

Annual Report 2025



ETOP·IBCSG

Foundation for International
Lung & Breast Cancer Research

Annual Report 2025

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Dear Reader

At the heart of every enduring foundation lies not only in its mission, but the people who embody it day after day. The four pillars that make up the DNA of ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation are Trust, Community, Consistency and, of course, Innovation.

These values are not abstract ideals, but lived realities—shaped by longstanding, dedicated members of the board, realised together with the leadership and employees of the Coordinating Center and dedicated clinical investigators and researchers from around the world. Supported by generous donors, industry partners, and many others whose involvement and commitment underpin our institutional credibility, these values reflect our collective effort and shared purpose.

The fact that the 49 members of our team at the Coordinating Center in Berne have been employed for an average of 9.8 years is quite remarkable and is a testament to trust and continuity and the sustained expertise that safeguards the Foundation's vision and ensures its effective execution.

This continuity is embodied most notably by Anita Hiltbrunner, Director of the Coordinating Center, who this year celebrates an extraordinary 35 years of service. Her leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to excellence have shaped not only the Center's culture, but the very heartbeat of our operational strength.

And it is precisely this continuity that fuels our fourth pillar – Innovation. It reflects our scientific strength, our readiness to explore new frontiers, and our determination to contribute to the cancer landscape through rigorous research, global collaboration, and a relentless pursuit of better outcomes for patients worldwide.



On a personal note, I am deeply honored to have received the ESMO Lifetime Achievement Award this year. I accept it with genuine gratitude and humility, knowing that such recognition is never the result of individual effort alone. It reflects the support, collaboration, and trust of the many colleagues, partners, mentors, and friends who have shaped my professional journey. This award strengthens my commitment to our shared mission and inspired me to continue the work we pursue together.

It is a pleasure to offer you the key developments and highlights of our work in the Annual Report 2025 and sincerely thank you for your continued trust and support.

Prof. Dr. med. Rolf A. Stahel
President of the Foundation Board

Key Figures in 2025



26

Participating countries in ongoing ETOP IBCSG trials

ETOP 11, IBCSG 23

49

Coworkers at the Coordinating Center

Total number of years 482.83
Average number of years 9.85



215

Recruited Patients

ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 88, IBCSG 110
Non-ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 0, IBCSG 17



2

Launched clinical trials

ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 2, IBCSG 0
Non-ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 0, IBCSG 0

10

Recruiting clinical trials

ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 5, IBCSG 2
Non-ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 0, IBCSG 3

11

Clinical trials in follow-up

ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 2, IBCSG 3
Non-ETOP IBCSG sponsored: ETOP 1, IBCSG 5

30

Ongoing translational research projects

ETOP 18, IBCSG 12



19

Publications

ETOP 6, IBCSG 13
cumulative: ETOP 46, IBCSG 444

List of publications is available on the website

The POSITIVE Trial in 2025 – an Ongoing Success Story, Powered by Long-Term Commitment

For many years, supporters of the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation have witnessed the POSITIVE trial evolve from a bold, pioneering idea into a global reference study. POSITIVE is more than a clinical trial; it is a shared journey made possible by long-term commitment, perseverance, and trust.

Thanks to sustained support, the trial has steadily generated evidence, confidence, and hope for young women with hormone receptor-positive early breast cancer who have not yet completed their family plans. In 2025, this collective academic initiative reached a particularly meaningful milestone.

Building on the initial results previously shared, the POSITIVE trial has delivered new peer-reviewed publications, high-profile international scientific presentations, as well as an eagerly awaited update to its primary analysis. Together, these achievements demonstrate how continuity of support translates into sustained scientific and clinical impact for patients worldwide.

From an urgent question to reassuring answers

The POSITIVE trial addresses an urgent and clinically important question: Can young women with hormone receptor-positive early-stage breast cancer safely pause endocrine therapy to pursue pregnancy without compromising the outcome of their disease?

Addressing this question requires years of careful follow-up, international collaboration, and sustained financial support. Thanks to the commitment of our supporters, POSITIVE has already generated evidence that is changing how patients are informed, advised and supported.



The POSITIVE consortium: a global collaborative effort

The success of the POSITIVE trial is the result of an exceptional international collaboration. Conducted within the Breast International Group (BIG) network and supported by numerous academic research groups worldwide, POSITIVE represents a truly global scientific effort. This consortium-based approach

enabled patients to be recruited across countries, ensure rigorous long-term follow-up, and generates evidence that is applicable to diverse healthcare systems. The dedication of investigators, study teams, and institutions around the world has been instrumental in transforming a shared clinical question into practice-changing knowledge.



Scientific highlights of 2025

In 2025, the POSITIVE trial continued to turn long-term follow-up into practical knowledge that directly benefits patients and their families.

Presentation of results from longer follow-up at the ESMO Congress 2025

The most important achievement of the year was the updated primary analysis with longer follow-up of the POSITIVE trial, presented at the ESMO Congress 2025, one of the world's leading oncology conferences. The results were presented by Dr. Fedro Peccatori, POSITIVE scientific co-chair and a long-standing advocate for fertility preservation and quality of life for young women with breast cancer.

With longer follow-up, the findings confirmed and strengthened earlier results: temporarily interrupting endocrine therapy to attempt pregnancy does not negatively impact short-term breast cancer outcomes. Most women in the study (76%) became pregnant, which is comparable to pregnancy rates in the general population. A total of 440 babies were born, including 18 sets of twins.

