



**EuroTEST**

Working together for integrated  
testing and earlier care

*Addressing Hepatitis, HIV, STIs and TB*

# Outcomes of the EuroTEST initiative

## Annual Report 2020

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## Introduction

The year 2020 was profoundly impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions on movement, gatherings and many other social and professional activities, including restricted access to non-COVID related health care services. The health care sector and particularly people working in the field of infectious diseases have been under extreme pressure. EuroTEST's work for integrated testing and earlier care, which involves many stakeholders and actors engaged in addressing hepatitis, HIV, STIs and TB and other infectious diseases, has inevitably also been affected. Some activities planned for 2020 have had to be postponed because most partners in the infectious disease field have been fully occupied with COVID-19 duties. Other activities have been adapted into new virtual formats (for example the 2021 HepHIV conference) and new projects have been defined and implemented in response to the changed situation, such as the survey assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on testing for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region.

The EuroTEST initiative (originally named HIV in Europe) began in 2007 as a way to bring attention to the importance of earlier diagnosis and care for people living with HIV and has played a critical role in the HIV response by uniting clinicians, community activists, policymakers and researchers to ensure that people are diagnosed early and linked to care and treatment.

In 2013, a concerted effort was made to also prioritise hepatitis, and in 2019 the disease scope was further broadened to address sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis (TB) as well. With this change, EuroTEST reflected parallel shifts in the field to address infectious diseases more broadly and in a less disease specific manner, mainly due to overlaps in modes of disease transmission and affected populations. The initiative's primary focus remains on integrated testing when appropriate linkage to care for people with HIV, hepatitis B and C, TB and STIs. EuroTEST aims to utilise integrated strategies to help increase early detection and earlier entry into treatment leading to better health outcomes and preventing the risk of further transmission.

Since its initiation, EuroTEST (formerly HIV in Europe) has built a European platform where a wide range of independent experts from civil society, policy institutions, health care and European public health institutions work toward influencing policy, share knowledge and build the evidence-base to support earlier diagnosis and care.

The initiative is directed by a Steering Committee (SC), which is an independent group of HIV, viral hepatitis, STI and TB experts who represent civil society, research institutions, policy bodies, health systems and public health institutions. The SC is led by two co-chairs, one clinician and one community representative. There are also several observers who contribute to the SC, including representatives from the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

EuroTEST's Policy Secretariat is based at the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) in Brussels and the Secretariat, which oversees the day-to-day management of the initiative and its various projects including financial management, is based at Centre for Excellence for Health, Immunity and Infections (CHIP) in Copenhagen. CHIP – is an integrated part of the Department of

Infectious Diseases at Rigshospitalet, which is a hospital within the legal entity of the Capital Region of Denmark.

Since the beginning, the initiative has obtained support from industry sponsors to conduct its activities, including the biennial conferences, and to support activities in the Eastern European region. In recent years, the European Commission's Health Programme has also been a major co-funder of the EuroTEST activities.

## Project activities, progress and results in 2020

### Survey assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on testing for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region

In order to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing efforts for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs in the WHO European Region, a consortium of partners, led by EuroTEST and including international organisations, national bodies and individual experts representing community, health care and public health institutions developed the survey assessment with the aim to:

- Document the impact of COVID-19 on prevention and linkage to care for these infections;
- Collect information on causes associated with this impact;
- Collect information on measures put in place to mitigate it and areas where guidance or support are needed.

The main objective of the survey was to document the impact of COVID-19 in testing for HIV, HBV, HCV, chlamydia, syphilis and gonorrhoea among the different actors in the testing response: laboratories, clinicians or clinical services, primary health care units and community organizations that provide testing for one or more of these infections.

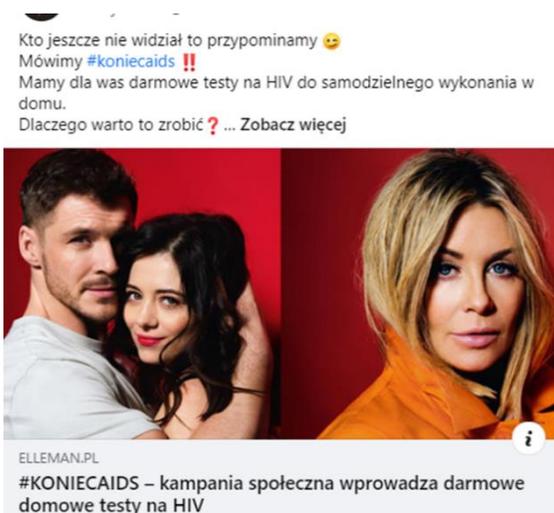
The survey results have been written up into a rapid communication published in EuroSurveillance in November 2020 entitled *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing services for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region, March to August 2020*. The results will be used to inform advocacy efforts as well as next steps in the regional response to HIV, viral hepatitis and STI testing.

## European Testing Week

Being one of the EuroTEST flagship projects, the European Testing Week ran for its eight-consecutive year. European Testing Week (ETW) has become a well-known awareness campaign throughout Europe. The main aim of ETW is to unite partner organisations throughout Europe for one week to increase access to testing and promote awareness on the benefits of earlier hepatitis and HIV testing. What once started as an annual event has since 2018 become a biannual event with two ETWs occurring each year in Spring (May) and Autumn (November). Each organisation who signs up for the ETW volunteers their own time to organise local Testing Week activities and create displays of a united effort to increase testing awareness at all organisational levels.

