



# The fight against AIDS in the 2007 French elections campaigns

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## Background

In France in 2007, two major elections took place; presidential and legislative. The results of which would characterize politics in France for the next five years. AIDES was anxious to establish the HIV/AIDS issue at the heart of the political debate in order to influence future health policies.

## Method

During the presidential election campaign, AIDES went to see all the presidential candidates and asked them to declare their position on a set of demands. They were also asked to lend their image to our campaign against the discrimination many HIV positive people are subjected to. For the legislative elections, the AIDES network submitted around ten private bills on the creation of needle-exchange programmes in prisons, therapeutic education, accommodation for sick people and so on. All over France, meetings were held with the upcoming Members of Parliament.

## Results

AIDES succeeded in imposing the HIV/AIDS issue in the election campaign. The poster campaign called "Would you vote for me if I was HIV positive" and the file sent to the candidates compelled the latter to express themselves on these matters. For many future MPs, the vague issue of the fight against AIDS became more definite. They became aware of what it means to live with HIV/AIDS, which is essential in continuing the fight against this epidemic.

Many MPs committed themselves to endorsing the private bills which the AIDES militants presented them. For instance, MPs from all the political parties represented in the French National Assembly, presented a private bill aiming to implement a trial needle-exchange programme in a French prison. AIDES has a privileged relationship with these MPs, which in turn gives AIDES more credibility in their eyes. We appeal to them when trying to push forward actions which we advocate for, or when trying to foil government projects we are opposed to.

## Conclusions

Election campaigns are a perfect time to involve and interest politicians in our struggle and in so doing, pave the way for an effective alliance in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

*"Would you vote for me if I were HIV positive?"  
Stop HIV, not people living with HIV.*



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## AIDES, a French NGO

Set up in 1984, AIDES is the largest HIV/AIDS community-based organisation in France, with centres in over 70 cities. We support partner organisations in Central and Eastern Europe, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

### Our main goals:

- To inform vulnerable people about HIV/AIDS prevention and testing
- To support PLWHAs, (social & professional integration, therapeutic education)
- To advocate for the rights of PLWHAs.



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