Most participants (82%) resumed endocrine treatment after giving birth and breastfeeding. These data provide renewed reassurance to both patients and clinicians and support informed, shared decision-making.

Professor Richard Gelber, Senior Biostatistician of the POSITIVE trial, who helped conceive and guide the study from the outset alongside Professor Aron Goldhirsch, emphasises the importance of long-term follow-up:

“The first results of the POSITIVE trial, published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2023, showed with short-term follow-up that it was safe for young women with breast cancer to temporarily interrupt hormonal therapy in order to have a baby. We now have longer-term follow-up confirming the continued safety of this approach, which is very reassuring for both the women and their medical providers.”

The manuscript reporting these updated results has been submitted to a leading international journal and is currently under review. Once published, the findings will be accessible to clinicians and patients around the world.



Reflecting on the significance of these findings, Dr. Peccatori commented:

“For many young women, the desire to have a child is inseparable from their vision of the future. These updated results provide strong reassurance that, with appropriate medical guidance, pursuing pregnancy can be compatible with effective breast cancer care.”

Additional results addressing patients' everyday concerns

Beyond the primary analysis, POSITIVE revealed important findings on issues that matter to young women:

- **Breastfeeding after breast cancer:** Following its presentation at ESMO 2024, results were published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, showing that breastfeeding is feasible and does not increase short-term recurrence risk among women who paused their endocrine therapy to have a baby.
- **Fertility outcomes:** This translational research analysis, published in The Breast examined hormonal factors associated with the likelihood of pregnancy after treatment interruption. Presented at ESMO Breast Cancer 2025, these findings reinforced the need for personalised fertility counselling and

close collaboration with reproductive specialists, ensuring that cancer care and family planning go hand in hand. This analysis required substantial logistical efforts, including the collection and transfer of blood samples from 116 participating centres worldwide to the central laboratory in Brussels, as well as comprehensive data consolidation coordinated by our Translational Research Coordination Office. We are deeply grateful to all staff involved for their exceptional dedication and collaborative spirit, which were essential to the success of this work.





Why this research matters: A Patient's Voice

At the heart of the POSITIVE trial are the courageous women who made this research possible:

“When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I feared I would have to choose between surviving and becoming a mother. Knowing that the POSITIVE trial existed gave me confidence to make decisions about my future. Today, I am both a survivor and the mother of a wonderful girl.”

Ilaria, a POSITIVE trial participant

Looking ahead: completing the journey through continued commitment

While the POSITIVE trial has already delivered practice-changing evidence, the commitment to patients and clinicians continues. Long-term follow-up through 2029 remains essential to confirm the durability of these findings, deepen our understanding of long-term outcomes, and ensure that today's reassurance remains valid in the long term.

To completing this research, sustained resources are required for follow-up, data analysis, and global dissemination, allowing the POSITIVE trial to provide definitive answers that will guide the care of future generations of young women with breast cancer.

This is what long-term commitment makes possible – and together, we will carry it forward.



Thank You for Making a Difference!

THANK YOU to all our donors and partners. Your long-term commitment has transformed the POSITIVE trial from a bold idea into a globally recognised study that is improving patient care. Your generosity has allowed us to follow women as they pursue motherhood after cancer, turning scientific research into real-life hope.

As the trial continues towards its long-term follow-up goal, your ongoing support remains essential to ensure that young women with breast cancer are no longer forced to choose between effective treatment and their hopes for the future.

Activation of the Immune System to Fight Cancer

T-cells (white blood cells, or lymphocytes) are a central component of the immune system. They fight pathogens that invade the body and can therefore help prevent and cure diseases. In some cases, they can also recognise and destroy cancer cells.

This property is being exploited in the fight against cancer. T-cell engagers are a new form of immunotherapy. They are designed to direct the body's immune system specifically against cancer cells, particularly when they are not recognised as "foreign" by the immune system. As illustrated in figure 1, these biotechnologically produced antibodies have two binding sites: one binds to T-cells (in Figure 1, depicted in blue), and the other binds to a molecule found almost exclusively on the surface of cancer cells (in figure 1, depicted in red).

By binding simultaneously, T-cell engagers connect the cancer cells to the immune system. This connection between T-cells and tumour cells allows T-cells to destroy the cancer cells, even if the tumour has previously managed to defend itself against attacks by the immune system.

This new form of therapy is currently being researched intensively, particularly in relation to small cell lung cancer (SCLC). This type of lung cancer grows very quickly and often responds to chemotherapy only for a short period of time. An important new active substance is tarlatamab (IMDYLLTRA®), a T-cell engager that binds to DLL3, a molecule which is highly present in SCLC tumour cells but rarely found in healthy tissue.

Tarlatamab connects DLL3-positive cancer cells directly to T-cells, triggering a targeted immune response.

In its DeLLphi studies, the biotechnology company Amgen investigated the effectiveness of tarlatamab in patients with advanced small cell lung cancer who had previously received multiple lines of treatment.

