

Annual Report 2013

AIDS Action Europe
March 2014





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Executive summary

AIDS Action Europe is a European-wide network, covering EU Member States, neighbouring countries and countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. By the end of 2013, AIDS Action Europe had established partnerships with 436 NGOs from 46 European and Central Asian countries.

The mission of AIDS Action Europe is to bring together civil society to work towards a more effective response to the HIV epidemic in Europe and Central Asia.



For 2013, the following specific objectives have been formulated:

- Strengthen civil society contribution to regional and national HIV/AIDS policies and programmes;
- Increase collaboration, linking and learning and good practice exchange among NGOs, networks, policy makers and other stakeholders;
- Manage internal processes to successfully implement the work programme.

The core activities of AIDS Action Europe in 2013 were focused on three major areas:

- Advocacy and policy support: here, attention was paid to co-chairing the EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum, evaluating the current EU Communication on HIV and providing advice for the development of a new European HIV policy beyond 2013
- Communication and support of linking and learning: the management of the HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse and AIDS Action Europe website, as key communication channels with civil society actors and other stakeholders, were main activities in this area.
- Network management: here, the communication strategy with the AIDS Action Europe network was further tailored and fine-tuned.

Strengthen Civil Society

In 2013, AIDS Action Europe represented and supported the interests of civil society in numerous ways. For instance, Steering Committee members and staff fed the EU Think Tank on HIV/AIDS and advocated the needs of affected communities at relevant occasions, such as the 'Right to Health, Right to Life' Conference in Brussels. The involvement of AIDS Action Europe staff at relevant meetings and conferences and in CSF list server discussions safeguarded the input from a civil society perspective on a broad variety of topics.

AIDS Action Europe engaged in various policy actions, e.g., with respect to threatening restrictive HIV laws in Greece. The advocacy interventions in Greece resulted in policy adjustments and the improvement of the situation.

AIDS Action Europe worked on its advocacy and policy influencing strategy, predominantly through its active contribution - as co-chair - to the HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum (CSF) and as member of the HIV/AIDS Think Tank. The work related to the CSF focused on the update of the EU Commission Communication on *Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries, 2009 -2013*, including input to the evaluation of the current Communication and suggestions for the new EU HIV/AIDS Action Plan. A comprehensive document with suggestions and advice from civil society was submitted to the European Commission as input for the new EU Action Plan.





AIDS Action Europe established the European HIV Legal Forum (EHLF), which looks into access to services and health insurances for migrants in an irregular situation living with HIV. A report was published with the findings of a survey from five European countries. The Forum formulated recommendations from a civil society perspective. The work of the EHLF led to a concrete proposal for follow-up activities in 2014 and 2015.

Increase collaboration, linking & learning

In 2013, the communication channels of AIDS Action Europe have been used intensively for the dissemination of news, calls for action, announcements, vacancies, events, key materials, etc. The AIDS Action Europe communication officer updated the website continuously. In 2013, the average number of visitors per month of the AIDS Action Europe website was close to 1.800 (in 2012: 1.700). The communications coordinator took care of regular moderation of the Facebook and Twitter accounts. Posts and tweets motivated network members and partners to respond and engage in debate, in particular regarding the EU/UNAIDS *Right to Health - Right to Life* High Level Meeting. AIDS Action Europe network members were updated on CSF meetings: there were live reports from both meetings; relevant quotes, pictures and videos were disseminated via Facebook and Twitter. The number of fans and followers on Facebook and Twitter increased significantly in 2013 (29% and 42% respectively).

Communication with the network through our newsletter has intensified: the *Network News* was disseminated 10 times among a mailing list of more than 600 addresses (in 2012: 500). In addition, AIDS Action Europe disseminated tailored information, resulting in a higher number of readers of our messages, which succeeded in the aim to reach specific target groups with relevant information (instead of addressing the overall network).

The HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse grew steadily in 2013; a total of 66 new materials were uploaded into the Clearinghouse database. The AIDS Action Europe network grew with 11 new members to a total number of 436 members and 15 partners at the end of 2013.

AIDS Action Europe's involvement in EU Joint Action: Improving Quality in HIV Prevention

The Joint Action on Quality in HIV Prevention (QHP) is an ambitious and comprehensive 3-year project, initiated by the European Commission. It aims at improving in a structural way prevention efforts at various levels – from policy to the development of tools and interventions. QHP started in March 2013, and AIDS Action Europe is one of the associated partners. AIDS Action Europe contributes specifically in the areas of policy and communication. It can be expected that the results of QHP will have a positive impact on the work of AIDS Action Europe and its partners. In addition, the cooperation between AIDS Action Europe and QHP will create opportunities to create synergy and establish links with Ministries of Health and other governmental and non-governmental actors in the field. Finally, it will increase AIDS Action Europe's visibility and the possibility to update the Clearinghouse with new materials. In 2013, AIDS Action Europe staff provided input into two work packages, and it can be expected that the involvement will continue and intensify in 2014.