Key ETW activities in 2020 included:

- 1) The Spring European Testing Week initiative (SETW 2020) held during 15-22 May 2020 and focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing services.
  - The event had 70 participating organisations from 13 countries in the WHO European Region. Due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 SETW primarily focussed on virtual (online) activities with two recommended key focus areas: 1) Sharing experiences from the HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infection fields to work in unison against COVID-19; 2) continuing to remind the European community that HIV, viral hepatitis and STI prevention, testing, care and support services are essential services and must continue to be supported, especially during times of crisis.



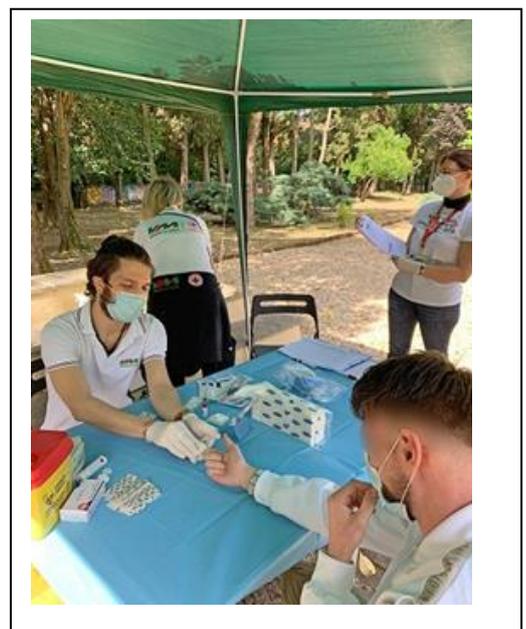
*#endAIDS social campaign, Poland*



- Various online activities and videos were organised to help promote the event. These included presentations of country case examples from Serbia, Portugal, Georgia and Czech Republic on how organisations have adapted their services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The ETW secretariat also hosted a live webinar on the increasing interest in HIV self-testing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and service closures and/or restrictions to in-person testing. This webinar presented case examples from Lithuania (Asociacija Demetra) and Italy (Arcigay) where pilot activities were undertaken as part of the INTEGRATE Joint Action, aiming to better understand the HIV self-testing situation in both countries. These pilots implemented activities to assess awareness, usability, acceptability, availability and knowledge of self-tests and the findings were presented at the webinar.



- An online activity 'Expert point-of-view on impact of service closures due to COVID-19' was organised, inviting experts in HIV, viral hepatitis and/or STI to share their thoughts on the impact of service closures and their recommendations for services/communities/policy makers in the future. An expert presentation was given by Ricardo Fernandes, the Executive Director of GAT - Portuguese Group Treatment Activist on HIV/AIDS (GAT) - [www.gatportugal.org](http://www.gatportugal.org) and Chair of the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG - [www.eatg.org](http://www.eatg.org)).
- Highlights of the SETW 2020 evaluation survey:
  - Many respondents reported being greatly impacted by COVID-19 and shifting services from in-person to more online-based. Interest in expanding self-testing/self-sampling services was also reported but many were unable to do so due to current inaccessibility.
  - Although many organisations reported limited capacity and/or total service closures, many adapted to find alternative ways to provide services while still adhering to local health and safety precautions to minimise service disruption.
  - About 70% of the responding organisations reported being able to implement SETW activities in spite of COVID-19.
  - Despite the COVID-19 pandemic severely affecting the number of participants and activities for the Spring



2020 ETW, it still served as an important reminder for communities, healthcare workers and policy makers that services for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs are crucial, especially during a pandemic.

- 2) The November European Testing Week took place during 20-27 November 2020 with the aim of continuing to provide support to the organisations through online activities showcasing new options for service delivery and advocacy towards long-term sustainable solutions amid COVID-19 pandemic. 644 organisations participated in the event.
- The ETW secretariat hosted a series of free live webinars during the event. The series focused on “Challenges and opportunities for testing during the COVID-19 pandemic throughout Europe.” The webinar series highlighted the different experiences of organisations throughout Europe who have adapted testing services to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Participants were able to engage with presenters who have practical experiences with these topics and join in the discussion of strategies for ensuring continued testing during the pandemic. The webinars covered a range of topics including:
    - **Testing vulnerable populations in COVID-19-restricted contexts:** the webinar highlighted different experiences of organisations and clinicians in the UK and Spain who have maximised opportunities during lockdown and other COVID-19- restricted contexts to continue to reach particularly vulnerable populations to provide testing for blood-borne viruses, including HIV and Hepatitis.
    - **Integrating testing for HIV and/or viral hepatitis and COVID-19:** the webinar presented two case examples from the WHO European Region of how integrated testing with COVID-19 can be done, with presentations from the Danish NGO “Brugernes Akademi” (Users’ Academy) and Villa Maraini Foundation from Italy.
    - **HIV self-testing – opportunities and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic:** the webinar explored experiences with offering HIV self-testing from different organisations within the WHO European Region. Case examples were presented from Georgia (Georgian Harm Reduction Network) and Bulgaria (Single Step Foundation) where pilot studies were undertaken to assess acceptability of different types of self-testing. The findings from both pilots were presented and discussed as well as the recommendations for implementers and decision-makers.
  - A series of online videos has been produced by the European Testing Week to promote the November #EuroTestWeek. These videos highlight best practice examples of how to ensure continued provision of testing services for HIV and viral hepatitis despite of COVID-19 restrictions. Case examples included:



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**Case example of adapting HCV services during COVID-19** from Alliance for Public Health in Ukraine on distributing HIV self-test kits to MSM in Ukraine during COVID-19 restrictions in order to increase access and uptake of HIV testing.



