

SAAWatch

AIDS 2010: A Major Push for Universal Access

The 18th International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) was held on 18-23 July in Vienna, Austria. The theme of AIDS 2010 was *Rights Here, Right Now*, emphasising a shared responsibility of delivering on the commitments to provide universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010. Among key speakers at the conference were Bill Clinton and Bill Gates and representing the EU, Health and Consumer Policy Commissioner, John Dalli. AIDS 2010 reaffirmed that human rights are

the cornerstone of universal access while stressing that concrete measures need to be in place to protect vulnerable groups, especially people living with HIV, women and girls, injecting drug users, migrants, prisoners, sex workers, men who have sex with men, and transgender persons. The conference saw the launch of the *Vienna Declaration*, a statement for increased funding for HIV/AIDS. With the global economic crisis threatening to undermine public investments, the con-

ference has without doubt helped keep HIV on the international agenda, while demonstrating the importance of continued HIV investments in promoting global health and reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

The Robin Hood Tax gained wide support as an innovative source of financing for HIV and health



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AIDS 2010: Stop AIDS Alliance speaks at European Commission Session

Stop AIDS Alliance was invited by the European Commission to speak at one of their satellite sessions - *Doing more and better - how can partners work with the European Commission to confront HIV/AIDS?*, on 19 July.

The session discussed how the Commission addresses HIV globally and how stakeholders benefit from the EU's financing instruments.

The topics included confronting HIV effectively in the new paradigm for EU development cooperation, EU health programmes addressing HIV in Europe, and EU research programmes. Speakers included Andrzej Rys, Director of DG Health and Consumers and Luis Riera-Figueras, Director for thematic issues in DG Development. Stop AIDS

Alliance's Arben Fetaj delivered a presentation on *Advocacy and effective use of international aid instruments*, highlighting the shortcomings of new aid modalities and the challenges in engaging civil society in decision-making processes.

The Commission recognised the current limitations of budget support in delivering develop-

ment outcomes and committed to address them in the coming months. Mr. Riera also recognised the difficulties in implementing the EU Programme for Action (PfA) to confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis (2007-2011) and committed to work for the operationalisation of the PfA Action Teams and the renewal of the PfA beyond 2011.

Financial Transactions Tax on the EU agenda

Stop AIDS Alliance welcomes the fact that one of the new Belgian presidency's priorities is the introduction of a global financial transactions tax (FTT). As a result, an extraordinary Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) will be held on September 7 with FTTs and bank taxation

on the agenda. Furthermore, the European Commission has recently created a task force on innovative financing mechanisms, including FTTs. It will bring DG Development together with other DGs and EU Member State representatives. The process is foreseen to result in a Commission

Communication on innovative financing in early 2011.

Also recently, several MEPs have taken the initiative to start a call for a Finance Watch. Initiated by 22 MEPs, the call has already been signed by more than 100 MEPs and MPs. Civil society representatives have been invited to share

their views with the MEPs in September.

Currently SAA is co-organising a stunt to be held during the ECOFIN meeting on September 7. The aim of the stunt is to call for the introduction of an FTT that generates income for global public goods, such as health care.