Conclusions and recommendations

From the experiences gathered in 2013 it can be concluded that AIDS Action Europe is a valuable and respected player in the area of HIV and AIDS in Europe. The network is relevant for both (European) policy makers and the NGO sector. In particular through its central role for the HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum and EU Think Tank, AIDS Action Europe can safeguard that the experiences and expertise of affected communities are incorporated in policy making processes, and that policy issues are communicated effectively to non-governmental actors in the field.

The fact that the network has grown in 2013 and that communication with the network members has intensified is a clear indication that AIDS Action Europe caters to the needs of its stakeholders.



The three specific objectives – strengthen civil society, increase collaboration, linking and learning, manage internal processes – and their respective areas of work, have proven to be suitable and effective to achieve the main aim and the strategic objectives of the network. The cooperation with the EU-wide Joint Action on Improving Quality in HIV Prevention and the involvement in two work packages has been and will be of great potential to improve the visibility and increase the profile of AIDS Action Europe.

The major challenge for AIDS Action Europe in 2013 was the funding situation. Finding appropriate co-funding agencies proved to be increasingly difficult. This resulted in an adjusted budget and – accordingly – slight adjustments of the work plan. The Steering Committee and the host organisation looked intensely in the financial possibilities and restrictions and suggested ways to realise the work plan in a justified manner. For 2014 it is recommended, that the financial and co-funding challenges are met in such a way, that the valuable work of AIDS Action Europe is safeguarded in the future.

The activities of AIDS Action Europe in 2013 were made possible thanks to financial contributions from the Second EU Public Health Programme (2008-2013) through the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers, Aidsfondet, ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action Programme, T101 Limited, Gilead Sciences and WHO Europe.





Introduction

AIDS Action Europe is a European-wide network, covering EU Member States, neighbouring countries and countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. By the end of 2013, AIDS Action Europe had established partnerships with 436 NGOs from 46 European and Central Asian countries.

The mission of AIDS Action Europe is to bring civil society together to work towards a more effective response to the HIV epidemic in Europe and Central Asia. The strategic objectives are to strengthen and support civil society's contributions in the fight against HIV and AIDS by:

- Making an effective and meaningful contribution to regional and national policies related to HIV and AIDS;
- Facilitating continuous exchange among NGOs on good practices and lessons learned in the field of HIV and AIDS;
- Developing a stronger, more effective organisation and network.



Specific objectives for 2013 were to:

- Strengthen civil society contribution to regional and national HIV/AIDS policies and programmes;
- Increase collaboration, linking and learning and good practice exchange among NGOs, networks, policy makers and other stakeholders;
- Manage internal processes to successfully implement the work programme.

Core activities of AIDS Action Europe in 2013 were focused on co-chairing the EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum and managing the HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse and AIDS Action Europe website, as key communication channels with civil society actors and broader stakeholders. In addition, we focussed on evaluating the current EU Communication on HIV and the development of a new European HIV policy beyond 2013. Finally, the communication strategy with the AIDS Action Europe network was further tailored and fine-tuned.

1 Strengthen civil society contribution

1.1 The EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum and Think Tank

The EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum and Think Tank proved to be crucial in safeguarding the input of civil society into European agenda setting and policy making.

As co-chair of the EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum (CSF) and member of the EU HIV/AIDS Think Tank, AIDS Action Europe contributed effectively to European policies. The CSF and Think Tank are important policy dialogue mechanisms in the European region, including neighbouring countries like Russia and Ukraine. The CSF facilitates in particular connection between civil society actors, while the Think Tank addresses primarily national public servants. CSF and Think Tank meetings are organised twice a year, and play a vital role for the European Commission Communication and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS 2009-2013. The two CSF chairs, of whom one originates from AIDS Action Europe create a formal link between both fora.

1.1.1 CSF input towards new HIV/AIDS Action Plan

The Commission Communication on HIV/AIDS expired in December 2013, and a new Communication is not yet in place. The CSF therefore lobbied with the Commission in order for them to find an interim solution to prevent a policy void. This topic was discussed at both CSF meetings. A call was sent to EU leaders and the EC to reaffirm their leadership and commitment regarding HIV/AIDS by approving a new strategy and action plan. This call was signed by 200 civil society organisations and other stakeholders in the European region. Next to the public call, there was a meeting with Paula Duarte



Gaspar, representative of EU Commissioner Tonio Borg's cabinet on March 18, 2013. The meeting was also attended by Paolo Guglielmetti (DG Sanco) and Ann-Isabelle von Lingen (policy officer at EATG). During the meeting, civil society representatives stressed their strong concern about the EU Commission Communication and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS 2009-2013 coming to an end in due course, and the need to have a renewed formal political document in support of HIV policy in future years.