**Case example of adapting HCV services during COVID-19**, presented by Hepatitis C Trust in the UK, highlighted how their services, including outreach to prisons and homeless people, have been affected by COVID-19 and how they have adapted their strategies.

- **An example of community-based face-to-face HIV testing during COVID-19** UK based Yorkshire MESMAC presented how the organization has been able to offer face-to-face HIV testing during the COVID-19 pandemic and which changes have been made to ensure that it can be done safely and effectively.



**Joint Action on integrating prevention, testing and link to care strategies across HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and STIs in Europe (INTEGRATE)**

The secretariat of EuroTEST (CHIP/RegionH) is coordinating the Joint Action on integrating prevention, testing and link to care strategies across HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and STIs in Europe - INTEGRATE. The INTEGRATE Joint Action aims to increase integrated early diagnosis and linkage to prevention and care of the aforementioned four disease areas in EU Member States by 2021. INTEGRATE is 80% funded by the EU 3rd Health Programme and offers a platform to disseminate and exchange best practices among Member States and facilitate the discussions on innovations and emerging issues within these four diseases. In this respect,



INTEGRATE is a shared European effort that extends beyond the partners and can create important synergies across European stakeholders, projects and initiatives.



Although initially planned for completion in August 2020, in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has been extended and is set to finalise at the end of May 2021 with the final dissemination events to take place during HepHIV 2021 conference on 5-7 May 2021.

During 2020, results from all work streams and pilots including integrated testing, HIV self-testing, monitoring, partner notification training and outcomes from the ICT tool were disseminated:

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Workshop and Partnership Forum meeting planned to take place in Tallinn, Estonia during 26-27 May, 2020 was converted into an online meeting with good participation of INTEGRATE partners, advisory board members, relevant external expert and EC staff. A final Partnership Forum Meeting to discuss and present final outcomes and experiences from INTEGRATE is planned for January 2021 followed by the dissemination event at the HepHIV2021 Conference.
- INTEGRATE pilot studies on HIV self-testing from Lithuania (Asociacija Demetra) and Italy (Arcigay) were presented at a webinar held during the Spring European Testing Week 2020.
- The RiskRadar App and website was finalised and launched. The Risk Radar is the first information and communication tool of its kind providing information, risk-assessment and anonymous partner notification for four diseases together. The Risk Radar was translated into Italian, Lithuanian and Croatian, and pilot tested in these countries.
- A supplement in the BMC Infectious Diseases journal with 10 manuscripts presenting pilot results and outcomes has been finalised for publication:
  - Introduction: Lessons learned from the first European project on the integration of infectious diseases in testing services, data collection and country response.
  - Acceptability and usability of HIV self-tests in two European countries: findings from surveys of clients at non-governmental organisations in Lithuania and Italy.
  - Quality of life in people living with HIV in Romania and Spain.

- Integrated testing in community settings and interventions for change, including the Spring European Testing Week.
- Recommendations for collection and integration of community-based testing and linkage to care data into national surveillance, monitoring and evaluation systems for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections; Results from the INTEGRATE Joint Action
- National multi-stakeholder meetings: a tool to support development of integrated policies and practices for testing and prevention of HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and STIs
- Integration of community-based testing data into national HIV surveillance in Poland, Serbia and Slovakia within the framework of INTEGRATE project
- Integrating partner notification and contact tracing services across Europe: barriers and findings
- RiskRadar: Development and preliminary results of the pilot implementation of a technical intervention aiming to assist combination prevention regarding HIV, viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Tuberculosis
- Increased Integrated testing for HIV/ HCV and STIs in Health Care Facilities: results from the INTEGRATE Joint Action pilots in Lithuania, Romania and Spain
- An online training module on Prevention, Testing & linkage to care has been developed in 2020 in collaboration with the INTEGRATE Steering Committees, the EuroTEST secretariat and members of the EuroTEST SC. Several INTEGRATE partners presented the work conducted in the project. The module will be ready to launch in Spring 2021.



### [HepHIV2021 Conference, Lisbon and Virtual](#)

A key activity was the planning of the HepHIV 2021 conference, which will take place during May 5-7, 2021 in Lisbon Portugal and will focus on progress and implementation of integrated testing, new technologies and approaches. The conference Organizing Committee has been established, the programme has been developed and key speakers identified. The planning has taken into consideration the current COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, the conference will have a hybrid format combining virtual and onsite participation.



The main aim of the conference is to bring together stakeholders from all levels of the health system from community organisations to health care providers and policy makers in order to:

- present and discuss new technologies and approaches for integrated testing and linkage to care for HIV, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis (TB);
- highlight programmatic and implementation achievements and challenges;
- share good practices and lessons learned regarding adaptation of testing services in response to emerging public health issues, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reflecting on the ongoing global crisis, the HepHIV 2021 conference will also highlight the local and national testing responses during the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on service availability, including service closures and new innovative service delivery models. As a follow-up to the HepHIV 2019 conference, HepHIV2021 will reflect on progress made since the publication of the ECDC guidance on integrated testing (Nov 2018), the last conference and the growing evidence on integrated testing.

