

**Statement by the World Hepatitis Alliance for 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe. 14 September 2022 in Tel Aviv, Israel.**

The World Hepatitis Alliance and our 71 member organisations in Europe strongly support the adoption of the regional action plans for ending AIDS and the epidemics of viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections 2022–2030; and tuberculosis 2023–2030.

Every 30 seconds, a life is lost to viral hepatitis somewhere in the world.

In the WHO EURO region, nearly 29 million people live with chronic hepatitis B and C and almost 170,000 will die from hepatitis-related liver cancer and cirrhosis each year.

Governments and regional institutions must do more to reduce these deaths and the devastating impact hepatitis has on our communities.

Stigma and discrimination continue to be a barrier to testing and care. It is clear that countries will not achieve these targets without placing equity and the needs of key populations at the centre of the epidemic response.

We believe these action plans provide an opportunity to reshape the landscape and accelerate the response through integration, new partnerships and collaboration.

We must focus on the needs of individuals and communities rather than diseases specific programmes. If we do, we can achieve universal health coverage, person-centred care and our 2030 goals.

We urge member states to implement the entirety of the plans and not leave people living with and affected by viral hepatitis behind.

At the World Hepatitis Summit in June, the Director-General of the WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told the world, “there are few diseases that we can realistically dream of eliminating, but hepatitis is one of them.”

We can’t wait for Europe to be free from hepatitis, and together we can make it happen.

Hepatitis can’t wait.

