

**EUROPEAN
TESTING
WEEK**
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Toolkit 4

Engaging with other
partners: organisations,
healthcare professionals
and government bodies

Toolkit 4

Engaging with other partners: organisations, healthcare professionals and government bodies

Thank you for downloading this toolkit to support you when engaging with other partners

In this toolkit you will find guidance to assist you if you are considering engaging with partners in the run up to European Testing Week, as part of your ETW activities.

The website includes a list of organisations that have signed-up to European Testing Week in each country – visit the [Who's signed up](#) section. You may wish to contact these organisations to stimulate dialogue, share ideas or discuss how you might work together to create a strong and unified national approach.

This toolkit includes:

Section 1 – Why engage with other partners

Section 2 – How to identify and work with other partners

Section 3 – Template letters

This toolkit aims to provide support and guidance only and it is not mandatory that your organisation uses the information outlined in this toolkit, nor is it obligatory to engage with other partners. If you have any questions do get in touch:

eurotest.rigshospitalet@regionh.dk

Please also remember we are active on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). Tell us about your plans, share information and photos and tweet us (using #EuroTestWeek or #TestTreatPrevent) to help build anticipation and excitement for the week.

Section 1 – Why engage with other partners

European Testing Week (ETW) aims to increase the proportion of people who are aware of their HIV and/or hepatitis status and reduce late diagnosis. Helping to ensure more people become aware of their HIV and/or hepatitis status can only happen with the support of partners like you. We want as many people as possible to hear about and get involved with European Testing Week. To do this we are asking for your support to inform potential partners across Europe about ETW.

When engaging with potential partners around the European Testing Week, you may wish to:

- **Invite** them to get involved and contribute to the success of ETW
- **Inform** them that ETW is happening so that they can staff their testing services appropriately
- **Let them know** why testing for HIV and/or hepatitis is important.

You can find a list of organisations from the WHO European Region who are currently signed up to participate in testing week in the [Get involved](#) section of our website.

We would welcome any support you may be able to provide in order to encourage other organisations to sign up to ETW at a local level.

Section 2 – How to identify and work with other partners

Who should I contact?

In order to support implementation of European Testing Week at a local level you may want to consider approaching the potential partners detailed in the boxes below. All of these individuals or organisations are likely to be affected by or able to contribute to European Testing Week. These are suggestion only and you may have additional ideas of who to contact based on your knowledge of the local challenges you face and your priorities for testing week.

**Health
Minister/Member of
European
Parliament**

**Patient/community
organisations**

**Healthcare
professionals in
HIV and/ or
hepatitis settings**

**Sexual health
clinics**

**Healthcare
professionals in
non sexual health
settings**

Volunteers

Why contact your Health Minister or Member of European Parliament?

One of the barriers to testing in some countries is the lack of access to free, voluntary and confidential testing, which requires government support and funding. In more recent years, HIV and hepatitis have become less of a priority in many European countries – in some instances there is little or no funding available for free, confidential testing.

We are asking participating partners to help us tackle this issue by approaching government bodies and putting forward the rationale and evidence for why access to testing is so important. Using this approach we hope to encourage government bodies to adopt healthcare policies that meet European testing guidelines, including access to care for people living with HIV and/or hepatitis. For more information about the guidelines that testing week endorses please see [Appendix I](#).

When identifying relevant partners to engage with, please consider approaching your government Health Minister or Member of European Parliament. You may wish to use the template letter in [Section 3](#) of this toolkit to help you do so.

Before approaching government officials, you may find it helpful to review the evidence to support the rationale for improved access to HIV and/or hepatitis testing, which is available in the [Evidence](#) section of the testing week website. This section includes a factsheet that highlights the benefits of testing to the healthcare system and wider society. The evidence and factsheets can be tailored with the addition of data relevant for your country in order to create a compelling argument that is aligned with regional challenges and priorities.

