



Minutes of a meeting held in Lisbon
28th and 29th April 2010
at the Hotel NH Liberdade

This meeting was supported financially with contributions
from Gilead Sciences and ViiV Healthcare

As per attendance list.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from LHIVE Switzerland, Mic Rasmussen and Michele Meyer.

2 Introduction

Henrik Arildsen as chairman welcomed members to the meeting and gave an introduction to the proposed agenda.

3 Applications from proposed new members

Latvia - Sandris Klavins introduced his organisation, AGIHAS. Unanimously agreed and welcomed as members.

Belarus - Elena Grigoryeva introduced Belarusian PLWH Community. Unanimously agreed and welcomed as members.

Germany - Carsten Schatz introduced Deutsche AIDS Hilfe, Agreed by majority and welcomed as members..

Kosovo - Alban Gjonbalaj introduced KAPHA. Unanimously agreed and welcomed as members.

Russia - Sergey Shagaleev introduced Positive Wave. Unanimously agreed and welcomed as members.

There followed round table introductions for other individuals to introduce themselves to the newer members.

The meeting was informed of breaking news that day that China had opened its borders to travelers with HIV infection.

4 Statutes to create a formally constituted organisation

Nenad Petrovic introduced the debate. Members had been provided with a draft of a much simplified statute to which the steering group had made some minor amendments at a meeting the previous day.

The meeting split into a number of smaller working groups to deal with specific aspects of the proposed statutes.

5 Vienna Project

Henrik gave a presentation on proposed activities for HIV Europe involvement at AIDS 2010 in Vienna and answered questions on issues like funding and budget. The proposal aimed to get a variety of messages across to researchers and industry that treatment is not the solution to everything and that efforts to eliminate stigma and discrimination are still needed to enable plwha in Europe (and elsewhere) to live healthy and productive lives.

The majority of member representatives present indicated they would be participating in Vienna.

6 Sexual and Reproductive Rights Survey

Henrik presented an outline of the proposed survey to be conducted by Jacob Haff, fuller details would be made available on day 2 of the meeting.

Four member representatives volunteered to take part in testing the first version of the questionnaire, before it is released for everyone. It was hoped that the information and report would be ready for presentation/release at AIDS 2010.

7 Policy Position Papers

It was agreed that each of the papers should end with a short demand at the conclusion.

Criminalisation of HIV Transmission

The original version of this paper was produced in 2006 and had been updated in light of scientific advances.

Andreas proposed an addition, as did Sini, that the position also had to include that HIV Europe was opposed to the use of criminal law in cases of anything other than deliberate HIV transmission, this was agreed.

HIV in the Workplace

The inclusion of the word "robust" was questioned, and explained on the basis that there was no point in having a policy that was then ignored, and to show that what we stood for was that protection should not only be enshrined in law but also enforced.

The position paper was agreed.

HIV Related Travel/Entry Restrictions

The position paper was agreed.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights

This paper would be formulated during the work on the questionnaire. The rights of children to have parents was raised as an issue to complement the rights of adult plwha to adopt children.

Coffee break, followed by working groups the proposed Statutes.

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8 Country Reports

A proposal was made that country reports should be submitted by email, apart from urgent matters, This was to allow working groups more time to finish their work and address issues raised with the policy position papers. Agreed.

9 Vienna Project (continued)

To ensure the widest opportunity to input to the proposals, the steering group asked that the issue be looked at again. There was discussion and sharing of ideas alongside a commitment to more frequent communication on the issues raised.

10 Country Reports

With some time to spare, there was opportunity for some country reports to be given verbally.

Turkey – reported having taken 15 discrimination cases to court this year, doesn't look like rights will be delivered by courts, govt has stopped approving new drugs - lot of resistant patients waiting for new drugs, still no proper residency test, people still losing jobs due to HIV status.

Norway - working on criminalisation for some years, govt decided to put together a broad committee to look at whether criminal law is the way to combat HIV in Norway.

Italy – have challenged national job advertisements by the dept of defence completely excludes plwha from participating in military; defence dept response that there is a sentence in the constitutional court 1994 which is the justification for this decision, so NPS are now promoting two questions in parliament and waiting to hear responses.

Russia - going to have many problems with drug supply because funding reducing for both Prevention and Treatment. Govt is not going to buy expensive drugs, govt is undertaking less and less programmes in prevention and among vulnerable groups. Ever more restrictions on harm reduction programmes considering that 60% of plwha are IDUs.

Lithuania - evaluation report circulated by Jurgis who wanted to ask HIV Europe to make approaches to the EC about tragic situation in Baltic countries. This is the area where the most drug infections are – without sufficient work in Baltic countries there could be severe consequences in the rest of Europe.

The meeting agreed to send written representations to President of the Republic of Lithuania and also the European Commission in support of the Lithuanian proposal, and to distribute it to wider partner agencies.