AIDS Action Europe @aidsactioneurop · Dec 9
Civil Society organizations are meeting in Luxembourg #HivAidsCSF to discuss the future of HIV/AIDS policy #Actionplan2014 in Europe.

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The efforts of the CSF lobby resulted in the decision to update the present Action Plan as an interim reference document until the new policy framework comes into effect. European Commissioner Tonio Borg committed to a new EU policy framework by the end of his mandate (October 2014). The CSF was invited to contribute to the update of the Action Plan. A document with collated suggestions received from CSF members, EATG Board members, AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee members as well as the CSF Coordination Team was sent to Matthias Schuppe and Paolo Guglielmetti from the EC as input for the new Action Plan. Probably not all suggestions will make it into the new Action Plan, but it can be expected that they are food for thought towards a new Communication.

"I would like to thank you and your services for the valuable input that was provided during the consultations in preparation of the prolongation and look forward to working with you and ECDC to implement the actions contained in the plan."
John F. Ryan, Acting Director European Commission

1.1.2 Evaluation of the present EU Communication on HIV/AIDS

In September 2013, the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) launched the final report *Monitoring implementation of the European Commission Communication and Action Plan for combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries, 2009 – 2013*. The report is based on a monitoring process in 2011 and 2012 among different stakeholders, including the HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum. The AIDS Action Europe office, in its role as CSF co-chair, coordinated both times the CSF response and compiled two reports as input for the ECDC. The ECDC report marks progress made on reaching the goals of the Commission Communication, as well as the remaining challenges. It also highlights the challenges for 2013, the final year of the Communication, and for the years ahead, while working towards a new political framework on HIV for the European region. Through its involvement with the CSF, AIDS Action Europe is able to provide vital input to shaping this new framework. In 2013, AIDS Action Europe committed itself to taking up the key conclusions and recommendations from the report and to feed them into CSF meetings and discussions about future EU HIV policies.



AIDS Action Europe @aidsactioneurop · Sep 18
What's in it for us as civil society? The @ECDC final report on monitoring implementation of EC communication is out: bit.ly/16DBc4E

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Among others, the following aspects are stressed in the conclusions of the report:

- The CSF is recognized as a valuable platform for policy dialogue, exchange of information and experience, and for promoting Europe-wide action and effective communication.
- Participation in the CSF has enabled civil society organisations to play a more visible role in national policy dialogue in a number of countries.

1.1.3 CSF lobby on the situation in Greece

In Greece, the modification of a health provision regulation led to the arrest, detention, mandatory HIV testing, publication of photographs and personal details and the pressing of criminal charges against 12 women (1 sex worker and 11 drug users) and to the re-introduction of a law on compulsory HIV testing. Following the e-mails immediately addressed by the CSF to the Cabinet of Commissioner Borg and to the officers of the HIV team in Luxembourg, Positive Voice, the Greek member of the CSF, received a prompt reply by Paola Duarte Gaspar saying that Commissioner Borg raised his concerns on this issue



with the Minister of Health of Greece and received assurances that the Greek government will be presenting a new law, which fully complies with human rights. The CSF was also reassured that the Commissioner and his Cabinet will be following this matter very closely. The CSF also formulated and sent two letters to EU Commissioners Dalli and Reding, complaining about the situation and suggested to contact the Greek authorities and urge them to adopt evidence-based programmes instead of discriminating actions.

The advocacy interventions in Greece resulted in policy adjustments and the improvement of the situation. 8 of those 12 women were set free by the court, as their cases didn't have any legal base. The four women still in prison are charged for other offenses. Positive Voice was invited – as the only member of the Greek civil society – to attend a round table discussion with Greek authorities and public officials, in order to study the abolition or the modification of the health provision regulation.



1.1.4 Further collaboration and activities

In 2013, the CSF email group/listserv has been used far more intensively than in previous years. CSF members requested input and support from other CSF members, in order to develop or feed into national policies and developments.

Some examples of letters and statements that were sent out by the CSF to representatives of the EU or states are mentioned below. In general, they were developed by the CSF coordination team, in cooperation with other CSF members, who were involved through the civil society e-mail group.

- Letter sent to the president of Ukraine to bar anti-gay bill;
- CSF letter to EAHC on ensuring community and civil society participation in improving access to early diagnosis of HIV/AIDS and timely treatment and care of most vulnerable groups and in priority regions in Public Health Call 2013-Project(s);
- Call upon European Union leaders and the European Commission to reaffirm their leadership and commitment on HIV/AIDS, both inside and outside the European Union, by approving a new strategy and action plan on HIV/AIDS;
- Call upon Italian leadership to organise an event for the decennial of the “Dublin Declaration on Partnership to Fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia” during the Italian EU Presidency in 2014.



