



AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT NICOLAS SARKOZY

Young civil society delegates want the European Union to work towards achieving Universal Access to HIV/AIDS prevention, harm reduction, treatment and care in Europe and worldwide by 2010.

Online video version of this letter:

Youtube: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=lZp5D5AmtN8>

Revver (better quality): <http://revver.com/video/998480/an-open-letter-to-president-nicolas-sarkozy/>

Bucarest, Romania - Saturday, June 28, 2008

Monsieur le President,

France will assume the presidency of the European Union starting on July 1, 2008 and we believe this will be a perfect opportunity to vastly expand and strengthen responses to the HIV/AIDS and hepatitis pandemics, both in our wide European region and worldwide.

As you know, the HIV and hepatitis epidemics remain major challenges in both the European Union and neighbouring countries. In our European Region (as defined by the World Health Organization), the number of newly diagnosed cases of HIV has vastly increased over the past ten years. The numbers of reported AIDS-related death began to increase again in 2004. This reflects the dangerous unacceptable shortcomings that remain with regards to prevention, testing and treatment programmes in many countries of our region.

In Dublin in 2004, European governmental representatives committed to rapidly achieve "universal access to effective, affordable and equitable prevention, treatment and care" for HIV/AIDS in Europe and in Central Asia. This promise was expanded to the global level by the G8 in 2005 and by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2006. Soon after you became president, you also publicly affirmed on June 7, 2007 your strong personal commitment to achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS by 2010. However, much remains to be done!

More than twenty countries in our region currently benefit from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria but in most cases, this support will end soon. The sustainability of many essential prevention and treatment services is thus clearly threatened because national governments remain very reluctant to provide the funding that is needed.



People living with HIV still today all too often face violent rejection when their medical status is known: this happens in schools, universities, work places, even in some healthcare settings. Maybe, as "president of the European Union", you will be willing to denounce most assertively discriminations faced by people living with HIV. One way to do so could be for both Madame Bruni-Sarkozy and yourself to visibly wear the "HIV?" or the "HIV+" temporary tattoos designed by NGOs (attached, along with a few condoms to this letter).

France already has an established legacy in the global responses to HIV/AIDS. We expect that during the French presidency of the European Union, you will be willing to:

- forcefully remind governments in our European region of their duty to guarantee a high level of health protection and promotion for their own people. This includes obviously achieving universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment by 2010.
- and reform our European institutions in order to vastly reduce silly bureaucracy and crazy procedures.

Also, We want the European Union to play a far more active and effective role in confronting the HIV and hepatitis epidemics. This includes making sure that local prevention, harm reduction and support NGO in EU neighbouring countries can benefit from funding from the European Commission. This is vital, especially in countries no longer eligible for Global Fund grants.

- To affirm your full solidarity with people living with HIV and to denounce all forms of human right violations, especially those affecting people living with HIV and member of vulnerable communities, including men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, commercial sex workers, roma people, migrants and other.

Mister president Sarkozy we challenge you and we dare you!

World AIDS day on December 1st 2008 will be a perfect occasion to inform us on the concrete steps you have taken in response to this letter.

Sincerely yours,

The participants to the Youth and AIDS European Seminar Bucharest, Romania.

Contact: Nicoleta Dascalu, ARAS NGO, Romania, nicoletele@gmail.com

This seminar was organized as part of the AIDS ACTION and INTEGRATION Projects.
More info on http://www.integration-projects.org/keydocs/youth_and_aids/

This letter was produced by participants to the Youth and AIDS European Seminar that took place in Bucharest, Romania on June 27 and 28, 2008 and brought together more than 70 young delegates, representing 39 different non-governmental organisations based in 22 European countries (from Portugal to Russia!). There, we exchanged about the best strategies to improve prevention and support for HIV/AIDS and hepatitis and to make sure these services adequately respond to the needs of most affected communities, including men who have sex with men, people who use drugs, members of roma communities and people living with HIV, especially young people.

The participants represented the following organisations:

BULGARIA: Initiative for Health Foundation / Health and Social Development Foundation - **CYPRUS:** Cyprus Family Planning Organization - **CZECH REPUBLIC:** SPRSV (Czech Family Planning Association) - **FRANCE:** AIDES / - **HUNGARY:** Association of Hungarian Girl Guides - **LATVIA:** Youth Against AIDS - **MACEDONIA:** Roma Right Forum "ARKA" **MOLDOVA:** Крединца / "Поколение будущего" (Transinistrian region) / Family Planning Association of Moldova - **POLAND:** Foundation of Social Education / Polish National Network of PLWHA "SIEĆ PLUS" - **PORTUGAL:** Cidadao do Mundo/Bué Fixe - **ROMANIA:** ARAS / Youth For Youth Foundation / Sun House / Casa Sperantei / SENS Positiv / Integration / Romanian Angel Appeal Foundation - **Russia:** Non-Governmental Organisation against HIV/AIDS "Phoenix Plus" **Serbia:** Humanitarian Association of Rroma / Youth of JAZAS, Yugoslav Youth Association against AIDS - **SLOVAKIA:** Slovak Medical Students' Association - **SLOVENIA:** ŠKUC-MAGNUS - **TURKEY:** Turkish Red Crescent / Dokuz Eylul University(Deu) Youth And Sports Student Club Association - **UKRAINE:** Charitable Fund Peremoga. **INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS:** AIDS ACTION EUROPE / EATG / EHRN / IPPF-EN / UNAIDS / WHO.

Note: these organisations may or may not officially have endorsed this letter.