



**Novel treatment of acute on chronic liver failure  
using synergistic action of G-CSF and TAK-242  
H2020 – 945096**

## D7.8 – Second patient and layman event

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Contributor	Contribution	Estimate of person-months
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<b>EASL, organiser of the annual EASL Congress</b>	<i>Provision of the room, technical equipment, and time-slot</i>	<i>Wouter Kruijs, (0.05 PM)</i>

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## Abbreviations

<b>ACLF</b>	acute-on-chronic liver failure
<b>Charité</b>	Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin
<b>concentris</b>	concentris research management gmbh
<b>D</b>	Deliverable
<b>EASL</b>	European Association for the Study of the Liver
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EFCLIF</b>	European Foundation for the Study of Chronic Liver Failure
<b>ELPA</b>	European Liver Patients Association
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>G-CSF</b>	granulocyte-colony stimulating factor
<b>G-TAK</b>	combinatorial therapy of A-TANGO using G-CSF and TAK-242
<b>IB</b>	Impact Board
<b>NL</b>	The Netherlands
<b>ppt</b>	PowerPoint
<b>PU</b>	public
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	questions & answers
<b>TAK-242</b>	antagonist of toll-like receptor 4 (TLR4)
<b>TLR4</b>	toll-like receptor 4
<b>UCL</b>	University College London
<b>WP</b>	work package

## 1 Executive Summary

One of the key objectives of the [A-TANGO](#) project is to destigmatise cirrhosis as a disease, including late-stage cirrhosis, decompensated cirrhosis, and acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF) and to disseminate the project's goals and results in a comprehensible way to the liver patient community. To meet this objective, interactive events that include the opportunity for patients, relatives, and patient representatives to learn about the ongoing research, ask questions, talk about their experiences, and voice their wishes and concerns are an important element.

A-TANGO's second patient & layman event (D7.8) took place as an in-person event on 7th of May 2025 during the prestigious annual [EASL Congress 2025](#) in Amsterdam, The Netherlands (NL). Together with ELPA, the A-TANGO consortium organised this layman-targeted event to raise awareness about alcoholic hepatitis, decompensated cirrhosis, and acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF) and to share the project's progress with regard to A-TANGO's clinical G-TAK study (a Phase 2 clinical trial that evaluates a promising novel combinatorial treatment consisting of granulocyte-colony stimulating factor, G-CSF, and TAK-242, an antagonist of toll-like receptor 4, TLR4) with the European liver patients community. The EU-funded A-TANGO project unites 13 European partner institutions with a common mission: To improve the survival and quality of life of patients suffering from advanced cirrhosis and ACLF.

The 1-h long patient & layman event at EASL Congress opened with a warm welcome by Marko Korenjak, president of ELPA, who gave an overview of ELPA's involvement in other pan-European liver projects, followed by a comprehensive 45-minute deep-dive into the A-TANGO project spearheaded by Professor Dr. Rajiv Jalan (UCL, London) and Professor Dr. Cornelius Engelmann (Charité, Berlin). The agenda included 3 patient-targeted PowerPoint (ppt) presentations and an interactive podium discussion, moderated by Marko Korenjak, Rajiv Jalan, and Cornelius Engelmann. About 40 liver patient representatives from 25 countries participated in the session, sharing their experiences and engaging in the dynamic 15-minute podium discussion that closed the event. In total, approximately 50 people - including the speakers and participating clinicians and scientists from the field of hepatology and cirrhosis research - attended the event, which also marked an important step in ensuring that A-TANGO remains connected to the people it ultimately aims to serve: Patients and their families!

