



EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum

Open letter to

**President of Romania Mr TRAIAN BĂSESCU
Prime Minister of Romania EMIL BOC
Romanian Minister of Public Health CSEKE ATTILA
Romanian Minister of Finance Mr SEBASTIAN VLĂDESCU**

**cc President of the National Insurance House in Romania Mr NICOLAE DUTA
cc Health counselor at the the Presidency VIRGIL PAUNESCU**

Brussels, 22 April 2010

EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum calls on the Romanian government to ensure access to antiretroviral treatment

Dear President,
dear Prime Minister,
dear Minister of Public Health,
dear Minister of Finance,

We are writing to you as EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum (CSF) Co-chairs, an advisory body to the European Commission.

We are extremely alarmed and concerned by information received from local NGOs in Romania according to which supply of and access to antiretroviral treatment for People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in need is not assured - with some HIV patients having treatment interruption of over a month now, and patients living in rural areas travelling to the capital having to queue-up in front of the main hospital to obtain treatment.

The interruption of antiretroviral treatment therapy puts PLHIV at imminent danger to develop resistance. In particular those who as youngsters got infected in Romanian hospitals during their early childhood, between 1986 and 1992 are patients who received several drug regimens in past, and some of them are already receiving their last treatment option. By interrupting their treatment, these patients will be at great personal health risk with the well known public health implications on top.

In the past, lack of funding has been cited as the main reason for repeated treatment interruptions in Romania, and like in other European countries and in particular the Baltic States the situation has been aggravated by the economic crisis the whole of Europe is currently facing. However, most of the European Union countries managed to prioritise uninterrupted HIV treatment and have where needed taken steps to control prices for medicines striving to live up to their commitment to ensure their universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care by 2010.

It is very regrettable that Romania did not act upon the support offered by the affordable medicines initiative put forward by the German authorities based on the Bremen Declaration.

Whatever the reasons and details that have led to this untenable situation in Romania, the current situation constitutes a clear breach not only of the national commitments but also of the European Convention of Human Rights Article 3.¹

We hereby call on the Romanian authorities

- to provide necessary treatment to all of those in need immediately
- to negotiate price rebates with pharmaceutical companies as way of follow-up of the so-called 'Bremen initiative'
- to invite WHO Europe to have a country visit in Romania in order to thoroughly assess the situation in Roumania and secure access in the long term

Furthermore, we encourage the Romanian government to have its representative at the upcoming EU HIV/AIDS Think Tank meeting (5th of May 2010, Brussels) provide a detailed report on the next steps the government intends to take to improve the situation.

Yours sincerely



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The EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum (CSF) is an informal advisory body established in 2005 by the European Commission to facilitate the participation of NGOs and networks, including those representing People Living with HIV/AIDS, in European policy development and implementation as well as to exchange information.

¹ For similar cases in which the European Court of Human Rights has sanctioned the national authorities for failing to fulfil their obligations towards PLWH see „D. v the United Kingdom” and most recently „Oyal v Turkey”.