



Strengthen youth leadership to address the challenge of HIV and advance health and human rights of LGBTQI people in Europe

Joint Declaration by UNAIDS, ILGA Europe and IGLYO

On occasion of the consultation ***Nothing for us without us - Unleashing youth leadership to address the challenge of HIV and LGBTQI rights in Europe***, organized jointly in Geneva, 15-16 July 2014, UNAIDS together with ILGA-Europe and IGLYO call upon the European Union, governments, local authorities and member organizations in Europe to support and strengthen youth leadership and empowerment to address the challenge of HIV and advance health and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people in Europe.

Across Europe 8% of men who have sex with men today are living with HIV, with up to one in four living with HIV in the age group 45-49 years in the western parts of Europe. Studies among transgender women in Europe indicate a potentially very high prevalence of HIV: 24.5% in Italy, 18.8% in the Netherlands and 18.4% in Spain.

Young men who have sex with men are particularly affected by a new wave of HIV infections, which has occurred in many European countries the last decade. The new wave is also affecting men who have sex with men previously at lower risk, who are living in rural areas and smaller cities. At the European level, there is a rapid growth of new infections among men who have sex with men living in the central and eastern part of Europe. Access to internet and increased mobility in Europe may have increased the scope, size and density of networks of men who have sex with men, but little has been done to address the prevention needs of young men who have sex with men and transgender women that are now at increased risk.

On the opposite, several European countries have sharply reduced funding for prevention among men who have sex with men. The rise of new infections threatens to further intensify and ignite stigma and discrimination towards LGBTQI people, especially in countries with high levels of homophobia, and in countries, where populist movements who are against the human rights

of LGBTQI people are gaining foothold. New approaches, tools and technologies have potentials to significantly bring down the number of new infections, but are not well known and yet to be fully harnessed.

Governments, local authorities and civil society organizations should as a matter of priority work towards:

1. Strengthening the capacity of young LGBTQI activists and organizations to develop and implement innovative approaches to address the challenge of HIV and advance their health and human rights, and ensuring their full and meaningful involvement in national responses to HIV
2. Strengthening sexual education in schools in accordance with the international technical guidance¹, as well as online-communication and other approaches that addresses the urgent needs of young men who have sex with men and transgender women for access to tailored, non-judgmental and anti-stigmatizing HIV information, prevention commodities and HIV testing, counseling and care services.
3. Ensuring the rights and empowerment of young men who have sex with men and transgender women across Europe to make informed choices in relation to treatment initiation and prevention strategies, including on the reduced risk of transmission for people in effective treatment, condom use and new tools such as pre-exposure prophylaxis
4. Reducing stigma and discrimination related to sexual orientation and HIV status, and ending criminalization of homosexuality and an overly broad criminalization of HIV non-disclosure, exposure and transmission.

¹ UNESCO: International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education, 2009