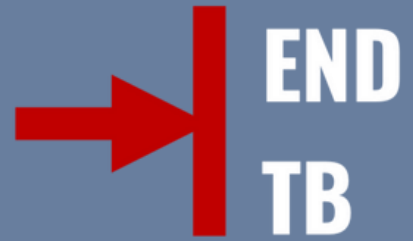


24 MARCH 2023

World Tuberculosis Day



From left to right: Andriy Klepikov (Alliance Public Health director), Marc Angel (Vice-President of the European Parliament, Delphine Thizy (Friends of the GF Europe), Dianne Stewart (Head of donor relations, Global Fund), Charles Goerens (MEP and Vice Chair for Friends Europe), Dr Vinciane Sizaire (Director FARES), Alesia Matusevych (Global TB caucus), Anton Basenko (TB survivor and EATG programme officer)

Ending Tuberculosis - the role of Europe in responding to growing challenges

On Wednesday, Friends of the Global Fund Europe and Charles Goerens, member of the European Parliament from the Renew Group and Vice-Chair of Friends for the EU, Luxembourg and Belgium, organised an event focused on the role of Europe in responding to the growing challenges to end tuberculosis.

Speakers insisted on the importance of the Global Fund in this fight against TB. For instance, Andriy Klepikov (director of [Alliance Public Health](#)) reminded the audience that the Global Fund responded quickly to the new circumstances by providing emergency funding as early as March 2022 to ensure the continuity of TB and HIV services. Gabriela Fesüs (DG International Partnership) highlighted the commitment of the EU towards eliminating TB, with the ambitious EU pledge of 715 million euros and 4.3 billion from Team Europe to the Global Fund and the commitment to fight Anti-Microbial Resistance in the Global Health Strategy currently under review.

Dan Perciun (cochair of the Global TB Caucus for the Eastern Europe & Central Asia and chair of the health commission at the Moldovan Parliament) called for strong political commitment to end TB and concrete actions at the upcoming UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis on September 22nd 2023.

Dr Sizaire (director of [FARES](#)) and Dianne Stewart (Head of donors relations at the [Global Fund](#)) stressed the importance of looking at socio-economical determinants of health and other measures that need to be put in place in addition to TB treatment (mental health support, nutrition package, etc)

Marc Angel (Vice-President of the European Parliament) called for a gender-sensitive approach in the fight against TB, and a commitment against stigma and discrimination to end TB. He closed by joining MEP Charles Goerens in his call to work TOGETHER to end TB!

In 2021, TB killed 1.6 million people

The Global Fund provides 75% of all international financing to fight TB

The Global Fund has invested \$8.5 billion in programmes to prevent and treat TB as of June 2022



Watch the event recording by clicking on this link

A message from our Vice-Chair and Member of the European Parliament, Charles Goerens



Tuberculosis is on the rise again: in 2021, 10.6 million people were affected by Tuberculosis, compared to 10.1 million in the previous year, with 95% of Tuberculosis deaths occurring in low-and middle-income countries. The pandemic has diverted resources from tuberculosis programs, reducing prevention and care. Funding dropped by \$600 million from 2020 to 2022, now amounting to less than 45% of the \$13 billion annual target agreed upon at the 2018 High-Level Meeting of the United Nations.

As members of the European Parliament, we have a responsibility to address these issues and work towards the goal of eliminating TB by 2035. We must work together to ensure that TB remains a priority even in the midst of ongoing conflicts, pandemics and other challenges. This means increasing funding for TB prevention and care, supporting health care workers, and promoting research and innovation to find new and effective treatments.

TOGETHER WE CAN END TB BY 2030

The challenge of multi-resistant Tuberculosis

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently released [updated guidelines to treat drug-resistant TB](#). They now recommend a 6-month all-oral, injection-free treatment regimen composed of four medicines – bedaquiline, pretomanid, linezolid and moxifloxacin (BPaLM). This treatment regimen offers significant benefits due to the short duration of treatment.

Pretomanid has been [EMA-approved](#) but access to this drug remains difficult in some EU Member States. This is problematic from a global health perspective but also for individual TB affected people who might have been under this treatment in a country and can no longer access it when they move. This situation has been particularly dire for Ukrainian refugees seeking asylum in different European countries.

The Ukrainian National Tuberculosis Programme Manager and the Global TB caucus call European countries to update their standards to ensure equal access to essential medicines to fight drug-resistant.



Unbreakable Against TB



On Wednesday, partners from Ukraine shared their challenges and achievements in fighting tuberculosis since the beginning of the war.