Three steps for identifying and engaging with relevant partners

You may wish to follow these three steps to assess the most relevant partners to engage with:

Step 1 – decide what you are aiming to achieve and make a list of potential organisations to contact

Once you have decided what you are aiming to achieve, you will be able to identify which organisations to contact. In **Table 1** on the next page, we have included a suggested list of the types of organisations that you may want to consider making contact with, but this should not be seen as an exhaustive list. Using this table, desk-based research and your knowledge of the HIV and/or hepatitis communities, healthcare professionals and government bodies in your region, you will be able to generate a comprehensive list of key partners to contact.

Step 2 – prioritise who to contact and why

We are aware that it is not always possible to contact everyone. Therefore you may wish to consider prioritising those who can make the biggest impact in supporting more people to become aware of their HIV status. In **Table 2** on page 6, we have included some guidance to help you prioritise your list.

Consider which organisations or individuals you need to contact based on factors such as:

- Accessibility to engage with them and any previous contact you have had with them
- Their target audience
- Their influence
- Likelihood to engage in testing week
- Their priorities as an organisation

You may wish to use a template table, such as **Table 2** on page 6, to help prioritise your identified partners. The first line has been completed with an example. As you can see this organisation is likely to be interested in European Testing Week and is also highly influential, so it has been listed as a high priority.

Table 1: partners for European Testing Week, their current role and how they might support the initiative:

Partner	Likely current role of the organisation/individual	Potential role during the European HIV-Hepatitis testing week									
		Communicate key messages to target audiences	Help link individuals to HIV/Hepatitis testing providers	Provide HIV/Hepatitis tests	Handle queries from the public	Act as a media spokesperson	Contact HIV/Hepatitis testing ambassadors or bloggers	Host HIV/Hepatitis testing week events	Lobby governing bodies for change	Use indicator conditions guidance and offer HIV/Hepatitis tests to relevant people	Implement policy change
Governing bodies/Ministry of Health/Members of European Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree national policy regarding access to HIV/Hepatitis testing and treatment 										✓
HIV/Hepatitis patient/community organisations that provide information and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide balanced and accurate information about HIV/Hepatitis to the public and PLHIV/Hepatitis • Provide support services for PLHIV/Hepatitis • Often act as media spokespeople – commenting on HIV/Hepatitis related news stories • Maintain relationships with PLHIV/Hepatitis 	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
HIV/Hepatitis patient/community organisations that provide tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free tests to the public • Provide support services for PLHIV/Hepatitis • Often act as media spokespeople – commenting on HIV/Hepatitis related news stories • Maintain relationships with PLHIV/Hepatitis 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
HIV/Hepatitis patient/community organisations that lobby for policy change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby governing bodies regarding HIV/Hepatitis-related matters and guidance in order to influence policy change • Provide balanced and accurate information to governing bodies regarding HIV/Hepatitis to inform the development of guidance • Often act as media spokespeople – commenting on HIV/Hepatitis related news stories • Maintain relationships with key individuals within governing bodies 	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Sexual Health Clinics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tests • Provide balanced and accurate information on HIV/Hepatitis 	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
HIV/Hepatitis clinical specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as advisors for governing bodies regarding HIV/Hepatitis testing and treatment • Act as a credible independent source of information regarding HIV/Hepatitis • Often act as media spokespeople – commenting on HIV/Hepatitis related news stories 	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓			
Healthcare professionals in non-sexual health settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to come into contact with target groups but may not be aware of HIV/Hepatitis symptoms or be actively offering or encouraging HIV/Hepatitis testing 			✓						✓	
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free support to HIV/Hepatitis patient/community organisations 	✓	✓						✓		

Table 2: example of how you might prioritise identified partners:

Organisa- tion name	Role	Relation- ship	Influence	Target audience	How they might help	Priority
HIV/Hepatitis and Men's Health	HIV/Hepatitis patient organisation focused on increasing access testing	I know the press officer well	Highly influential	MSM	Testing week is well aligned with their priorities so I would like to ask the press officer to help raise awareness in the local media of the testing week	High priority
<i>Insert organisation name</i>	<i>Insert their role</i>	<i>Insert what relationship you have</i>	<i>Insert what influence they have</i>	<i>Insert what groups they target</i>	<i>Insert details about how you would like to work with them</i>	<i>Insert the order of priority you would like to contact them in</i>

Step 3 – make contact with your priority list

Consider the best way to make contact with your priority list. Do you already have an existing relationship with the organisation? If so, a telephone call and follow up information may be enough. If an established relationship does not exist, you may wish to consider a more formal approach. We have drafted two branded template letters to help you with this approach, which you will find in [Section 3](#). The first is to inform other HIV organisations about testing week, the second is for engaging with governing bodies. Simply personalise the letters to suit your target audience.

