

ACHIEVE

ASSOCIATIONS COLLABORATING ON HEPATITIS TO
IMMUNIZE AND ELIMINATE THE VIRUSES IN EUROPE

Press release ACHIEVE launch

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New coalition calls on the EU to take action to eliminate viral hepatitis B and C by 2030, inline with WHO Strategy and UN Sustainable Development Goals

Brussels, 7 June 2017

Launched at an event in the European Parliament today, the ACHIEVE (short for Associations Collaborating on Hepatitis to Immunize and Eliminate the Viruses in Europe) coalition calls on the EU to take action to eliminate viral hepatitis B and C by 2030 in the WHO European Region, in line with the WHO Global Health Sector Strategy on viral hepatitis, the WHO Europe Action Plan, which build on and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ACHIEVE coalition comes together to speak with one voice representing patients and community, clinicians and researchers.

ACHIEVE Chair and President of the European Liver Patients' Association (ELPA) Tatjana Reic explains: *"As one of the richest regions of the world, the EU has a moral and political obligation to lead the way and implement the WHO Strategy and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We have a cure for hepatitis C and hepatitis B can be effectively controlled through immunisation and treatment. What is needed is a concerted effort by all Member States in favour of prevention, screening and access to treatment and care."*

Karin Kadenbach MEP and co-host of the event adds: *"Although I am delighted about the European Commission's commitment to the UN SDGs and its intention to support Member States' by monitoring, reporting and reviewing Member States' progress, I see problems as far as viral hepatitis is concerned as current surveillance is too patchy. The European Parliament has recognised this problem in its draft Resolution on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Hepatitis C, which will be adopted in Plenary next week, and which calls for EU-wide surveillance. The adoption of the Resolution will follow an exchange of views with the European Commission on this topic and I am looking forward to some convincing answers on how they will address this challenge."*

Professor Jeffrey Lazarus, ACHIEVE member from ISGlobal, Hospital Clínic, at the University of Barcelona, elaborates: *"We need governments to respond to the urgent need for better data. Eliminating HBV and HCV as a public health threat is feasible, as is the full elimination of both diseases – but only with a greater investment in monitoring key indicators of progress."*



Eberhard Schatz, ACHIEVE member from Correlation network, stresses: *"There is an urgent need for policy-makers, health care providers, health insurance providers and the pharmaceutical and diagnostic industry to work in collaboration with the affected communities and their organizations, as well as low threshold services, to achieve scale-up of hepatitis policy and practice. Communities and community representatives must participate in formulating and implementing hepatitis C prevention, testing and strategies for affordable treatment because these stakeholders have unique knowledge about what will be accessible, acceptable and effective. Without their close ongoing involvement, the effort to eliminate hepatitis C is likely to fail."*

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Notes for the Editor

The ACHIEVE coalition includes the following organisations: The European Liver Patients' Association (ELPA), the Viral Hepatitis Prevention Board, Hepatitis B and C Public Policy Association, EASL International Liver Foundation, European Aids Treatment Group (EATG), Correlation Network, the World Hepatitis Alliance and the Barcelona Intitute for Global Health (ISGlobal). It is enabled by the support of Abbott, CEPHEID, Gilead Sciences and MSD.

About viral Hepatitis B and C

The elimination of viral hepatitis B and C as a public health threat was agreed to by all Member States of the World Health ORganization. However, Europe is yet to make significant progress. As many as 171,000 deathsⁱ annually in the WHO European region are caused by two infections: hepatitis B virus and hepatitis C virus. These viruses affect 28 million people, many of them living without visible symptoms for decades before disease progression.ⁱⁱ The number of individuals affected will continue to increase unless action is taken to prevent, detect, and cure these diseases.

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Website

achievehepatitiselimination.eu

ⁱ WHO Europe Action Plan

ⁱⁱ Hope V.D., Eramova I. Capurro D. et al. Prevalence and estimation of hepatitis B and C infections in the WHO European Region: a review of data focusing on the countries outside the European Union and the European Free Trade Association, *Epidemiol. Infect* (2013)