AIDS Action Europe @aidsactioneurop · 16 Jan 2013

Just sent by EU #HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum: an appeal to Ukrainian Parliament to reject the draft #homophobic law bit.ly/Y90NAh

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1.1.5 Think Tank meetings

Both CSF meetings were followed by Think Tank meetings that were attended by three AIDS Action Europe representatives and three EATG representatives of the CSF, including the two co-chairs. At both meetings, the CSF co-chairs reported back to the Think Tank on the work and outcomes of the CSF.

This procedure proved to be a suitable tool to link the agenda of civil society with policy making at the national level in the EU Member States.

1.2 Participation in other events

Throughout the year, AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee members and staff were involved in advisory activities in relation to relevant European and international policies. In addition, they participated actively in key European and international events. The AIDS Action Europe leaflet and promo gadget (developed in 2012) have been widely disseminated at these meetings and conferences:

- EC/UNAIDS ‘Right to Health, Right to Life - HIV/AIDS and Human Rights’ conference in Brussels, 27-28 May 2013.



The purpose of this meeting was to promote and protect human rights and get towards zero discrimination in the EU and neighbouring countries. AIDS Action Europe and CSF members played different roles at the conference, as speakers and panellists. The AIDS Action Europe co-chair of the CSF, Ms Lella Cosmaro, made the closing remarks. The discussion paper “Right to Health - Right to Life: Why we Need to Act Now on HIV and Human Rights” was made available through the HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse.

- At the COBA Test Final Conference, AIDS Action Europe coordinator Martine de Schutter gave a presentation about the different communication channels of AIDS Action Europe for the wider dissemination of lessons learned, materials and discussions around Community Based Voluntary Counselling and Testing (CBVCT). In addition, she informed the audience about the HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum as a policy influencing mechanism. She also wrote a blog about the conference.
- Martine de Schutter, replacing CSF co-chair Lella Cosmaro, attended the EU Health Policy Forum (EUHPF), in order to link up with CSF policy discussions and to put HIV on the EUHPF agenda. The rationale and terms of reference of the CSF were shared as a good practice example for the EUHPF.
- Martine de Schutter presented the AIDS Action Europe Clearinghouse and Civil Society Forum as good examples of knowledge sharing at EU level during the pre-conference workshop of the 6th EPH Conference: Evidence generation and successful knowledge transfer in public health: operating at multiple levels of the science-policy interface.
- AIDS Action Europe was a supporting organisation of HARM REDUCTION 2013, Harm Reduction International's 23rd international conference. Lella Cosmaro was a panellist at the session ‘Human rights – who to blame and what to do?’ In addition, she took care of publicity for AIDS Action Europe.
- Dejana Rankovic represented AIDS Action Europe at the HIVERA policy makers and experts workshop and disseminated AIDS Action Europe materials among the participants.



1.3 European HIV Legal Forum

In 2012, AIDS Action Europe established the European HIV Legal Forum (EHLF), which looks into access to services and health insurances for migrants in an irregular situation living with HIV. In 2013 a report was published with the findings of a survey from five European countries on legal issues regarding access to services and health insurance for migrants living with HIV in an irregular situation. The Forum formulated recommendations from a civil society perspective.

At the end of October 2013, a Roundtable meeting was organised to define the general outline of a project plan for the coming two years for the EHLF, including objectives, activities and expected outcomes, stakeholder analysis and funding plan. Unfortunately, due to several external factors beyond our control (including a major storm affecting the Netherlands) only two country representatives could attend (Italy and Switzerland), while three others (Hungary, Netherlands and the UK) were absent. As a follow up to the meeting, a consultant was hired to formulate - together with the EHLF working group - a funding proposal.

1.4 IQhiv initiative/Joint Action on Improving Quality in HIV Prevention

The Joint Action on Quality in HIV Prevention (QHP) is an ambitious and comprehensive 3-year project, initiated by the European Commission. It aims at improving - in a structural way - prevention efforts at various levels, from policy to the development of tools and interventions. QHP started in March 2013, and AIDS Action Europe is one of the associated partners. AIDS Action Europe contributes in particular in the areas of policy and communication. Firstly, the involvement in this project is meant to improve quality aspects of AIDS Action Europe and its partners. But it can be expected that some broader, secondary effects can be achieved as





well. The cooperation between AIDS Action Europe and QHP will create opportunities to find new synergy and links with Ministries of Health and other governmental and non-governmental actors in the field. It will increase AIDS Action Europe's visibility and the possibility to update the Clearinghouse with new materials. In 2013, AIDS Action Europe staff provided input to two work packages, and it can be expected that the involvement will continue and intensify in 2014. Our members will be approached and invited to take part in the seminars and workshops in the respective countries, with the aim to improve the quality of HIV prevention initiatives.