In the early DeLLphi-300 study, around 20–25% of participants who had already received several previous treatments, showed a measurable tumour response, which is a remarkable result at this advanced stage of the disease.¹

The subsequent DeLLphi-301 study yielded response rates of around 40%, with the effect persisting for several months in many patients.²

Recent results from the phase III DeLLphi-304 study show that tarlatamab can prolong overall survival compared to conventional standard chemotherapy. The study was conducted in patients with small cell lung cancer who had suffered a recurrence after previous treatment.³

Based on these promising study results, the drug has been approved in the United States and the United Kingdom for use in patients with advanced small cell lung cancer for whom standard therapy is no longer effective. It is currently undergoing the approval process in the European Union and Switzerland.

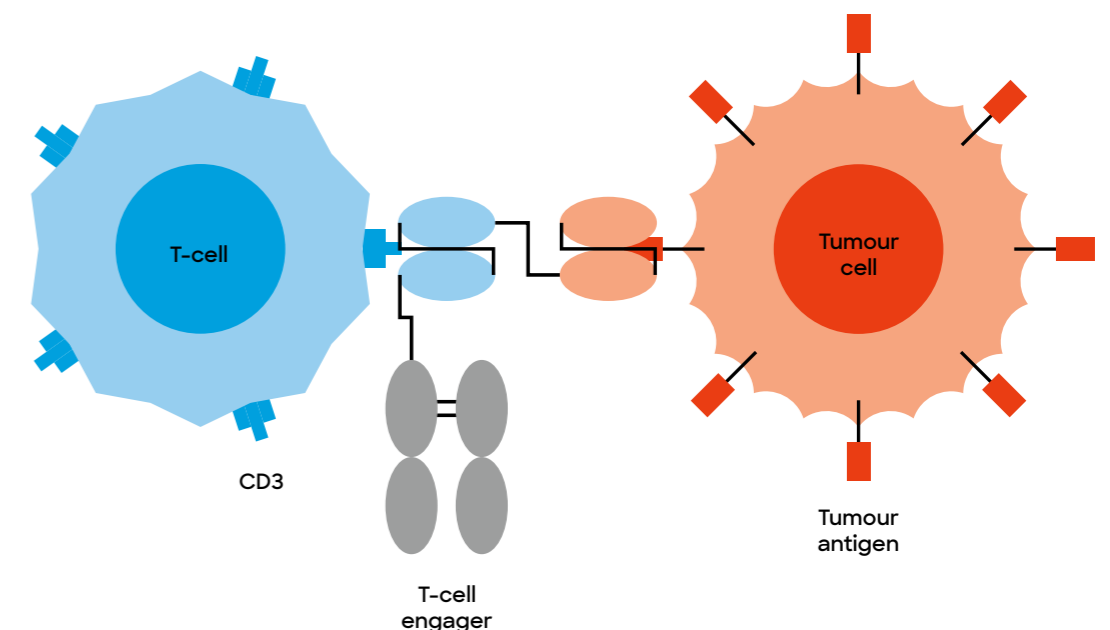
However, strong activation of the immune system often comes at the price of side effects, which can sometimes be severe. The most common side effect of T-cell engager therapy is cytokine release syndrome (CRS), an inflammatory reaction characterised by symptoms such as fever, fatigue, chills and low blood pressure. CRS typically occurs in the early phase of therapy and is rarely after the first two infusions. CRS is generally easy to treat.

Less common, but more severe, are neurological side effects known as ICANS (immune-effector cell-associated neurotoxicity syndrome). These include temporary confusion, speech disorders, difficulty concentrating and tremors. In most cases, these symptoms resolve completely with appropriate treatment.

Additionally, in rare cases, tumour lysis syndrome may occur. It can happen when a large number of cancer cells are destroyed in a short time. Cell components are released into the bloodstream, which can lead to disruptions in the balance of salts and fluids, putting strain on the kidneys.

All of these side effects are well known and can usually be treated effectively today. To minimise the risks of such side effects, T-cell engagers are initially administered in gradual doses, and the first two infusions are usually given under hospital supervision.

Figure 1: The mode of action of a T-cell engager.



ETOP embarks into the T-cell engager field

The ETOP START-lung study

Since T-cell engager therapies can cause side effects that are sometimes severe, early studies have mainly focused on patients in good general health (performance status 0–1) in whom the side effects of treatment can be effectively controlled with appropriate medical treatment.

However, in clinical practice, patients with small cell lung cancer who relapse after the initial treatment are often found to be in a more fragile state (performance status 2) due to the aggressive nature of the disease and associated comorbidities. These patients would therefore not be eligible for treatment with T-cell engagers.



Prof. Maurice Pérol,
Chair of the
ETOP START-lung study

To investigate whether tarlatamab is also effective in this more fragile patient group, the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation has developed the START-lung study. This study includes participants with pre-treated small cell lung cancer and limited performance status. The primary end-point is the survival rate at 12 months.

The study chair for the START-lung study, which has been developed with the support of Amgen, is Prof. Maurice Pérol from Lyon, France. Centres in France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Switzerland will participate in the study. The coordinating investigator in Switzerland is Prof. Sacha Rothschild.

The study is scheduled to start in March 2026.



Prof. Sacha Rothschild,
Coordinating investigator of the
START-lung study in Switzerland

The ETOP T-cell Engager Workshop

The ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation successfully hosted its first T-cell Engager Workshop on 11 and 12 July 2025. This high-level scientific meeting focused on bispecific T-cell engagers an emerging class of immunotherapy. The workshop brought together leading experts in immunology, oncology and drug development. These experts shared their insights on the therapeutic potential of T-cell engagers and the challenges associated with their use in cancer treatment. Specific focus was given to optimising clinical implementation and the management of adverse events.