The main objectives of the HepHIV2021 Conference are to:

- Discuss the impact of COVID-19 on testing services for HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB
- Provide an overview of progress at the 'left side' of the cascade of care (prevention, testing and linkage to care) for HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB and integrated approaches by discussing current gaps in implementation and sharing models of good practice to address identified issues/barriers;
- Provide an overview of innovative initiatives/new approaches for prevention, earlier testing and care for the different infections;
- Provide an overview of HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB-related implementation research, highlighting both programmatic and implementation issues.

The aim of the event is to reach >200 conference participants, face-to-face and online, and develop a diverse and representative scientific programme that highlights innovative testing responses, especially in times of global health emergencies. The conference program will be adapted to the digital format and will include an online format for poster presentations and a virtual exhibition hall for sponsors to interact with the participants.

The digital conference format will also allow for participation from a wider range of regions and countries, including settings where conference participants may not otherwise have been able to pay for the travel and conference fee.

### Literature review to assess the HIV seroprevalence in key populations in the EU/EEA

The EuroTEST secretariat in partnership with a number of independent experts, were contracted by the ECDC to gather, review and synthesise all relevant peer-reviewed published literature on HIV seroprevalence in 31 EU/EEA countries among men who have sex with men (MSM), people who inject drugs (PWID), sex workers, prisoners, migrants and pregnant women. Over 10 000 articles were identified and underwent title and abstract screening. After the initial screening and review of secondary references, 374 articles were selected for full-text review and data extraction, including a quality assessment and risk of bias. Eventually 115 articles were included in the review in line with the inclusion criteria and the extracted data was compiled into tables for the final report. The evidence from the review has been further analysed and summarised into a manuscript entitled "HIV seroprevalence in five key populations in Europe: a systematic literature review" submitted for publication in Eurosurveillance.

### Scoping project to develop European Standards of Care for People Living with HIV

The EuroTEST secretariat, in partnership with the European AIDS Clinical Society, were contracted by ECDC to conduct a scoping exercise to explore the perceived usefulness and possible outline of a Standard of Care (SoC) guidance for people living with HIV, considering public health, clinical and community perspectives. Overall, the scoping exercise aimed to provide input to ECDC's decision-making process on whether to develop European standards of care for people living with HIV and how such standards can be of most use for people living with HIV, clinicians and public health experts. The results of the Scoping Exercise were presented at an expert meeting in Basel in November 2019 and in 2020 a final report was developed. A short communication is being drafted for submission to a scientific journal in 2021.

### Policy and advocacy activities

EuroTEST aims to inform policy processes, share knowledge and improve the evidence base around important issues of earlier testing and care. As part of its secretariat for policy and advocacy, the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) advocates for optimal testing and care for the EuroTEST initiative and promotes its projects findings to stakeholders.

The results from the spring European Testing Week and plans for the November European Testing Week 2020 were presented at the September 2020 online meeting of the re-launched EU Civil Society Forum on HIV, TB and Hep (CSF). EATG on behalf of EuroTest shared plans to perform an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, viral hepatitis and STI testing at that meeting and at the Joint WHO-ECDC HIV, hepatitis and TB programme managers/national focal points and partners meeting on addressing TB, HIV and hepatitis during COVID-19 in September 2020. The plan is to present the results of the impact assessment at the CSF meeting in March 2021.

There was also advocacy for a balanced and ambitious EU4Health funding programme. This was based on signs of scale back on some of the progressive elements of the EU4Health programme the negotiations between EU Member States, European Parliament and European Commission after the summer. Such scale back would have affected available funding for continue ongoing successful work to advance early diagnosis and linkage to care for HIV, TB and viral hepatitis.

Several parties were addressed in the negotiations arguing for a EU4Health programme to support actions on communicable diseases beyond pandemics, including for the improvement of surveillance, of diagnosis and of treatments, European Networks and strengthening of the ECDC. We It advocated actions to tackle health inequalities and specific health vulnerabilities, support for civil society and consultation of key stakeholders by EU4Health steering group. The political agreement in December 2020 indicated that a more balanced programme was forthcoming, allowing for projects focusing on early diagnosis and linkage to care of HIV, TB, viral hepatitis and STIs and strengthening of ECDC. Moreover, the EU4Health Programme's budget for 2021-27 (EUR 5.1 billion) is significantly higher than previous health programmes.

## Proposed activities and plans for 2021 (and 2022)

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic some of the activities planned for 2020 have had to be cancelled (e.g. F2F meetings and travel) while others have been postponed until 2021 (or 2022) because our partners in the infectious disease field have been fully occupied with COVID-19 duties. The proposed activities and plans for 2021 (and 2022) include:

### **Re-thinking public health guidance development**

EuroTEST was involved in the development of the evidence based ECDC public health guidance on integrated testing for viral hepatitis and HIV which was published in 2018. The proposal is to re-think the current process on guidance development and create a new adapted methodology to produce guidance at the national level. The project includes:

- Phase 1: a workshop write-up, producing a guide on 'How to develop a public health guidance', other recommendations including how to gather and share good practice of testing;
- Phase 2: a write up of the pilot process, assistance for each pilot country in producing a new testing guideline, a submitted publication.