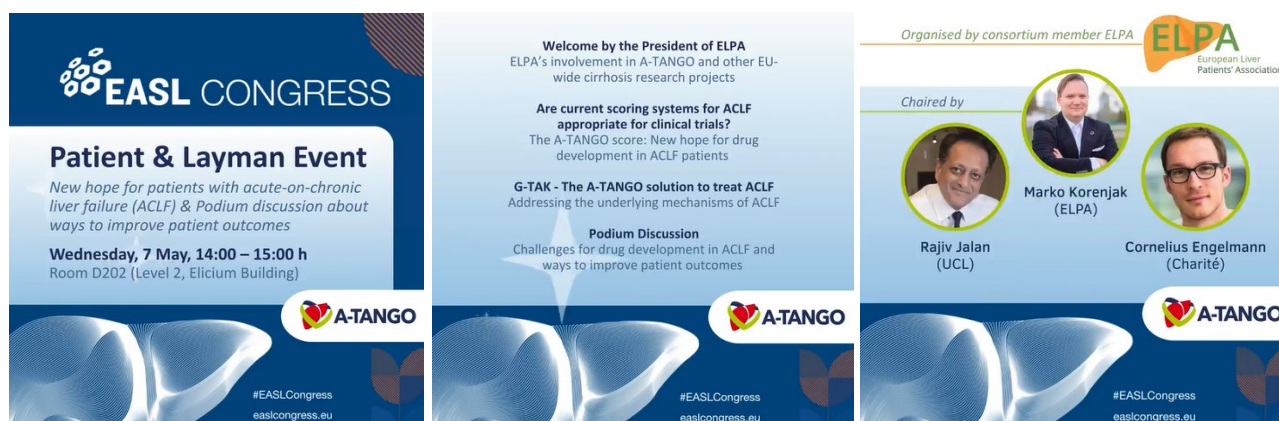


**Figure 1.** ELPA's announcement of the event on social media.

## 2 Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first patient and layman event (D7.6, topic: *Therapies for acute decompensation of cirrhosis and ACLF, research needs and outlook*) took place as an online-event early in the project on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and was organised by the European Liver Patients' Association (ELPA), the European Foundation for the Study of Chronic Liver Failure (EFCLIF) and concentris research management gmbh (concentris). The consortium and patient representatives were therefore equally excited to organise A-TANGO's second patient and layman event (D7.8) as an in-person event during EASL Congress 2025 (annual international liver congress by the European Association for the Study of the Liver, EASL) in Amsterdam, NL.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> event was also spearheaded by ELPA, titled "*New hope for patients with acute-on-chronic-liver failure (ACLF) & Podium discussion about ways to improve patient outcomes*", and took place in Room D202 of the Elicium Building at Amsterdam's large convention centre RAI from 14:00-15:00 on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The idea was for ELPA president, Marko Korenjak, to present an overview of ELPA's involvement in related cirrhosis projects and ethe actively engage attendees into the podium discussion following scientific presentations by Rajiv Jalan and Cornelius Engelmann, all with the focus on how to improve treatment outcome of patients with cirrhosis and ACLF. **Figure 1** shows ELPA's initial announcement of the event in March 20025, and **Figure 2** displays the detailed event promotion by concentris in April 2025. All consortium partners, particularly EASL, ELPA and EFCLIF, actively helped in sharing the social media announcements, event emails, and promotional materials (event title and info, topics, speakers, and agenda).



**Figure 2.** Screenshots of promotional event materials for the project website and social media.



## 2.1 Preparation

Several Zoom calls were held between concentris, ELPA, UCL, Charité, and EASL to discuss the specifics, plan the details and promotional activities, and prepare the event. An event-specific ppt template was provided by concentris and shared with the three speakers (Marko Korenjak, Rajiv Jalan, and Cornelius Engelmann) a week in advance (see **Figure 3**). All speakers were also asked to present and discuss complex scientific issues in an easy-to-understand patient-targeted language and use patient-friendly visuals.



**Figure 3.** Event-specific visual, intro-slide, and ppt template for the presentations.

## 2.2 Topics and agenda

The agenda was decided to contain the following topics (see **Figure 4**). Forty print-outs were distributed on the seats in the room of the event.

EASL Congress  
Amsterdam, NL  
7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2025


**A-TANGO**

### A-TANGO Patient & Layman Event

**“New hope for patients with acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF) & Podium discussion about ways to improve patient outcomes”**

**Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 14:00 – 15:00 h**

Room D202 (level 2, Eljicium building)  
Organised by: European Liver Patients' Association (ELPA)

**14:00 Welcome by the ELPA President**  
*ELPA's involvement in A-TANGO and other EU-wide cirrhosis research projects*  
**Marko Korenjak (ELPA)**  
 10 min + 5 min questions from the audience

**14:15 Are current clinical scoring systems for ACLF appropriate for clinical trials?**  
*The A-TANGO score: New hope for drug development in ACLF patients*  
**Rajiv Jalan (UCL)**  
 10 min + 5 min questions from the audience

