

HIV-SPECIFIC RESTRICTIONS ON ENTRY AND RESIDENCE IN EUROPE: A SOURCE OF DISCRIMINATION AND A CHALLENGE TO DEMONSTRATE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

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In 2007-8 the Deutsche AIDS Hilfe (DAH – German AIDS Federation) conducted an enquiry on HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence.

With support of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs a questionnaire was sent to German embassies in 197 countries, including all countries in the WHO Europe zone. Data from the WHO Europe zone was extracted and analysed.

15 countries from the WHO Europe region have HIV specific restrictions in place. These restrictions range from the denial of work, residency applications and study permits, mandatory HIV tests for certain groups and populations, like domestic help, construction workers, sex workers and people working in the tourism industry, people arriving from endemic regions and returning citizens and finally the threat of deportation. Some European countries still consider HIV as a disease threatening public health and refer to restrictions imposed on people living with HIV and AIDS as good public health standard.

More information is available at: www.hivrestrictions.org

NEXT STEPS:

In 2008, the EU Civil Society Forum on HIV calls for a European response to remove restrictions in Europe. The call includes concrete proposals for further investigation on these issues and actions to the European Commission and intergovernmental bodies like WHO Europe, UNAIDS and IOM. This call was reiterated in May 2010, asking Civil Society to lobby for the removal of unacceptable restrictions by the end of 2010. The AIDS 2010 conference taking place in Austria would indeed qualify Europe as a dignified host for the conference. However, HIV specific restrictions on entry and residence in the WHO Europe zone are still in place and remain to be abolished.

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Georgia (new law, February 2010, restrictions repealed)

Bavaria (Germany) 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)

