



# MINUTES AIDS ACTION EUROPE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 2014

**Berlin, 20 + 21 November 2014**

Participants:

Steering Committee: **ANKE VAN DAM, CHAIR**, AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW), the Netherlands; **BRIAN WEST**, European AIDS Treatment Group (EATG), UK; **FERENC BAGYINSZKY**, Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, Hungary; **LELLA COSMARO**, Lega Italiana per la Lotta contro l'AIDS (LILA Milano ONLUS), Italy; **SILKE KLUMB**, Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe (DAH), Germany; **NENAD PETKOVIC**, Q-Club, Serbia; **MARIANELA KLOKA**, PRAKSIS, Greece; **AIGARS CEPLITIS**, AGIHAS, Latvia;

Staff: **LJUBA BÖTTGER**, AIDS Action Europe Office; **MICHAEL KRONE**, AIDS Action Europe Office.

Apologies:

Steering Committee: **SVETLANA MOROZ**, All-Ukrainian Network PLWH, Ukraine

## Thursday, November 20, 2014

### 1. AIDS Action Europe – Opening and Orientation

#### 1.1 Opening

The re-hosting process from SANL to the new host organisation Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe has proceeded successfully. After first opening words, all participants hold one minute of silence in remembrance of Martine de Schutter who died in the MH 17 plane crash and played a significant role in establishing AAE and led the network as Executive Coordinator for a decade.

The Steering Committee (SC) reviewed the ACTION LIST of the previous SC meeting in Amsterdam. The goal to reach 90% of the actions listed was reached.

#### 1.2 AIDS Action Europe – Orientation Session

This session is meant to introduce the history of AAE, its objectives and strategies to the new comers but also to discuss expectations and visions of the SC members regarding the future of AAE. Also decision-making procedures between SC, SC chair and office are part of the discussion.

AAE will focus in the upcoming years on: Re-launch of the Clearinghouse is necessary to optimise its use. Apart from the European HIV Legal Forum which is a project of AAE, already funded and will be implemented in 2014 and 2015, AAE is involved in Joint Actions. The Joint Action on Improving Quality in HIV Prevention in Europe runs since 2011 and will continue until spring 2016. Moreover, AAE is nominated to join the Joint Action on HIV and co-infections that will start in 2015 and run for three years.

#### 1.3 Ensuring AAE members' needs and engage them in Action

The office has to address all registered organisations to find out in particular about them. According



to the last count on September 9, 2014, AAE consists of 440 member organisations of which 162 are based in the EU-28. AAE SC members are called on to engage with organisations in their region. To engage members increasingly, more social media use is needed and the website has to be continuously updated with news, ideas and activities. A needs assessment among members could be helpful to serve organisations' demands. Also mapping of contents and issues, for instance in the field of hepatitis C and affordability of medicines should be on the agenda.

## **2. Strategic Development**

### **2.1 Strategic Framework 2015-2017**

The Strategic Framework (SF) is the core document of AAE for the period of 2013 to 2015. Against the background that there have been many changes in 2014 and that the funding period from the Commission is called from 2015 to 2017, a new SF has to be produced. A first version of the Strategic Framework 2015 – 2017 should be finalised with the support of an external editor until March 3, 2015. After review of SC members it will be approved during the next SC meeting in Riga and then printed and published.

### **2.2 Discussions of core areas of AAE in 2015**

Core thematic areas of AAE's work in 2015 are determined by the applications addressed to the Commission and were reconciled during the application process. Three topics are already defined in the application by their working means which are the European EHIV Legal Forum as project; community based testing outside medical settings as consultancy and affordability of medicines as consultancy and working group. Furthermore, there are thematic areas that are on the agenda but have not been described in depths in the application for 2015 since they will be worked on in 2016 and 2017 but should be already prepared in 2015. These are the action plan deriving from the EU-Communication for Combating HIV/AIDS in the European Union and neighbouring countries after 2016, austerity policy (different layers) and discrimination and stigma.

## **3. Co-Chair Civil Society Forum – Representative of AAE**

Lella agreed to extend her term as CSF co-Chair until the end of 2015.

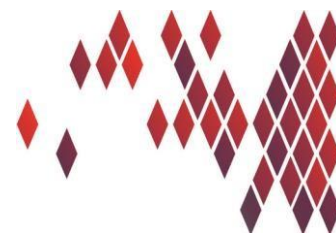
## **4. SC Members for the EECA Region**

The SC therefore decides to extend the call and appeals to all SC members to spread the word about the SC member vacancy, since only a few candidates applied.

## **Friday, November 21, 2014**

## **5. Discussion of the geopolitical situation and its impact on AAE's action plan**

Aigars Ceplitis introduces this session with a presentation on the geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe and the changes triggered by Russian politics, specifically in Ukraine. Main problems in terms



of HIV and co-infections is the ban of opiate substitution therapy, the anti-gay propaganda law that fuels discrimination and stigma and hence, the access to treatment, prevention and care for key populations.

The situation in the region is a highly sensitive issue and needs to be handled with care since a good part of AAE members are located in Russia and Ukraine. The discussion generates different opinions on the political situation but common ones on the messages that AAE should send out. AAE supports OST and other measures of the harm reduction package, it fights discrimination and stigma wherever it appears and supports human rights at national, regional and international level. AAE supports civil society organisations whenever it is needed and asked for. AAE needs urgently to continue its work in the Russian speaking regions. However, it also has to be considered that NGOs can be brought into critical situations through cooperating with Western based organisations.

## **6. Planning 2015**

In order to frame the role AAE can and should play in the upcoming year, SC members will attend the important conferences in 2015. Next SC meetings will take part in April 20-21 in Riga and in October 8-9 in Berlin.

## **7. Travel costs and reimbursement**

AAE reimburse travel expenses and regulations regarding the German business travel act. Limits of per-diems and accommodation costs for every country are presented.

## **8. Any other business**

For the Joint Action on Improving Quality in HIV Prevention in Europe a new member for the external advisory board of AAE has to be appointed. Lella Cosmaro will take over that seat. Michael will follow-up on grant applications to the EU and keep the SC members informed. The SC will be conducted for a full and a half day, so that the second day can be used for meeting Latvian stakeholders.

## **9. Evaluation of this meeting**

The meeting was very positively reviewed. The fact that AAE has been able to set up the applications for the operating grant is very much appreciated. To meet SC-members face-to-face and discuss matters in regard to contents again, after re-hosting was the predominant matter during the last meeting, is very helpful.