



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Fight against HIV/AIDS: launch of enhanced Action plan in EU and neighbouring countries for 2014-2016

Today the European Commission put forward an Action Plan on HIV/AIDS which prolongs and extends existing EU action in this area, building on the achievements of the Action Plan 2009-2013.

The new Action Plan places a greater focus on keeping HIV/AIDS high on the political agenda, tackling HIV-related stigma and discrimination and achieving better access to voluntary testing. Actions on HIV prevention and awareness-raising to tackle risk behaviour, as well as early treatment and care, remain priorities, as are prevention strategies and measures that focus on priority groups, such as men who have sex with men, migrants, and injecting drug users.

Tonio Borg, European Commissioner for Health, underlined: *"Today's Action Plan shows that the fight against HIV/Aids remains a priority for EU health policy. We need to address the worrying increase of HIV/AIDs in some parts of the EU. To do this, we must reach out to the citizens who are most at risk, fight all forms of discrimination, and foster access to diagnosis and treatment. I am fully committed to this cause and call on all actors – health authorities, NGOs, international organisations – to join us in putting this plan in action"*.

Other needs identified in the Action Plan are targeted support to additional populations at risk - e.g. prisoners and sex workers, improved cooperation with Eastern European Member States and neighbouring countries, and addressing co-morbidities such as Tuberculosis and Hepatitis. Civil society organisations will continue to play a crucial role in implementing the prolonged action plan alongside Member States, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNAIDS, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

HIV/AIDS on the increase in the EU and neighbouring countries

Contrary to the global trend which shows an overall drop in new HIV infections, in Europe the number of newly reported cases is increasing. **In 2012, more than 131 000 new HIV infections were reported in Europe and Central Asia – up 8% from 2011.** Of these new cases, **29 000 were reported in the EU and the European Economic area (EU/EEA) – 1% more than the previous year.**

EU Strategy for combating HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries

The Commission's Communication on combating HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries 2009-2013, provides an EU-level policy instrument to complement Member States' policies on HIV/AIDS. The overall objectives of the Communication are to contribute to reducing HIV infections across EU, improve access to prevention, treatment, care and support, and improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries.

To achieve these objectives, the Communication is complemented by an **operational action plan, originally running from 2009 to 2013 and now prolonged up to 2016**. The actions contained in this plan are structured in the following six key areas: (1) Politics, policies and involvement of civil society, wider society and stakeholders, (2) Prevention, (3) Priority regions, (4) Priority groups, (5) Improving knowledge, and (6) Monitoring and evaluation. The Commission works jointly with civil society and Member States through the HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum and the Think Tank on HIV/AIDS to facilitate the planning and implementation of the response to HIV/AIDS.

Funding instruments

Funding for the implementation of the Communication and Action Plan is provided through a range of mechanisms and instruments. These include the EU Health Programme, the programme for research and innovation - Horizon 2020, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria – to which the EU is a major contributor, as well as EU Structural Funds, the Development Cooperation Instrument and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.

Next steps

An independent external evaluation of the Commission's 2009 Communication and Action Plan to combat HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries is underway. The results, which are due before summer 2014, will contribute to the consideration of options for a possible future EU policy framework on HIV/AIDS.

For more information on EC policy on HIV/AIDS:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/sti_prevention/hiv_aids/index_en.htm

Commissioner Borg's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/borg/index_en.htm

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