

# SAAWatch

## The EU Role in Global Health: achieving the health

In its new Communication “the EU Role in Global Health”, adopted on 31 March, the European Commission underlines essential principles for common EU action on global health and health system strengthening, including universality, equity and the right to health.

While Stop AIDS Alliance welcomes this approach, we believe that the achievement of the health MDGs requires in addition to strengthening national health systems, targeted interventions that have the greatest impact on the health MDG targets.

These interventions

should include the promotion of universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. Even in developing countries with relatively well functioning health systems, many people do not access antiretroviral treatment because of HIV related stigma and fear of discrimination by public health workers. This means that specific activities to such as awareness raising, information and education, should get specific attention in order to enable more people to access treatment.

We would also like to see a stronger emphasis on the interlinkages between the health MDGs and the

need for integrated and comprehensive services. Malaria is responsible for one in five children dying in Africa, while HIV/AIDS is the main cause of morbidity and mortality among women of reproductive age globally.

Finally, the EU would play a credible role in supporting global health if it makes strong financial commitments to achieve the health MDGs. This should include meeting the financial targets agreed in the 2008 EU Agenda for Action on the MDGs and contributing to a fully funded Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

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## The European Commission recommit to the MDGs

The European Commission has recently adopted a 12 point EU Action Plan in support of the MDGs. The Action Plan was adopted in light of the upcoming UN Review Summit in September where progress towards the MDGs will be assessed. It urges Member States to establish verifiable annual action plans for reaching their

agreed aid levels. Stop AIDS Alliance welcomed this approach given that last year EU’s average aid levels decreased to 0.4% of EU GNI, being still far from the intermediate collective target of 0.56% of GNI by the end of 2010.

Priority will be given to the MDGs most off track which should mean renewed attention for the MDGs 4, 5 and 6 as they are the fur-

thest of being achieved. With regard to MDG 6, the overall number of HIV infections may have decreased but the total number of people living with HIV continues to grow partly due to increased survival because of expanded coverage of antiretroviral treatment.

The EU is a major contributor to the Global Fund

to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and supports many HIV projects around the world. This means that the recommitment to reach the MDGs is very important and should now be translated into strong political conclusions and detailed actions at the Foreign Affairs Council in June.

## Stop AIDS Alliance supports the Robin Hood Tax



On March 25<sup>th</sup>, several NGOs gathered outside the European Parliament for a stunt in support of a Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) or a “Robin Hood Tax“. The stunt took place as Eu-

ropean Heads of State met to examine financial market regulation ahead of the G20 meeting on June 26-27 in Canada. The stunt brought together a broad coalition of NGOs who support the introduction of an FTT that would generate income for reaching the MDGs and tackling climate change. Even at low rate of 0.05%, the tax could raise billions annually.

SAA believes that these finances could reduce the financing gap for reaching the health MDGs. However, the income should not allow donors to forget about their current commitments on reaching 0.7% of GNI for ODA by the year 2015.

Recently, the European Commission has been supportive of innovative financing mechanisms

for development, both in its staff working paper on the topic, as well as in the Spring Package on Development. Unfortunately, the FTT has not been among possible innovative mechanisms for development but rather seen as a way to generate income for future crises in the financial sector. SAA continues to work in support of the tax.