

AHF EUROPE AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CO-HOST ONLINE EVENT ON STRENGTHENING EU HEALTH RESPONSES IN TIMES OF GLOBAL HEALTH THREATS

BRUSSELS-AMSTERDAM-Following an unprecedented year during which European healthcare systems and cooperation have been put to the test – and with the overarching aim of sharing lessons to make European and Global healthcare more efficient – AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Europe <https://www.aidshealth.org/global/> will co-host an online event **Strengthening the EU Response in Times of Global Health Threats: From Bremen 2007 to COVID-19 and Beyond** with the European Parliament on 17 November 2020.

Health preparedness has come into the spotlight during 2020 and revealed many gaps and challenges in Europe and across the world. As a result, the European Health Agenda is undergoing large operational and financial changes – with ambitious new programmes such as EU4Health or expansion of ECDC competences, to be launched in early 2021. AHF's event is a timely occasion to take stock of and share lessons from the evolution of European Health Policy and various concrete initiatives taken by Member States and the European Commission over the years since the historic European AIDS conference held in Bremen 2007 under a previous German Presidency to the European Council.

One of the key instruments to achieve greater cooperation in and beyond Europe is the **EU4Health Programme**, an ambitious, stand-alone health programme (2021-2027) set forth by the European Commission in May 2020. It outlines Commission priority areas to be better prepared for future health emergencies. These ongoing budgetary discussions are a concrete example of the shifting paradigm on health. The initial ambitious budgetary proposal of €9.4 billion - also supported by MEPs - was however reduced by the Member States to €1.7 billion.

MEP **Juozas Olekas** (S&D, Lithuania), the event's co-host, is adamant: *"We will not succumb to pressure from the European Council and will continue to fight for a multiannual EU budget in which citizens' social and health issues are one of their top priorities. I am convinced that access to high-quality healthcare for patients must be a priority, and that health policy has to become one of the key areas of EU policy."*

Joining MEP Olekas in the discussion are MEPs **Andreas Glöck** (Renew Europe, Germany); **Lidia Pereira** (EPP, Portugal); **Nicolás González Casares** (S&D, Spain); **Ortwin Schulze**, Head of Division for Health Policy in German Permanent Representation to the EU; **Mario Pinto**, Health Advisor to the President of Portugal; **Antonio Maritati**, ProMIS Coordinator; European Commission representatives and **Anna Maria Żakowicz**, Deputy Bureau Chief, AHF Europe. The speakers will give a range of perspectives on European cooperation in the health sector and discuss what happens when health care focuses on people's needs instead of concrete diseases.

While panelists from **Italy, Portugal, Lithuania** and **Germany** will share lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the event also aims to examine EU cooperation around infectious diseases from the past 10+ years – referencing the **2007 Bremen Declaration** during which ministers and government representatives of EU Member States reaffirmed their commitment to tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic on a global level. AHF is the largest provider of HIV/AIDS medical care worldwide, positioning the organisation to offer valuable insights on people-centred health care approaches and engage European experts on ideas for taking more responsibility in global health care actions.

The 17 November event builds upon a technical webinar held on 6 October, during which participants debated the major challenges of implementing integrated, people-centred health care. **Anna Maria Żakowicz**, AHF Europe said: *"One of the barriers for implementation of people-centred care is the traditional way in which care is provided. We must look beyond the biomedical paradigm and take a more holistic approach to health care with stronger focus on prevention."*

Background: Bremen and beyond

Germany currently holds the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU, just as it did in 2007 when pledges for political leadership on national, European and international levels; exchanging best practices; and promoting access to prevention in the fight against HIV/AIDS were made in the Bremen Declaration. These commitments were very important to the overall management of several infectious diseases.

How to register

The event will be held on 17 November from 15:00 – 16:30 CET online. To view more details including the program and registration, please visit: <https://ahfbetterhealth-eu.org/>

About AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), the largest global AIDS organization, currently provides medical care and/or services to over 1.4 million people in 45 countries worldwide in the US, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean, the Asia/Pacific Region and Europe. To learn more about AHF, please visit our website: www.aidshealth.org

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