TB clinics were destroyed or damaged in 9 regions of Ukraine, and 106 civilian medics were killed in their workplace.

But civil society organisations continued their work and increased TB screening among key populations compared to 2021. For example, they organise screening in bomb shelters and other crowded places. Beyond the diagnostic and treatment, they provide TB-affected people with mental health support.

Thanks to APH's support, 84.2% of people with susceptible TB were successfully cured of the disease (compared to the national average of 78.3%) and 81% of people with drug-resistant TB (compared to the national average of 65.1%).

The support provided by CSO to TB affected people is critical to increasing treatment outcomes, and EU Member States should consider supporting similar programmes in their countries.

Read the full APH report [here](#) and the story of Yulia in Kharkiv [here](#)

Interview with Timo Ulrichs, Microbiologist and immunologist specialized in tuberculosis, founder of the Koch-Metchnikov Forum in Germany and member of Friends of the Global Fund Europe's Advisory Committee



What are the main challenges in the fight against tuberculosis to achieve the 2030 targets?

In the WHO European region, we face two main challenges: MDR-/XDR-TB (multidrug resistant tuberculosis) and a parallel increasing spread of HIV infections in the Eastern European countries, especially in Russia.

In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic drew the attention in health care away from TB control. Many health services faced disruptions and there was an increase of TB cases these between 2019 and 2021, as well as an increase of the number of missing cases.

Moreover, the Russian aggression against Ukraine is another condition causing long-term negative effects on successful TB control in the European region and worldwide. Ukraine has the 4th highest TB incidence rate in the WHO European Region, with 17,593 new TB cases registered in 2020. Shortages of medicines and medical supplies, poor access to essential health services and disruption of prevention, diagnosis and treatment services pose a serious threat to people living with tuberculosis and increase the risk of spread of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, a major global health issue.

Unresolved questions in TB control worldwide and within the WHO European region are mobility and access to TB prevention, detection and care (including palliative care for MDR-TB s), with specific barriers that put migrants in a particularly vulnerable situation with regard to the disease. Another open question is how tuberculosis control can be integrated into overarching global health approaches, i.e. general concepts addressing health care coverage, general awareness for health issues among political decision makers with a focus on specific needs in TB control and global concepts for dealing with different burden of diseases.

What kind of commitments do you expect from international decision-makers on the fight against tuberculosis this year?

To increase funding for both basic research in immunology/vaccine development and diagnostic and therapeutic approaches to control TB; to strengthen functioning systems, such as the Global Fund and its programs, WHO action plans and in general health care systems fighting against TB and other health challenges/burden of disease.

2023 started with news about a potential TB vaccine. What can we expect from this vaccine and what about other TB health products?

To reach SDG targets for TB control in 2030, an effective vaccine would be most helpful. mRNA-technology-based vaccine candidates – a technology widely developed and used during the Covid-19 pandemic - could be game-changers.

But until a protective new vaccine will be available, we will have to rely on proven tools in prevention, based on public health interventions such as preventive treatment, improved diagnostics, increased health literacy and better coverage with TB care structures.

For the full interview of Timo Ulrichs and further background, visit Friends of the Global Fund's [webpage](#)

For more content on innovation to end TB, visit this Global Fund [webpage](#)

CALLS TO ACTION TO PARLIAMENTARIANS

From civil society TB organisations:

- Advocate for and facilitate strong multisectoral collaboration (beyond health) and an effective accountability system to accelerate progress towards 2030 SDG 3.3 (end epidemics of AIDS, TB and combat hepatitis) in line with Universal Health Coverage (UHC: access, quality and financial protection) and integrated people-centered and right-based care, including multisectoral and quality response to the needs of refugees and migrants living with TB and HIV and viral hepatitis in hosting countries."
- Join the TB Europe Coalition's [formal appeal](#) for joint measures to support the healthcare system of Ukraine

To contact us:
Delphine Thizy
Advocacy officer for Belgium,
Luxembourg and the European
Union
delphinethizy@afmeurope.org
+32476575059

Friends of the Global Fund Europe (hereafter Friends Europe) is a not-for-profit organisation founded in April 2005, under the high patronage of the President of the French Republic, to engage with Europe's political and institutional decision-makers, the public opinion, the media, civil society organisations and the private sector with the aim to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and more specifically to mobilise support for the Global Fund.

Its actions aim at raising public awareness of global health issues, and specifically of the three epidemics. Its work includes political advocacy to support investment of the international community in the Global Fund and in the programmes it supports, with the ultimate objective to eradicate three of the most devastating pandemics affecting developing countries.



Friends of
the Global Fund
Europe