



## The European AIDS Conference opens its 15<sup>th</sup> edition with more than 3.500 delegates

- The Conference will allow professionals to share the most important scientific advances in the field of the HIV treatment, new prevention tools such as pre-exposure prophylaxis, and to discuss standard of care of people living with HIV.
- During the Opening Ceremony, the speakers made a public call for better and stronger commitment to people living with HIV or at risk of acquiring HIV in order to fulfil the objectives set by UNAIDS for 2020.

**Barcelona; October 21, 2015.** Today was the first day of the 15th European AIDS Conference, where more than 3.500 delegates from all over the world gathered to exchange the latest and high-quality information on HIV. A total of 889 abstracts were submitted, with an acceptance rate of 67,6%.

The Director of the Public Health Agency of Catalonia, Joan Puigdollers I Fargas, opened the 15th European AIDS Conference. Also, the Director of the Public Health Observatory, Dr. Maribel Pasarin, said that, “Big cities around the world understand the impact of HIV. The city council endorses the principles of the World Health Organization. The city of Barcelona is part of the Alliance for Healthy Cities, aiming to protect and enhance the health of our citizens”.

The Conference co-chairs, Prof. Manuel Battegay and Prof. José M. Gatell, welcomed the delegates to the 15th edition of the Conference. Prof. Battegay stated that, “Our mission is to promote excellence in standards of care, research and education in HIV infection and related co-infections, and to actively engage in the formulation of public health policy, with the aim of reducing HIV disease burden across Europe”. “EACS wants to build the next generation of HIV physicians, that is why 75 scholarships have been granted to young medical doctors, nurses and community members”, added Prof. Gatell.

The epidemiologic context of Eastern Europe was one of the main topics discussed during the Opening Ceremony. In his presentation, Professor Matthias Egger from the University of Bern analysed the impact of achieving the 90-90-90 UNAIDS target “HIV/AIDS has severed the life expectancy in several countries. Now thanks to the scale up of ARV treatment, the tendency is reverted. We have averted 7.8 million deaths between 2000 and 2014. This is not enough. If we do not achieve the 90-90-90 target, the epidemic will increase again. There would be 28 million additional HIV cases”. In his intervention, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Prof. Michel Kazatchkine, stated that the epidemic in Europe is in a critical situation and “Europe is not done with AIDS; there is no room for complacency. Meeting the 90-90-90 target does not mean the end of HIV. It means that we are on the right path to eliminate AIDS as a public health threat.”

The epidemic and response to the Hepatitis C is another challenge that clinicians, researchers, policy makers, and activists are facing. Mr. Tamás Bereczky, from the activist organisation European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG), talked about the current situation and how there is a need for strong political action from a community perspective. He thanks the EACS for the exemplary cooperation with the community of people living with HIV. In Bereczky's words, “clinical trials remain a key vehicle for many to access life saving treatment, especially with the prohibitive prices of HCV and HIV treatment that must be offered to all”. Mr. Bereczky also analysed the lack of women in the HIV field: There is a lack of research and data on women living with HIV as well as access to care.

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## About the 15th European AIDS Conference

[www.eacs-conference2015.com](http://www.eacs-conference2015.com)

Since the first European AIDS Conference held in 1987 in Brussels, the Conference has become a must for clinicians and researchers, communities and people living with HIV / AIDS. Through scientific excellence, the Conference promotes the participation and engagement of young researchers in clinical research. The Conference aims at presenting and critically discussing new knowledge as a fundamental part of good clinical practice and health care, whether to deal with HIV transmission, Hepatitis C and other co-infections, as well as co-morbidities. The European AIDS Conference is held every two years, this being its 15th edition.

## About the European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS)

[www.eacsociety.org](http://www.eacsociety.org)

The European AIDS Clinical Society was founded with the aim of bringing together health professionals that are working in the HIV/AIDS field in Europe. Since its beginning, the EACS has ensured compliance with the highest ethical standards, care and treatment of people living with HIV, as well as scientific excellence, in order to respond to the pandemic. The organisation of the European AIDS Conference is one of the most important activities of the EACS.

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