COVID-19 is time for equitable access for all, not for business as usual

(Brussels, July 8th, 2020) - On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak - the disease caused by the novel coronavirus - a global pandemic. Substantial resources to support the development of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines have been mobilised.

EATG is a patient-lead organisation concerned about the various implications that the COVID-19 pandemic can have for the lives of people living with or affected by HIV, as well as for healthcare systems. We stand in solidarity with countries and populations hit by this health and social crisis.

Controlling this pandemic requires a comprehensive public health and social response from governments, international institutions and other actors. One, that places respect, protection and promotion of human rights at the centre. At the same time, there is an on-going need for financial and scientific support for the development of highly needed diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines and then a need to ensure fairness and equity in their access. We need a Common Public Good approach.

This is why we join our voice to others asking researchers, industry, regulators, policy makers, and funders of COVID-19 research (stakeholders) to:

- Develop treatment and prevention options according to ethical and inclusive research principles. Commit to upholding globally agreed-upon ethical and Good Participatory Practice standards for research. See as codified in the UNAIDS/AVAC Good Participatory Practice Guidelines.

- Commit to ensure rapid and equitable access to proven COVID-19 treatments, diagnostics, vaccines and other prevention options for people across the globe.

- Ensure that the necessary medical tools are free of charge at the point of delivery, particularly for vulnerable populations.

- Reinforce international collaboration and a global framework of equitable allocation and access to COVID-19 medical tools.

- Incorporate collective, public interest safeguard clauses in public funding and investments for R&D, including transparency on public funding, accessibility and affordability clauses and non-exclusive licences for exploitation of end-result products.

- Maximise the global capacity of development, manufacture and supply of multiple effective vaccines to enable as many people as possible to be
catered to as soon as possible, rather than enhancing dependency on
selected pharmaceutical companies with limited internal capacity to deliver
better, faster or affordable access.

- Governments should exercise their right to use flexibilities provided by the
TRIPS agreement to ensure that their populations can benefit from approved
life-saving medicines and vaccines if needed.

About the European AIDS Treatment Group:

The European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) is a patient-led NGO that advocates for the rights and
interests of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS and related co-infections within the WHO
Europe region. Founded in 1992, the EATG is a network of more than 180 nationally-based members
from 48 countries in Europe. Our members are PLHIV and representatives of different communities
affected by HIV/AIDS and co-infections. EATG represents the diversity of more than 2.3 million people
living with HIV (PLHIV) in Europe as well as those affected by HIV/AIDS and co-infections. For more
information, please visit www.eatg.org

#####

Background

EATG endorses:

- [Letter to EU authorities for pro-public safeguards ensuring access to COVID-19 medical tools for all](#)
- [Advocates Call for Ethical Research for COVID-19 Solutions](#)
- [RCC-THV: Call to action in response to COVID-19](#)
- [EU4Health: COVID-19 has shown EU action on health is more urgently needed than ever](#)
- [For Global Equitable Access to COVID-19 Medical tools](#)
- [Proposals for achieving equitable global access for treatments, vaccines and diagnostics resulting from the ACT Accelerator](#)

For an overview of EATG’s work related to COVID-19 click [here](#)