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#### NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council

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Subject:	A call for action at the EU and national level to prioritise efforts and investment towards ending HIV epidemic in Europe until 2030, ensuring the implementation of appropriate political actions in the next crucial 6 years to come.  <i>- Information from the Romanian, Polish and Spanish delegations</i>
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Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Romanian, Polish and Spanish delegations on the above mentioned subject to be raised under “Any other business” at the meeting of the EPSCO Council (Health) on 21 June 2024.

AOB EPSCO Health 21 June 2024

**“A call for action at the EU and national level to prioritise efforts and investment towards ending HIV epidemic in Europe until 2030, ensuring the implementation of appropriate political actions in the next crucial 6 years to come”**

*Information from Romanian, Polish and Spanish delegations*

The United Nations established the Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) with clear targets to combat the alarming spread of HIV globally, including across Europe. Member States committed to ending the HIV epidemic by **2030** by achieving the **95-95-95** targets: 95% of all people living with HIV should know their HIV status, 95% of those diagnosed should receive sustained antiretroviral therapy, and 95% of those on therapy should achieve viral suppression.

In the early 1990s, Romania accounted for more than half of the pediatric HIV/AIDS cases in Europe, due to an epidemiological accident. An estimated 10,000 children were infected with HIV, with over 6,000 of these individuals surviving long-term, now aged between 30-36 years. Given Romania’s unique experience, our experience can serve as a milestone for other Member States in maintaining HIV-related discussions and actions.

According to the ECDC February 2024 data<sup>1</sup>, in the EU/EEA overall, some progress is being made, with 91% of all people living with HIV knowing their status, 93% of people who know their status on treatment, and 91% of those on treatment being virally suppressed. However, nearly one in four of all people living with HIV (23%) in the 23 EU/EEA countries with available data had still not achieved viral suppression and only two countries have achieved the overall 86% target of ensuring that all people living with HIV are virally suppressed by 2025.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/evidence-brief-progress-towards-reaching-sustainable-development-goals-related>

With less than six years remaining until 2030 and in light of the upcoming political changes within the European Union, with a new European Commission and European Parliament, it is imperative that the Union and its Member States remain committed to this goal. Continued efforts are needed to keep HIV on the political agenda, so that we can ensure that necessary tools and resources are secured towards this important goal, as appropriate and in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity on healthcare matters.

To achieve the 2030 targets, it is crucial to raise awareness at the EU and Member State levels and acknowledging that HIV continues to spread across Europe. Vulnerable populations are particularly affected and addressing this issue is a key towards ending the epidemic in Europe.

Policies that should be considered and implemented at both the EU and national levels include inter alia screening, testing, rapid linkage and retention to innovative care and/or prevention options, people-centred integrated care looking at the needs and wellbeing of people living with HIV, and measures to reduce stigma and discrimination.

While positive progress towards the 95-95-95 targets has been reported by the ECDC in Europe overall, there is still much to be done to effectively end the epidemic by 2030. Public health policy to combat HIV mainly falls under the responsibility of Member States. Therefore, it is essential that efforts begin at the local level and are then translated into coordinated actions at the EU level.

We call on the European Commission to include HIV in their public health priorities and define a concrete HIV action plan to support and complement Member States in their efforts towards ending the HIV epidemic in Europe by 2030. This, together with Member States efforts at national level, could enable Europe to become the first region globally to end the HIV epidemic within its borders and set an example for other parts of the world. It is within our reach, and it is our shared responsibility to act now collaboratively.