

## RESEARCH

# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF POLIO ERADICATION: 10 ACTIONS FOR EUROPE

The world is closer than ever before to eradicating polio. There is a risk that with the diversion of aid resources to address short-term national concerns, Europe will become a free-rider in the final stages of this important initiative. It is not just financial resources that are threatened. The world stands to lose a champion for sustaining political support in the remaining endemic countries and a key player in maintaining international solidarity in pursuit of a global public good.

The issues, risks and challenges involved in eradicating polio are interconnected and relate to the choices that different actors make about their priorities and their preferences for how to balance different interests. From global donors and managers to local communities, families and individuals, a political thread waves through and links the circles of influence comprising the diverse actors involved in polio eradication.

Europe has been a traditionally strong player in development assistance and a significant contributor to polio eradication. The following ten key messages summarise the findings of a research project conducted on the social and political barriers to polio eradication; they serve as a call to action for European actors, to ensure the polio endgame and a lasting legacy:

1. European governments should sustain and increase financial support to polio eradication. European countries must not be 'free riders', benefitting without appropriately contributing to the global public good of polio eradication.
2. On the one hand, European institutions should contribute effectively to strengthen the political will of European governments and on the other, the European governments should provide political support and implement the recommendations of the European institutions in the countries still affected by polio or in countries at risk.
3. European institutions and European governments should act together to ensure continuing capacity for resilience following certification and realise the long-term benefits of polio assets for health systems and Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
4. European actors must recognise and promote linkages between polio eradication and other important health initiatives, such as SDG3, strengthening of health systems, achieving UHC, and strengthening global health security.
5. European institutions should show leadership in multi-stakeholder negotiations and collaborations to ensure the success of the GPEI and its partners.
6. Europe faces its own challenges of containment and resilience. 'Missed children' constitute a significant risk for Europe. Strengthening polio resilience and containment capacities should be coordinated between WHO EURO, the ECDC, the EC and European governments.
7. European actors must act together, fostering dialogue and maximising collaboration and coherence among their constituents. The European institutions should play a leading role in ensuring that diverse actors investing in polio eradication work together.
8. European institutions and governments need to act together to ensure that polio transition processes not only benefit national health systems but also result in the effective capture of valuable polio assets for European and multilateral institutions.
9. European institutions should be pro-active in bringing together the key actors dealing with transition processes (e.g. the GPEI, the Global Fund, Gavi and others) to facilitate better coordination and complementarity.
10. European institutions should support and reinforce the role of the Polio Transition Independent Monitoring Board (TIMB).

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