

Brussels, 30 November 2009

## **World AIDS Day 2009 – European Commission tops a billion Euros invested in the fight against the global AIDS epidemic**

*On the eve of World AIDS Day 2009 (1<sup>st</sup> December), the European Commission can announce that it has invested over one billion Euros in the fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. As a founding member of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the European Commission has to date pledged €1,072.5 million covering the period 2002-2010 and has recently made new policy commitments to do more, better, together. According to the latest figures, new HIV infections have been reduced by 17% over the past eight years and that the most progress is seen in sub-Saharan Africa. However worldwide, the number of people living with HIV now reaches 33 million, with the fastest spread of the epidemic occurring on the threshold of the European Union, in the neighbouring countries of Eastern Europe.*

Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Karel De Gucht said: *"Despite recent hopeful trends, it is a fact that more than 2 million people die from AIDS every year, with 70% of these deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. AIDS remains the most deadly virus of our time and the EU, as the biggest donor worldwide, is committed to do more in the fight against AIDS."*

Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou said: *"We need to renew and refocus our actions to where they are most needed. In Europe today, the number of new infections is increasing among certain groups and in specific regions. There is no time for complacency. Prevention and early testing are still the best weapons in the fight against HIV/AIDS."*

### **European Commission Action:**

- As the world's largest donor, the EU has collectively provided the majority of the significant increase in recent years of international financing earmarked for HIV/AIDS.
  - EU contributions to the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria have almost quadrupled: From \$403 million in 2003 to \$1,546 million, representing around 55% of world contributions in the years 2004-2008.
- The EU Member States and the European Commission have a common programme for action and decided together to call for stronger, more effective and more concerted efforts through External Action (2007-2011).
- The Commission is increasingly channelling its funds available through budget support to strengthen health systems as one of the main ways to confront AIDS. This new instrument is thought to be particularly beneficial for health systems, providing longer-term and predictable financing.
  - Budget support has increased from €1,425 million for 2002-2006 to €2, 571 million for 2007-2011

- The Commission has also adopted a new Communication (26 October 2009) on combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries for 2009 -2013 with the view of addressing the unfortunate trend of increasing infections in Europe. It focuses in particular on the promotion of prevention, and on the implementation of measures targeting most at risk groups and particular geographical areas mostly affected by HIV/AIDS.

### **Background:**

Since the beginning of the epidemic, almost **60 million people have been infected** with HIV and 25 million people have died of AIDS related causes.

Although important progress has been achieved in preventing new HIV infections and in lowering the annual number of AIDS –related deaths, AIDS continues to be a major global health priority. **The number of people living with HIV worldwide continued to grow in 2008, reaching a total of 33.4 million.** In 2008, 2.7 million people became newly infected, and **2 million people died** from AIDS-related causes.

The epidemic appears to have stabilized in most regions, although prevalence continues to increase in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and in other parts of Asia due to a high rate of new infections. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for **71% of all new HIV infections** in 2008. 14.1 million children in sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to AIDS, and AIDS remains the top killer in the region.

### **More information:**

[http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)

[http://ec.europa.eu/development/pdf/AIDS\\_day\\_info.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/development/pdf/AIDS_day_info.pdf)

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