Section 3 – Template letters

[Recipient organisation name]

[Address]

[Insert your organisation logo(s)]

[Organisation name]

[Address]

[Date]

Dear [Insert contact name]

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming **European Testing Week** [insert year], which is taking place from [insert date of testing week]. It is an initiative being led by EuroTEST* in collaboration with an expert working group comprising civil society representatives, healthcare professionals and government bodies from across Europe.

European Testing Week is targeted at individuals who should be getting tested, as well as those who should be offering HIV and/or hepatitis tests, and to increase awareness of the benefits of testing, so that more people are aware of their status. Last year, more than [insert figure] organisations from [insert figure] countries signed up to participate in European Testing Week in [insert year].

I am contacting you on behalf of [insert the name of your organisation], a [insert information about your organisation and role]. My reason for contacting you is to invite you to support European Testing Week [insert year]. Due to the role [insert partner organisation name] plays in [insert role that they have, such as raising awareness of HIV in the community] you may wish to [insert action that you want them to be involved in such as: host a testing week event, engage with testing ambassadors, liaise with media etc. Personalise this section based on the specific organisation and their potential role (see also Table 1 on page 5)].

EuroTEST will be working closely with involved organisations to evaluate the success of European Testing Week [insert year]. This will include following up with organisations who participated to understand initiatives they rolled-out during the week and how successful they were at encouraging individuals to come forward for a test. Any support you may be able to provide in the evaluation phase of the initiative would be hugely appreciated.

I look forward to working with you to make European Testing Week [insert year] a success. If you would like more information on the initiative please visit

www.testingweek.eu or contact the HIV in Europe Secretariat directly:
eurotest.rigshospitalet@regionh.dk

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

*EuroTEST, originally named HIV in Europe, is a pan-European initiative initiated in Brussels in 2007. The initiative provides a European platform for exchange and activities to improve early diagnosis and earlier care of HIV, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis (TB) across Europe. The initiative is directed by an independent group of experts with representation from civil society, government bodies, health professionals and European public health institutions.

EuroTEST is not an organisation, but an initiative formed to inform processes, share knowledge and improve the evidence base around important issues of earlier testing and care. It is unique in its collaboration between stakeholders at a clinical, advocacy and public health level.

The EuroTEST initiative has received funding and grants from Gilead Sciences, ViiV Healthcare, Janssen, Merck/MSD, AbbVie, AAZ, Cepheid, InTec, OraSure, Owen Mumford and the European Commission under the 3rd and 2nd Health Programmes and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

[Recipient organisation name]

[Address]

[Insert your organisation logo(s)]

[Organisation name]

[Address]

[Date]

Dear [Insert contact name]

I am writing to inform you about the upcoming **European Testing Week** [insert year], which is taking place from [insert date of testing week]. It is an initiative being led by EuroTEST* in collaboration with an expert working group comprising civil society representatives, healthcare professionals and government bodies from across Europe.

European Testing Week is targeted at individuals who should be getting tested, as well as those who should be offering HIV and/or hepatitis tests, and to increase awareness of the benefits of testing, so that more people are aware of their status. Last year, more than [insert figure] organisations from [insert figure] countries signed up to participate in European Testing Week in [insert year].

The unacceptable reality is that one in five of the 2.3 million people living with HIV in 2017 in Europe are unaware that they are HIV positive; and over 50% of those who are positive are diagnosed late, delaying access to treatment. It is estimated that around 15 million people are living with hepatitis B in Europe and approximately 20-30% of infected patients will develop cirrhosis, liver failure or hepatocellular carcinoma. Around 14 million people are living with hepatitis C, and only a small minority of people receive treatment, in Europe 4.6% on average. [Include relevant HIV and/or hepatitis data and include regional statistics to personalise the above statistics to suit your country if applicable].