**14:30 G-TAK - The A-TANGO solution to treat ACLF**  
*Addressing the underlying mechanisms of ACLF*  
**Cornelius Engelmann (Charité)**  
 10 min + 5 min questions from the audience

**14:45 Podium Discussion**  
*Challenges for drug development in ACLF and ways to improve patient outcome*  
**Marko Korenjak (ELPA), Rajiv Jalan (UCL), Cornelius Engelmann (Charité)**  
 15 min moderated discussion & questions from the audience

**15:00 End of Patient Event**

- Enjoy our “Nutty Give-Aways” :0)
- Read more about A-TANGO in our info brochure
- Follow us on social media
- Subscribe to receive our newsletter on [a-tango.eu](http://a-tango.eu)

a-tango.eu



@a-tango.bsky.social



A-TANGO on LinkedIn







This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 945096. The agenda reflects only the speakers views and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

**Figure 4.** Agenda of A-TANGO's second patient and layman event with the title “New hope for patients with acute-on-chronic liver failure (ACLF) & Podium discussion about ways to improve patient outcomes”.



## 2.3 Social media announcements, website post, newsletter, and invitation email

Several social media posts about the event were published by ELPA on their social media accounts and on A-TANGO's [LinkedIn](#) and the new [BlueSky Social](#) account (which is replacing the project's social media account on X since March 2025). A prominent post on the [project's homepage](#) and [news page](#) announced the event, and a newsletter was sent to the project's subscribers and our stakeholder contacts (from the A-TANGO project, but also from related EU-funded projects, MICROB-PREDICT and DECISION) received an invitation email. Partners ELPA, EASL, EFCLIF, and others shared these promotional activities with their network in an effort to attract as many participants as possible. See **Figure 5** below for examples of the event invitations.



**Figure 5. (A)** Example of a social media post about the event on LinkedIn, **(B)** screenshot of the website post, and screenshot of **(C)** the top portion of the project newsletter that announced the Patient & Layman Event together with other consortium activities at EASL Congress 2025.

### 3 Description of the Event

#### 3.1 Welcome by the ELPA President (Marko Korenjak)

The introductory presentation by Marko Korenjak outlined ELPA's role in the A-TANGO project and other EU-wide cirrhosis research initiatives. It emphasised the urgent need for better diagnostic criteria and treatment options for ACLF, a condition with high mortality and - at the moment - limited to no therapeutic options besides standardised clinical care to compensate for the failure of multiple organs. He also introduced the newly developed A-TANGO score and G-TAK as a novel, innovative, patient-centred treatment solution aimed at improving clinical outcomes. He also highlighted ELPA's commitment to bridging science and patient needs, promoting awareness, and empowering patients.


**A-TANGO**

## The A-TANGO Solution

*New hope for drug development and improved patient survival!*

- Developing the **A-TANGO score**: a more accurate, patient-centered clinical scoring system.
- Introducing **G-TAK therapy**: targeting the root mechanisms of ACLF.
- Collaborative effort between **researchers, clinicians, and patient advocates**.

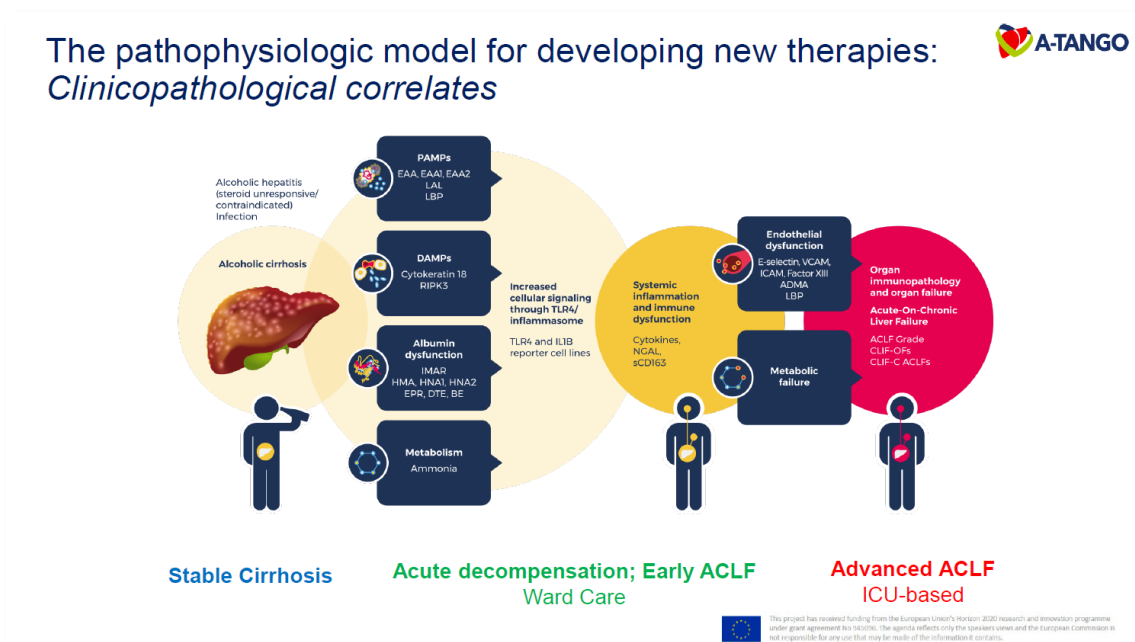
This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 945096. 



