

## Meeting report of AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee meeting 25-26 September 2008

Date: 25-26 September 2008

Present: Ton Coenen, Chris Lambrechts, Arnaud Simon, Karlo Boras, Ilona van de Braak, Aisuluu Bolotbaeva, Nataliya Salabai, Wim Vandeveld, Harry Witzthum, Martine de Schutter, Marija Subataite.

Apologies: Yusef Azad, Ophelia Haanyama Orun, Ulrich Heide,

### 25 September 2008, Thursday

#### 1. Update on proposals submitted by AIDS Action Europe to European Commission

##### 1.1. Operating Grant

Operating grant proposal by AIDS Action Europe is in principle accepted by European Commission (EC). It is a 1 year grant with budget of 250.000 and 80% co-funding from EC. Contract is in negotiation.

##### 1.2. Conference Grant

No response from the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) and confirmation was due in July and AIDS Action Europe did not get any response which means that the proposal is probably rejected or on reserve list.

With this conference grant AIDS Action Europe hoped to organize a members meeting with a focus on Universal Access. Please see below for more information.

#### 2. Update on the Project “European Partners in Action Against AIDS” (EPAA)

Series of seminars took place within the project. Major follow-up actions proceeded the Gay Health seminar and the seminar on Legal and Judicial Systems. For more information please refer to AIDS Action Europe website the [Projects section](#) or contact Western Office at [MvanderMeulen@aidsactioneurope.org](mailto:MvanderMeulen@aidsactioneurope.org).

AIDS Action Europe plans to produce a memory stick with all materials developed during EPAA project.

#### 3. Internet Communication Technologies (ICT)

AIDS Action Europe will explore how ICT can be used to improve communications within Secretariat and Steering Committee; also communication with members or as a framework for skills building.

#### 4. The initiative of Germany for the Clearinghouse

This Clearinghouse is similar to the Clearinghouse of AIDS Action Europe. It is different in its topic focus (includes sexual health promotion), also geographical focus (intends to cover from 5 to 6 countries within European Union), language (only English) and information/ tools provided (will provide evaluation of national programs).

Currently it was decided not to have an advisory board to coordinate this initiative. AIDS Action Europe will prepare a letter to initiative coordinators saying that we should work together in order for resources to be used most effectively and needs to be optimally met; and that we welcome any initiative that improves access to information. Our concern is about how civil society is represented in their initiative. AIDS Action Europe would aim to be kept in the loop.

## **5. AIDS Action Europe members' meeting on Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support**

Since European Commission did not approve the Conference grant, AIDS Action Europe will fundraise through other sources to try to make this meeting happen. Potential funders will be approached: pharmaceutical companies, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, International AIDS Society, etc.

Several other possibilities will be explored: linking the members meeting to other conferences as for example: HIV in Europe 2009 and International AIDS Conference 2010 in Vienna.

## **6. Workplan & Budget 2009**

The workplan and budget 2009 were approved by the Steering Committee and will shortly be available at AIDS Action Europe website in the [Organizational documents](#) section.

## **26 September 2008, Friday**

## **7. Meeting with BMS and Gilead**

Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS) and Gilead approached AIDS Action Europe with a proposal to be involved in their joint initiative of patient education programs. The initiative addresses late presenters. At the beginning it intends to cover 5 countries – France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK and as a follow-up it may be extended to Eastern European and Central Asian countries.

AIDS Action Europe would like to see the commitment of BMS and Gilead to expand to Eastern Europe and Central Asia from the start. This should be obvious from concrete steps in the plan and the steering committee of the initiative could include observers from this region right from the start.

European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) should be involved in this initiative as this is their thematic priority. They will have discussion on their involvement. At this point AIDS Action Europe committed only to provide suggestions (in cooperation with EATG) for potential members to the steering committee of the initiative.

## **8. Longer term financial sustainability**

AIDS Action Europe receives funding from European Commission and pharmaceutical companies. This is also the perspective for the upcoming years. Some of the funding is annual other is for longer term (from 3 to five years).

## **9. Governance**

### **9.1. Replacement of Steering Committee members**

There are vacancies for 4 positions. The call will be sent out in October and the selection of candidates will take place in December. In fall 2009 there will be a call for 3 positions

### **9.2. Replacement of the Chair of the Steering Committee**

Chris Lambrechts (Belgium) steps down as Chair of AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee. The Steering Committee and Secretariat have highly appreciated his work as a Chair.

The Steering Committee is very pleased with Harry Witzthum's (Switzerland) willingness to become the new Chair.

The host organization of AIDS Action Europe, at present it is SOA AIDS Netherland, will have a permanent seat in the Steering Committee. In principle the Committee sticks to 12 seats, including the seat of the host organization.

## **10. Advocacy**

### **10.1. Civil Society Forum and the Think Tank (EC)**

AIDS Action Europe together with European AIDS Treatment Group are co-chairs of the Civil Society Forum (CSF) – a structure created by the European Commission to facilitate input from civil society into European Union policies on HIV/AIDS.

Ton Coenen (AIDS Action Steering Committee member) will step down as a co-chair of the Civil Society Forum (CSF). Yusef Azad (UK) is approved as new co-chair on behalf of AIDS Action Europe.

### **10.2. International Council of AIDS Service Organizations**

AIDS Action Europe is a European partner of International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO) and has a seat in its Board. Currently this position is filled by Ton Coenen (the Netherlands).

ICASO is in the process of changing an Executive Director. An organisational assessment was held concerning strategic directions of ICASO, transparency, governance etc. ICASO is in a period of transition. Ton Coenen will stay on ICASO Board to finish the restructuring phase, that will bring new guidelines on the link with regions and how members on Board are elected.

### **10.3. Vacancy of Senior Advocacy and Networking officer for Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

AIDS Action Europe is looking for a person to fill in the position of Vacancy of Senior Advocacy and Networking officer for Eastern Europe and Central Asia who will be working on advocacy and relationship with NGOs building in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The decision is to approach some organizations as possible hosts of the position that can search for a candidate.

### **10.4. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)**

Currently the GFATM is recruiting civil society officers in Geneva, to increase civil society involvement. The concern still is the lack of coordination among European NGOs. New EU members are not eligible any more because they are in EU. There are clear concerns about willingness of their governments to fill the funding gap.

AIDS Action Europe has access to Civil Society Forum & the Think Tank & European Commission: it can be used to influence processes related to GFATM.

## **11. Any other business**

The next Steering Committee meeting takes place on March 2 & 3, 2009 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Next Steering Committee conference calls:  
28 October 2008  
9 December 2008