### **Follow-up on National Stakeholder Meetings & Trainings**

EuroTEST in collaboration with the INTEGRATE Joint Action organised National Stakeholder Meetings and Trainings in 2019 (Croatia, Lithuania, Poland and Italy). As a follow-up to these National Meetings and sustainability of the outcomes from INTEGRATE, EuroTEST will support efforts to further assess the implementation/adaptation of both the ECDC guidance on testing for hepatitis and HIV and meeting recommendations in the national policies and strategies. EuroTEST has been discussing with the infectious disease teams at ECDC and WHO Regional Office for Europe on possibilities for collaboration on these National Stakeholder meetings and trainings.

### **Assessment of current self-testing/self-sampling strategies in Europe and dissemination of best practices**

Building on the work being developed in INTEGRATE where a mapping of ST/SS throughout Europe is being conducted with specific country focus, EuroTEST will support further assessment of current support structures for ST/SS at the country level, taking into account the overall awareness of ST/SS (among the general population) and user experience of purchasing/using/interpreting ST/SS to determine if continued efforts must be made to improve access and availability of self-tests/self-sampling. The project includes:

- Assessment of current implementation of ST/SS in Europe and development of strategies to improve information dissemination on how to obtain, use, and interpret ST/SS results.
- Package the lessons learned through the INTEGRATE pilots into a tool where other organisations can pilot similar activities.
- Support pilots in 1-2 countries based on experiences from INTEGRATE and help disseminate results nationally and within relevant networks.

### **IC guided testing (continuation of existing focus area)**

Continue to develop and improve communication regarding existing focus areas of work on Indicator Condition guided HIV testing. The work area includes:

- Concerted efforts to “spread the message”.
- Update and prepare a ‘package’ of the old tools and some case descriptions aiming to simplify and making it user friendly.

### **European Test Finder (under European Testing Week)**

The European Test Finder (ETF) – a free online search engine tool enabling users to search for the nearest testing site for HIV, viral hepatitis and other STIs in countries of the WHO European Region – was first launched in connection with the European Testing Week (ETW) in November 2015 in collaboration between ECDC and Terrence Higgins Trust (THT). Up until 2020, NAM Aidsmap has been hosting ETF on their webpage and has been in charge of running and updating the page. The tool is currently available in 16 different languages and covers thousands of testing sites across 55 countries but updating has been limited since 2019. In 2021, the EuroTEST/ETW secretariat at CHIP will take over the coordination and maintenance of ETF. A thorough update process will be initiated to validate existing data and add as many relevant testing sites as possible with correct and updated information about them.

### **Late presentation of viral hepatitis**

A project has been designed to audit late presentation of chronic hepatitis B and C viruses across Europe in a prospective study of incidence of late presentation and characteristics of late presenters, aiming to assess late presentation of chronic infection with hepatitis B and/or C virus in multiple European countries using the consensus definition established by a working group under EuroTEST in 2017.

### **Collaboration with diagnostic kit companies**

EuroTEST will continue to collaborate with diagnostic kit companies, including Cepheid, OraSure, InTec and Owen Mumford, among others.

### **Online training: Prevention, Testing & linkage to care**

The online public health training module on prevention, testing & linkage to care will be launched in 2021. There will be focus on the promotion of the online course and on course evaluation and feedback from users.

### **Improved testing diagnostics**

As a continuation of the meeting series arranged by the policy secretariat and the European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) in 2018-19 with community testing services providers, partners and

diagnostics companies on testing technologies for use in community settings, a pilot project is being developed with a focus on new testing technologies and the opportunities for integrated point-of care testing in non-medical settings.

### **Covid-19 assessment follow-up**

The COVID-19 impact assessment consortium of partners will meet online in early 2021 to discuss whether a second round of the survey assessment should be undertaken in 2021 and if so, draft a timeline, focus areas and key objectives given the stage of the pandemic.

## **List of EuroTEST-related publications and other media in 2020**

### **Publications**

1. Simões D, Stengaard AR, Combs L, Raben D; EuroTEST COVID-19 impact assessment consortium of partners. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on testing services for HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections in the WHO European Region, March to August 2020. *Euro Surveill.* 2020 Nov;25(47):2001943. doi: 10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2020.25.47.2001943. PMID: 33243354; PMCID: PMC7693166.
2. Raben D, Hoekstra M, Combs L, Sullivan AK, Lazarus JV, Lambert JS, Simões D, Streinu-Cercel A, Rockstroh JK on behalf of the HepHIV Conference Organizing Committee, the EuroTEST Steering Committee, INTEGRATE Steering Committee. A call to action toward integrated testing and earlier care for viral hepatitis, HIV, STIs and TB. *HIV Medicine* 2020; 21:403-408, April 2020.

