

## Meeting Report of Steering Committee

Date : 22-24 February 2007, Bonn

Present : Wim Vandeveld, Maria Georgescu, Ton Coenen, Chris Lambrechts, Elena Nechosina, Karlo Boras, Arnaud W. Simon, Ulrich Heide, Yusef Azad, Martine de Schutter, Martine van der Meulen, Marija Subataite, Iti Westra (minutes)

Apologies : Ilona van de Braak, Ophelia Haanyama, Emmanuel Trenado, Hannah Bate

### **1 Thursday, February 22**

#### **1.1 Welcome, Logistics and Programme**

Welcome to Karlo and Elena. Elena wants to add value to the Steering Committee by her expertise on involving NGOs in the region of the former Soviet Union to participate more effectively in sponsoring, advocacy etc. Karlo wants to complement to the Steering Committee by his expertise in mobilising young people and executing a successful awareness campaign.

Addition on the agenda: AIDS & Mobility (strategic discussion).

#### **1.2 Project European Partners in Action on AIDS (EPAA)**

##### **1.2.1 EPAA intro: presentation report yr 1 & overall 2007 work plan**

The report has been sent to the European Commission, and will also be sent to GSK and BMS.

General conclusion: most planned activities have been executed (2 seminars organised by Sensoa and STI AIDS Netherlands, 2 Steering Committee meetings, preparations for the Clearinghouse).

Challenges: 1. There are more applications than scholarships for the seminars, we need a clear and transparent selection of scholars. Partial solutions: to make all reports public, and send them in hardcopy to the members; to encourage and support applicants, that AIDS Action Europe can not provide with a scholarship, to apply for financial assistance with local donors. We need a list of funds/sponsors that could provide financial support and inform them about our activities.

2. Western NGOs participation is low. Are we becoming a Central European NGO network?

3. How to find indications to measure the impact of the seminars? Chris and MartineS will follow up on the Media seminar. Their approach can function as starting point for future evaluations.

##### **1.2.2 Financial Report**

Handouts: overview general spending.

Conclusion: we did spend less than planned, especially on staff member payments, travel costs and translations (see also chapter 6, Financial Report). We can not shift EU money to other costs. GSK has agreed that their money can be spend otherwise than budgeted. The overview does not state the contributions of the members (43.600 Euro). We will use this money to fill the 44.000 Euro gap. A final statement will be sent to Steering Committee members by email.

### **1.2.3 The Process**

The process of getting information from all involved organisations has been disastrous, with a few good exceptions. Aidsfondet has not delivered any information. Ton will contact Kristen to discuss their future as partner in the project.

We will miss out on European money if we can not manage the administrative consequences. The Steering Committee members are responsible to have their financial staff deliver all information in the right format in time. The Steering Committee members will ask their financial staff for comments on the guidelines. In the next Steering Committee we will discuss how to engage financial staff, and commit to inform them well in time (October) and monitor the process.

## **1.3 EPAA Update on Upcoming Best Practice Seminars**

### **1.3.1 NAT Seminar**

There has been much response to the survey. Yusef will try to produce an interim report before Bremen, and present it there to the Civil Society Forum. Yusef will inform Ton on the conclusions, so he can use it for his presentation in Bonn.

### **1.3.2 AIDES Seminar**

The seminar is on MSM in Central and Eastern Europe (see also backgrounder teleconference). AIDES hopes to involve PSI Russia. The seminar hopefully will change attitudes on gay men, form new co-operations and exchange knowledge. The report of the seminar by STI AIDS Netherlands and Schorer in 2005 will be used as backgrounder. AIDES also wants to produce a baseline report, contributions to the clearinghouse, clear advocacy recommendations on MSM issues and develop tools for local NGOs. In connection with the Gay pride in Paris there will also be communication for the French media.

Chris suggests that there should be a press release after each seminar, if not for the press than for advocacy purposes or the Think Tank. It might also be interesting to discuss the outcome of the seminar in the Civil Society Forum meeting in September.

