



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Subject : Council conclusions on Combating HIV/AIDS  
– Outcome of proceedings

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The Council conclusions annexed hereto were adopted at the EPSCO Council on 3 June 2005.

**COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**  
**on Combating HIV/AIDS**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLS the Declaration of Commitments on HIV/AIDS adopted by the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS on 27 June 2001 signalling the emergence of a response needed to be successful in the fight against HIV/AIDS;
2. RECALLS the Council Recommendation of 18 June 2003 on the prevention and reduction of health-related harm associated with drug dependence <sup>1</sup>, underlining the need for Member States to make available a range of different services and facilities, in order to reduce substantially the incidence of drug-related health damage;
3. REAFFIRMS the importance of the Conference "*Breaking the Barriers – Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia*" (Dublin, Ireland, 23-24 February 2004) in highlighting the threat posed by the rise of HIV/AIDS;
4. RECALLS in this respect the request expressed in the Dublin "Declaration on Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia" to strengthen the capacity of the European Union to fight effectively the spread of HIV/AIDS;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 165, 3.7.2003, p. 31.

5. WELCOMES the "Vilnius Declaration" as an outcome of the Ministerial Conference "*Europe and HIV/AIDS – New challenges, New Opportunities*" (Vilnius, Lithuania, 17 September 2004) highlighting the need for joint efforts *to strengthen* comprehensive prevention activities, including human capacity building and sustainable health care infrastructures, *to provide* universal access to care, support, and treatment, and *to build* effective partnerships between governments, civil society, private sector, and other international partners; moreover, recognising that in the European region the most vulnerable populations include drug injectors and their sexual partners, men who have sex with men, sex-workers, trafficked women, prisoners, ethnic minorities and migrant populations which have close links to high prevalence countries;
6. WELCOMES the Commission working paper of 8 September 2004 "*Coordinated and integrated approach to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic within the European Union and in its neighbourhood*";
7. WELCOMES the Commission Communication of 29 October 2004 to the Council and the European Parliament on a *Coherent European Policy Framework for External Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis* and ACKNOWLEDGES the Council Conclusions of 23 November 2004 which endorsed this Communication and urged, amongst others, the Commission and Member States to ensure that sexual and reproductive health is an essential component of HIV and AIDS prevention;
8. RECALLS the Council Conclusions of 23 November 2004 on a Renewed EU Commitment to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in the context of the Millennium development goals (MDGs);
9. TAKES NOTE of the on-going exchange of best practices on prevention through information campaigns, access to antiretroviral treatment with special focus on injecting drug users and migrant populations, and the prevention of mother to child transmission, during the Extended HIV/AIDS Think Tank meeting (Luxembourg, 5-6 April 2005);

10. WELCOMES the guidance of the informal ministerial meeting "Health in Europe: protecting the health of European citizens" (Paris, 13-14 April 2005) on a European strategy and HIV vaccine research;
11. UNDERLINES that the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the related underlying phenomena fuelling the spread of the epidemic are common, cause human suffering and disability, increase the risk of social exclusion, and have negative implications for national economies;
12. RECOGNISES that, as well as continuing to strengthen existing methods to prevent the disease, there is a need to further develop research, surveillance, and methods for effective interventions, in order to tackle the multifaceted HIV/AIDS epidemic;
13. RECOGNISES that HIV/AIDS as well as other communicable disease epidemics are fuelled to a great extent by common root factors, such as inequality between women and men, poverty and social marginalisation of the most vulnerable populations;
14. RECOGNISES the need for addressing the variety of problems related to combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic by way of increased cooperation between the Commission, Member States, accession, candidate and neighbouring countries, and international organisations such as UN AIDS, with the participation of people living with HIV/AIDS and the civil society concerned;
15. NOTES that whilst the primary responsibility for health systems resides with the Member States, there is an added-value to addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic both at a pan-European and at a global level, including through appropriate development policies.

INVITES the Member States to:

- Promote the implementation of the Dublin "Declaration on Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia" and the "Vilnius Declaration" from the Ministerial Conference "*Europe and HIV/AIDS – New challenges, New Opportunities*".

- Take further action to ensure that national multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS coordination structures, strategies, and financing plans are implemented, maintained and further developed in cooperation with people living with HIV or affected by HIV and that best practices and experiences are exchanged at Community level.
- Take further action to improve general knowledge and raise awareness of the general public on the prevention of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as information on sexual and reproductive health and to develop and implement evidence-based targeted activities to cover particular vulnerable populations.
- Take further action to promote safer and responsible sexual behaviour and practices, including through condom use, and scale up access for injecting drug users to prevention, drug dependence treatment and harm reduction services.
- Take appropriate action to counsel and support people with HIV/AIDS, their families and their friends; and to establish and maintain, through the appropriate legislative or other means, a respectful, non-discriminatory and accepting societal atmosphere and behaviour towards people with HIV/AIDS.
- Continuously work on maintaining and developing a sustainable, affordable, and accessible health care system as a basis for prevention, treatment, and care activities; and in this context pay special attention to the access to affordable anti-retro viral treatment, as well as other medical treatment, for all in need.
- Strengthen the co-operation of clinical trials in the continuing search for HIV-vaccines and microbicides in the context of a comprehensive global response, in collaboration with the European Commission and with due reference to the Community framework programme for research.
- Take into account the possibility of using horizontal EC financing instruments in the implementation of comprehensive national strategies.

- Continue to work closely together with the European Commission and other relevant international organizations and agencies, when planning and agreeing specific bilateral actions in the context of neighbourhood and development policy.

INVITES the Commission to:

- Support Member States in their efforts to implement the Dublin and Vilnius declarations.
- Contribute to efforts to improve general knowledge and to raise awareness of the general public on the prevention of HIV infection, as well as of other sexually transmitted infections.
- Contribute to activities that aim at establishing a respectful, non-discriminatory and accepting societal atmosphere and behaviour towards people with HIV/AIDS.
- Facilitate the use of existing EC financing instruments for the implementation of comprehensive national HIV/AIDS strategies within the Member States and in neighbouring countries.
- Promote the investment in the appropriate research and development of effective behavioural and risk reducing as well as prophylactic measures, such as vaccines and microbicides, and cure.
- Encourage the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to further reinforce and coordinate existing activities on the surveillance of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, in coordination with national institutes and international specialised observatories.
- Facilitate the collaboration between the Member States, accession, candidate and neighbouring countries and relevant international organisations in order to promote the exchange of good practises and joint projects.

- Promote and continue the dialogue and cooperation with countries at a regional and global level, as well as with international organisations such as UN AIDS, both in health and development policy context, in order to achieve further regional and global progress in the fight against the spread of the HIV.

