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Written contribution to agenda item 5 (j). Implementation of the Action Plan for the Health Sector Response to Viral Hepatitis in the WHO European Region (resolution EUR/RC66/R10) at the Regional Committee for Europe 69th session, Copenhagen, Denmark, 16–19 September 2019.

The World Hepatitis Alliance (WHA) is a non-State actor in official relations with the WHO. The organisation represents the 325 million people living with viral hepatitis through an alliance of over 280 patient organisation members in 91 countries.

WHA welcomes the item '*Implementation of the Action Plan for the Health Sector Response to Viral Hepatitis in the WHO European Region (resolution EUR/RC66/R10)*'. The report shows signs of good practice across the European region in including underserved populations in elimination programmes, especially people who inject drugs and people in prison. The report also has a strong focus on the role of civil society in the development and implementation of countries' hepatitis responses.

The Global Health Sector Strategy (GHSS) on Viral Hepatitis and the Action Plan set out the steps needed to reach elimination. With a vaccine and effective treatments for hepatitis B and a cure for hepatitis C together with a strong civil society representation across Europe ready to help, the elimination of viral hepatitis in the region is achievable.

The WHO European region is home to the majority of the countries currently on track to reach the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030. The UK, Italy, Spain, Iceland and France have made great progress and we are seeing countries like Georgia become global leaders on hepatitis elimination.

However, some countries are falling behind, making little or no progress towards the GHSS targets. Patient voices are calling for help and urgent attention, as lives continue to be lost needlessly. This must change. By up-scaling prevention services and increasing diagnosis and testing, we can find the nine in ten people living with viral hepatitis that are unaware of their diagnosis and link them to care. Civil society must play a key role in the development and implementation of health systems so that all people can access services and hepatitis elimination can be achieved across the region.

We urge all WHO European Member States to ensure they are doing everything they can to meet the targets set out in the GHSS and to accelerate progress towards their official commitment to the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030.