Since there is no European MSM network or representative from Central or Eastern Europe in the Global MSM forum, AIDS Action Europe might need to fill that gap (will be discussed during strategic discussion).

## **1.4 Advocacy Issues**

### **1.4.1 Civil Society Forum**

This spring there are 2 Civil Society Forum meetings: one after the Bremen conference (agenda: human right issues, legal issues, NAT report and WHO report, Bremen declaration, monitoring Dublin declaration), and one from April 23-25 in Luxembourg.

The Civil Society Forum has been very influential on the Bremen declaration and the participation of NGOs, governments, people living with HIV. Participating NGOs are not yet known although the German government insisted on 5 NGO representatives per government.

Wim will send a statement on health and migrants to the Civil Society Forum before the conference. Because Kristen has stepped down from the Think Tank so AIDS Action Europe needs a new representative. If it fits in combination with the NAT seminar, Yusef will replace Kristen at the Think Tank meeting in April. The Civil Society Forum has a mandate for 2 years. It has been decided that

half of the Forum will be renewed this year (September). A lot of people are interested, so we will need a clear selection procedure. In the end the EU decides who will be admitted. AIDS Action Europe is fundraising to hire an advocacy officer at Sensoa. This person could play a key role in preparation and support for the Civil Society Forum meetings, because it is too much work for Ton and MartineS at present. It might be useful if this person could be one of our representatives at the Think Tank.

#### **1.4.2 Think Tank (26-27 April)**

The Think Tank has representatives from all EU countries (usually a representative from the Ministry of Health), NGOs are represented as observers. There is one vacancy, and there will be another vacancy in November. It could be of importance to have a HIV+ representative and/or someone to connect the Civil Society Forum with the Think Tank. It is of importance the representative has enough weight to be influential and strengthen the possibilities of the Think Tank. We need a broader discussion on the procedure of selecting representatives.

#### **1.4.3 Monitoring of the Dublin Declaration**

MartineS is undertaking an inventory who from the Civil Society Forum wants to participate in the review of the documents that will be prepared on different topics of the Dublin monitoring. The Steering Committee adds additional names to the list. MartineS will send the updated version to Steering Committee members and WHO Europe. Germany pays for this process since there is no EC money reserved for monitoring declarations. How sustainable this is has to be raised in the Think Tank. The Portuguese presidency will focus on migrants; health and migrants, and HIV & AIDS and migrants. September 27/28 there is a Ministerial meeting. The Think Tank needs to decide what to bring to the meeting. October 12/13 there is a conference with national organisations on focal point level, including 53 countries. June 7/8 there is an open meeting organised by Wim/European AIDS Treatment Group to develop community recommendations.

#### **1.5 Press Conference Preparations**

Ten journalists have signed up for the federal press conference by AIDS Action Europe. At the same time there is a governmental press conference in Berlin. There are national viewing possibilities for other journalists, also in Berlin. The main focus of the press conference should be on universal access and the lack of sustainable funding. Ulrich will stress the German experience of cooperation between governmental institutions, self help groups and Civil Society, as an example for other EU countries and new members. Arnaud will say something about the new EU members, Elena about the situation in the Ukraine and advocacy, Ton about the European perspective and human rights. All of this calls for political leadership, funding, and involvement of Civil Society, and therefore links to the Bremen conference.

#### **1.6 Prevention & Treatment Alignment Project (PTAP) Project Update**

Presentation cancelled due to lack of time – see backgrounder.

#### **1.7 Needs assessment Central and Eastern Europe**

A needs assessment has been done to develop an inventory of the needs of AIDS Action Europe member NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The assessment includes a questionnaire and interviews with experts from the region. Outcomes are consistent with what was expected: capacity gaps are often based on language, because English is predominant in the

international field. Capacity building on a national level is at the moment more important than capacity building at the global level. The Steering Committee is very content with the report and wants to use it strategically by putting it on the agendas of the Civil Society Forum and Think Tank. That might give reason to do a similar assessment in South Europe, the needs of non-members could also be of interest. The Steering Committee has to decide what AIDS Action Europe needs to do with the outcomes of the assessment. Proposed activities should be discussed with NGOs from the region. To hire a policy officer in Central and Eastern Europe, the Aids Fonds will provide 120.000 Euro for the coming 3 years, an additional 60.000 might be funded by OSI (also on the board of ICASO) based on this report. We will need to talk to them again, when besides this report, we also have a better specification of the profile of the officer, and know if s/he will be located in Lithuania. The main problem is to find expertise and get money from the private sector (Levi Straus might be an option). The hosting organisation needs a certain degree of organisation to use European or private money.

