

The European ESTHER Alliance contributes to the implementation of its member states policy for health sector development aid. It aims to build up capacities in the fight against HIV/AIDS and its associated infections in developing countries.

AN INITIATIVE TO COUNTER NORTH-SOUTH INEQUALITIES IN HEALTH

The ESTHER Initiative (Together for a Networked Hospital Therapeutic Solidarity) was launched in 2002 by France with the main goal to strengthen the capacities of Southern countries to combat HIV/AIDS and associated pathologies. A first group of countries (Spain, France, Italy, and Luxembourg) undertook to develop this initiative in April 2002. At this time, a European Secretariat was set up in France. Four additional States joined the group in March 2004 (Germany, Austria, Belgium and Portugal). The arrival of Greece (September 2006) and Norway (November 2008) brought the number of European ESTHER Alliance members up to ten. All members have signed a ministerial declaration of engagement to develop the initiative. Potential new comers are invited to join the Alliance.



BRINGING TOGETHER OUR STRENGTHS AND EXPERTISE

The European ESTHER Alliance is a network of Governments favouring the networking of health professionals and associations from the European region who decided to work in synergy for fighting HIV/AIDS and its disastrous consequences in developing and transitional countries through a high standard comprehensive treatment and care approach, aiming thus at contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to Universal Access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care.

Members of the Alliance committed to develop the Initiative by implementing capacity building activities through twinnings between hospitals of the North and hospitals and health structures in the developing countries, in order to provide comprehensive and quality care for people living with HIV/AIDS and related diseases.

This European initiative receives direct support from the European governments who have mandated technical agencies or ministerial departments to set up programmes (GIZ in Germany, GIP ESTHER in France, NORAD and FK Norway in Norway, Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality and AECID in Spain, DGPS and ISS in Italy, IPAD and AIDS National Coordination in Portugal, Hellenic AIDS and KEELPNO in Greece, LUX DEV in Luxembourg).

MEMBERS AND FOCAL POINTS OF THE EUROPEAN ESTHER ALLIANCE

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Coordination / Réalisation: **Argos** Photo: DR

THE EUROPEAN ESTHER ALLIANCE :

FÉDÉRER TOUTES LES ÉNERGIES POUR UNE PRISE EN CHARGE THÉRAPEUTIQUE PLUS EFFICACE



A EUROPEAN AND OPERATIONAL PLATFORM FOR COUNTRY PARTNERS

From 2002 to 2010, the Alliance has developed projects in more than 40 partner countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and South East Europe.

More than 120 programmes allowed implementing a wide range of twinning activities: Training for hospital professionals (30.000 people trained from 2002 to 2010 : physicians, nurses, biologists, virologists, lab technicians, pharmacists, hospital management teams etc.), Prevention of Mother To child Transmission (PMTCT), Paediatric care, Patient and health professional safety, Psychosocial activities, Operational research, Monitoring and Evaluation, Laboratory support, Technical assistance at country level (e.g. on Drug and Supply management systems), Support for University diplomas, Networking with civil society.

The increasing number of hospital twinings of the Alliance made possible expertise and resources pooling for joint projects development but also more specialised and targeted programmes toward most vulnerable populations (IDUs, Prisoners, women and girls etc.).



