



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
IMPACT ASSESSMENT BOARD

Brussels, 29 JUN 2009
D(2009)

Opinion

Title **Impact Assessment accompanying the Communication on combating HIV/AIDS in the EU and the neighbourhood - strategy and second action plan (2010 -2013) (draft version of 4 June 2009)**

Lead DG **DG SANCO**

1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion

(A) Context

The Commission communication on combating HIV/AIDS, 2006-2009, launched a European action plan which is coming to an end in 2009. The action plan (proposing about 40 different actions) and the accompanying Commission communication served as a guideline for priorities for funding through the European Health Programmes and for activities under the Research Framework programmes. The action plan has been implemented to a large extent in a coordinated manner among major stakeholders over the last years.

(B) Positive aspects

The report is accessible to the non specialist reader and provides a comprehensive overview of the HIV/AIDS problem.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance. Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.

General recommendation: The report needs significant further work to demonstrate the lessons drawn from the current action plan for the design of a new plan. It should address more fully the reasons why some commitments of the current plan were not met, and be more explicit about (options for) the content of the new plan (which actions will be reinforced, which downgraded or dropped, and whether new actions are necessary). It should assess the option of extending the validity of relevant actions of the current action plan for one more year, so that a formal evaluation could be carried out to serve as an input for a new proposal. The report should also define the operational objectives in terms of impacts rather than

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measures, so that they can be monitored more easily. Social impacts should be analysed. During the IAB meeting, DG SANCO agreed to make the necessary changes in the impact assessment on this basis.

In the light of these recommendations, the Board would like to examine a revised report, on which it will issue a new opinion.

(1) Make better use of the available elements of the evaluation of the current HIV/AIDS action plan to justify more fully the need for and content of a new initiative. The report should specify why/how some of the elements of the current action plan delivered expected results, and why some failed to do so. It should explain why a certain number of the political commitments have not been achieved. In this context, the report should re-define the baseline scenario so that it includes the elements of the current action plan which are likely to continue should the action plan not be renewed at the end of this year. This would make it easier to understand the impacts of discontinuation of the current action plan, and would facilitate the comparison with the new action plan proposed under policy option 3. The report should also examine, to the extent relevant and feasible, an option under which the existing action plan would be extended for a further year, allowing for a formal evaluation to be carried out which would serve largely as the evidence base for a new proposal.

(2) Explain the content of the various options in greater detail and be more explicit about the differences between the options. The report should explain the reasons why the components of the current action plan will be changed, and specify whether certain actions of the current plan will be reinforced, scaled back or dropped. It should present such changes in terms of sub-options. The report should explain to what extent and how the proposed option will tackle the problem of poor resourcing, focus and implementation of the current action plan. It should also provide information about the costs (in particular for Member States) of the measures envisaged for the new action plan. Furthermore, the report needs to distinguish between health and non-health related issues of the HIV/AIDS problem, and reflect this in the proposed action plan. It should address better the social and human rights impacts. The report should also clarify the basis for the choice of the geographical coverage and be more explicit about complementarities with programmes in other geographical areas such as Africa. Finally, in order to distinguish between the preferred option 3 and option 2, the report should be more explicit about the content and impacts of the 'structured technical cooperation'.

(3) Define the operational objectives in terms of impacts rather than measures, in such a way that criteria can be defined to assess their success. The objectives should be more clearly linked to specific aspects of the problem as listed on pp. 14-17, preferably at the level of specific objectives. The operational objectives should – where possible - be reformulated in terms of specific deliverables, targets and deadlines in all areas in which this is feasible so that they can be monitored more easily. The report should provide further details on the 'agreed targets' mentioned in the first specific objective. The general objective of improving quality of life of HIV/AIDS infected people should be more adequately reflected in the operational objectives and in the policy options. The report should also provide a description of the social impacts of the policy options. Finally, a set of indicators for monitoring should be developed and presented in the monitoring and evaluation section.

(D) Procedure and presentation

It appears that all procedural requirements have been complied with. The readability would be improved by reducing the use of abbreviations in the text and present the differences between options 2 and 3 in a table. The report should use the term 'immigrant' instead of 'migrant' to describe the third country citizens immigrating to EU.

2) IAB scrutiny process

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