## **2 Friday, February 23, 2007 Strategic Discussion**

Facilitator: Alexander Popp

Absent during press conference: Ulrich, Ton, Elena and Arnaud

### **2.1 Setting of Priorities**

The objectives presented by Alexander are based on backgrounders K and M. The Steering Committee needs to make choices on which issues to focus, since there are too many issues within the European scope of the network. There is a tension between focusing on HIV & AIDS or on sexual health, public health or infection disease in general. A broader focus may guarantee sustainability, but by broadening the scope, HIV & AIDS get marginalized. In its mission statement AIDS Action Europe focuses on NGOs and not specifically on HIV & AIDS organisations, which is in line with the fact that some of the members focus on family planning or gay and lesbian rights. AIDS Action Europe should supply the framework in which they can integrate HIV & AIDS and related issues.

It is reconfirming however that results from the priority setting exercise show that there is clear agreement on our main priorities. We want:

- to be a pan European partnership of non government organisations [NGOs] that works towards more effective response to the HIV an AIDS epidemics;
- to address the needs of communities affected by HIV and support lobbying and advocacy of interests;
- to mobilize the responsibility and commitment of national governments.

#### **2.1.1 SWOT Analysis**

The needs of the organisation are: policy making & implementation, and capacity building (horizontal), and advocacy (vertical). Although the Steering Committee has no mandate from the members, it does have a strong voice to get HIV & AIDS on the political agenda on a European level. Should AIDS Action Europe also focus on national governments? At the moment AIDS Action Europe mainly focuses on advising on policies and mobilizing advocacy in Central and Eastern Europe. The European lobby activities are a central attraction for all European NGOs, but these are apparently not clear for Southern and Western European countries. The Steering Committee wants a needs assessment in these regions (among members and non-members) to see where involvement and

collaboration would be appreciated, to use this knowledge in strategic discussions. AIDS Action Europe might need regional meetings on a tactical level as pan-European organisation.

## **2.2 Urgent Decisions to be Made**

### **2.2.1 AIDS & Mobility**

NIGZ hosted the AIDS & Mobility network, but has no capacity to continue managing it (1,8 million). It would be an option for AIDS Action Europe, or one of its members, to take over the network, so the money would not be transferred to another European project proposal. The deadline is May 15<sup>th</sup>. Migration is one of the major issues in Europe, so the subject should be picked up by AIDS Action Europe. AIDS & Mobility would be an amendment on the lobby agenda, but capacity building on this subject would logically not be integrated in the organisation of AIDS Action Europe. It might be an option to cooperate with a member, such as Deutsche Aids Hilfe (that has shown interest), on this part of the project. If AIDS Action Europe would take on the project it needs to be on its own conditions. It's not clear what the possibilities are to formulate a new proposal. Also DAH's position is not clear. Ton will contact DAH to see where they stand. At this point AIDS Action Europe does not have the capacity to facilitate the project and take on its financial and bureaucratic obligations. After an orientation it might be recommendable to take Mobility on as a topic and write a proposal that expresses AIDS Action Europe's ambitions (especially if the current network will be abandoned). For now, the subject would be interesting as topic for a seminar, since a lot of members are involved and/or struggling with the subject.

