

Press Release



Sweden needs to improve radically in HIV care, says new EU Index

Brussels, October 13, 2009

The care and conditions for people living with HIV/AIDS in Sweden need a lot of improvement, said the Euro HIV Index (EHIVI) 2009 which was presented today in Brussels. This first survey of HIV policy and best practice ranked the Sweden 24th out of 29 countries, scoring 642 points from a potential 1,000. Luxembourg wins the ranking with 857 points followed by Malta (791) and Switzerland (775).

"Access (as usual for Swedish healthcare) seems to be the weakest point also for HIV care. Undocumented migrants have real difficulties to access healthcare services. Sweden is one of the countries having the highest number of prosecutions for exposure/transmission of HIV in EU, which worries the people working there in the field. It is also necessary to implement real harm reduction strategies in prison." states Dr. Beatriz Cebolla, the Euro HIV Index Director. "Sweden has a high level of sexually transmitted disease (STD) cases reported, but HIV patients do not receive a minimum of annual STD and hepatitis tests."

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.

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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