



EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum

Brussels, 27 May 2010

Open EU HIV/AIDS Civil Society Forum letter

- China is lifting its ban on people with HIV. European countries still discriminate!

In recent months there has been an increasing momentum across the world to end entry and residency restrictions for people living with HIV. The United States and China have been two of the countries which have acted recently to repeal their restrictions. In so doing they have demonstrated their commitment to end discrimination and to support a genuinely evidence-based and effective response to the HIV epidemic. But there are still sixteen countries across the WHO European region where such travel restrictions remain in place. The EU's Civil Society Forum called for an end to HIV-related travel restrictions in November 2008 - and we reiterate that call today. As the International AIDS Conference in Vienna approaches, these sixteen countries should comply with international standards, follow the example set by so many other countries across the globe and end all entry and travel restrictions for people living with HIV.

HIV-specific entry and residency regulations were adopted in various countries round the world in the mid 1980s at a time when the global response to the epidemic was still too often characterised by ignorance, panic and prejudice rather than by understanding of the nature of the virus and how it is spread.

After 25 years of the HIV epidemic we know that HIV is not transmitted by casual contact; we know that people with HIV can as a result of effective treatment remain well and be active members of society; that entry and residency restrictions have proved to have no impact in reducing the spread of HIV in a community but instead only reinforce the stigma, discrimination and misconceptions which drive infection.

HIV-related entry and residency restrictions are therefore discriminatory and violate international HIV and human rights standards and guidance.

The International AIDS Conference takes place in Vienna from 18 to 23 July 2010 with the theme of 'Rights here - right now'. This should be the occasion to end all HIV-related entry and residency restrictions across the whole of the WHO European region.

We therefore call on all European and Central Asian governments where these unjust and discriminatory rules remain in place to repeal these laws and regulations as soon as possible, and in advance of the International AIDS Conference. As the eyes of the world turn to Vienna in July, this will make Europe a worthy host for such an important event.

We therefore ask the Governments of the following States to revise their restrictions

Andorra (denial of work and residence permits for PLWHA)*

Armenia (deportations may be possible by law)

Belarus (mandatory HIV tests targeting students)

Cyprus (denied entry for PLWHA applying for work or study permits)

Georgia (health checks for residency permits, unclear situation)

Germany (Federal States of Bavaria, Saxony and New Brandenburg: mandatory HIV-tests targeting migrants and asylum seekers)

Hungary (HIV considered as a disease threatening public health, deportation possible)

Israel (HIV-testing required for migrant workers)

Kazakhstan (HIV-tests for stays longer than three months, deportations possible)

Moldavia (HIV-tests for stays longer than three months, deportations possible)

Russian Federation (HIV-tests for foreign employers and students, deportation at large scale)

Slovak Republic (no residence permits for people with HIV)

Tajikistan (HIV-tests for stays, exceeding 3 months, immediate deportation)

Turkmenistan (Visa denied for HIV-positive tourists, students, employees, deportation)

Ukraine (HIV-tests for visitors staying longer than 3 months)

Uzbekistan (HIV-tests for stays, exceeding 3 months, deportation possible).

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.