**Figure 6.** Example slide by ELPA president Marko Korenjak, emphasising the clinical potential of the novel combinatorial G-TAK therapy (top), and images taken during his presentation (bottom).

### 3.2 Are current clinical scoring systems for ACLF appropriate for clinical trials? (Rajiv Jalan)

The presentation by Rajiv Jalan explained the limitations of current clinical scoring systems in guiding clinical trials. Highlighting the global burden and mortality associated with ACLF, it introduces A-TANGO's G-TAK therapy as a novel, combinatorial treatment targeting inflammation and promoting liver regeneration. The presentation critically reviewed existing scoring systems like the CLIF-OF score and presented the A-TANGO score, which shows improved diagnostic accuracy and suitability for patient stratification. It emphasised that robust, validated scoring is essential to facilitate drug development and improve patient outcomes.



**Figure 7.** Example slide by Prof. Dr. Rajiv Jalan showing the disease progression, the different stages, and the pathophysiological correlates of cirrhosis (top), and image taken during his presentation (bottom).



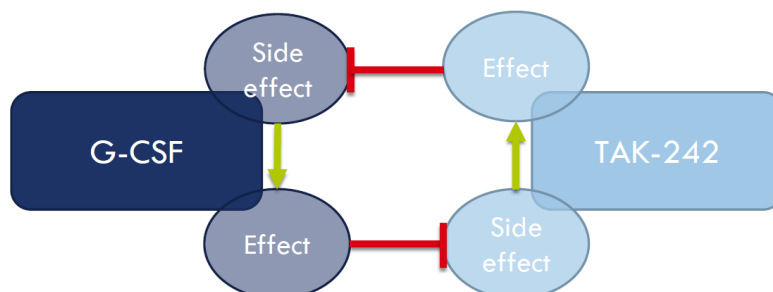
### 3.3 G-TAK, the A-TANGO solution to treat ACLF (Cornelius Engelmann)

#### The synergistic effect of G-CSF and TAK-242 (G-TAK)



Granulocyte-colony stimulating factor

Toll-like receptor 4 inhibitor



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**Figure 8.** Example slide by Prof. Dr. med. Cornelius Engelmann simplifying the synergistic actions of G-CSF and TAK-242 (top), and images captured during his presentation (bottom).

The lecture by Cornelius Engelmann outlined the pathophysiology and therapeutic challenges of ACLF, with a focus on innovative treatment strategies. ACLF arises in patients with cirrhosis and is characterised by acute decompensation, systemic inflammation, and multi-organ failure. The presentation highlighted the central role of systemic inflammation, comparing ACLF pathogenesis with that of sepsis, while emphasising the immune dysfunction specific to cirrhosis. The data presented in his slide deck demonstrates that inflammation is nearly universal in decompensated cirrhosis and strongly correlates with poor clinical outcomes due to impaired liver regeneration and increased risk of organ failure.