THE EUROPEAN ESTHER ALLIANCE SECRETARIAT A JOINT MECHANISM FOR THE ALLIANCE'S DEVELOPMENT

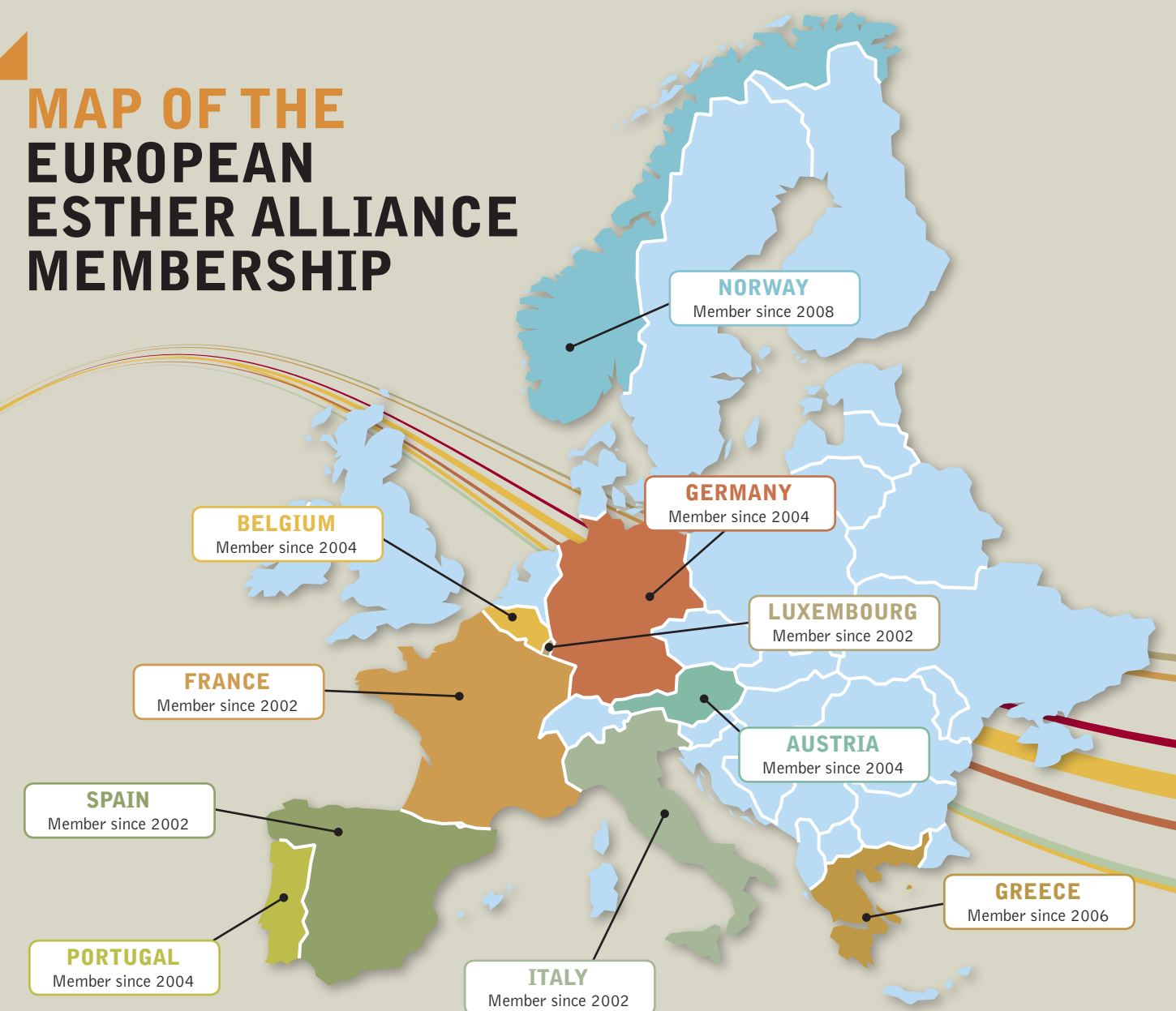
The European Secretariat, based in Paris, receives financial support from the European ESTHER Alliance members to cover the coordinating and joint activities. The Secretariat provides logistical and technical support to organise joint meetings and events, favour networking and information sharing, develop external communication, set up joint projects and develop common tools. It also represents the European ESTHER Alliance, advocates towards new potential members and facilitates partnership and collaboration development between the Alliance and external actors.

EUROPEAN MEETING AND WORKING GROUPS JOINT APPROACH AND COMMON TOOLS

The European Secretariat organises regular European meetings. They serve to hone a common strategy and develop a growing number of projects and joint efforts in partner countries. European working groups allow country members to exchange on their practices and design a joint approach and common tools for hospital twinings implementation.



MAP OF THE EUROPEAN ESTHER ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP



DEVELOP EXTERNAL RELATIONS FOR ADVOCACY AND NEW PARTNERSHIPS

The Alliance also builds relations with international bodies such as the European Commission, United Nations' agencies (WHO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNODC, etc.), the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership (E.D.C.T.P.).

In the 2009 "Progress report on the implementation of the European Programme for Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through External Action (2007-2011)", the European Commission acknowledged the European ESTHER Alliance as an innovative approach seeking to involve a large number of research and health institutions and civil society organisations in Member States and partner countries in capacity building through twinning programmes and networking.



A GLOBAL NETWORK FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN HEALTH

These endeavours have led to the mobilisation of a global north-south network of health professionals, improving health systems in partner countries. It focuses mainly on care for HIV/AIDS, but addresses other pathologies or health problems too, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, maternal and infant mortality, blood transfusion safety, patient safety, drug addiction. Particular attention is accorded to the most exposed or vulnerable population groups.

ADDED VALUE AND LESSONS LEARNT

The European ESTHER Alliance initiative and approach represent a huge potential to mobilize expertise for capacity building in health and further contribute in the EU role in global health, respecting the Aids effectiveness principles

The European ESTHER Alliance initiative is a good approach to contribute in the Global Funds and other funders programs (EC) implementation in country partners

The ESTHER model and the twinning approach favor joint capacity development, with a lot of experience coming back to the European hospitals

The twinning approach often works at individual level but remains challenging at institutional level. A system approach involving partners at clinical level, at hospital management level, and at sector level is key to a successful model and the quality of partnership

The twinning approach allow implementing a wide range of activities such as : operational research combined with development cooperation; capacity building in hospital on specific care programs (e.g. PMTCT); capacity building in hospital for management; capacity building in specific settings and for vulnerable populations (prisoners, IDUs) etc.

The ESTHER model feeds the country partners authorities' reflection for health policies and national guidelines definitions

The ESTHER model and the twinning approach is adapted to widen the scope beyond HIV/Aids for capacity building program implementation related to MDGs 4, 5, 6, and health system strengthening