The valuable discussions that took place at the workshop will be summarised in a manuscript which is currently being prepared.

ETOP initiative to develop European guidelines for managing T-cell engager administration and related toxicities.

As mentioned above, T-cell engager therapies are often associated with specific side effects such as ICANS, CRS or TLS. These require careful and well-coordinated management.

Helpful strategies for the diagnosis and treatment of these specific side effects have been published by Jacob M. Sands from the Dana-Farber Institute in Boston (USA).⁴

However, these recommendations refer to the situation in the USA and cannot be directly translated to Europe. Even within Europe, healthcare systems, care structures and clinical procedures differ from country to country. In addition, knowledge about side effects and their treatment is developing very rapidly in this dynamic therapeutic field.

Our goal is therefore to compile existing national recommendations and practical experience from various European countries and present them in a joint publication. The aim is to develop practical guidelines that are relevant throughout Europe and support and further improve the safe use of T-cell engager therapies.

1 Dowlati A, Hummel HD, Champiat S et al. Sustained Clinical Benefit and Intracranial Activity of Tarlatamab in Previously Treated Small Cell Lung Cancer: DeLLphi-300 Trial Update. *J Clin Oncol* 2024; 42 (29): 3392–3399.

2 Ahn M-J, Cho BC, Felip E et al. Tarlatamab for Patients with Previously Treated Small-Cell Lung Cancer. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2023; 389 (22): 2063–2075.

3 Mountzios G, Sun L, Cho BC et al. Tarlatamab in Small-Cell Lung Cancer after Platinum-Based Chemotherapy. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2025; 393 (4): 349–361.

4 Sands JM, Champiat S, Hummel HD et al. Practical management of adverse events in patients receiving tarlatamab, a delta-like ligand 3-targeted bispecific T-cell engager immunotherapy, for previously treated small cell lung cancer. *Cancer* 2025; 131 (3): e35738.

Countries Participating in ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation Trials

■ Lung ■ Breast

	14-18 CHESS	18-21 AMAZE-lung	19-21 USZ-STRIKE	22-22 ADEPPT	23-22 RAISE
Australia					
Austria					
Belgium				x	
Canada					
France		x		x	x
Germany					
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland				x	
Israel					
Italy	x	x	x	x	x
Japan					
Lebanon					
Netherlands	x	x	x		
Norway					
Portugal					
Romania					x
Serbia					
Singapore		x			
Slovenia					
South Korea					
Spain	x	x		x	x
Sweden					
Switzerland	x	x	x		
UK		x	x	x	
USA					

	25-23 ADOPT-lung	27-23 ARCH	43-09 HOHO	48-14 POSITIVE	59-19 POLAR	67-22 PREcoopERA
Australia	x			x		
Austria				x	x	
Belgium	x			x		
Canada				x		
France	x			x	x	
Germany						x
Greece				x		
Hungary					x	x
Ireland	x	x		x		x
Israel				x		
Italy	x		x	x	x	x
Japan				x		
Lebanon				x		
Netherlands				x		
Norway				x		
Portugal				x		
Romania						
Serbia				x		
Singapore						
Slovenia				x		
South Korea				x		
Spain		x		x	x	x
Sweden						x
Switzerland	x		x	x	x	x
UK	x					
USA				x		

Anita Hiltbrunner: 35 Years of Dedication to the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation – with Con- sistency, Competence, and Wise Leadership.



When Anita Hiltbrunner joined our foundation in 1990, quite a few of the current employees at the Coordinating Center had not even been born yet!

35 years of dedication to the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation! What an extraordinary anniversary! It is an achievement that is anything but commonplace, and words cannot adequately express our gratitude.

Anita began her career at the foundation, then known as the Swiss Institute for Applied Cancer Research, as a study coordinator. With the formal establishment of the International Breast Cancer Study Group (IBCSG) in 1992, she moved to the Central Services department, in the administration and accounting.

The most significant milestone followed in 2003, when Anita Hiltbrunner was appointed Director of the IBCSG. This appointment underscored her exceptional professional expertise and outstanding leadership qualities.

In her role as Director, she is the central link between the Foundation Board, the associated partner organisations, and the Coordinating Center, the development of which she has significantly influenced over the years.

The Coordinating Center in Bern, the headquarters of the foundation, is the heart of our organisation and a centre of excellence for conducting clinical trials and research programmes. Over 50 specialists in various departments contribute daily to the success of our trials.

Under Anita Hiltbrunner's leadership, the Foundation has mastered numerous significant challenges over the decades. Particularly drastic was the relocation of the entire IBCSG study management to the USA, a measure that resulted in numerous redundancies at the Coordinating Center in Bern. This crisis could only be overcome without lasting damage to the Foundation thanks to Anita's wise, clear, and humane leadership.

In 2009, the European Thoracic Oncology Platform (ETOP) was founded, initially sharing its headquarters and Coordinating Center with the IBCSG. With the merger to form the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation – Foundation for International Lung and Breast Cancer Research in 2021/22, the organisation took another significant step forward. With Anita at the wheel as a steady and thoughtful captain, also this profound change went remarkably smoothly for employees and our collaboration partners alike.