### **Presentations/Posters**

1. Simões D. *EuroTest update*. Presentation for the ECDC/WHO Addressing TB, HIV and viral hepatitis during the COVID-19 pandemic: Programme Managers / National Focal Points and partners meeting, September 23-24, 2020.
2. Simões D. *Impact assessment of COVID-19 pandemic on HIV/ hepatitis response and recommendation on maintenance of essential services*. Presentation for the ECDC/WHO annual TB, HIV and viral hepatitis Programme Managers and partners meeting, 24 Sept 2020.
3. Stengaard A. *Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on testing for multiple infectious diseases in the WHO European Region*. Presentation for the EMCDDA Drug-related infectious diseases (DRID) network meeting, 22 October 2020.
4. Lundgren J. *Impact of COVID-19 on HIV, Hepatitis and TB services: What are the consequences and what are the chances?* Presented for the roundtable discussion at the

EACS Standard of Care for Coinfections in Europe 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, 22 October 2020.

5. Raben D. *Indicator Condition Guided Testing for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs – increasing provider-initiated testing*. Presentation for the WHO technical consultation on Optimizing HIV Testing Services Using HIV Risk Assessment Tools, 11-13 November 2020.
6. Simões D. *EuroTEST update and results from the EuroTEST COVID-19 impact assessment on testing*. Presentation for the WHO/ECDC World AIDS Day webinar on Measuring progress, looking forward: HIV in Europe and Central Asia, 30 November 2020.

## Other media

1. Statements from the European Testing Week Working group re COVID-19 pandemic: [May 2020](#) and [November 2020](#).
2. Interview with the President of the European Testing week, Professor Jürgen Rockstroh: <https://www.eacsociety.org/about-eacs/news/interview-etw.html>.
3. European Testing Week 2020 webinars:
  - Testing vulnerable populations in COVID-19-restricted contexts: <https://bit.ly/3eIGSCJ>
  - Integrating testing for HIV and/or viral hepatitis and COVID-19: <https://bit.ly/35h9z6t>
  - HIV self-testing – opportunities and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://bit.ly/2ldpSc1>
  - Closing the gaps on HIV self-testing/sampling in Lithuania and Italy: findings from the INTEGRATE pilot: <http://region-hovedstaden-ekstern.23video.com/2020-spring-etw-webinar-closing>
  - Expert point of view on service closures during COVID-19 pandemic: <http://region-hovedstaden-ekstern.23video.com/setw-2020-portuguese>
4. European Testing Week 2020 video testimonials on the impact of COVID-19:
  - Distributing HIV self-test kits to MSM in Ukraine during COVID-19 restrictions: Alliance for Public Health in Ukraine: <https://youtu.be/F542A3HyCNw>
  - Adapting HCV services during COVID-19: Hepatitis C Trust in the UK: [https://youtu.be/iFc\\_nGu8Sul](https://youtu.be/iFc_nGu8Sul)
  - Community-based face-to-face HIV testing during COVID-19: Yorkshire MESMAC, UK: [https://youtu.be/l2\\_C8lrytDc](https://youtu.be/l2_C8lrytDc)
5. European Testing Week 2020 country cases:
  - HIV Services in Serbia during COVID-19 pandemic: Asocijacija DUGA/Association RAINBOW in Serbia presented how their organisation has been able to continue to provide in-person testing in accordance with government recommendations during the pandemic: <http://region-hovedstaden-ekstern.23video.com/setw-2020-hiv-services-in-serbia>
  - Service provision for HIV, viral hepatitis and syphilis during COVID-19 in Portugal: GAT - Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos presented the steps they took to continue to provide

- services for HIV, viral hepatitis and syphilis during the COVID-19 pandemic:  
<http://region-hovedstaden-ekstern.23video.com/setw-2020-country-example>
- Adaptation of HIV self-testing and other services during COVID-19 in Czech Republic: Czech AIDS Help Society presented how their organisation has adapted their services and the role of HIV self-testing in maintaining HIV testing during the COVID-19 pandemic: <http://region-hovedstaden-ekstern.23video.com/setw-2020-country-example-czech>
  - Testing in Georgia during COVID-19: Tanadgoma - Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health presented how a network of organisations in Georgia have utilised delivery services to provide prevention, testing and treatment for HIV in addition to testing for HCV and harm reduction services during the pandemic: <http://region-hovedstaden-ekstern.23video.com/setw-2020-country-example-georgia>

## Annex 1: Overview of ongoing and proposed activities

Project	Description	Expected Outcome	Period
<b>Secretariat coordination, communication/dissemination, advocacy, collaboration</b>			
All projects (including ETW, INTEGRATE JA, HepHIV Conference, subcontracting, research and proposed new activities)	Management tasks for each project (e.g. reporting, budgeting, fundraising, organising teleconferences and face-to-face meetings, etc); coordination of expert groups, advisory boards, steering committees and working groups; monitoring and evaluation.	Annual Reports for 2019 and 2020, teleconferences, face-to-face meetings (in 2020 and 2021) including EuroTEST SC meetings, conference planning kick-off meeting and ETW Working Group meetings. These outcomes will guide the direction of the EuroTEST projects and ensure their successful implementation. A well-functioning secretariat will also ensure support and endorsement from a broad range of stakeholders (community organisations, health care professionals, government agencies and international organisations).	2020-2021
	Each project coordinated by EuroTEST has its own network including stakeholders, endorsers, sponsors, community organisations, health care professionals and public institutions. The secretariat communicates with its networks through frequent updates on project websites, posts on social media, press releases, newsletters, promotional materials (online and paper) and through representation at relevant meetings and conferences.	Communication plan, regular updates to project websites, posts on social media, press releases, newsletters, development of promotional materials (online and paper), 1-2 publications annually (peer-reviewed, posters, newspapers, online articles, other journals).	2020-2021
	EuroTEST's Policy Secretariat coordinates the advocacy tasks to foster renewed political commitment at the National and European levels to achieve universal access to	Representation at relevant meetings and conferences including the EU-level meetings, Joint Action INTEGRATE's final partner meeting and HIV Glasgow 4 – 7 October 2020	2020-2021