Current therapeutic options, such as corticosteroids used in alcohol-associated hepatitis (AAH), show limited efficacy and carry significant infection risks, especially in patients with advanced ACLF. In this context, Prof. Engelmann explained G-TAK in more detail, our novel therapeutic approach combining G-CSF (Granulocyte-Colony Stimulating Factor) and TAK-242 (a TLR4 inhibitor). This combination is designed to synergistically promote liver cell regeneration while modulating excessive immune activation. In fact, it is thought that the two drugs mutually reduce each other's unwanted side effects.

A-TANGO's clinical trial, the G-TAK study, which is planned to start soon, aims to evaluate this dual-target strategy as a promising new therapy for ACLF. Prof. Engelmann's presentation concluded with a call for further clinical evaluation and a Questions & Answers (Q&A) session for attendees.

### **3.4 Podium discussion - Challenges for drug development in ACLF & ways to improve outcomes**

The event was closed by a 15-min long lively discussion about what is needed to improve patient outcomes and accelerate innovation in the treatment of liver failure. Patients also raised important issues such as demographical differences and inequalities in healthcare access between different countries in the EU.



**Figure 9.** A-TANGO coordinator Prof. Dr. Rajiv Jalan responding to questions and discussion points raised by ELPA members in the audience of the second patient and layman event on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025.



### 3.5 Print materials, give-aways, and roll-up posters



**Figure 10.** Each attendee received the A-TANGO info brochure (6 pages), color printouts of the agenda with QR codes to the project's website and social media channels, and a snack bag of healthy nuts. On the right side of the speaker's lectern, the A-TANGO and ELPA roll-up posters prominently displayed key information.

### 3.6 Social media coverage of the event

The event was covered on the social media channels of ELPA through photos and posts from attending patient representatives, and on the social media channels of A-TANGO and concentris via posts by the WP7 leader. See screenshots of two exemplary posts, [one on LinkedIn](#) and [one on Bluesky Social](#) below.