The image of Anita as a captain at the helm is also a fitting metaphor for the management of our foundation's financial affairs. With great foresight and reliability, she has consistently guided our organisation through turbulent times.

Events such as the Swiss National Bank's abolition of the Euro minimum exchange rate in January 2015, which resulted in the loss of a sizeable portion of the study budgets overnight, went virtually unnoticed by employees and partners, an impressive testament to her thoughtful and far-sighted leadership.

The challenges have not diminished since then. But Anita has grown alongside them. In times where academic clinical research is under growing pressure, our organisation is standing on very solid ground thanks to her outstanding expertise and meticulous accounting, a fact whose importance cannot be overestimated.

Dear Anita,

On behalf of the Foundation Board, all employees at the Coordination Center and our collaboration partners, we would like to express our heartfelt thanks for your immeasurable work, your caring and clear leadership and, last but not least, your friendship.

We are proud to work with you and under your leadership, and we wish you many more successful years full of joy and fulfilment in your role.

On the Retirement of Dr. Barbara Ruepp, Head Safety and Regulatory

After more than 21 years as Head Safety and Regulatory at the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation's coordinating center in Berne, Barbara Ruepp is entering her well-deserved retirement. Since joining us in December 2004, she has played a key role shaping our organisation with her tremendous dedication, exceptional expertise, and tireless commitment.

In her role as Head of Safety and Regulatory, Barbara Ruepp was also responsible for the Drug Supply Office, and for many years, she also managed the Monitoring team. With her invaluable experience, she has supported countless ETOP and IBCSG studies, making a significant contribution to their success.

In addition to her impressive expertise, Barbara Ruepp was particularly appreciated for her open, cheerful, and always supportive manner – far beyond the coordinating center. The ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation, the co-workers at the coordinating center and the teams at the participating centres owe her a dept of gratitude.

To express our appreciation of Barbara Ruepp's outstanding work and her many years of commitment, we would like to give the floor to her team:



Dear Barbara,

A huge THANK YOU is by no means enough to adequately express our appreciation for what you have done and achieved.

In your role, you were responsible for a wide range of areas. Juggling all these tasks was not only an enormous achievement, but also required a very broad range of expertise, which you have always applied with passion.

THANK YOU for taking on this task and guiding us all through our daily work. The many commitments, many studies and many employees also resulted in many piles of paper on your desk. It was legendary how whenever questions arose, you would conjure up exactly the right document from the pile in a matter of seconds with a precise reach, leaving us amazed every time.

THANK YOU for always keeping track of everything for us.

You always trusted your employees. You had an open ear for questions at all times. No one ever left your office without feeling that their concerns had been adequately addressed. We could discuss issues openly with you, and you always helped us to find a solution.

THANK YOU for your trust and all your help.

You had not originally intended to participate in the transition to the new EU Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS). But you could not escape it and you mastered this innovation magnificently, too. Even the two regulatory authority inspections that took place during your long career did not unsettle you.

Thankfully, although we have occasionally been outraged by certain issues, we have rarely been outraged with each other.

THANK YOU for your openness and energy with which you repeatedly took on new tasks and challenges.

You always greeted the team with a smile, taking an interest in everyone as a person. THANK YOU for bringing so much colour to the team with your personality.

Dear Barbara, we THANK you from the bottom of our hearts for your tremendous enthusiasm, your unwavering composure, and the extra splashes of colour you brought to grey days. We will miss you greatly, both as a supervisor and as a person. We wish you all the best for the future and hope that you never lose your smile and always find time for everything you would like to do.

THANK YOU for everything!
Your Team

Professor Rolf A. Stahel – Recipient of the ESMO Lifetime Achievement Award 2025

There are personalities in medicine whose influence is measured not only in publications or positions held, but in the steady reshaping of an entire field. Professor Rolf A. Stahel, MD, recipient of the ESMO (European Society of Medical Oncology) Lifetime Achievement Award, is one of those rare individuals whose career is inseparable from the evolution of modern thoracic oncology.

Born and educated in Switzerland, Rolf Stahel's early academic years shaped a mind attuned to curiosity, complexity, and the pursuit of meaningful human impact. During his medical studies at the University of Zurich, he discovered a growing fascination for clinical oncology – supported by his mentor, Prof. George Martz, and further strengthened through a formative fellowship at the Dana-Farber Cancer Center, Harvard Medical School. These experiences deepened his commitment to translational research and the interplay between laboratory discovery and patient care.

At the University Hospital Zurich, Rolf Stahel emerged as a defining architect of modern cancer care, like introducing high dose chemotherapy with autologous marrow support for patients with high risk lymphoma. As a thoracic oncologist – and later CoDirector of the Thoracic Oncology Center - he helped to develop and advance a multidisciplinary approach for patients with thoracic malignancies.

Building on this commitment for education and interdisciplinary collaboration, Rolf Stahel became the founding president of the Swiss Society for Medical Oncology in 1993 and established the Swiss Academy of Multidisciplinary Oncology (SAMO) in 2008. SAMO's workshops bring together physicians from across Switzerland, combining expert lectures with case discussions that encourage active participation and offer insights for daily clinical practice.

“In my institution, I made an effort to establish a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of thoracic malignancies, collaborating closely with the thoracic surgeon.”