2 Linking and learning

2.1 The HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse

Since its launch in 2007, the HIV/AIDS Clearinghouse has played an important role in facilitating linking and learning between various actors in the field of HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia in general, and AIDS Action Europe members in particular. Many of the communication activities that were carried out in 2013 were therefore directly linked to the Clearinghouse. These activities focused in particular on the following aspects:

- promoting the use of the Clearinghouse;
- keeping the Clearinghouse up to date;
- (technical) maintenance.



We actively searched for relevant publications and stimulated our members to upload new resources. At the end of 2013, the Clearinghouse contained 1296 resources, compared to 1229 in 2012 – an increase of more than 5 %. We promoted the Clearinghouse through posting its latest publications on Facebook and Twitter. The Clearinghouse Update was disseminated 12 times in both Russian and English. This newsletter informs users of the Clearinghouse about the latest added materials and the most popular downloads. In addition, two special Clearinghouse Updates were released. The AIDS Action Europe network and Clearinghouse users were also stimulated through direct mailing activities – drawing attention to new publications that reached AIDS Action Europe through different channels. The communication officer stimulated the authors of these publications to share them on a wider European level by uploading them to the Clearinghouse.

In 2013, a separate account for the Clearinghouse was created in Google Analytics, providing us with the opportunity to separately analyse statistics of the Clearinghouse. The “open rate” i.e. the percentage of recipients who opened the Clearinghouse Update, was 20% in 2013. The percentage of recipients who clicked on one of the links in the Update - the “click-through rate” - was 5%.

In 2013, 67 new documents were uploaded to the Clearinghouse database bringing the total number of key materials to 1296, a growth of 5% instead of the targeted 10%. Despite our efforts, the targets appeared to be too ambitious.

2.2 Network News

In 2013, the AIDS Action Europe newsletter was modified. It got a new name – Network News – and the format was changed. The new outline aimed at focusing on activities that AIDS Action Europe either had carried out or had been involved in. Besides, network members and EU funded projects were actively approached and encouraged to write articles for the newsletter. In that sense, the newsletter provided contributing organisations with a platform to present their activities and at the same time to strengthen relations with them. The newsletter was disseminated ten times in 2013, compared to four times in 2012. We assumed that a more frequent newsletter would be more effective to inform the network about relevant news and activities. Although the higher frequency may have increased AIDS Action Europe's visibility, the statistics show a decrease in reading the newsletter: 26% opened and 6% clicked through, compared to 30% and 10% respectively in 2012. Based on the experiences from 2013, the number of newsletters in 2014 will be reduced: every other month an issue

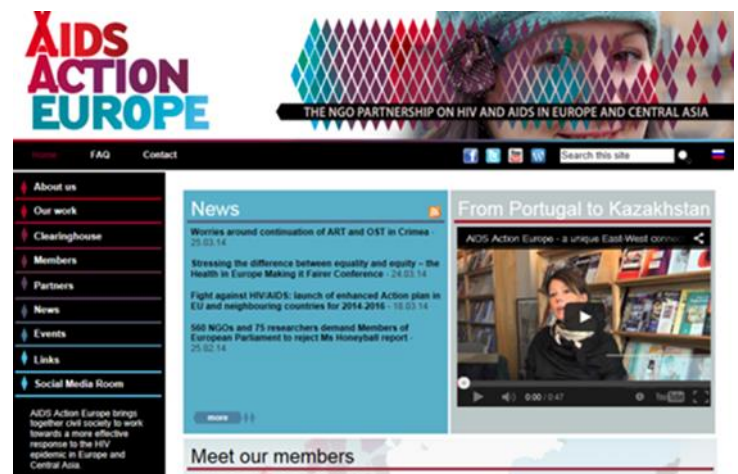


of the Network News will be sent out, and in the following month a Clearinghouse Update will be sent to the Clearinghouse users.

2.3 Social Media & Website

The AIDS Action Europe network grew with 11 new members to a total number of 436 members and 15 partners at the end of 2013. The AIDS Action Europe website played an important role for facilitating linking and learning between members, partners and projects. Network members were requested on a regular basis to update their profiles and the list with project files on the website was adjusted accordingly. New EC-funded projects were invited to create a project profile.

As in earlier years, the website was updated almost daily with announcements, calls for action, vacancies and events (in English and Russian). More traffic to the website was generated by posting links on Facebook and Twitter. After every Network News and Clearinghouse Update an increase in the number of page views was measured. Although the target of 2,000 web visits per month has not been met, the number of web visits was satisfying. There was a slight increase to a monthly average of 1799 visits, compared to 1736 in 2012. 71% were new visitors, which is similar to 2012. The social media room on the website was kept up to date and promoted through several communication channels. Here, at a single glance, one can see what's happening on the AIDS Action Europe social media: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and WordPress. In 2013, guest bloggers were invited to contribute to WordPress.



