



EECA COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN



EECA Networking Zone: ActivEast #515, Global Village AIDS2018 / Media Centre: media@chasevirus.org / <http://chasevirus.org>

Press release

“Chase the virus, not people!”

Campaign of regional community networks of Eastern Europe and Central Asia calls for immediate joint action in response to HIV epidemic in the region

XXII International AIDS Conference

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

July 23, 2018

The region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) is the only region in the world where new cases of HIV and AIDS mortality are still steadily increasing. The number of new cases of HIV in EECA countries increases by 57% every year since 2010, while the mortality rate of AIDS has increased by 38%. Meanwhile, the level of access to ARV treatment is one of the lowest in comparison with other regions - only 28%. The problem of access to medical and social help is a serious challenge for vulnerable and discriminated populations.

On the first day of AIDS2018, **July 23**, the team of regional community networks from Eastern Europe and Central Asia* (EECA SWA, ECUO, EHRA, EWNA, ECOM, ENPUD, Teenergizer and SWAN) together with AFEW International will be holding a press conference on the launch of the joint campaign “Chase the virus, not people!”. It’s aimed to draw attention of the global society to stigma and discrimination of key affected populations as the main barriers for effective response to HIV in the region of EECA.

The campaign's objective is to make real commitments to create favorable legal environment and support involvement of civil society in the decision-making process. It is important for us to demonstrate to the whole world the negative impact of reduced international support, as well as to seek global support for resource mobilization to stabilize the HIV/AIDS epidemic in EECA for all key populations.

“We understand that now more than ever, the voice of our region and community representatives must be heard, as our countries need comprehensive support to fight the epidemic and the political will to reform certain policies. That is why 9 regional EECA networks declare: CHASE THE VIRUS, NOT PEOPLE! It is necessary to overcome discrimination of key populations such as people living with HIV; women living with HIV; people who use drugs; men who have sex with men; trans people; sex workers; youth and adolescents; children and elderly people living with HIV. I strongly believe that only zero stigma, zero discrimination, existing political will of our countries and active steps of the communities and international partners can help us achieve better access to HIV care, treatment and services for people living with HIV, key affected populations, for all and everyone”, admits Wojciech Jerzy Tomczyński, co-chair of East Europe and Central Asia Union of People Living with HIV (ECUO).





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Throughout the whole conference, the campaign "Chase the virus, not people!" will hold various events aimed at civil society and political leaders in the region and in the world, UN agencies, international organizations, donors and experts. To learn about program, participants and opportunities to join the campaign, as well as the schedule of EECA communities Networking Zone "ActivEast" at AIDS2018, please, visit our official website chasevirus.org and our social media profiles ([Facebook](#), Instagram: @chasethevirus and Twitter: @chasevirus).

More than 100 civil society organizations from around the world have already expressed their support for the regional campaign of EECA communities. It is time to act together! Chase the virus, not people!

#chasethevirusnotpeople

***EECA communities team:** EECA Sex Workers' Alliance, East Europe and Central Asia Union of People Living with HIV (ECUO), Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA), Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA), Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM), Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD), Eurasian Union of Adolescents and Youth "Teenergizer", Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN). Organizational partner – AFEW International (the Netherlands).

