain the novelties on atherosclerosis in diagnostics, screening and treatment.

**More than 500 GPs attended one of the two webinars, which is a success factor to repeat this activity for the next years.**