AIDS Action Europe staff continuously interacted with network members, by actively communicating through Facebook and Twitter. Clearinghouse publications, calls for action, EU funded projects, external funding opportunities and other announcements, vacancies, events, Network News and Clearinghouse Updates were disseminated as tweets and Facebook posts. The messages were often combined with questions to trigger dialogue or response. On Facebook, images and movies were used that supported the content of the posts with the aim to communicate in a more attractive way. A specific link was included in the newsletter to the “Member Mondays” on Facebook, in order to facilitate further exchange between network members. At the end of 2013, 761 people “liked” AIDS Action Europe’s Facebook page (32% increase), whilst 396 were following us on Twitter (51% increase). Since most Facebook fans and Twitter followers are following us with their personal accounts, it is not possible to give an exact percentage about how many of them are also a member or partner of the AIDS Action Europe network.

2.4 Tailored mailings

Tailored mailings are direct mailings focussing on one particular subject sent to either a selection of interested parties or to all members. The look-and-feel of such a mailing is similar to the Network News and Clearinghouse Update, in order to create a distinct and clear AIDS Action Europe signature. For instance, in one mailing we invited our members to take action and endorse our call to action for a renewed European HIV policy. The open and click-through rates of this mailing were 31% and 9% respectively. By way of comparison: both percentages were higher than the average of our standard newsletter: 26% and 6%. It can be concluded that tailored messages succeed to reach network members in a more effective way.



3 Management of the network

AIDS Action Europe is hosted by the Dutch NGO STI AIDS Netherlands (Soa Aids Nederland) and has its office in Amsterdam. An international Steering Committee acts as governing body on all programmatic issues concerning policy, strategy, finance, monitoring and evaluation. Steering Committee members are individuals originating from AIDS Action Europe member organisations or partners. The geographical scope of AIDS Action Europe's is the WHO European region; this is also reflected in the composition of the Steering Committee. In 2013 members came from Belarus (chair), Ukraine, Serbia, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Lithuania, United Kingdom and regional networks AIDS Foundation East West (AFEW) and European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG). The AIDS Action Europe office is run by an executive coordinator, a communications officer and a programme assistant.

The AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee takes care of its governing tasks through regular conference calls and bi-annual Steering Committee meetings. In January 2013, one meeting was organised with a special focus on the financial challenges of AIDS Action Europe.

The second meeting was organised in April 2013 in Amsterdam. During this meeting the future of AIDS Action Europe in a changing Europe was discussed. There is still an alarming rise of HIV infections in Eastern Europe, while governments do not take appropriate measures in terms of prevention, treatment and care. The meeting also addressed the challenges for AIDS Action Europe due to the economic crisis; it becomes increasingly difficult to acquire co-funding, while at the same time the relevance of AIDS Action Europe for its members remains particularly high in times like these.



The AIDS Action Europe network – primarily civil society organisations and community based organisations in Europe and Central Asia – grew in 2013. By the end of the year, the network consisted of 436 members in 46 countries in the WHO Europe region. 153 members are based in EU Member States, and 269 are from non-EU Eastern European and Central Asian countries. The AIDS Action Europe network also involves partners (15) and EU projects (7). Partners are (international) networks or organisations not being non-governmental.

4 Impact analysis and planning for the future

4.1 Analysis of the results

One of the major tools of AIDS Action Europe for civil society representation – the EU Civil Society Forum – has been evaluated extensively in the ECDC report *Monitoring implementation of the European Commission Communication and Action Plan for combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries, 2009–2013, Final Report*¹. The AIDS Action Europe office played a vital role in the evaluation process, as it coordinated the response of civil society to the

¹ The report can be found in the AIDS Action Europe Clearinghouse: <http://www.aidsactioneurope.org/clearinghouse/latest-added-items/final-report-monitoring-implementation-european-commission>



monitoring questionnaire.

The ECDC report gives valuable feed-back on the role and functioning of the CSF and its coordination, not only from the CSF members perspective, but also from Think Tank members, the European Commission and various international agencies. The comments and feedback can be used in the future to improve the co-chairing of the CSF. According to the evaluation, the CSF is a valuable platform for policy dialogue, exchange of information and experience, promotion of Europe-wide actions and effective communication. The report refers to several examples of CSF's vital role in sharing information and good practice, stimulating discussion, and developing recommendations and advice. The CSF is recognized for its critical role in facilitating dialogue between civil society and policy makers.



With respect to the quality of the CSF meetings, evaluation after every meeting shows high satisfaction about the way AIDS Action Europe and EATG co-chair the Forum. Based upon these assessments it can be concluded that AIDS Action Europe is successfully chairing an important and valuable platform for European civil society.

As far as two other policy areas of AIDS Action Europe are concerned – the European HIV Legal Forum and the EU Joint Action on Quality in HIV Prevention – it is still too early to analyse its results and impact. Nevertheless, both initiatives have great potential to contribute significantly to the aims and objectives of AIDS Action Europe.