Prof. Rolf A. Stahel



His vision for integrated cancer care also guided his role in promoting and expanding the development of the Comprehensive Cancer Center Zurich (CCCZ), where he served as Chair from 2015 to 2020. Under his leadership, the CCCZ strengthened multidisciplinary structures and pioneered the systematic offering of second opinions for patients – a reflection of Stahel’s conviction that meaningful progress in oncology emerges when disciplines work side by side.

Rolf Stahel’s influence extends far beyond Zurich. Within the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO), he helped establish the clinical practice guidelines that now guide oncologists worldwide and strengthened the society’s educational mission. As ESMO President in 2014 and 2015, he expanded its global reach, and – driven by his belief that excellence in cancer care must be shared across borders and generations.

With the same commitment to collaborative progress, he was instrumental in the foundation of the European Thoracic Oncology Platform (ETOP), where he has served as President since 2009. Under his leadership, ETOP merged in 2021 with the International Breast Cancer Study Group (IBCSG) to form the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation, establishing international research networks that enable largescale studies and crosscontinental partnerships contributing to treatment standards today. His name appears throughout scientific literature and global collaborations – not as a solitary figure, but as a catalyst who brings people and ideas together.

As Vice President of the International Cancer Foundation, Rolf Stahel contributes to efforts to reduce global inequalities in cancer care by supporting projects in low and middleincome countries. His engagement reflects a personal conviction that access to effective treatment should be universal – a perspective that has long shaped both his leadership and his humanity.

Today, Professor Stahel stands as one of the most respected figures in thoracic oncology – a clinician, researcher, educator, and institution builder whose contributions continue to shape the field. His career shows what becomes possible when scientific rigor meets humanistic purpose, and when leadership is exercised not through authority, but through vision, generosity, curiosity, and the exceptional ability to inspire others.

Away from his professional commitments, Rolf Stahel finds his balance on two wheels. At times, he can be found on his Triumph Bonneville, winding his way through mountain passes in Switzerland and beyond – a pleasure that balances the intensity of his professional world.

We proudly congratulate Professor Stahel, President of the ETOP IBCSG Foundation for International Lung and Breast Cancer Research, on receiving this esteemed and well-earned award.

“Even if you believe you are smart, hardworking, determined and believe in yourself, do not think you can do it all alone. Mentorship and sponsorship are extremely important.”

Prof. Rolf A. Stahel

Colleagues often describe Rolf Stahel as a leader who listens first. His mentorship has guided a new generation of oncologists, many of whom now hold senior positions across Europe. He is known for his clarity of thought, calm presence, and unwavering commitment to patient-centered care. His belief in supporting the next generation is expressed with characteristic modesty.

This lifelong dedication to advancing oncology – through science, leadership, and international cooperation – led ESMO to honor him with its Lifetime Achievement Award, recognising not only his scientific contributions but also his role as a builder of communities, a mentor to generations of oncologists, and a visionary who helped shape the global landscape of cancer care.



“Together, we share the common goal of promoting and conducting international clinical research in thoracic malignancies and breast cancer.”

Prof. Rolf A. Stahel

This Year's Heine H. Hansen Award goes to Professor Keith Kerr

The prestigious 2025 Heine H. Hansen Award was presented to Professor Keith Kerr, renowned pathologist from the Aberdeen University School of Medicine and Dentistry, UK and esteemed member of ETOP IBCSG's Translational Research Working Group Lung Cancer.

Professor Kerr was honored for his exceptional contributions to lung cancer pathology and his outstanding work in thoracic oncology research and education. Over the past three decades, he has played a pivotal role in shaping the classification, diagnosis and treatment of lung cancer. His extensive work on the classification of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and the development of diagnostic and treatment guidelines for lung cancer has had a significant influence on the field.

The Heine H. Hansen Award ceremony took place at the 2025 European Lung Cancer Congress in Paris and honors and recognises investigators who have made a significant international impact on the field of cancer research and education.

We warmly congratulate Professor Kerr on this well-deserved distinction.



About Prof. Keith Kerr

Professor Keith Kerr is a consultant pathologist in the Department of Pathology at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and an honorary professor at the University of Aberdeen, specialising in thoracic pathology.

He is a highly regarded member of the Translational Research Working Group for Lung Cancer at ETOP IBCSG.

Professor Kerr is a long-standing member of the British Thoracic Society. His research covers extensive expertise in non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), predictive and diagnostic biomarkers, molecular profiling, immunotherapy, and personalised medicine. He is also recognised as the lead author of the ESMO Consensus Guidelines on pathology and molecular biomarkers for NSCLC.

Dr. Karin Ribí Awarded Professorship

The Council of the University of Applied Sciences at Kalaidos has awarded Dr. Karin Ribí the title of Professor. Since 2026, Karin Ribí has served at the Careum University of Health Sciences in Zurich as Vice Director of Research and a member of the Executive Board.

Karin is also the Quality-of-Life expert at ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation, where she designs and leads quality-of-life sub-studies within our clinical trials.

Throughout her career, Karin has focused her research on patient-reported outcomes, including quality of life, psychoncology, cognitive consequences of cancer, geriatric oncology, and resilience.

These areas play a central role in cancer research, as they capture patients' lived experiences beyond clinical outcomes and ensure that treatments not only extend life but also preserve well-being, functioning and dignity.

Her appointment as Professor is a well-deserved recognition of her long-standing expertise in the field and her outstanding contributions to the benefit of patients.

