

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

among

East Europe and Central Asia Union of People Living with HIV (ECUO), Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), The Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM), Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA), Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD), International Treatment Preparedness Coalition of East Europe and Central Asia (ITPCru), the Regional HIV Legal Network.

By the initiative of East Europe and Central Asia Union of People Living with HIV (ECUO) and Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), the two above-mentioned networks, and the Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM), Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA), Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD), International Treatment Preparedness Coalition of East Europe and Central Asia (ITPCru), the Regional HIV Legal Network united with the purpose of cooperation in advocacy of sustainable access to continuous assistance for all the people living with HIV in East Europe and Central Asia (EECA).

Preamble

In 2012 ECUO developed the Regional Advocacy Strategy of PLWH Community on access to ART in the EECA region. The purpose of this Strategy is to achieve 100% state budget funding for antiretroviral treatment for all the PLWH who need it in EECA by the year 2020 and its effective use. To provide technical and expert assistance in the implementation of this Strategy in 2013 ECUO initiated the creation of the Regional Consulting Group which included representatives of regional non-governmental organizations working in HIV/AIDS area in EECA region such as ITPCru, representatives of governments from EECA countries, European Union, WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, INICEF, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF). In June 2014 representatives from every regional network of groups vulnerable to HIV (ENPUD, SWAN, ECOM, EWNA) joined the Regional Consulting Group.

In October 2014 representatives of the above-mentioned regional networks as well as ITPCru and the HIV Legal Network's representatives were invited by the ECUO to participate in the governance structure responsible for the development of the Regional HIV/AIDS Concept Note for the period of 2015-2017 to be submitted to the GF¹.

Objectives of cooperation in the framework of the Memorandum

ECUO, EHRN, SWAN, ECOM, ENPUD, EWNA, ITPCru, the HIV Legal Network agree that it is necessary to unite the efforts of regional community networks vulnerable to HIV in order to:

- Facilitate changes in legal framework in the countries of the region with the purpose of introduction of the continuum of services which include HIV prevention, testing and treatment and HIV-related TB and Hepatitis C.

¹ Regional coordination group responsible for strategic management of the Regional Proposal development

- Facilitate increase of state funding for provision of sustainable continuum of HIV-related services and their rational use.
- Improve access to legal assistance in the countries of the region and facilitate rights observance of people affected by HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Potential areas of interaction among the regional networks

1. Cooperation on expanding access to prevention and treatment: conducting joint awareness campaigns aimed at involvement of people to prevention, testing and treatment programmes; ensuring access to the key groups by means of non-government organizations and initiative groups; expansion of peer-counseling projects; enhancement of coverage and quality improvement programs related to HIV and co-infections treatment adherence; exchange and introduction of best practices of procurement management and medical supplies as well as access to treatment advocacy practice in EECA countries and experience in overcoming systemic difficulties in ensuring universal access with the emphasis on vulnerable groups, information exchange on rights violations of vulnerable groups, conducting joint campaigns aimed at lobbying changes in the legislation of the EECA countries, development of joint documents (reports, fact sheets, etc.), reflecting the situation with people living with HIV and communities vulnerable to HIV.
2. Overcoming legal, administrative and other systemic barriers for access of the key groups to HIV treatment: decriminalization of HIV risk behavior; building of trust to health care system among key groups; ensuring a comprehensive approach to vulnerable groups (diagnostic and treatment of co-infections, using evidence based practice of drug use treatment, ensuring general medical services) in the framework of various vertical systems of service provision; reduction of stigma and prevention of discrimination of HIV in health care system and in the society; protection of human rights.
3. Advocacy of issues ensuring provision of continuum of services for HIV prevention, testing and treatment and HIV-related TB/Hepatitis C co-infections in EECA region, as well as including them in the agendas of national, regional and international meetings/conferences.

Voluntary participation

Each of the parties joins this Memorandum on a voluntary basis and it is entitled to discontinuing its participation at any time by means of informing other participants about its decision.

Term of Memorandum

This Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation shall be signed for a term from 22 May 2015 till 30 November 2017 and is subject to prolongation upon mutual agreement of the parties concerned.

Information about partners **East Europe and Central Asia Union of People Living with HIV (ECUO)** is a regional organization founded by PLWH for PLWH. It was officially registered

in October 2007. ECUO is a “network of the networks” which unites PLWH community from East Europe and Central Asia (EECA) to strengthen influence on increasing access to antiretroviral treatment through efficient regional and international instruments in order to ensure access to treatment for all the people living with HIV in EECA region. ECUO unites national PLWH organizations and communities from 16 countries of EECA regions, including Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland.

Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) – is a regional network of harm reduction programmes in 29 countries of Central and East Europe and Central Asia.

The Eurasian Harm Reduction Network's (EHRN) mission is to promote humane, evidence-based harm reduction approaches to drug use, with the aim of improving health and protecting human rights at the individual, community, and societal levels.

The Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), founded in 2006, is a network of civil society organizations engaged in advocating for human rights of the sex workers in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM) was created in June 2011 as a regional mechanism aimed at creation of favourable conditions for an effective response to HIV epidemic among men having sex with men (MSM) and transgender people (TG) in East Europe and Central Asia (EECA). UNDP, UNAIDS, UNFPA and WHO (the European Bureau) support creation and development of ECOM for execution of recommendations issued by the Regional Consultation on HIV epidemic among MSM and TG in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (November 2011).

Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA) was founded in 2013 by 11 female leaders from Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Estonia.

The mission of the Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA) is to improve the quality of life of women living with or affected by HIV. Priority directions of Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA) for 2014-2015 are capacity building and women leadership development, advocacy for investments for women's programs, scaling up access for sexual and reproductive health, elimination of violence against women and promotion of gender equality.

Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD) was founded in 2010 with the support of Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) and gradually starts playing a more significant role in advocating for the rights of people using drugs as a vulnerable group with the most hindered access to the continuum of services – the main idea which unites members of ENPUD. ENPUD members advocate for freedom from stigma and discrimination being the main factor for the spreading of socially important diseases in East Europe and Central Asia (EECA).

International Treatment Preparedness Coalition of East Europe and Central Asia (ITPCru) is the movement of people united by a common goal – to achieve universal access

to medications for HIV treatment and co-infections, in the first place – Tuberculosis and Hepatitis C.

In 2005 the Coalition began its activities in East Europe and Central Asia (EECA) which includes the following countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Ukraine and Estonia.

The main working principle of the Coalition is highest possible involvement of people living with HIV and advocates of their interests to the decision making process related to their lives – on the international, regional, national and local levels.

The Regional HIV Legal Network includes human rights organizations from 9 countries (Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) which provide legal aid to people living with HIV. The legal clinics of the region and HIV-service organizations are also involved in the work of the Network. Main objectives of the Regional Network are: promoting favourable legal environment and good legal practices to protect the human rights and legal interest of people affected by HIV; ensuring enjoyment and protection of the rights of PLWH, capacity building of PLWH communities and key groups; strengthening the capacity of lawyers and organizations providing legal services to PLWH.