As described in section 3, analysis suggests that the communication channels of AIDS Action Europe are appropriate for the achievement of the network's objectives. The use of the different tools – website, social media accounts etc. – is still increasing, even if the percentages are somewhat lower than envisaged.

Finally, also the network as such has grown, which is reflected in the increased number of members. This may be considered as clear indicator that AIDS Action Europe responds in a suitable way to the needs of civil society in Europe.

4.2 Future

Several concerns arise when looking at the future of AIDS Action Europe.

Firstly, concerns of general nature: the economic crisis is likely to have negative effects on access to HIV prevention, treatment and care, and to threaten the sustainability of HIV programmes and interventions that have been developed by NGOs for the most affected populations. Members of AIDS Action Europe and the Civil Society Forum indicate that NGOs face increasing difficulties in having their core activities financed.

Secondly, there are concerns affecting directly AIDS Action Europe. The host of AIDS Action Europe also experiences the increasing difficulty to find financial resources to sustain AIDS Action Europe's core programme. In 2013, efforts to secure sufficient co-funding for the entire work programme did not lead to satisfying results, and the AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee and the host organisation had to take measures and adapt the work programme, in order to reduce costs and the minimise the funding gap.

For 2014 and beyond, securing a sound funding structure needs to have highest priority, in order to safeguard the sustainability of the network.

5 Financial overview 2013

This financial review covers the 10th operational year of AIDS Action Europe, ending 31 December 2013. The information in this statement originates from the accounts of the host organisation STI AIDS Netherlands.



5.1 Income and expenditures

Income and expenditures in 2013 were € 355.687,-, less than the originally budgeted € 468.534,-.

As far as staff costs are concerned, the totals include the salaries and all related social liabilities, accommodation and associated costs, utilities, telecommunication and computer costs, administrative expenditures, financial charges, insurances and administration costs.

Administration costs include internal support services, such as finances (part not included in staff costs), facility management and reception, IT, human resources management and general management.

5.2 Budgetary adjustments

Throughout 2013, AAE staff and host organisation engaged in numerous fundraising activities to secure the co-funding of the work plan. However, it appeared that finding additional funding became increasingly difficult, so that the initial planning (activities and budget) had to be adjusted, in order to prevent serious financial problems.

The AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee and host organisation decided to find a solution that safeguarded the quality of the work, while at the same time expenses could be limited.

This led to the following adjustments:

- Reducing staff costs: the working hours of one staff member were decreased and her term was limited; her tasks were taken over by other staff members.
- Reducing staff travel and subsistence: mission costs for staff members and Steering Committee members were seriously reduced. For instance, meetings were combined, in order to reduce travel and accommodation costs. With respect to the CSF meetings, it was decided that one instead of two staff members would attend. One Steering Committee meeting (in Belgrade) was replaced by an extensive Skype conference.
- Reducing travel and subsistence of external invitees: here again, the cancellation of the Belgrade meeting resulted in substantial savings. Other meetings took place as planned, but with strict budget control.
- Reducing information & publication costs: the agreed deliverables have been realised, however with a limited budget. The design of the leaflet from last year was kept with minimal adaptations to save budget, and the trouble-shooting and website improvement budget was reduced by 50%.
- Only one activity has been cancelled: the photographer's fee and travel expenses to produce a database of visual materials was cancelled. Although this might have made communication channels more attractive, the SC considered it as a "luxury" expense that could be deleted from the budget without affecting the content of the work too much. Free stock photos were used instead.
- Finally, the Russian web editor's hours were reduced by 50% for the second half of 2013. Prioritizing messages online helped to limit the negative impact of this budgetary limitation.

Steering Committee, staff and host organisation are convinced that the balance achieved between limiting expenses and safeguarding quality has been successful, and that the overall achievements of the plan of work can be considered very satisfying.

5.3 Auditors' endorsement

The summarised financial information for 2013 presented on these pages for STI AIDS Netherlands is derived from its financial statement. The full statement and audit report of the organisation is included in the SANL Annual Report and can be found at www.soaaid.nl. PWC auditors expressed an unqualified opinion on these financial statements in March 2014.