We warmly congratulate Karin on this well-deserved professorship and her remarkable achievements.



About Prof. Dr. Karin Ribí

Professor Karin Ribí holds a PhD in Psychology. She has dedicated her professional career to researching patient-reported outcomes and quality of life in oncology. Since joining the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation in 2004, she has led the Quality of Life Office, making a substantial contribution to the success of our clinical trials. Her exceptional expertise has also been invaluable to the Swiss Cancer Institute, where she is responsible for quality of life sub-studies. Between 2017 and 2021, she was also a senior researcher at the University Institute for Teaching and Research in Health Services Science (IUFERS) at the University of Lausanne and Lausanne University Hospital.

In 2022, she took the next step in her career by joining Careum University of Health Sciences in Zurich, where she has served as Vice-Director of Research and a member of the Executive Board since 2026, while continuing to manage the ETOP IBCSG quality of life sub-studies.

Solange Peters Receives the IASLC Paul A. Bunn, Jr. Scientific Award 2025

Professor Solange Peters, MD, PhD, has been awarded the IASLC Paul A. Bunn, Jr. Scientific Award 2025, one of the most distinguished honors in the field of thoracic oncology. Presented by the International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC). This award recognises individuals whose lifetime achievements have profoundly advanced the scientific understanding, clinical management, and global standards of care for thoracic malignancies.

Named in tribute to Paul A. Bunn, Jr., a visionary whose pioneering work helped shape modern lung cancer diagnostics and biomarker driven therapy, the award celebrates leaders whose scientific contributions continue to influence the trajectory of the field.

Professor Peters' recognition reflects her enduring impact on research, education, and international collaboration in thoracic oncology.



Professor Solange Peters, Member of the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation Board and Chair of its Scientific Committee Lung, is a globally recognised leader in thoracic oncology. A physician-scientist and full professor at the University of Lausanne, she was appointed in 2025 to head the Oncology Department at the Lausanne University Hospital.

She has held prominent international roles, including youngest-ever President of ESMO (European Society of Medical Oncology), member of the IASLC Board, and founder of the Women for Oncology Committee. She currently chairs Oncosuisse and serves as President of the International Cancer Foundation, Vice President of the Swiss Cancer League, and President of SAMO (Swiss Academy of Multidisciplinary Oncology).



Meetings and Workshops

48th IBCSG Annual Meeting

- 11–12 March 2025
- Vienna, Austria
- Participants: 65

ETOP Translational Research Meeting

- 9–10 May 2025
- Nice, France
- Participants: 42

3rd ADC Workshop

- 21–22 June 2025
- Zurich, Switzerland
- Participants: 64

T-cell Engager Workshop

- 11–12 July 2025
- Zurich, Switzerland
- Participants: 58

14th ETOP Residential Workshop

- 29–31 October 2025
- Rome, Italy
- Participants: 54

ETOP Annual Meeting

- 31 October–1 November 2025
- Rome, Italy
- Participants: 132

Organiser's Perspective:

“Organising international oncology meetings focused on novel treatments is not just logistics; it is creating a global community where diverse expertise transforms into shared progress to improve patient’s lives.”



Participant Insights:

“I wanted to thank you again for giving me the opportunity to take part in your event, and I would also like to congratulate you once more for the remarkable work you are doing and for your contribution to the field of thoracic oncology.”



Participant Feedback:

“It was a great meeting, where I obtained constructive knowledge and information for my field of interest.”



Standing Together: Community Support in Action

In 2025 the POSITIVE trial once again benefited from the extraordinary generosity, energy and solidarity of its supporters.

Pink Ribbon Switzerland: A pillar of long-term support

Pink Ribbon Switzerland has been a steadfast partner for more than a decade. In 2025, the Pink Ribbon Golf Tour, held across three Swiss courses, raised CHF 60'000 to support research for young patients with breast cancer, particularly the POSITIVE trial. These events combined fundraising with a strong sense of community and shared purpose.

Later in the year, the Pink Ribbon Music Gala at the Dolder Grand contributed an additional CHF 100'000, providing substantial resources for ongoing analyses, patient follow-up, and dissemination of results.

Together, the Pink Ribbon initiatives raised a total of CHF 160'000, clearly demonstrating the power of sustained commitment to research.

We are deeply grateful to Pink Ribbon Switzerland, the participating golfers, sponsors, and everyone who made these events possible. Your dedication transforms science into hope for young patients worldwide.



IBCSG Pink Ladies: awareness, solidarity, and visibility

The IBCSG Pink Ladies continued to bring research into the public eye through creativity, visibility, and heartfelt engagement. At the Schweizer Frauenlauf 2025 in Bern, about fifty Pink Ladies, including colleagues, survivors, families, and friends, walked together under the motto:

“Ein Herz für Sie, Hoffnung für Viele”
 (“A heart for you, hope for many”)

With pink wigs, heart-shaped biscuits, they engaged with spectators and drew attention to the POSITIVE trial and the Program for Young Patients with their joyful energy. Their initiative received prominent recognition from the Mayor of Bern, reinforcing the importance of their message and community impact.

In October, the Pink Ladies returned to Bärenplatz in Bern to sell roses under the motto:

“Buy a rose. Bring joy. Spread hope.”