	prevention, testing, treatment and care for HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB. The policy secretariat engages and participates in all related open EU-level meetings.	(eventually held online due to COVID-19 related restrictions).	
	EuroTEST maintains strong collaborations and partnerships with numerous international public and private institutions including among them but not limited to diagnostic kit manufacturers, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Terrence Higgins Trust, AIDSMap-NAM, social networking apps.	Follow-up meeting to the first European Community Advisory Board meeting with community testing services providers, partners and diagnostic test kit manufacturers, increased access to affordable diagnostic kits to support ETW testing activities, update and expansion of the European Test Finder.	2020-2021
<b>Ongoing projects</b>			
HepHIV Conference	Fundraising; coordination of organising committee, endorsers and sponsors; development of scientific programme (including identifying and inviting speakers, abstract categories); logistical planning of the event	Launch of planning with a face-to-face meeting during early Spring 2020, convening the conference organising committee including local affiliates, establishment of preliminary conference logistics (main aim and objectives, date, venue, etc), development of the conference programme, invitations to speakers, preparations for the virtual conference events.	2020-2021
Joint Action INTEGRATE	Management and coordination of the final year of the Joint Action; summarisation and dissemination of project findings and conclusions, development and roll-out of trainings	Final online Partnership Forum Meeting in early 2021.  project report; published supplement in scientific journal.	2020-2021

		<p>Preparation for publication of 10 BMC infectious disease supplements.</p> <p>Dissemination of project findings and key messages at HepHIV2021 final meeting.</p> <p>Development of an online public health training module on prevention, testing &amp; linkage to care to be launched in Spring 2021.</p>	
European Testing Week	Management of biannual ETW campaigns (May and November); coordination of Working Group, stakeholders, partners, endorsers and sponsors; communication of project updates	SETW (16-22 May) and Autumn (20-27 November); WG F2F meeting; Upkeep of the ETW materials (development of new logos, templates); development of online materials and events in light of COVID-19 restrictions; additions to European Test Finder (update information, add new data); evaluation reports; submitted manuscript to scientific journal.	2020-2021
Literature review for HIV seroprevalence in key populations in EU/EEA	Finalise report and submit manuscript.	<p>Final report submitted to ECDC.</p> <p>Submission of a manuscript "HIV seroprevalence in five key populations in Europe: a systematic literature review" for publication in EuroSurveillance.</p>	2020
Scoping project to develop European Standards of Care for People Living with HIV	Finalise discussion paper that provides input to ECDC's decision-making process on whether to develop European standards of care for people living with HIV and how such standards can be of most use for people	<p>Development of a final report following project results presentations.</p> <p>Drafting of a short communication and submission to a scientific journal in 2021.</p>	2020-2021

	living with HIV, clinicians and public health experts.		
<b>New project proposals</b>			
Follow-up on the EuroTEST/ INTEGRATE National Stakeholder Meetings	Gather country-level feedback on current initiatives/testing policies/planned adaption and/or changes to testing policy.	<p>A better understanding of how the meeting recommendations are being interpreted by national stakeholders and how the newest guidance is being disseminated and prioritised in order to provide tailored assistance for each country.</p> <p>Discussion between EuroTEST and the infectious disease teams at ECDC and WHO Europe on possibilities for collaboration on these National Stakeholder meetings and trainings.</p>	2020-2021
Assessment of current ST/SS strategies in Europe and dissemination of best practices	Support further assessment of current support structures for ST/SS at the country level, taking into account the overall awareness of ST/SS (among the general population) and user experience of purchasing/using/interpreting ST/SS	A better understanding of current implementation of ST/SS in Europe and development of strategies to improve information dissemination on how to obtain, use, and interpret ST/SS results.	2020-2021
Integrated point of care testing	Support EATG with continued dialogue and collaborations with diagnostic kit companies to improve testing technology and availability in community settings; support pilot activities of POC in community settings	Continue collaboration with diagnostic kit companies.	2020-2021



<p>Re-thinking public health guidance development</p>	<p>Phase 1: Review available testing guidelines across Europe; review and document the current process of public health guideline development using national, regional and international guidelines as examples; conduct 1-2-1 interviews with 5-8 experts in the field (from WHO, ECDC and other relevant public health bodies, academics); plan and deliver 1-2 workshops with relevant experts to review and discuss the gathered evidence; produce a guide with input from stakeholders</p> <p>Phase 2: Pilot new guidelines development within 2 selected countries; refine and publish guide</p>	<p>Phase1: A workshop write-up, a guide on ‘How to develop a public health guidance,’ and other recommendations including how to gather and share good practice of testing. Phase 2: a write up of the pilot process, assistance for each pilot country in producing a new testing guideline and a submitted publication.</p>	<p>2020-2021</p>
<p>Geographic expansion of ETW</p>	<p>Consultation with international organisations who have coordinated global awareness campaigns, including WHO, ECDC, World Hepatitis Alliance, and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. patient organisations, NGOs, healthcare providers, governments, etc) to examine the feasibility and logistical implications of expansion.</p>	<p>Meetings with relevant stakeholders who have implemented similar awareness campaigns and a better understanding of the feasibility of expanding a regional awareness campaign to the global scale, including the required tasks and considerations to make before implementation.</p>	

