

Policy Recommendations for vulnerable groups: a focused approach to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care in Europe



Introduction: The following policy recommendations have been developed within the framework of the Correlation Network II project. The 10 recommendations represent the voices of the HIV community, practitioners and community leaders from across the EU/EFTA countries working together through the Correlation Network. **Objective:** The EATG coordinated the development of these recommendations aimed at government and policy-makers, and intended to support efforts to improve HIV/AIDS services for vulnerable and high-risk populations. A brochure is available for distribution.

PRACTITIONERS CALL ON EU/EFTA STATES AND THEIR GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- > **PR 1: Restate their commitments on a biannual basis** to a core set of basic principles, international conventions, and practical norms to guide their national response to HIV/AIDS. States that have not ratified these should do so without delay.
- > **PR 2: Safeguard the human rights of populations most affected by HIV/AIDS.** Governments should restate key commitments (conventions, norms) on human rights for these groups. Governments should repeal laws that serve to criminalize key groups, and act to reduce discrimination. Governments should recognize the unintended HIV risks/public health consequences of national policies and practices that serve to criminalize and discriminate against MSM, IDU,
- > **PR 3: Ensure civic participation in all aspects of the national response.** Governments should involve civil society stakeholders in designing, implementing and evaluating the response, and in particular, they should involve most affected populations, subpopulations and their representatives as primary stakeholders in the response.
- > **PR 4: Provide greater accountability for national HIV policies.** Governments should define national HIV policy priorities explicitly in relation to core HIV commitments, human rights, epidemiological data and analysis, and evidence of effectiveness. Governments should urgently ensure coherence between HIV policy and other policy areas, most notably law enforcement policies.
- > **PR 5: Ensure universal access to HIV services.** Governments should scale up efforts to reach key populations, and ensure equitable access to services by removing barriers faced by migrants, sex workers and prisoners. Governments should ensure timely diagnosis, full ART coverage, and TB services to all PLHIV.
- > **PR 6: Focus the national HIV response on populations most affected by the epidemic.** Governments should collect and analyse epidemiological data systematically, and develop prevention programmes according to the epidemiology. Governments should focus response on key populations (MSM, IDU, migrants, sex workers, prisoners), and on vulnerable sub-populations (IDU in prison, migrants from countries with generalized HIV epidemics, migrant sex workers, young IDU, bisexual men).
- > **PR 7: Ensure that national HIV programmes are effective.** Governments should invest in programmes that based on solid evidence of effectiveness where that is available and on reasonable probability of effectiveness where solid evidence is not available. Governments should be informed by learning about effectiveness in HIV services, including services aimed at key populations. Governments should develop a culture of evaluation to inform policies.
- > **PR 8: Ensure adequate funding to implement the national response and effective spending of limited resources.** Governments should provide additional funding from domestic sources, including from the redeployment of resources from programmes that serve to criminalize, and thus increase the vulnerability of, populations most affected. Governments should concentrate existing resources on addressing the epidemic among populations most affected, and prioritize effective prevention interventions.
- > **PR 9: Delegate political leadership to implement the national response.** Governments should appoint a strong political and public authority to implement these recommendations, and to address specific national HIV policy challenges.
- > **PR 10: Participate in the regional response to HIV/AIDS.** Governments should address these common challenges at regional level.



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The Correlation Network

The Correlation Network, a project funded by the European Commission, aims to tackle health inequalities in Europe and to improve prevention, care and treatment services, targeting blood-borne infectious diseases (BBID), in particular Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS among vulnerable and high risk populations (e.g. drug users and young people at risk). Its aim was to contribute to the European Health Programme by collecting, developing and disseminating information regarding BBID, including by convening a European-wide network of experts.

European AIDS Treatment Group

The European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) is a community organisation that promotes the interests of people living with HIV. EATG's mission is to achieve the fastest possible access to state of the art medical products, devices and diagnostics tests that prevent or treat HIV infection, and to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV in Europe.