This is important because when people are diagnosed with HIV and/ or hepatitis a long time after they contracted it they are less likely to respond well to treatment. They are also more likely to suffer with health complications, which put a greater financial burden on the health system. Regular testing and early diagnosis should be a national priority in order to improve disease outcomes, prevent onward transmission and reduce the financial burden on the health system. For this reason I ask you to support European Testing Week to ensure we raise awareness of this amongst government bodies, healthcare providers and those most at risk of HIV and/ or hepatitis.

I am contacting you on behalf of [insert organisation name], a [insert information about your organisation and role]. My reason for contacting you is to ask for your

support in prioritising testing initiatives in [insert country]. As the above statistics demonstrate, undiagnosed HIV and/or hepatitis continues to be a significant challenge for health providers. European Testing Week provides an opportunity to create an open dialogue within government about HIV and/ or hepatitis management in this country and the importance of regular testing to facilitate early diagnosis. As such I would like to take this opportunity to request a [meeting, telephone call or other] with you to discuss this initiative and the importance of facilitating access to HIV and/ or hepatitis testing in more detail.

We are also asking European governing bodies to help support the evaluation of European Testing Week through regional HIV and/ or hepatitis testing and diagnosis statistics. This will help us to evaluate the impact of European Testing Week on the numbers being tested. Any support you may be able to provide in the evaluation phase of the initiative would be hugely appreciated. EuroTEST will be in contact with you after ETW has taken place.

Please do let me know if you are available to discuss European Testing Week in more detail. In the meantime, if you would like more information about the initiative please visit www.testingweek.eu.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

*EuroTEST, originally named HIV in Europe, is a pan-European initiative initiated in Brussels in 2007. The initiative provides a European platform for exchange and activities to improve early diagnosis and earlier care of HIV, viral hepatitis, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and tuberculosis (TB) across Europe. The initiative is directed by an independent group of experts with representation from civil society, government bodies, health professionals and European public health institutions.

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Appendix I

European testing guidelines

There are several guidelines that the ETW endorses, these are:

1. [European Centre for Disease prevention and Control](#) (ECDC), Stockholm: HIV Testing 2010.
2. [European AIDS Clinical Society](#) (EACS), Brussels: HIV Guidelines version 9.0 2017.
3. [European Association for the Study of the Liver](#) (EASL), Brussels: Hepatitis C recommendations 2017
4. [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) Scaling up HIV testing and counseling in the WHO European Region as an essential component of efforts to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support 2010.
5. [European Association for the Study of the Liver](#). (EASL), Brussels: Chronic Hepatitis B management 2017.
6. [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), Geneva: Consolidated guidelines on HIV testing services 2015.
7. [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), Geneva: Consolidated Guidelines on the Use of Antiretroviral Drugs for Treating and Preventing HIV Infection. 2016.
8. [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), Geneva: Guidelines on HIV self-testing and partner notification. 2016.
9. [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), Geneva: What's new in HIV monitoring 2015.
10. [World Health Organization](#) Guidelines on hepatitis B and C testing. 2017, WHO: Geneva.
11. [HIV in Europe](#). HIV Indicator Conditions: Guidance for Implementing HIV Testing in Adults in Health Care Settings. 2012.
12. [European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction](#) (EMCDDA). Guidelines for testing HIV, viral hepatitis and other infections in injecting drug users, 2010.
13. [UNODC, UNAIDS, WHO](#). Update on HIV in prisons and other closed settings. 2017.
14. [UNAIDS](#), Global AIDS Monitoring 2018.
15. [International Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections](#) (IUSTI). European Guideline for the screening, prevention and initial management of hepatitis B & C infections in sexual health settings. 2017.
16. [European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#). Public health guidance on active case finding of communicable diseases in prison settings. 2018

17. [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](#), Stockholm:
Public health guidance on HIV, hepatitis B and C testing in the EU/EEA. 2018.

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