Resolution on accelerating progress and tackling inequalities towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030

2021/2604(RSP) - 20/05/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 468 votes to 63, with 162 abstentions, a resolution on accelerating progress and tackling inequalities towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

Nearly 76 million people have become infected and nearly 33 million people have died of AIDS-related causes since the beginning of the epidemic in 1981. The HIV epidemic remains a global crisis and a total of 38 million people live with HIV. 1.7 million people acquired HIV in 2019. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most heavily affected region, accounting for 57 % of all new HIV infections and 84 % of HIV infections in children (aged up to 14 years), with much higher HIV prevalence in females than in males, and with 4 500 girls and young women (aged between 15 and 24) becoming infected with HIV every week.

Moreover, inequalities that drive the HIV epidemic, including violation of human rights and sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as stigma and discrimination, have been deteriorating and have been further exacerbated by COVID-19.

People in difficult humanitarian situations and informal and fragile settings, people with disabilities, indigenous populations, LGBTIQ+ people, and migrant and mobile populations are vulnerable to HIV infection and face unique challenges in accessing HIV services.

The resolution noted that the COVID-19 pandemic poses further challenges to the AIDS response and has reversed some of the gains made to date, with several countries not achieving their 2020 targets. This puts the achievement of the SDG target of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 at risk. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen resilient and sustainable health systems as part of universal health coverage, while preserving the gains of the AIDS response.

Parliament stressed the importance of a positive outcome at the UN High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS to be held from 8 to 10 June 2021. It requested that the Council contribute to the adoption of a set of forward-looking and ambitious commitments in the political declaration.

The Commission is called on to address AIDS as a global public health crisis and accelerate all efforts to meet the 2025 targets, including through scaling-up investments in UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Parliament called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- work with partner countries to instate compulsory comprehensive sexual education in their national education plans in order to prevent the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, especially in countries with the highest infection rates;

- ensure the level of spending and resource mobilisation needed to achieve the 2025 targets in all EU Member State.

The EU is called on to:

- set up a clear and coherent EU global COVID-19 vaccination strategy, focusing on ensuring equal, affordable and timely access to vaccination for people in developing countries, in particular those belonging to vulnerable and high-risk groups, including people infected with HIV/AIDS;

- set up a comprehensive global strategy and road map for the achievement of the SDGs, including those relating health and targets on HIV/AIDS reduction;

- offer particular support to developing countries, especially least developed countries, in the effective implementation of flexibilities provided for in the TRIPS Agreement for the protection of public health, notably on compulsory licencing and parallel import, and to optimise the use of voluntary licensing and technology sharing mechanisms to meet public health objectives by insisting that multinational pharmaceutical companies include middle-income developing countries in such mechanisms and offer affordable HIV treatment in those countries.