



SAVE THE DATE - 14th of December 2020

**IS HIV WORK HUMAN RIGHTS WORK?
EASTERN EUROPEAN CONFERENCE 2020**

East European Conference 2020 – Virtual Conference

14th of December 2020

Languages: German, Russian and English

Background

We will conduct a virtual Eastern Europe conference on Monday, 14th of December 2020 on the topic “Is HIV Work Human Rights Work?” which was originally planned to be held in Berlin in March but had to be cancelled due to the Corona Pandemic. This conference is based on the discussions and outcomes of the conference "HIV in Eastern Europe - the unnoticed epidemic?!" from 2017.

We are very pleased to announce that Michel Kazatchkine, UN Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ralf Jürgens, Senior Coordinator, Human Rights at The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria and Raminta Stuikyte, Senior Advisor to UN Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia already confirmed their participation.

Despite all efforts, promises and calls for intervention, Eastern Europe remains out of focus in the response to HIV/AIDS, TB and viral hepatitis. While the spread of the HIV epidemic can be contained in many countries, the numbers continue to rise in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Corona pandemic is also having a significant impact in the regions of Eastern Europe.

HIV/AIDS work in Eastern countries is all too often reduced to collective health care and health policy, while in Western countries HIV/AIDS work is usually considered human rights work that led to very concrete demands for the rights and well-being of individuals. We therefore invite experts and NGO representatives from the respective countries to discuss and debate the local challenges and development opportunities of HIV/AIDS work together.

The conference is hosted by Aids Action Europe, Action against AIDS (Aktionsbündnis gegen AIDS), Bread for the World (Brot für die Welt) and the German AIDS Service Organization (Deutsche Aidshilfe)



Programme

Opening panel

9.00- 10.30 CET

Admission and technical "Houskeeping rules" (admission from 8:45 CET onwards)

Welcome by the organizers from [Susanne Müller](#) (Bread for the World).

Greeting

[Binod Mahanty](#), Speaker Federal Ministry of Health (inquired)

Key Notes

Speaker: [Michel Kazatchkine](#), UN Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Key Note: "HIV in Eastern Europe, role of civil society".

Speaker: [Ralf Jürgens](#), Senior Coordinator, Human Rights at The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria Key Note: "Importance of HIV and human rights work in Eastern Europe"

Chair: [Raminta Stuikyte](#), Senior Advisor to UN Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Panel I „Transition“

11:45 – 13:15 CET

Many of the countries supported by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis (GFATM) are in a transition process, i.e. the internationally financed services have to be replaced by national funds, as the GFATM is withdrawing due to the established award criteria. This often means the end of prevention services for key affected communities. Since countries generally try to maintain the treatment of patients, while harm reduction, outreach or training programs are discontinued. This often has fatal consequences for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, which usually provide these services close to the community. Achieved successes are reversed by the resurgence of new infections. Against this background, the following questions arise, for example:

- How do countries deal with these challenges? How important is a strong civil society to protect the interests of the main groups affected? Are there good practice examples?
- What are the experiences of NGOs that have already undergone or are currently undergoing this transition process? How has the Global Fund prepared them for transition? What are their needs and how were they involved in decision-making processes?
- How important is international support in these processes and what should it look like?
- What does the withdrawal of the GFATM mean for countries where tuberculosis is a major problem?

- Can human rights-related approaches support organizations in the transition process in their advocacy work?
- To what extent has the COVID-19 situation complicated the already difficult situation in transition countries? What are special challenges? Where are there possibly synergies/possibilities to use the current awareness?

With participation of the following persons/NGOs

Valeria Rachinska, 100% Life, Kyiv, Ukraine

Marine Gogia, Georgian Harm Reduction Network, Tbilisi, Georgia

Sergij Filipovitsch, Public Health Alliance, Kyiv, Ukraine

Chair: **Michael Krone**, AIDS Action Europe and **Ganna Dovbakh**, Eurasian Harm Reduction Association

Panel II “Shrinking Civil Society - Shrinking Spaces?”

13:30 – 15:00 CET

The withdrawal of international donors often mean that NGOs no longer receive funding for their services and have to discontinue them, which often even means the end of the organization. Considering that civil society organizations in Eastern European countries in general have neither the political tradition nor sufficient financial resources contributes substantially to the decline in civil society involvement in the areas of HIV/AIDS, TB and viral hepatitis and is linked to considerable consequences for the rights of key affected communities. In addition, the GFATM has explicitly supported cooperation between the private, governmental and non-governmental sectors by creating the Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM). The withdrawal of the GFATM is therefore usually accompanied by a weakening of civil society. The following questions arise in this context:

- How does civil society function in Eastern Europe and how can its development be strengthened despite all adverse circumstances?
- Are there good practice examples of how the effects of weakening civil society after the withdrawal of external funding sources can be reduced?
- How different are the developments in the individual countries?
- How closely are civil society organizations interlinked with community-based organizations?
- What is the influence of COVID-19 on the overall situation and the access to offers of the communities?

With participation of the following persons/NGOs

Aisuluu Bolotbaeva, Central Asian Public Health Activist, Kyrgyzstan
Oxana Ibragimova, Kazakh Union of People with HIV, Almaty, Kazakhstan
Oleg Eryomin, BelSet Anti-AIDS, Minsk, Belarus
Tatjana Vinnitschenko, Community Centre, Moscow, Russian Federation

Chair: **Peter Wiessner**, Actions against AIDS und **Shona Shonning**, HIV and Human Rights Activist

Panel III „Human Rights and HIV/AIDS – Work”

15:15 – 16:45 CET

The acceptance of the topic of human rights and how we deal with it seems to be shaped by cultural and political factors, and its relevance is therefore differently classified: with sometimes considerable differences between our Western, individualistic view and the perception of more collectivist, Eastern European societies. On the other hand, prevention work is not affordable if the individual rights and practices of drug users, sex workers or homosexuals are not respected and addressed. How can this contradiction be overcome without becoming moral and appearing culturally and economically superior? In this thematic block we will work out how much human rights in Eastern Europe are integrated into HIV work and whether this view is more likely to be effective or harmful. Questions in this context are:

- How are the rights of individuals such as sexual rights or the right to health as well as the rights of minorities in Eastern European societies perceived?
- How can the needs of key affected communities affected be brought into focus?
- How can sexual rights be integrated into general education and training?
- Can the HIV/AIDS crisis in Eastern Europe be interpreted as a crisis of human rights?
- Is there an impact of COVID-19 on the human rights situation and the care situation of key groups?

With participation of the following persons/NGOs

Denis Efremov, SIB Alt, Omsk, Russian Federation
Julia Godunova, Eva Frauennetzwerk, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation
Tetiana Basiuk, Child Wellbeing Fund, Kyiv, Ukraine
Tatjana Zhuravskaja, Ljudi Plus, Positive Network, Minsk, Belarus

Chair: **Alexandra Gurinova**, German Aids Service Organisation and **Dasha Matyushina-Ocheret**, Consultant, UNAIDS Technical Support mechanism (TSM)