Each rose symbolised a gesture of hope and a direct contribution to research addressing the unique medical and psychosocial challenges faced by young women with breast cancer.



“The Pink Ladies are highlighting an important issue at the Swiss Women’s Run. Women with breast cancer deserve our solidarity. I thank the Pink Ladies for their invaluable commitment.”

Marieke Kruit, Mayor of Bern



As Isabel, one of our Pink Ladies, reflects:

“Walking, selling roses, or simply showing up in pink, every gesture counts. We do it for the women who inspire us every day, and for the hope research brings to their future.”

Annual Financial Statement

31.12.2025

Balance

Assets	31.12.25	31.12.24
	TCHF	TCHF
Cash	5 739	4 758
Financial assets short-term	4 443	5 893
Accounts receivable	1 733	2 594
Other short-term receivables	374	395
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	986	898
Current assets	13 275	14 538
Financial assets	12 325	11 684
Non-current assets	12 325	11 684
Total assets	25 600	26 222
Liabilities	31.12.25	31.12.24
	TCHF	TCHF
Accounts payable	487	337
Advance payments short-term	12 468	13 439
Other short-term liabilities	165	103
Accrued expenses and deferred income	1 374	2 574
Short-term liabilities	14 494	16 453
Advance payments long-term	4 517	3 720
Long-term liabilities	4 517	3 720
Dedicated Fund Support Breast Cancer Clinical Research	1 024	1 024
Dedicated Funds	1 024	1 024
Foundation capital	175	175
Voluntary retained earnings		
Profit brought forward	4 849	4 129
Result of the year	541	721
Equity	5 565	5 025
Total liabilities and equity	25 600	26 222

Income statement

	2025	2024
	TCHF	TCHF
Research contributions	9 349	11 491
Grants and donations/Income from other research organisations	2 660	2 727
Other contributions	751	386
Reimbursements from externals for services	63	59
Operating income	12 823	14 663
Research contributions to members/sites and suppliers	-6 132	-8 662
Cooperation expenses	-517	-333
Personnel expenses	-5 615	-5 304
Other operating expenses	-752	-892
Operating expenses	-13 016	-15 191
Operating result	-193	-528
Financial income	901	1 346
Financial expenses	-167	-97
Result of the year	541	721

Thank You

...to all patients who have participated or are still participating in our trials, as well as to their families and caregivers. You are central to all of our clinical trials.

...to all investigators and their teams at participating hospitals, as well as our partner organisations, for their invaluable commitment. Their support is crucial to the success of our studies.

...to all members of our Foundation Board, the two Scientific Committees, our Study Chairs, the two Independent Data Monitoring Committees (IDMC), and the IBCSG Ethics Committee. Their vision, knowledge, and ideas lay the foundation for our research.

...to all our donors, who make a significant contribution to the funding of our projects, and to all our pharmaceutical partners, who fund the majority of many trial budgets.

...to all the staff at the ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation Coordinating Center in Bern (Switzerland), the Statistical Centers in Boston (USA) and Athens (Greece), the Data Management Center in Amherst (USA) and the teams at the Central Laboratories in Milan (Italy) and Lausanne (Switzerland). Their expertise and commitment are vital to the success of our studies.

List of Our Donors

- Anna dai capelli corti
- Bärbel und Paul Geissbühler Stiftung
- Baillet Latour Fund (via Breast International Group)
- Belgian National Lottery (via Breast International Group)
- Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF)
- Breast International Group BIG
- Fondazione Sandro Pitigliani
- Fondazione Veronesi
- Frontier Science & Technology Research Foundation, Southern Europe (FSE)
- Gateway for Cancer Research
- Hafner Christine and Wyss Marc
- Krebsforschung Schweiz
- Krebsliga Schweiz
- Pavesi Elisabetta
- PINK RIBBON SCHWEIZ
- Rising Tide Foundation for Clinical Cancer Research (RTFCCR)
- San Salvatore Foundation
- Stiftung St. Gallen Oncology Conferences (SONK)
- Swiss Cancer Foundation
- USZ Foundation
- Verein Bärigüf
- Supporting companies in the research-based pharmaceutical industry and many other private companies and individuals



Your Donation Drives Pioneering Cancer Research and a Brighter Future for Generations

A cancer diagnosis brings profound physical, emotional, and social challenges, underscoring the urgent need for equitable access to prevention, early detection, and treatment.

ETOP IBCSG Partners Foundation is a global leader in clinical and translational research on lung and breast cancer – the world’s most common cancer types, affecting millions across all ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. With decades of experience as an active academic foundation, we advance long-term patient studies in collaboration with leading researchers, key opinion leaders, and international partners. Together, we seek answers that improve and ultimately save patients’ lives.

We are deeply grateful to our donors, whose support enables pioneering research that drives progress in medicine and technology, creating breakthroughs and a lasting legacy for future generations of people with cancer.

Whether through an individual donation or by including us in your will, your contribution has a meaningful impact on our work and is sincerely appreciated.

We welcome your donations as follows:

Bank account information

UBS AG, Postfach, 3000 Bern 94, Switzerland
IBAN: CH55 0023 5235 4440 8840 E,
SWIFT/BIC: UBSWCHZH80A

Further donation options

are available on our website (Scan the QR Code) →.



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For reasons of legibility, the masculine form has been chosen in the text; nevertheless, the information refers to members of all genders.

