



RESOLUTION:

APPROACH TO EBOLA

*Adopted at the YEPP Congress, Porto, Portugal
On the 16th of May 2015*

Recognising that:

- The WHO (World Health Organisation) has admitted that it knew for two months that the outbreak of the Ebola virus would lead to a humanitarian catastrophe before it raised the alarm internationally;¹
- The economic interests of the countries hit by the virus were the reason for the delay;
- The WHO has the leading role in coordinating and directing international health issues;²
- The European Union waited too long to send help after the WHO raised the international alarm, and seemed to underestimate the seriousness of the epidemic;³
- Clinical research into the treatment and prevention of the Ebola virus was spurred as a result of the large-scale epidemic. In the context of “compassionate use”⁴, interventions which have not yet been approved using normal procedures have been given to people infected with the virus;⁵
- The rate of infection in Liberia has significantly decreased, but in other countries in West Africa the number of infections are increasing every day;⁶
- The attention on Ebola in the media has declined. However the epidemic has not yet been resolved;⁷

¹ <http://www.skipr.nl/actueel/id21836-who-erkent-trage-reactie-op-Ebola.html>

² <http://www.who.int/about/en/>

³ <http://nos.nl/artikel/708719-veel-te-weinig-hulp-eu-bij-ebola.html>

⁴ In the particular circumstances of this outbreak, and provided certain conditions are met, the panel reached consensus that it is ethical to offer unproven interventions with as yet unknown efficacy and adverse effects, as potential treatment or prevention.” ‘compassionate use’ (access to an unapproved drug outside of a clinical trial)- source:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-ethical-review-summary/en/>

⁵ Some phases in the scientific inquiry into the safety and the most suited dose of the treatment have been skipped at times. Source: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-ethical-review-summary/en/>

⁶ <http://www.volkskrant.nl/buitenland/verspreiding-ebola-lijkt-af-te-nemen-in-liberia~a3778298/>

- Doctors without Borders has written an evaluation on the emergency help surrounding the Ebola epidemic.⁸

Acknowledging that:

- Lessons must be learned from the Ebola epidemic for the future: for the international community, aid organisations and the European Union;
- Because of high interest in securing the economies of the stricken countries, worldwide assistance started later than needed whereas the economic collapse has only been postponed by a few months;
- The WHO did not have an emergency scenario ready for an Ebola epidemic of this size;
- The WHO has a leading and steering role in critical health situations;⁹
- Because of shortcomings in the actions taken by the WHO and the slow start to assistance, the Ebola virus has had more time to spread and therefore more victims;¹⁰
- The slow response of the European Union and its Member States and the too slow realisation of the seriousness of the epidemic have given the virus more time to spread;¹¹
- A chance exists that when the Ebola epidemic is over, the development of vaccines and other medical treatments slows down.

YEPP calls on:

- The WHO to, during an (imminent) humanitarian disaster, relegate the economy of a country a lesser role;
- The international community and in particular the WHO, to take lessons learned from the current Ebola epidemic seriously. It must have a plan ready for any subsequent very serious epidemic, which provides for acute care on a large scale;

⁷ <http://www.knack.be/nieuws/wereld/artsen-zonder-grenzen-tijdens-Ebola-epidemie-is-de-wereld-tekortgeschoten/article-normal-543485.html>

⁸ <http://www.medicalfacts.nl/2015/03/23/kritisch-rapport-azg-1-jaar-Ebola-pushed-to-the-limit-and-beyond/>

⁹ <http://www.who.int/about/en/>

¹⁰ <http://nos.nl/artikel/2025930-veel-meer-ebola-doden-door-late-noodhulp.html>

¹¹ <http://nos.nl/artikel/708719-veel-te-weinig-hulp-eu-bij-ebola.html>

- The European Union and its member states to respond more swiftly to an international alarm raised by the WHO;
- The International community and the WHO to bring the current epidemic to an end quickly by using the knowledge gained in Liberia to Sierra Leone and other affected West-African countries. The decreased media attention for the Ebola virus should not lead to a decrease in aid to countries affected by it;
- The WHO to support compassionate use of not yet approved treatments during epidemics which are comparable (in death rate) to Ebola;
- The European Union and the WHO to, even if the current epidemic subsides, keep facilitating the development of vaccinations and medicines against the Ebola virus;
- The EU and the international community to (locally) support the restoration of the health care system in the three most affected countries.