

[PRESS RELEASE]

[for immediate release]

EACS brings HIV experts and communities together in Budapest to strengthen standards of care across Europe

Brussels, 5 October 2026 – The European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) is bringing together clinicians, public health experts, policymakers and community representatives for the **EACS Standard of Care Meeting for HIV & Co-infections in Europe**, taking place on **8–9 October 2026 at Semmelweis University in Budapest, Hungary**. Under the theme “**Standard of care: in the Full Continuum**”, the meeting will examine how European standards can be translated into effective policy and practice, with a particular focus on reducing regional disparities and strengthening HIV prevention, testing, treatment and long-term care across Central and Eastern Europe.

The Budapest meeting builds on the previous EACS Standard of Care Meeting, held in Athens in October 2024, and continues EACS's work to bring together different perspectives on the quality and accessibility of HIV care across Europe. This time, the countries in focus are **Hungary** and **Albania**. The EACS Standard of Care Working Group aims to collect and share information on progress and challenges in different European regions and to provide a platform for collaboration between healthcare professionals, stakeholders and communities.

“Hosting the EACS Standard of Care meeting in Budapest is strategically crucial to bridge regional gaps in HIV care and strengthen healthcare standards across Central and Eastern Europe. We expect the event to foster cross-border collaboration, address specific regional challenges like late diagnosis and access to (novel) treatments and prevention,” emphasised **Botond Lakatos**, Co-Chair of the local organising committee.

“We hope that co-hosting this meeting will help us better understand the need for the provision of standardised treatment and care for people living with HIV in Albania. It will help us mobilise all the important stakeholders that will enable us to achieve the UNAIDS targets,” added **Arjan Harxhi**, Co-Chair of the local organising committee.

From standards to implementation

A central part of the two-day programme will focus on the **ECDC/EACS Standards of HIV Care** and their implementation in European healthcare settings. Participants will review the published standards covering **PrEP, HIV testing, antiretroviral therapy (ART), comorbidities, antenatal screening** and upcoming module on **engagement in care**, alongside experiences from clinical audits. The programme will also explore locally adaptable guidance, sustainability and the long-term maintenance of the standards.

Bringing standards of care into policy and practice

A key session of the meeting will be “**Advancing Standards of HIV Care and Prevention: Policy Impact, Political Commitment and European Leadership.**” The session will explore how the ECDC/EACS Standards of HIV Care can inform national policy and practice, strengthen political commitment and support sustainable, equitable HIV responses.

The session will open with **András Kulja, Member of the European Parliament for Hungary**, and **Stela Bivol of the World Health Organization**, setting the European agenda for excellence in HIV care. The meeting will also feature a **video address from Olivér Várhelyi, European Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare.**

The discussion will bring together perspectives on the impact of the Standards of Care on national policy and practice, including experiences from **Albania and Hungary**, and the role of communities in advancing equitable, person-centred HIV care.

Putting communities at the centre of HIV care

Community perspectives will be integrated throughout the meeting. A dedicated session will examine **stigma and equity**, with a focus on the barriers faced by women and pregnant people, Roma communities, migrants, refugees and people experiencing homelessness. The programme will also address community perspectives on stigma in healthcare settings and the role of communities in advancing equitable, person-centred HIV care.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to highlight the needs and priorities of local communities, including access to reproductive health services and HIV prevention. *“We hope that the Standard of Care meeting taking place in Budapest will lead to an improvement of reproductive health, securing prenatal testing during the first trimester and access to in vitro fertilisation for people living with HIV. We also hope it will contribute to the full implementation of PrEP in Hungary,”* said **Chris Cziria** and **Éva Laczkó**, Community Co-Chairs of the local organising committee.

The EACS Standard of Care Meeting is part of our ongoing work to promote standards that are informed by the needs of people living with HIV and those delivering care. EACS aims to support implementation of European standards of care across EU and non-EU countries in Europe, working with clinicians, people living with HIV, community representatives and institutional partners.

The scientific programme is available [here](#).

Learn more about the meeting: [EACS Standard of Care Meeting 2026](#)

What are standards of care for HIV?

The standards of care (SoC) for HIV define the expected, or desired, quality of prevention, treatment, and care for people at risk of HIV acquisition or living with HIV. The standards are based on a scientific rationale, as well as the responsibilities of each stakeholder and ensure that people receive appropriate, high-quality prevention and care that align with the most up-to-date medical knowledge and ethical standards.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in partnership with the European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) have developed standards of care in the areas of **HIV testing, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), antenatal screening, commencement of antiretroviral therapy (ART) and HIV and comorbidities**.

[Learn more and read the Standards of Care modules](#)

About EACS

EACS is Europe's largest society of healthcare professionals working in the field of HIV and AIDS. The society's mission is to promote excellence in clinical practices, research and education in HIV infection and associated conditions, to diminish disparities in care across Europe, and to actively engage in the formulation of public health policies to reduce the HIV burden.

Arising from the first European AIDS conference in 1987, EACS was legally established as a not-for-profit organisation in 1991. EACS brings the HIV/AIDS scientific community together to improve the delivery of care for people living with HIV across Europe, and to provide support to clinicians through educational programmes, the EACS Guidelines and a dynamic information-sharing network.

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