

Changes are needed in Germany to fight more efficiently against HIV, says new EU Index

Brussels, October 13, 2009

The care and conditions for people living with HIV/AIDS in Germany 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 Germany 13th out of 29 countries, scoring 720 points from a potential 1,000. Luxembourg wins the ranking with 857 points followed by Malta (791) and Switzerland (775).

Germany has good prevention programs and work is in progress to make them still more efficient. Access to care and treatment is good, with exception for undocumented migrants who can face severe problems.

“Harm reduction programs in prison have been recognised to reduce the risk of infection for inmates. Germany should standardize regulations and the gathering of information in prisons concerning harm reduction measures; drug substitution therapy programs (to reduce HIV spread among drug users) are minimal and not nationwide and condom distribution only sporadic. Isolated efforts to collect information by AIDS are made by service organizations concerning tattooing/piercing.” states Dr. Beatriz Cebolla, the Euro HIV Index Director. “Germany should review HIV criminalization. There still is an HIV specific law and exposure and transmission are prosecutable.”

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

Press Release



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.

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>

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