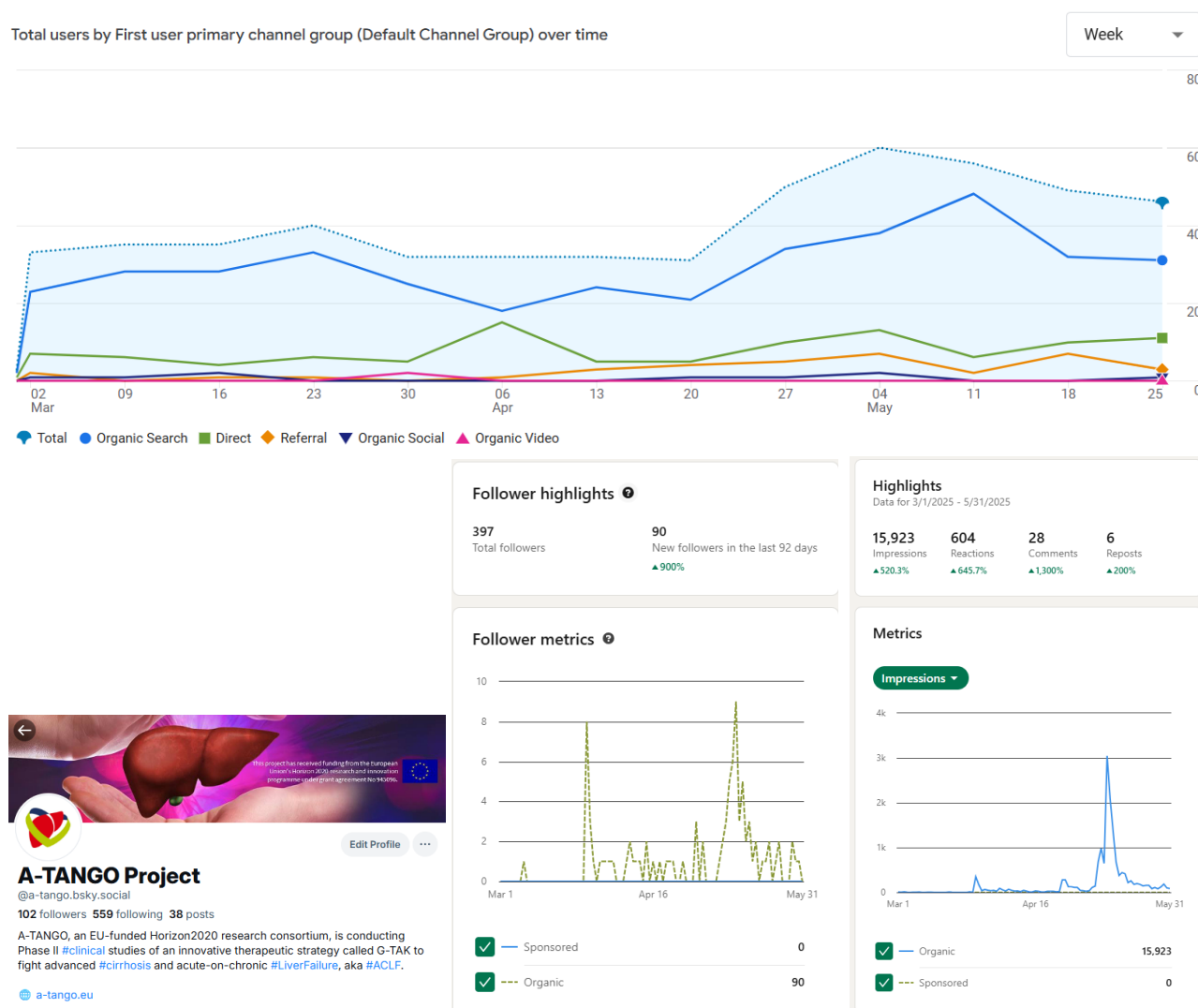


### 3.7 Impact and feedback

During and after the event, the general feedback received from the speakers and attending patient representatives was unanimously positive. The only criticism was that the room was a bit hard to find and reach because was located in a different building than all other conference activities. In the online world, the event (together with other A-TANGO activities at EASL Congress 2025) exerted a clear and measurable positive impact on the metrics of the project website ([a-tango.eu](http://a-tango.eu)) and the project's social media channels within three months, namely from 01.03.2025 to 31.05.2025 (increased user acquisition, number of new followers, impressions, and reactions). This is visualised in **Figure 12**.

On [LinkedIn](#), A-TANGO gained 90 new followers since the promotion of the EASL events started in March 2025. Between 01.03.2025 and 31.05.2025, A-TANGO posts resulted in nearly 16,000 impressions, more than 600 reactions, 28 comments, and multiple reposts on LinkedIn.

On [BlueSky Social](#), promotion and coverage of the A-TANGO events at EASL Congress 2025, including the patient and layman event, led to over 100 followers, which is a great achievement considering the comparable infancy of this newly fledged social media social platform.



**Figure 11.** Top: Increased user acquisition on the project website between 01.03.2025 and 31.05.2025, source: Google Analytics GA4; Bottom: Over 100 followers on BlueSky Social by now (left side), and also more followers (middle) and impressions (right side) on LinkedIn within 3 months (01.03.2025 - 31.05.2025).

## 4 Conclusion

A-TANGO's second patient and layman event (D7.8) was very well received by the audience, increased awareness of and knowledge about A-TANGO, and also reminded the consortium of important issues (raised by the patient community) that may be out of the scope of A-TANGO, but also need to be addressed; for example, healthcare disparities within countries (depending on demographics and marginalised communities) and between countries (disparities in access to health care). A total of 40 liver patient representatives and about 10 academics (researchers and clinicians, including the two scientific speakers), attended the event, making it about twice as successful - with respect to attendance - as the virtual patient and laymen event in June 2021 (via Zoom) during the COVID-19 pandemic. We therefore also conclude that the "human element" and direct, personal, face-to-face interaction is quite important for both sides, patients and researchers alike, to engage, to bridge the (perceived) gap, to really listen to each other, and to understand each other's points of view. As kindly asked for by ELPA members, the ppt slide decks of the presentations as well as the photographs captured during the event were shared (in form of a Google album) with all attendees once the EASL Congress 2025 had concluded and everyone had returned home.



**Figure 12.** Group pictures captured at the end of A-TANGO's second patient and layman event. Top (from left to right): Milan Mishkovikj (Vice President of ELPA), and Marko Korenjak (President of ELPA), Rajiv Jalan (UCL, coordinator of A-TANGO), and Cornelius Engelmann (Charité, clinical trial supervisor of A-TANGO). Bottom: The patient event's audience and the speakers as well as ELPA officials in the back of the room.

## 5 Acknowledgement and Disclaimer



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