



World AIDS Day 2024: Honouring Progress; Ready For the Future

Today, on **World AIDS Day**, we stand together to honour the enduring strength of our global HIV community. The community led the charge for the very first World AIDS Day in 1988 - mobilising to raise awareness, demand action, and fight stigma – and they have not stopped since.

Over the years, this unwavering commitment has brought in diverse stakeholders. **Together, we have achieved plenty:** deeper understanding of HIV, broader testing and earlier diagnosis, better prevention including pre-exposure prophylaxis, promotion of testing, stronger links to clinical care, better and more accessible therapies, the global embrace of U=U, and the widespread adoption of the 90-90-90 framework in many countries.

At EACS we've renewed our strategy, confirming our vision, mission and values, and charting our way forward along five strategic priorities: standards of care, access to care, education and research, social-related issues, and governance.

Our commitment to education has remained at the heart of our work. The new EACS core curriculum, leading to the European Diploma in HIV Medicine, is the foundation of our educational efforts. The core curriculum is supported by our initiatives to empower the next generation of HIV professionals such as this year's YING Conference in Brussels, the Short Clinical Exchange programme and the Career Development Fellowship. It is also supported by opportunities for professionals at all stages such as the HIV Summer School.

We have always seen partnerships as essential for progress, and this year we continued to work with organisations such as ECDC on standards of care and country support, as well as with WHO, UNAIDS, and EATG. We established agreements with societies in Japan, and beyond. In addition, our **“no person left behind”** philosophy was front and centre of our Standard of Care meeting in Athens, where we addressed the health needs of migrants.

We are well positioned for the year ahead. Preparations are in full swing for the **20th European AIDS Conference (EACS 2025)** in Paris, and we are all looking forward to investing wholeheartedly in the conference theme “From Science to Implementation”. Our updated guidelines and policies reflect state-of-the-art clinical care. At an upcoming European Parliament event, EACS members will advocate for greater political engagement on AIDS & HIV. Our new Governing Board, elected in November, are more than ready to take on their new mandate. I am particularly pleased to see that the Governing Board is even more diverse and I thank the new, remaining and departing members for their commitment and hard work.

On a personal note, this World AIDS Day marks my last as President of EACS. Serving this organisation as President has been an honour, marked by events such as the 19th European AIDS Conference (EACS 2023) in Warsaw, collaborating with ECDC on the stigma in healthcare settings survey, formulating the EACS strategy, advancing our work in policy development, and of course the impact of the war in Ukraine. I'm grateful for the support of the Bureau, the Governing Board, and the Secretariat, whose dedication makes our work possible. I want to particularly thank Joëlle Verluyten, Jasmijn Vervaeck, Véronique Van Hal, Stephanie Van Meenen, and Justyna Kopec for their invaluable contributions.

As I hand over the presidency to Miłosz Parczewski, I am confident he will continue to lead EACS with vision and passion. The society is thriving and building ever-stronger collaborations for the future, and will continue to fulfil our mission.

Let us take today as an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come and renew our commitment to a future free of HIV stigma and discrimination.

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EACS President

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