

Cyprus needs to drastically improve HIV care and support, says new EU Index

Brussels, October 13, 2009

The care and conditions for people living with HIV/AIDS in Cyprus need to improve, said the Euro HIV Index (EHIVI) 2009 which was presented today in Brussels. This first survey of HIV policy and best practice ranked Cyprus 26th out of 29 countries, scoring 627 points from a potential 1,000. Luxembourg wins the ranking with 857 points followed by Malta (791) and Switzerland (775).

The poor Cypriot conditions are explained foremost by weak access to care of people living with HIV. Cyprus is ranked behind countries like Bulgaria or Hungary.

"There are some points where Cyprus must improve access to care: There is strong discrimination when care is requested by undocumented / illegal migrants. Furthermore, Tuberculosis patients are not frequently tested for HIV. Also, it would be important that Cyprus includes sex education as a mandatory subject in the curriculum of compulsory school; naturally, teachers need to have training to give quality lessons." states Dr. Beatriz Cebolla, the Euro HIV Index Director. "There is also a need for improvement regarding harm reduction in prison."

While the number of people living with HIV (PLWH) increases in every member state of the EU, budgets in several countries are reduced. Sexual risk behaviour is becoming more and more regular practice. Criminalization of HIV is a problem in many countries, and still HIV specific legislation exists in some countries; people can get prosecuted also for unintentionally and unknowingly transmitting the virus. The access to care for marginalized groups such as undocumented migrants is not guaranteed almost anywhere in Europe. Discrimination and stigma against PLWH is frequent at work and in schools. Harm reduction strategies in prisons are still weakly implemented, especially in the Eastern European countries. There is a general lack of leadership in HIV management and no government seems to know the true number of HIV-infected inhabitants. The main conclusion of the HIV Index is that there is still a lot to do.

About the Index

The EHIVI ranks the HIV situation across 28 indicators, covering 4 areas that are key to HIV: Involvement and rights, Access, Prevention, and Outcomes. The Euro HIV Index is compiled from a combination of public statistics, patient polls and independent research conducted by the founder, the Brussels-based think tank Health Consumer Powerhouse. The EHIVI 2009 takes a patient centred position. The Index is being held in association with the Swedish EU presidency of autumn 2009. It has received an unrestricted educational grant by Gilead Research.

Press Release



You are invited to a Netviewer session of the presentation at 10 a.m. You can participate in the session by clicking this link:

<https://get.netviewer.com/meet/join.php?sinr=831594&sipw=nv64>

For more information about the EHIVI: www.healthpowerhouse.com or contact Dr. Beatriz Cebolla, beatriz.cebolla@healthpowerhouse.com, +34 620 78 33 83

About the Health Consumer Powerhouse: www.healthpowerhouse.com or contact Dr. Raluca Nagy raluca.nagy@healthpowerhouse.com, +32 472 61 24 63