Also an open letter to take to Vienna and get sign ups to raise the issue.

In terms of solidarity, consider making strategic arrangements for a future HIV Europe meeting to take place in Lithuania.

Estonia - remains largest epidemic in Europe 1.3% adult population, essential that access to HIV testing improves for high risk populations (IDU and MSM) priority to provide access to testing, in order to increase knowledge of status, rapid testing through needle exchange sites.

Belarus - biggest problem is to get the country to recognise its problems - need to validate data on issues, issues raised are not accepted as govt says there are no such problems. 9000 plwha in Belarus, but govt says that only 7 people in country really need treatment for Hep C. Stigma index work undertaken which was then followed by a govt survey which showed no stigma. Problems with drug supply, often people get drug regimes changed in bulk all at same time, due to shortages of previous regimes. Difficult to work in Belarus because the risk of imprisonment really exists.

UNGASS country report - previously not involved in govt response, so had made an alternative report which achieved a lot; this time govt wanted to avoid further scandal. Organisation is now involved in CCM for global fund,

Latvia - drug prices remain too high as they are now considered a middle income country. Negotiations taking place with Civil Society Forum as almost all donors have left the region, therefore only funders left are European Institutions who always require co financing as well as partnership across countries; lots of stipulations that most NGOs cannot comply with.

Romania - severe treatment shortages particularly for PTMC and paediatrics. 8000 young people on treatment, many of whom are on second or third combinations and with lot of resistance. Many young people on Efavirenz trying to make families, have children with birth defects. Lots of people afraid to speak up about shortages, Doctors afraid to speak out for fear of their jobs.

Lack of proper patient education and information, young people very poorly informed about treatments, access to treatment, sexual reproductive rights, etc.

In solidarity with Romanian PLWHA, the meeting participants agreed to commit themselves and their agencies to consider efforts to highlight the Romanian situation in their own countries, to get media attention to the issue, to petition their own governments and the EU to raise the issues facing Romania.

Albania – concern over political collapse in Albania after last year's election.

Parliament approved anti-discrimination law which includes sexual minorities, big campaign of homophobia, big campaign against msm community in country. Many asking for support to protect the rights of msm.

Serbia - drug shortages still exist, forced interruptions of therapy, lack of resistance tests. Now drafting national strategy for next 5 years, involved in that process. New anti discrimination laws.

Denmark - but conducting a study trying to figure out why people continue to present late, to be presented at Vienna.

Poland - govt limiting funding for treatment for each patient to only 800 euro each month. After 2 year battle in highest courts, a policeman won a case for losing his job on diagnosis and will now return to work.

11 Final adoption of Statutes of HIV Europe

The statutes having been discussed at length and revised, were adopted with unanimous support.

It was agreed to continue the current meeting under the previous arrangements, election of board members to feature as the final agenda item.

12 Membership fees

It was agreed that the Board should put forward proposals on what the membership fee should actually be after consultation with members.

13 Any Other Business

Role models

There was discussion on the potential to encourage new role models to come forward, in particular following the death of Turkey's most open and courageous spokesman for the PLWHA community. There were some ideas that could be pursued.

HIV Europe website

Andreas raised this issue and Bernard explained that the content management system that had been used, had been hacked. Subsequently an older version of the site had been put back which needed to be updated to reflect this meeting. There was discussion on some of the ideas and functions needed for a new website, including a members section, blogs and private discussion areas.

Global Financial Crisis

Agreed to include an element of financial reporting on the impact of the crisis in an email template for the country reports.

14 **First General Meeting**

Election of chair and vice chair persons

Henrik Arildsen was elected unopposed as Chair of the organisation; Ricardo Fernandes was elected unopposed as vice chair person.

Due to not having any members within the WHO Western Europe region, proposal would leave an empty seat, consensus that all board positions be filled. Therefore it was proposed and agreed to stick to existing way that HIV Europe deal with regional representation:

Northern Europe Evy-Aina Røe, Norway elected unopposed

Eastern Europe

Candidates

Alina Dimitriu, Romania and Elena Grigoryeva, Belarus

Alina Dimitriu elected by majority vote

Southern Europe

Candidates

Arzu Kayki, Turkey Nenad Petkovic, Serbia Olimbi Hoxhaj, Albania

Nenad elected by majority vote

Western Europe Sam de Croy, UK elected unopposed

Central Europe Wojtech Tomczynski, Poland elected unopposed

Meeting Evaluation

That was overall agreement that the meeting venue and facilities had been excellent, some papers should have been circulated much earlier than they had been.

A vote of thanks was proposed to Marcello Pereira and Per Henrk-Durr for making all the arrangements for the meeting.

Henrik thanked participants for all their efforts, in particular with the amendment and final adoption of the statutes.

Meeting closed at 5.20pm