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## **EuroTEST Steering Committee**

Anders Sönnnerborg, Department of Medicine, Karolinska University Hospital, Sweden; Ann K. Sullivan, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, United Kingdom; Brian Gazzard, Imperial College, School of Medicine, HIV Research Director, Chelsea & Westminster Hospital, United Kingdom; Brian West, European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG), United Kingdom; Cary James, World Hepatitis Alliance, London, United Kingdom; Daniel Simões, EPIUnit - Institute of Public Health of the University of Porto & Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos (GAT), Portugal (Chair); Daniela Rojas Castro, Coalition PLUS, Pantin, France; Francesco Negro, European Association for the Study of the Liver, Switzerland; Igor Karpov, Department of Infectious Disease, Belarus State Medical University, Belarus; John S. Lambert, University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland, Jeffrey V. Lazarus, ISGlobal, Barcelona Institute for Global Health, Hospital Clínic - University of Barcelona, Spain; Jens D. Lundgren, Department of Infectious Diseases, University of Copenhagen & Centre of Excellence for Health, Immunity and Infections (CHIP), Denmark; John de Wit, University of New South Wales, Centre for Social Research in Health & Utrecht University, the Netherlands; Jordi Casabona, Center for HIV/STI Epidemiological Studies of Catalonia (CEEISCAT), Spain; Jürgen Rockstroh, Department of Medicine I, University Hospital Bonn, Germany (Chair); Lella Cosmaro, Fondazione LILA Milano, Italy; Liudmyla Maistat, Medicines Patent Pool, Switzerland; Mojca Maticič, University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Slovenia; Nikos Dedes, European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG) & Positive Voice, Greece; Nino Tsereteli, Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health – Tanadgoma, Georgia; Rajul Patel, Department of Genitourinary Medicine, Southampton University Hospitals, Southampton & International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections (IUSTI), United Kingdom; Tom Platteau, HIV/STI clinic of the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium; Valerie Delpuch, Public Health England, United Kingdom; Wim Zuilhof, National HIV and STI prevention programs for MSM and ethnic minorities, STI Aids Netherlands, Netherlands; Yazdan Yazdanpanah, INSERM, France.

## **Observer organisations to the EuroTEST Steering Committee**

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC); European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMDCCA); World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.

## **Members of INTEGRATE Steering Committee**

Christine Kakalou, Centre for Research & Technology Hellas, Institute of Applied Biosciences, Information Technologies institute, Greece; Dorthe Raben, Region Hovedstaden, Denmark; Irena Klavs, National Institute of Public Health/ Nacionalni inštitut za javno zdravje, Slovenia; John S.

Lambert, University College Dublin, National university of Ireland Dublin, Ireland; Jordi Casabona, Catalan Institute for Oncology/Instituto Catalán de Oncología, Spain; Kristel Kivimets, Tervise Argengu Instituut/ National Institute for Health Development, Estonia; Lella Cosmaro, Fondazione LILA Milano ONLUS - Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro l'AIDS, Italy; Manuel Maffeo, Arcigay Associazione LGBTI Italiana, Italy; Nadia Gasbarrini, Fondazione Villa Maraini Onlus, Italy; Piotr Wysocki, National AIDS Centre Agency of the Ministry of Health, Poland; Valerie Delpech, Public Health England, United Kingdom.

#### **European Testing Week Working Group members**

Anna Zakowicz, AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Ann-Isabelle Von Lingen, European AIDS Treatment Group, Brussels, Belgium; Ben Collins, ReShape/ International HIV Partnerships, London, United Kingdom (Chair); Caroline Daaman, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Stockholm, Sweden; Cary James, World Hepatitis Alliance, London, United Kingdom; Chamut Kifetew, Terrence Higgins Trust, London, United Kingdom; Daniel Simões, EPIUnit - Institute of Public Health of the University of Porto & Grupo de Ativistas em Tratamentos, Portugal; Jason Farrell, Correlation-European Harm Reduction Network, Amsterdam, Netherlands; Josip Begovac, European AIDS Clinical Society, Zagreb, Croatia; Laura Fernandez-Lopez, Center for HIV/STI Epidemiological Studies of Catalonia (CEEISCAT), Spain; Marine Gogia, European AIDS Treatment Group, Tbilisi, Georgia; Nikos Dedes, European AIDS Treatment Group & Positive Voice, Athens, Greece; Sini Pasanen, AIDS Action Europe, Helsinki, Finland; Takudzwa Mukiwa, Terrence Higgins Trust, London, United Kingdom; Teymur Noori, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Stockholm, Sweden; Tonni van Moonfort, European Network of People Who Use Drugs, Brussels, Belgium; Tudor Kovacs, International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Youth and Student Organisation, Brussels, Belgium; Valerie Delpech, Public Health England, London, United Kingdom; Zoran Dominković, Iskorak, Zagreb, Croatia.