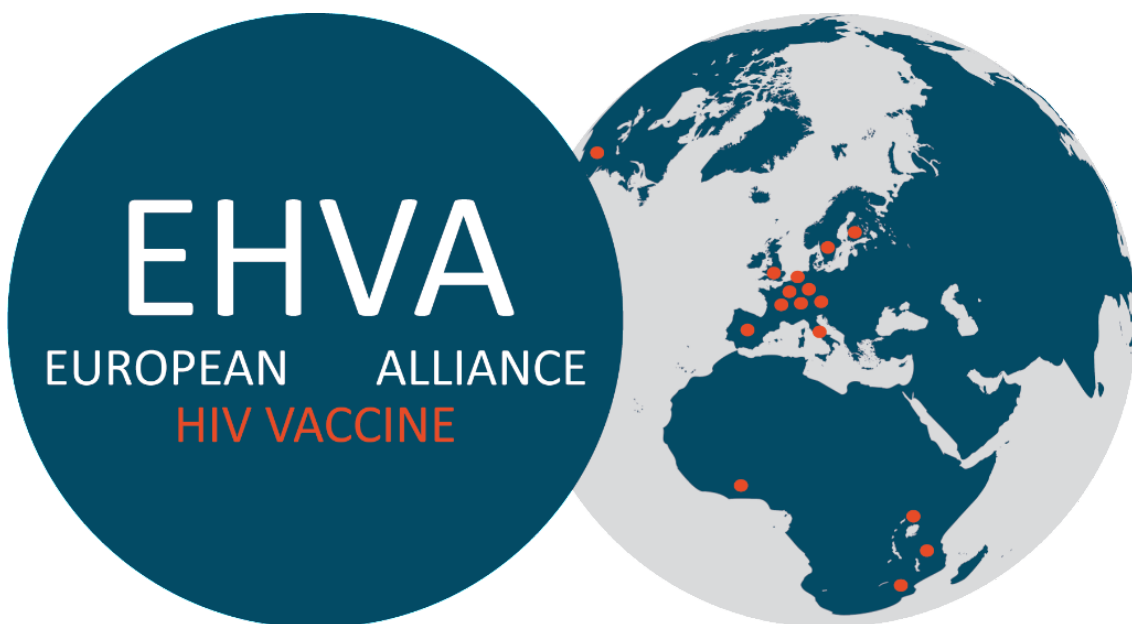


[Multidisciplinary approach to HIV vaccine development](http://www.ehva-a.eu)  
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# NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 - December 2016



Remember [World AIDS Day](#) with us, and join the many activities in your country and around Europe.

## WELCOME TO THE EHVA NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the second edition of the newsletter of the European HIV Vaccine Alliance (EHVA). EHVA is an alliance of 39 partners in Europe, Africa and the US.

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platform, EHVA facilitates the development and evaluation of novel prophylactic and therapeutic HIV vaccines, with the aim to select at least two of the most promising vaccine candidates for clinical development. We work closely with research partners across several Sub-Saharan African countries, and with the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership ([EDCTP](#)) to ensure that the vaccine candidates are relevant for and can be evaluated in countries where vaccines are most needed.

The work of EHVA is funded through a 5-year grant from the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme and the Swiss Government.

Learn more about EHVA on our website [www.ehva.eu](http://www.ehva.eu).



### EHVA (IN THE) NEWS

The [IAVI Report](#) (Publication on AIDS Vaccine Research, vol. 20 no. 3, 2016) featured the work of EHVA and that of the European AIDS Vaccine Initiative ([EAVI2020](#)), as well as the commitment of the European Commission to supporting HIV vaccine research. In the article "Europe invests in HIV vaccine research" Ruxandra Draghia-Akli, Director of Health Directorate in the European Commission's Research Directorate-General, notes that with EHVA and EAVI "*we offer a triple win: we promote European scientific excellence and global collaborations, accelerate the development of novel prophylactic and therapeutic vaccine candidates, and enhance European competitiveness.*" [Read the interviews](#) with EHVA Coordinator Prof. Yves Lévy and EHVA Scientific Co-Coordinator Prof. Giuseppe Pantaleo in IAVI Report.

Ruxandra Draghia-Akli was also a plenary speaker at the recent HIVR4P conference in Chicago, October 17 -21 2016. During her presentation on the EU Research Strategy to making an impact on the HIV epidemic, she introduced the audience to the work of EHVA and EAVI2020. [View her presentation online.](#)

During the 2016 HIV Drug Therapy conference in Glasgow, October 24 – 26, professor [Stefano Vella presented](#) on the work of EHVA during a [Cure Community workshop](#) organised by the European AIDS Treatment Group, notably on the work of



### DID YOU KNOW?

AIDS2016, the 21<sup>st</sup> International AIDS Conference, took place in Durban, South Africa, in July this year, with as its theme Access Equity Rights – Now. The declaration that was adopted during the conference, known as the [Second Durban Declaration](#), includes a call to amplify research for a vaccine and a cure: According to the declaration, “*preventive vaccine strategies and sustained HIV remission while off ART remain paramount to achieving definitive and economically-sustainable epidemic control. The recent progress in vaccine development and HIV cure research should be accelerated, driven by the necessary resources and motivation to consign AIDS to history.*”

During the conference, UNAIDS released a new publication [The Prevention Gap](#), which warns that after significant reductions, declines in new HIV infections among adults have stalled and are rising in some regions. As a means to closing the gap, UNAIDS Director Michelle Sidibe comments: “*Science, innovation and research have provided new and effective HIV prevention options, rapid diagnostics and improved treatment for HIV. Investing in innovation is the only way to secure the next big breakthrough—a cure or a vaccine.*”



## SPOTLIGHT ON

**RNA vaccines:** improving vaccine regimens is one of EHVA's research pillars, and developing an RNA delivery platform a key focus within this. RNA-based vaccines could herald an important innovation for HIV vaccines. Not only could vaccine candidates using this delivery system be produced faster and cheaper, they also have important biological advantages over DNA-based vaccines, including that they are thermostable. The EHVA programme has just initiated a head-to-head comparative study in non-human primates, evaluating two types of RNA-based vectors vs DNA-based vaccines. The hypothesis that EHVA will test is that RNA-based vaccines are at least as good or better at priming strong immune responses compared with DNA-based vaccines. The outcome of this study will provide the supportive data for the go/no-go decision on moving the best-in-class RNA based vaccine to clinical development. Leading the RNA platform development at EHVA is professor Peter Liljestrom at the [Karolinska Institute in Stockholm](#), Sweden. "RNA vaccines when administered mimic an infection by an RNA virus, activating both the innate and adaptive arms of the immune system," says Dr. Peter Liljestrom. "The RNA delivery platform, therefore, can elicit robust and durable immune responses which will be crucial in the development of an efficacious vaccine against HIV infection."



## UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

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13-16 February, 2017  
Washington, DC. USA

Harnessing Novel Imaging Approaches to Guide HIV Prevention and Cure Discoveries

8-9 May, 2017

Fishers Ln, Rockville, MD, USA

[9th IAS Conference on HIV Science](#) (IAS 2017)

23-26 July, 2017

Paris, France

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