

### **Should we neglect them?**

*Priority Medicines for the citizens of Europe and the World* reflects on the production of medicines through a system in which the public is considered only as valuable as its ability to pay.

Where consideration is given to the diseases of the rest of the world it is only to the extent that they may cross borders into Europe. But even for those medicines where a »commonality of interest« is identified, no attention is paid to the fact that market availability is not a guarantee of access. Indeed *Priority Medicines* attempts to circumvent this critical issue by limiting discussion of intellectual property barriers to health despite the global recognition of their significant impact on access.

Where the promotion of innovation through pricing and regulatory reforms is discussed [p120-1] *Priority Medicines* limits discussion to recommending the EU »support a research agenda linking prices to national income levels«. This to some degree reflects Europe's great pride in its long-standing tradition of social solidarity.

But European policy formulation and implementation needs to clearly demonstrate that it does not consider social solidarity only relevant within its geographic borders, or at the weakest parts in its fence, those areas *Priority Medicines* considers represent a commonality of interest with the rest of the world. Disease should not matter to Europe because there is profit in its treatment or because it may reach our shores, but because it injures and kills. That the face of illness does not appear within Europe does not mean that it does not exist, or is of less human worth.

### **What Health Action International Europe says:**

HAI Europe says that policy makers can no longer pretend that the choice to reward innovation through granting monopolies is not also a choice to condemn the global poor to death.

If the rules that drive the production of medicines do not allow Europeans actors, public or private, to produce those medicines that respond to global public health needs, then those rules should be changed. There is no lack of ideas or creativity within Europe, but key policy makers cling to the absurd and untested orthodoxy that there is only one way to drive innovation.

In regard to the role of the European Union governing bodies, HAI Europe urges that the Dutch and subsequent European Union presidencies:

- recognise and respond to the urgent needs of the citizens of the world by separating the response to public health needs from the commercial interests of a small number of its citizens;
- honestly investigate the use of alternative, sustainable mechanisms to finance public needs driven therapeutic innovation;
- consider the institution of fiscal mechanisms to provide funds for public needs driven research and medicines production;
- Where public funds are invested, provide assurance that a product is of clear therapeutic value and is equally accessible to all.