



## PRESS RELEASE

# 17th European AIDS Conference

6–9 November 2019, Basel, Switzerland

### Basel, 10 September 2019

The 17th European AIDS Conference will be held in Basel and is greatly anticipated among leading HIV experts, scientists and researchers, as well as representatives of the people living with HIV in Europe, in order to discuss the latest research in all HIV-related scientific fields.

### Setting the stage to end AIDS

According to UNAIDS, the AIDS epidemic can be ended by 2030 if the 90-90-90 targets are reached by 2020: 90% of people with HIV know their status – 90% of people who know their status are on antiretroviral therapy – 90% of people who are on antiretroviral therapy achieve viral suppression.

This year's conference is setting the stage for what needs to be done to reach these targets by bringing HIV prevention, treatment and care to all who need them. One major concern is the increase of HIV infections in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. HIV diagnoses in these regions have increased dramatically – by 60% – between 2010 and 2016.<sup>1</sup> For that reason, 16 conference sessions will be simultaneously interpreted into Russian.

**“Despite a fully prepared toolbox of prevention, treatment and care, the challenges of ending the AIDS epidemic are still dramatic when we look at the HIV status in specific regions of Europe and Central Asia,”** says Professor Juergen Rockstroh, EACS president and conference co-chair.

### Prospects of a cure for HIV and new antiretroviral drugs

Hopes for finding a cure for HIV have risen in light of this year's success with the ‘London and Düsseldorf patients’ who are in remission from HIV without any antiretroviral medication after having received stem cells donated by so-called elite controllers. The European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) co-organises, at the Conference, with the French National Agency for AIDS Research (ANRS), a cure symposium at which the latest scientific developments in creating a vaccine will be presented and discussed.

#### Conference Organiser

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#### Local Conference Co-Chair

Manuel Battegay

#### Conference Secretariat

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[www.eacs-conference2019.com](http://www.eacs-conference2019.com)

<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS 2018 Fact Sheet



Another focus at this conference will be the simplification of antiretroviral therapy (ART) using i.e. monthly injectables, and the discussion of clinical results from new HIV drugs.

### **Therapy as prevention to reduce HIV infections**

Another topic of the European AIDS Conference concerns the latest results from studies regarding PrEP, short for pre-exposure prophylaxis. Research clearly shows that PrEP is an effective prevention strategy for people who do not have HIV and who are at high risk. Taking antiretroviral medication reduces their risk of becoming infected with HIV if they are exposed to it. Even though many European countries are moving forward to implement PrEP, there are still countries where there is no PrEP programme in place.

### **Bridging the HIV knowledge gap between the East and the West**

Most importantly, this year's conference will be used to find ways to enhance the cooperation and exchange of knowledge between HIV research institutions and clinics in Western and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. New initiatives on that matter will be presented at the Standard of Care session and discussed among clinicians, people living with HIV and other partners such as the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

### **Addressing inequalities in HIV care**

In their opening ceremony keynote speeches, speakers Dr Anastasia Pharris and Prof. Jens D. Lundgren will address the disparities and challenges within Europe when it comes to reaching the 90-90-90 goals. Adding to this, the community representative Dr Alex Schneider will point out the causes of inequalities in HIV care with, for example, 1.4 million people living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia but only 36% of them accessing treatment.<sup>2</sup>

### **About the Conference**

The biennial Conference is the largest European HIV/AIDS meeting to date and will bring together around 3,000 delegates from across the world, with a clear focus on European clinicians, researchers and HIV care providers interacting and discussing the current challenges of HIV/AIDS.

The conference organisers expect more than 70 journalists. News coverage as well as exchange and dialogue are a vital factor in creating awareness and education. Media registration is free of charge.

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<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS 2018 Fact Sheet

# 17th EUROPEAN AIDS CONFERENCE

November 6 – 9, 2019  
Basel, Switzerland



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European  
AIDS  
Clinical  
Society

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## Basel, 9 October 2019

The European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) is holding the 17th European AIDS Conference in Basel this 6-9 November. The Conference is greatly anticipated among leading HIV experts, scientists and researchers, as well as members of the community of people living with HIV, in order to discuss the latest research in all HIV-related scientific fields.

## Reaching the 90-90-90 target equals ending AIDS in 2030

HIV experts will be calling out for stronger political leadership and initiatives when it comes to reaching UNAIDS' 90-90-90 target. One of the major topics to be debated will be the gap in HIV care between Western and Eastern regions in Europe and Central Asia.

**“The good news is that the 90-90-90 target is achievable, for all required tools are developed to end the HIV epidemic in 2030. But we need stronger political and collegial leadership – especially in Eastern Europe and Central Asia – for productive public health policies to make HIV treatment accessible to all people who need it.”**

Prof. Jens D. Lundgren, CHIP at Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Copenhagen, and keynote speaker at the Conference

Recent data provided by the European Centre of Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) shows that countries in the Western parts of Europe are closer to the 90-90-90 target: 87% of the people living with HIV know their status, 91% of them are on antiretroviral therapy, and 93% on antiretroviral therapy achieved viral suppression. Whilst the Eastern European region is lagging behind, where 76% of the people diagnosed with HIV, only 46% of them are on antiretroviral therapy, and 78% on antiretroviral therapy achieved viral suppression.<sup>1</sup>

## Improving the standards of HIV care across Europe

The European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) has played an important role in ensuring the development of clinical standards for HIV care across European countries. The EACS Guidelines cover HIV-related topics such as prevention, diagnosis, antiretroviral treatment, drug-drug interactions, monitoring and

<sup>1</sup> <https://ecdc.europa.eu/sites/portal/files/documents/HIV-continuum-of-care-monitoring-dublin-declaration-progress-report-2018.pdf>





treatment of comorbidities, coinfections and opportunistic diseases. These evidence-based recommendations have been proven crucial in implementing and improving standards of HIV care across Europe. The major updates will be presented at the EACS Guidelines session.