5.4 Statement of budget, income and expenditure as of 31 December 2013

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ACTUAL
Amounts in euro	2013	2013	2012
Staff			
Staff costs	255.088	301.325	277.161
Costs administration	50.879	56.688	50.813
Total staff costs	305.967	358.013	327.974
Direct programme costs			
Subsistence	9.598	36.622	21.387
Travel	10.470	25.800	17.875
Other	3.000	3.534	12.249
Meetings	800	5.485	3.237
Communication	6.595	13.000	23.367
Studies, consultancies	19.257	26.080	18.190
Programme activities third parties	0	0	29.862
Total direct programme costs	49.720	110.521	126.167
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	355.687	468.534	454.141
INCOME			
European Commission	196.082	263.580	232.387
Aids Fonds	20.000	0	40.000
MAC AIDS FUND (via Tides Foundation)	0	0	35.878
ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action	40.000	40.000	40.000
Gilead Sciences Ltd.	23.334	22.000	23.333
T101	4.257	4.257	10.110
Aids Fondet	5.000	5.000	6.716
WHO	2.541	2.543	2.386
Other	0	131.154	9.639
TOTAL INCOME	291.214	468.534	400.449
RESULT	-64.473	0	-53.692
Reserves per 1 January	77.733		102.042
Reserves ROST	0		29.383
Deficit	-64.473		-53.691
Reserves per 31 December	13.260		77.733
Allocation reserves:			
Continuity	13.260		77.733



5.5 Detailed statement 2013

PROJECTNAME	OPERATING GRANT	QUALITY ACTION	TOTAL
EXPENDITURES			
Staff Costs	250.386	4.702	255.088
Costs administration	49.921	958	50.879
Total staff costs	300.307	5.660	305.967
DIRECT PROGRAMME COSTS			
Subsistence	9.313	285	9.598
Travel	10.004	466	10.470
Other	3.000	0	3.000
Meetings	800	0	800
Communication	6.595	0	6.595
Studies, consultancies, translation	19.257	0	19.257
Total direct programme costs	48.969	751	49.720
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	349.276	6.411	355.687
INCOME			
European Commission	192.212	3.870	196.082
Aids Fonds	20.000	0	20.000
ViiV Healthcare's Positive Action	40.000	0	40.000
Gilead Sciences Ltd.	23.334	0	23.334
T101	4.257	0	4.257
Aids Fondet	5.000	0	5.000
WHO	0	2.541	2.541
TOTAL INCOME	284.803	6.411	291.214
RESULT	-64.473	0	-64.473
Reserves per 1 January	77.733	0	77.733
Deficit	-64.473	0	-64.473
Reserves per 31 December	13.260	0	13.260
Allocation reserves:			
Continuity	13.260	0	13.260



Acknowledgements

AIDS Action Europe is a European-wide network, and its objectives for 2013 could not have been achieved without the support of and cooperation with numerous stakeholders, colleagues and friends. We would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the involvement of our partners and thank them for their valuable input throughout the previous year.

In particular we would like to express gratitude to:

- The AIDS Action Europe members: they provided input into our work plan, were dedicated partners throughout the year and contributed significantly to the AIDS Action Europe Clearinghouse;
- The members of the AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee: they provided guidance to the network and were involved in all strategic decisions;
- The members of the EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum: from their respective NGO backgrounds, they played a crucial role in indicating needs for policy change and action;
- Our co-chair of the EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum, the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG): as patient-led organisation, they safeguarded the input from the perspective of affected communities in policies and interventions;
- Our partners in the European HIV Legal Forum: they contributed significant efforts to investigating legal aspect with respect to developing and implementing appropriate policies and interventions in the field of access to HIV prevention, care and support;
- The staff members of AIDS Action Europe: they took care of the smooth operating of the AIDS Action Europe office and catered to the needs of the AIDS Action Europe members;
- Last but not least, the various funding agencies: the European Commission/EAHC, ViiV Healthcare Positive Action, T101 Limited, Gilead and the Danish Aids Fondet provided generous financial support and made the implementation of AIDS Action Europe in 2013 possible.

We are convinced that the cooperation of all the above-mentioned partners provided a meaningful contribution to the fight against HIV and AIDS in Europe.



ANNEXES

List of Steering Committee members and staff

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013	
Elena Grigoryeva (chair)	Belarus network of PLHIV, Belarus
Assel Janayeva	Public organisation Amulet, Kazakhstan
Ferenc Bagyinszky	Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, Hungary
Harry Witzthum	Swiss Aids Federation, Switzerland
Anke van Dam	AIDS Foundation East-West, the Netherlands
Lella Cosmaro	LILA Milano ONLUS, Italy
Daria Ocheret	Eurasian Harm Reduction Network, Lithuania
Martin van Oostrom	STI AIDS Netherlands, the Netherlands
Brian West	EATG, Belgium
Svetlana Moroz	All Ukrainian network of PLHIV, Ukraine
Dejana Rankovic	Youth of Jazas, Serbia

STAFF	
Martine de Schutter	Executive Coordinator AIDS Action Europe
Maureen Sellmeijer	Communications Coordinator AIDS Action Europe
Rieneke de Man ²	Communications Coordinator AIDS Action Europe
Dieuwke Bosmans	Programme Assistant AIDS Action Europe
Nina Schat	Programme Officer AIDS Action Europe

² Replaced Maureen Sellmeijer