### **2.2.2 Legal Structure of AIDS Action Europe**

The Steering Committee has to decide which legal structure is most suitable for AIDS Action Europe. Besides a democratic organisation the Steering Committee wants a governance structure that is accountable, transparent, inclusive and takes on the GIPA principle and human right based approach. Ton's backgrounder strongly suggests an association structure (based on Belgium law). An association, with a General Assembly as highest decision making organ, is in principle the most democratic and flexible legal structure. Downsides could be that too much influence by members possibly endangers the mandate and authority of the Steering Committee, although there are possibilities to limit the decision making influence of the members, doing that would also limit its democratic potential. The Steering Committee fears that only West European NGOs can afford to attend the General Assembly, what would be non democratic and disempowers other members. To reach more members it could be interesting to organise the General Assembly in combination with a seminar, or as a congress. The Steering Committee foresees capacity difficulties to organise a General Assembly and thus to reflect equal representation of its members. Ton stresses that AIDS Action Europe has no obligation to organise any logistics, if members are not able to come they can vote through e-mail.

Taking all this in consideration the Steering Committee sees no necessity to have a legal structure as long as STI AIDS Netherlands, on behalf of AIDS Action Europe, takes the legal responsibilities. If the need to have a legal structure occurs, it can be organised within 6 months. The Steering Committee decides to create rules for a democratic non-legal body, and to formalise the organisation of the Steering Committee. MartineS. and Chris will prepare a document on procedures (deadline May 1<sup>st</sup>).

### **3 Saturday, February 24, 2007**

Apologies: Chris, Wim (from 11.00)

#### **3.1 Needs Assessment**

The Steering Committee wants to set priorities in the focus and activities regarding Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The options that came out of the needs assessment are: capacity building of NGOs and community based groups on a national level; networking and building regional partnerships; participation of AIDS Action Europe in regional and global initiatives. NGOs from the region are lacking basic skills, capacity building should therefore be one of the main activities. Ulrich suggests to include knowledge exchange, since West European NGOs have a lot of experience in capacity building in Africa. Also the lacking of commitment by national government, and failure of cooperation between NGOs and governments should be a focus of AIDS Action Europe.

The needs differ from country to country. Elena sees a need for technical assistance to participate in global and regional partnerships, to disseminate information on global initiatives, declarations, the GF etc. It would be useful to have readers on international discussions, decisions, implications and tools to use in the advocacy with local governments. Such information could easily be distributed by regional focal points. Maria underlines that on the Balkans there is a need for exchange of experiences on specific themes. Arnaud mentions that countries that will be cut of from GF support are struggling to get funding, and have no time to focus on Europe.

The Steering Committee concludes that AIDS Action Europe's activities should focus on networking and building regional partnerships. After the Bremen conference the Civil Society Forum will discuss how to take forward the commitments made in Bremen. After this Civil Society Forum meeting, the Steering Committee will continue the discussion on type and scope of activities in her next teleconference.

The Steering Committee is in general very content with this assessment, a scheme of action needs to be added so the report can be presented at the AIDS Action Europe stand in Bremen. The report also needs to be discussed in the Civil Society Forum, or even the Think Tank (to link it to governmental institutions). It is also of importance to share the report with NGOs from the region. The Steering Committee wishes to undertake also a needs assessment in Western and Southern Europe. In comparison to the Central and Eastern Europe needs assessment, the method could be improved by involving more interviews with both experts and participants, and (besides the listing of gaps) list opinions on the role of AIDS Action Europe from both members and potential members. Arnaud will write a proposal on a Western and Southern European needs assessment, Wim will assist him. Simone might be able to help and/or coordinate. To be discussed in the next teleconference.

#### **3.2 Steering Committee Procedures**

Kristen has stepped down from the Steering Committee. The vacancy will be put out on the website. Andy is welcome to apply.

The Steering Committee officially replaces Emmanuel by Arnaud, practically this doesn't cause any changes to the Steering Committee or Arnaud's position as member. The situation and procedure are deviant because Aides has always been represented by two persons at the Steering Committee, while only Emmanuel's name was officially listed. The Steering Committee prefers to have one representative per organisation, therefore it's logical that Arnaud continues to be involved in the Steering Committee, now that Emmanuel will not attend anymore. In addition, AIDS Action Europe is

partner in the AIDS Action & Integration projects that Arnaud coordinates, which is even more reason for close involvement.