EACS has also initiated a project in collaboration with the European Centre of Prevention and Disease Control (ECDC) with the objective to improve the standards of care delivered to people living with HIV across Europe and to establish a mechanism to measure and report performance against these standards at a local, regional and national level. Research data on hepatitis co-infection from a pilot audit conducted in Georgia, Germany, Poland, Romania, and Spain will be presented at the 17<sup>th</sup> European AIDS Conference.

Further important topics of the Conference are the latest clinical developments in finding a cure for HIV, the simplification of antiretroviral medication, long-term research on medical implications of ageing with HIV, and promising new insights on PrEP, short for pre-exposure prophylaxis, as a successful HIV prevention strategy.

## About the Conference

The biennial Conference is the largest European HIV/AIDS meeting to date and it will bring together around 3,000 delegates from across the world, with a clear focus on European clinicians, researchers and HIV care providers interacting and discussing the current challenges of HIV/AIDS. The conference organisers expect more than 70 journalists. News coverage as well as exchange and dialogue are a vital factor in creating awareness and education. Media registration is free of charge.

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## Basel, 30 October 2019

The 17th European AIDS Conference is approaching fast and will be welcoming around 3,000 delegates from across the world to discuss the latest research in all HIV-related scientific fields.

## Fastest growing HIV epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Even though HIV-related infections have been reduced by 47% worldwide between the epidemic peak of 1996 and 2017, there is a dramatic increase of HIV infections in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This region has the fastest growing HIV epidemic in the world. The annual number of new HIV infections is 29% higher than in 2010. The vast majority of people acquiring HIV live in the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Together, these countries account for 84% of all new infections in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.<sup>1</sup> That is why one of the main topics of this year's Conference is what is needed to provide prevention, treatment and care to all.

## Breaking down HIV stigma and discrimination

During the European AIDS Conference, HIV experts will be calling out for stronger political leadership and initiatives for effective public health policies and to eliminate stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV, which is a major contributing factor for the still increasing HIV incidence in some of the regions of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

On this occasion, the community support group for people living with HIV – Life4me+ – will launch the 'NO HIV STIGMA' campaign with numerous actions including a march on 8 November 2019. More information under:  
<https://nostigma.ch>

## From the 90-90-90 target to zero infections

As a global partnership launched on World AIDS Day 2014, the Fast-Track Cities initiative, involving more than 300 cities and municipalities, is committed to attain the UNAIDS 90-90-90 target in urban environments: 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status; 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy (ART); and 90% of all HIV-diagnosed people receiving sustained ART will achieve

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<sup>1</sup> UNAIDS DATA SHEET 2019



viral suppression. Achieving zero stigma is the initiative's fourth, but no less important, target.

The initiative has recently updated its declaration to include the attainment of the 90-90-90 target as the starting point on a trajectory towards getting to zero new HIV infections and zero AIDS-related deaths. At this year's European AIDS Conference, the Fast-Track Cities symposium will feature presentations and discussions on the pathway from the 90-90-90 target to getting to zero infections. This session will be interpreted into Russian.

## **Ageing with HIV**

As the population of people requiring HIV care is ageing, as a result of effective antiretroviral treatment and while complications caused by HIV are rare, specialists see higher rates of cancers and cardiovascular diseases among older people living with HIV. Medical science does not fully understand the reasons for this yet but suspects a complex interplay of virally-driven inflammations and anti-inflammatory responses. At this year's Conference, one of the goals is to discuss models of care and define what recommendations might be proposed for future guidelines for the management of people living HIV as they grow older.

Further important topics of the Conference are the latest clinical developments in finding a cure for HIV, the simplification of antiretroviral medication, and the presentation of major updates in the EACS Guidelines.

## **About the Conference**

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## Basel, 8 November 2019

### European Hector Research Award in HIV 2019

The European AIDS Clinical Society is proud to announce that the European Hector Research Award by the H.W. & J. Hector Foundation, Weinheim, has been awarded to two laureates thanks to their outstanding scientific work in the research field of HIV.

#### Prof. Dr Roger Dimitri Kouyos

The award for the best translational paper was given to Roger Kouyos et al for his paper on “Tracing HIV-1 strains that imprint broadly neutralizing antibody responses”. Prof. Dr Roger Dimitri Kouyos is working at the University Hospital Zurich on research projects in epidemiology, bioinformatics, mathematical modelling and evolution of infectious diseases, in particular transmission of HIV and coinfections, molecular epidemiology, and antimicrobial resistance.

#### Prof. Alison Rodger

The award for the best clinical paper was given to Prof. Alison Rodger et al for her paper documenting final results of the multicentre, prospective, and observational PARTNER study on “HIV transmission risk through condomless sex in gay couples with the HIV-positive partner taking suppressive antiretroviral therapy”. Alison Rodger is a Professor of infectious diseases at the University College London and a consultant in infectious diseases and HIV at the Royal Free Hospital, London. In the field of HIV, her research interests include reducing HIV transmission, HIV self-testing and improving the health of people with HIV including addressing health inequalities and HIV related stigma.

The award ceremonies took place on 7 and 8 November respectively on the occasion of the 17th European AIDS Conference in Basel.

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