



ACTION FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

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EUROPEAN CITIZENS CALL ON THEIR LEADERS TO “SOUND THE AID ALARM-BELLS” AT UN DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

In a major survey of close to 5000 citizens across 5 key EU countries – UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain, Action for Global Health has revealed that over 85% of European citizens believe that health should be the target area for channelling necessary increases in aid. The results of this survey are presented today.

European leaders gather this week in New York for a central UN Millennium Development Goals meeting. “We urge these leaders to act immediately in order to increase aid and improve health conditions in the world’s poorest countries”, said Action for Global Health, a European network of fifteen NGOs advocating for more and better aid for health. “We believe that, as one of the worlds’ strongest economic and political blocs, they must work together.”

“European Leaders gathered in New York must listen to their citizens’ calls to ring the aid alarm-bells and target health issues in the world’s poorest countries,+said Amy Kesterton, Policy and Advocacy Manager for Interact Worldwide. “This is a call for aid effort for health to be at the top of the agenda”

Aid for Health must be increased

Earlier this month, the UN said that wealthy countries are not living up to the commitments they made at the Gleneagles summit in 2005 and that **aid needs to be increased by at least \$18bn a year.**

“Health issues remain at the centre in a vicious circle of poverty with diseases such as HIV/AIDS, child mortality and maternal mortality crippling countries across Africa and Asia,” said Marielle Hart of Stop AIDS Alliance. “Urgent action is needed to improve both the quality and the quantity of aid for health, to strengthen health systems and to better harmonize all health aid coordination initiatives”.

The need for better public awareness on Health MDGs

The survey outlines the **glaring gap between opinion and reality** in certain EU member states approach to spending on health aid. In the UK and Germany close to 70% of people surveyed felt that their governments were giving enough or too much aid for health in developing countries. However, the reality is that both these countries are lagging behind their French and Spanish counterparts with **only 0.36% and 0.37% of their respective Gross National Income’s (GNI) spent on Official Development Assistance (ODA)** last year. Meanwhile in Italy, over half of the respondents felt their government spends too little on health aid and their government has the lowest allocation of development aid in Western Europe having further reduced its aid from 2006 to 2007.

“The UN’s Millennium Development Goals simply cannot be met unless reliable, long-term commitments of aid are invested in key areas such as health,” said Stephan Kreisler, policy advisor of Welthungerhilfe. “You cannot extend health care services to rural areas if you don’t know whether you’ll have the funds next year to pay salaries”

A huge opportunity for Health

With only seven years until the deadline for meeting the Millennium Goals, the United Nations Summit can be **a turning point for world leaders to review progress and commit to concrete efforts**, resources and mechanisms. By asking world leaders to announce their specific plans and proposals, the **UN Summit can prepare the ground for a decisive conference on financing for development in Doha** in November.

“The EU has made several commitments to ensuring that every child has the right to go to school and that the poor have access to essential healthcare,” stated Deepali Sood, Head of the Plan EU office.

“We are now half way through the MDG process and too many big European players are still indulging in broken policies which could negatively impact the quality and quantity of aid” said Monika Kosinska, Secretary General of the European Public Health Alliance.





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Note to editors:

1. Action for Global Health was formed in 2006 by **15 non-governmental organisations and charities**. Current partners are based in Spain, Italy, France, Germany, the UK and Brussels working on different aspects of health and with the overall aim to form a powerful **collective voice**, to call on European governments, NGOs, institutions and businesses to do much more to support the **right to health**. We want action to support health systems in developing countries, as well as removing obstacles that stop poor countries acting to benefit their citizens. We want European governments to keep **their promises**.
2. To read the Action for Global Health survey in full please go to our website - www.actionforglobalhealth.eu
3. For a copy of the recent Action for Global Health report . Healthy Aid . go to: <http://www.actionforglobalhealth.eu/publications/healthyaid>

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