



German Foundation for World Population (DSW)



Microbicides Advocacy Aimed at Decision Makers in Brussels

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Why advocate in Brussels?	Sample responses from EU officials...	How do people respond to hearing about microbicides?
<p>Brussels is home to a number of important institutions that collectively form the machinery of the European Union. In addition to the European Commission (EC), which initiates policy and allocates spending, the European Parliament brings together delegates from all 27 member states to contribute in forming legislation.</p> <p>The European Council consists of the Ministers of all member states, one of which hosts the Presidency of the EU. Finally, the governments of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) nations also gather here to influence development policy and spending.</p> <p>Over the past seven years, concerted efforts have been made to raise awareness of microbicides within all these institutions to secure the strongest level of support possible for microbicides from this leading player on the global stage.</p>	<p>"Micro-something, oh now I remember, microbissies, that sounds good. People in my unit find it very exciting. It is something new and therefore easier to sell than other health-related developments"</p> <p>"I think you have the wrong department, my portfolio does not cover pesticides"</p> <p>"We have no time for projects that are lining the pockets of pharmaceutical companies so they can make a profit in Africa"</p>	<p>Upon hearing about microbicides, most decision makers respond positively. But many questions follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When will they be ready? • Why does it take so long? • Will they be affordable? • Do they have side-effects? • Does participation in a trial increase the risk of infection? • Aren't all clinical trials sponsored by large pharmaceutical companies that have lots of money anyway? <p>Advocates also have to be ready to answer more specific questions that come up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many women sero-converted during the Phase 3 CS trials? • How do the microbicides currently under development work?

Successful tools and approaches for reaching decision-makers

Microbicide advocates have employed a number of strategies and methods over the past five years to persuade policymakers of the need to invest in microbicide development. These include presentations by scientific experts, community testimony, the GCM high-quality photographic exhibit "Giving Women Power Over AIDS", coverage in the media, briefing papers and one to one conversations.

For some, the human rights and specifically women's rights framework - stressing gender equity - is convincing. For others pointing out the economic benefits of a microbicide is an important aspect. The idea that HIV prevention will depend on combining multiple partially effective strategies just as HIV treatment relies on combination therapy is gaining ground.

Pictured above are a series of photos illustrating the many events, seminars and lobbying activities etc that we have undertaken over the last several years.

Current status of EU funding for microbicides

In 2000, European funding for microbicides represented less than 1% of the total global public spending on microbicides - this now stands at 30%. Three European countries are among the top five largest public donors in the world - the UK, the Netherlands and Ireland. In addition, through EU budgets, almost 44 million euros have been allocated to microbicides.

However, out of 27 EU member states, only eight have so far invested in microbicides development.

The following table gives an overview of current funding commitments to date:

EU Research Budget	€30m
EU Development Budget	€6m
EU Clinical Trials Platform (EDCTP)	€7m
United Kingdom	€77m
The Netherlands	€22m
Ireland	€19m
Denmark	€5m
Sweden	€3m
Belgium	€3m
Germany	€1m
France	under €1m