The Steering Committee decides that, if a member is unable to attend a Steering Committee meeting, a replacement is not desirable. When the occasion arises members can pass on their possible contributions to another member. If a Steering Committee member is unable to attend the Steering Committee meetings for a longer period, a replacement is desirable to guaranty continuity. It is decided that Yusef will replace Hannah during her maternity leave of 1 year.

Although the Steering Committee has decided that there will be no change in the legal reality of AIDS Action Europe, the Steering Committee wants to improve its transparency and procedures. In reference to backgrounder N, the following changes and remarks are made:

C. cancelled

D. the term of office is in principal 3 years (to prevent all Steering Committee members stepping down at the same time), to extend the term it is possible to apply for ones own vacancy.

E. cancelled

F. although the Steering Committee works by the unwritten rule to decide by consensus, the majority principle is maintained as proposed.

G. change: 1 year will be 2 year term. In principle each member can apply for chair, if nobody does, the current chair can apply to extend his/her term.

The members need to get informed and have influence. This means dates, agenda and minutes of Steering Committee meetings will be public to members, and a separate e-mail will be sent to ask for comments on the agenda. In connection to the members meeting in 2008 AIDS Action Europe has to find out how members want to, and can be involved. Karlo will write a proposal on how to increase members' involvement and participation. To be discussed in the next teleconference.

Chris and MartineS will adapt the backgrounder N (see also 2.2.2)

Chris will step down as chair, Steering Committee members are asked to put their candidacy forward. The Steering Committee will decide on the new chair in October. MartineS/Chris will send out a reminder, description of the function, indication of activities/time and deadline (this summer) to all Steering Committee members.

### **3.3 Clearinghouse**

The Steering Committee members are very enthusiastic about the clearinghouse, presented by MartineM. Hopefully the renewed website will be on line before the Bremen conference. All members will receive a password, and will be asked to complete their profile and upload information to the clearinghouse. Soon there will also be a forum available on the website. MartineM will look into the possibility of uploading videos, and a possible collaboration or link with the ECDC clearinghouse.

### **3.4 Communication**

#### **3.4.1 Leaflet**

AIDS Action Europe needs to rewrite and reprint its leaflet. The Steering Committee is in general content with the current leaflet. MartineM suggests to maintain the lay out and format of the leaflet and adapt its text. The text should be quite general, maybe add some quotes, mention AIDS Action Europe's achievements and (planned) activities (such as capacity building workshops, advocacy, involvement in the Civil Society Forum). It might be interesting to use the same map as on the website, and see if the mission statement or report by Alexander Popp contain useful information. Ton stresses that the leaflet should not be too general and aim for a 2 to 3 year life span, since AIDS Action Europe

is a young and growing organisation. Arnaud suggest to write the leaflet less formal than the current one.

### **3.4.2 E-news**

There are about 200 recipients of the e-news. The e-news is sent out 4 times a year. One can subscribe through the website. In the next e-news JAZAS will be highlighted. MartineM will inform Karlo about the deadline for his contribution

### **3.4.3 Press**

MartineM will work on a proposal to improve AIDS Action Europe's press strategy. To be continued (next teleconference).

## **3.5 AIDS Action and Integration Projects Update**

Hand out by Arnaud: 2007 Action Plan/2005-2008 framework

AIDS Action & Integration wants to support the emerge and development of local organisations in new EU member states. In 2005/2006 AIDS Action & Integration organised 6 European seminars in cooperation with local organisations. AIDS Action & Integration wants to bring malpractices out in the open, but country reports make that a difficult and slow process. Karlo suggest that AIDS Action Europe should take a clear position on how to tackle malpractices and use country reports to do so. The secretariat could have a role as watchdog and step in if necessary.

AIDS Action & Integration is planning a seminar on HIV, work and social issues in March. Most participants are from new EU member states. Although DG Sanco has extended financial authorization to neighbouring countries, there is a risk some scholarships will not be covered.

