

**Call to the European Union leaders and the European Commission to reaffirm their leadership and commitment on HIV/AIDS, both inside and outside of the Europe Union, by approving a new Strategy and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS”.**

April 2013

To:

José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission

Tonio Borg, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy

CC:

Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament

Herman van Rompuy, President of the EU Council,

**We undersigned, taking into consideration:**

- The UN Millennium Development Goals (2000),
- The UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (2001) and the
- UN Political Declarations on HIV/AIDS (2006, 2008 and 2011) and
- The Dublin Declaration on Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia 2004, highlighting the commitment *“to strengthen the capacity of the European Union to fight effectively against the spread of HIV/AIDS; promote the active involvement of the institutions of the European Union, and other relevant institutions and organisations”*

**Considering that:**

- The European Commission (the Commission) Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 26 October 2009 - *Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries 2009-2013 - and its accompanying Action Plan* will come to an end on 31 December 2013
- The Commission underscored political leadership and a number of measure to be taken, including
  - *“the need to link the response to HIV/AIDS with the socio-economic priorities in political strategies at country level”;*
  - *“the mainstreaming of HIV/AIDS-related issues across EU policies, legislation and agreements”;*
  - *Supporting “ the involvement of civil society organisations, including those representing PLWHA and affected communities, in planning, implementing and evaluating the response to HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries”;*

- *To “maintain the HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum as the principal interface to advise the Commission and the HIV/AIDS Think Tank”;*
- *To “support activities that aim at (1) to decreasing HIV-related stigma, (2) promoting respect for the human rights of all PLWHA and (3) addressing all forms of HIV-related discrimination and support the social inclusion of PLWHA”;*
- *Promote universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support by encouraging “Member States’ national authorities to assess the possibilities of structural and social funds and other instruments to scale up HIV/AIDS related health services”.*

**Recognising that:**

- Tangible and encouraging gains have been made in the control of HIV/AIDS,
- The European Union has been at the forefront of HIV/AIDS.

**Considering that:**

- Neither the European Commission nor the European Commissioner for Health and Consumers Policy has clearly committed to develop and adopt an updated strategy and action plan on HIV/AIDS and communicable diseases for 2014-2020.
- As we prepare to celebrate 10 years of the Dublin Declaration in 2014:
  - Complacency towards with HIV/AIDS represents a threat to public health in Europe;
  - The financial, economic and social crisis is jeopardising efforts to achieve prevention, early detection and access to state of the art affordable treatment and care based on public health evidence and human rights,
  - Targeting and allocating funds at the right level to programmes addressing risk groups within the EU and beyond is crucial to the control of the pandemic.
- The European Union, in particular the European Commission, needs to renew political, scientific and social commitment and leadership in order to address the issues mentioned above, and to fully halt the spread of the virus.
- The goal of the strategy must be to ensure affordable antiretroviral therapy for people living with HIV/AIDS, reinforce HIV prevention and end all forms of discrimination

We, the undersigned,

- Representatives of civil society organizations, of organisations and groups of people living with HIV/AIDS, representatives of community based organisations of most affected and vulnerable groups (people who use drugs, men who have sex with men, migrants, sex workers, prisoners, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups),
- Representatives of health professionals’ organisations, of research institutions, of scientific medical societies,

- Practitioners involved in research, prevention, testing, treatment and care,
- Members of the European Parliament,
- National policy makers,

Call on the European Commission to affirm at the HIV and Human Rights Conference, “Right to Health, Right to Life” 27-28 May 2013, in Brussels, to commit to develop a Strategy and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS and frequently associated diseases - viral hepatitis, STI and TB - in order to keep the EU at the forefront of the global efforts to get new infections, AIDS deaths and discrimination cases to zero.