## **3.6 2008 Members Meeting and Seminars**

AIDS Action Europe want to organise a members meeting in 2008 (October). Some members have offered to help organise or host the meeting. The Steering Committee prefers to meet in Central Eastern Europe, preferably on the Balkan where professional English/Russian translators are available. The idea arises to combine the members meeting with one or two seminars, and maybe also a seminar by AIDS Action & Integration. The seminars planned for 2008 so far are on fundraising and advocacy (hopefully to be organised by the new advocacy adviser), and voluntary testing and counselling (organised by ARAS). The subjects fundraising and advocacy would combine best with the members meeting. It might be possible to also fit in the PTAT. The Steering Committee would have to ask ICASO if some of that PTAP funding could be used for the meeting. BMS might also be interested to give additional funding when AIDS Action Europe organises an open forum. The partnership forum of the GF in Durban was organised very well. Karlo will contact Mick Matthews to find out by whom and how it was organised. Arnaud and Karlo will write a proposal on how to combine the members meeting with seminar(s) on advocacy and/or a seminar on fundraising and a possible plenary session between these seminars. MartineS will assist if necessary. Ulrich wants to be involved in the seminar on fundraising.

## **3.7 Other Issues**

AIDS Action Europe's strategy at the next MSM Forum in Mexico needs to be discussed in the next teleconference.



There is a need for a paper on advocacy opportunities for AIDS Action Europe within the EU, a lineout of the structure and activities of the Council of Europe and possibilities for advocacy. Yusef and Karlo offer to write the paper in June, unless the Steering Committee decides to hire an external consultant. Because Maria has planning problems attending the Steering Committee teleconferences, the conference calls will be rescheduled to 14.00-15.00. MartineS. will consult those absent. Both the Eastern and Western Secretariat have too high work loads. The Steering Committee members are aware of this and will be supportive. Karlo will apply for GF delegation member. He wants a letter of recommendation from AIDS Action Europe. He will send a draft to MartineS.

### 3.8 Other issues

The next Steering Committee meeting is October 9 and 10 preferably in Antwerp (MartineS will check with Chris). MartineS will ask the commission if Serbia and Ukraine can be financially supported, if so Ukraine would be an option, otherwise the meeting will take place in Amsterdam (if Antwerp is no option).

Special thanks to Ulrich's and the Deutsche Aids Stiftung's hospitality, and Sabine Jahn's organizational contribution.

## 4 Action list

What	Who	When
Develop list of local donors for scholarships for seminars	MartineS/all	ongoing
6-month monitoring tool seminar participants	Chris/MartineS	April
Send final EPAA report year 1 to all partners in the project	MartineS	April
Contact Director Aidsfondet about contract EPAA	Ton	ASAP
Plan process partners report year 2 EPAA	MartineS	Oct. SC meeting
Press release legal seminar	Yusef/MartineM	April/May
Press release Gay Men's seminar	Arnaud/MartineM	June
Discuss procedure AAE representatives at CSF & TT	Ton	July conf call
Discuss funding CEE officer with OSI & other donors	Ton/MartineS	ASAP
Procedures SC & governance document	Chris/MartineS	May conf call
Proposal needs assessment in Western & Southern Europe	Arnaud/Wim	April conf call
Proposal on members involvement	Karlo	April conf call
Application procedure to select new Chair in October	Chris/MartineS	May conf call
Develop draft leaflet	MartineM	July conf call
Develop press strategy	MartineM/Chris	May conf call
Proposal combination members meeting/ seminars	Arnaud/Karlo/MartineS	May conf call
MSM forum Mexico	Ton	April conf call
AAE advocacy with European institutions	Yusef/Karlo	June
Check meeting regulations for Serbia/Ukraine with EC	MartineS	ASAP
Contact Mick Matthews to discuss organisation members meeting	Karlo	ASAP

## **5 Planning**

### **Next Steering Committee meeting**

October 9& 10, 2007

Location: Antwerp (?)

### **Planned teleconferences 2007**

17 April	(14.00-15.00 CET)
15 May	(14.00-15.00 CET)
3 July	(14.00-15.00 CET)
4 September	(14.00-15.00 CET)
30 October	(14.00-15.00 CET)
18 December	(14.00-15.00 CET)