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# MINUTES AIDS ACTION EUROPE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 2015

**Riga, 20 + 21 April 2015**

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AIDS Action Europe | Европейское действие по СПИДу | [www.aidsactioneurope.org](http://www.aidsactioneurope.org) | [www.hivaidsclearinghouse.eu](http://www.hivaidsclearinghouse.eu)



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**Monday, April 20, 2015**

## **1. AIDS Action Europe – Opening and follow-up from previous SC Meeting**

### **1.1. Opening**

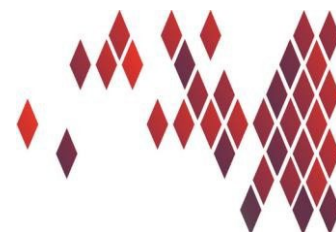
#### **1.1.1. Welcome, review of the agenda & logistics**

The chair of the Steering Committee (SC) Anke van Dam welcomes everybody to this important meeting and recaps the work of the past months.

Since the last Meeting the Steering Committee Group gained a new member, Olga Aleksandrova. Olga is the Acting Executive Director of the East Europe & Central Asia Union of PLWH (ECUO) Secretariat. Also Ferenc Bagyinszky came back, now as Project Manager of the AIDS Action Europe Office.

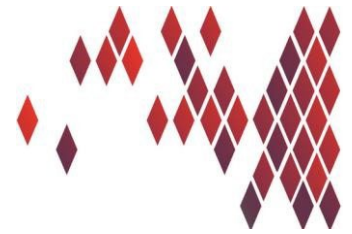
The major task of this SC Meeting is to make sure what we have committed to is still relevant and how to implement our strategy further. The main task is to get our members more involved and to put AAE in the spotlight, to make it more visible.

The agenda for the meeting is adopted by the attendees.



### 1.1.2. Review minutes and action list previous SC meeting

	WHAT	STATUS
<b>A</b>	Work on the TOR for members of AAE	The TOR document for members of AAE is in place but needs further refinement – work in progress
<b>B</b>	Address all registered organisations to find out in particular whether they still exist and whether their email addresses are correct	Work in progress, integrated in the follow-up of the communications strategy
<b>C</b>	Finalise a first version of the Strategic Framework 2015 – 2017, until March 3 with the support of an external editor. After review of SC members it will be once again edited and then printed and published.	Done, on the agenda for approval
<b>D</b>	Brian, Nenad and Michael will work in a working group to plan in-depths the activities of AAE in the field of VCT outside medical settings	Ferenc as new project manager has taken over the coordination. The WG will meet during this meeting in Riga
<b>E</b>	Marianela, Lella, Nenad and Aigars work in a working group on affordability of medicines	As above, Ferenc has taken over and the WG will plan further steps during this meeting in Riga
<b>F</b>	Extend call for a new EECA SC member	Done
<b>G</b>	Create and print a sticker with AAE Logo for Business Cards	Done
<b>H</b>	Mailing for SC Members: Create an e-mail-address for all SC Members.	<a href="mailto:steeringcommittee@aidSACTIONeurope.org">steeringcommittee@aidSACTIONeurope.org</a> – for internal use
<b>I</b>	Follow-up on grant applications to the EU and keep the SC members informed	Done at the end of December after successful approval of the SGA, FPA and the Operating Grant 2014



## 1.2. AIDS Action Europe – Reporting

### 1.2.1. Office Report (Nov 2014 to April 2015)

Anke and Michael presented the activities of AIDS Action Europe since the last meeting in Berlin in November 2014. This section also offered the space to discuss how to improve the work of AAE and how to improve the involvement of the AAE members.

The highlights since the last SC meeting:

- November 2014
  - At the end of the month the CSF Meeting, the Think Tank meeting and the Ministerial conference took place in Rome. It was not well attended from the Ministerial side, also because Ebola played a predominant role in the agenda of European MoHs during that period of time. The Rome Declaration was not adopted and needs to be followed up with the Commission and the upcoming presidencies. ECUO was pleased to find a Russian version of the press release that we sent out during the conference. This was very much appreciated by Russian speaking organisations.
- December 2014
  - AIDS Action Europe got the SGA and FPA grant approved with 20 % co-funding contribution. The Operational Grant for 2014 was retrospectively approved.
  - The EHLF meeting in Budapest took place in the midst of December.
- January 2015
  - The EATG Stakeholder meeting in Brussels put the spotlight on the EATG work plan in 2015. More than 50 partners came together and exchanged information regarding scientific research, policy and advocacy, and capacity building. In the course of this discussion, SC and office members exchanged ideas about the necessity of an AAE event that would bring together members, partners, stakeholders to inform about AAE's strategies and activities. This exchange was taken up in the communications strategy part later on.
- February 2015
  - The follow-up workshop meetings of Quality Action took place in mid-February in Tallinn, Barcelona and Ljubljana. Participants of the workshops on QA Tools took the chance to exchange their experience and networked on it. Lella, Marianella and Ljuba participated in the workshops.
  - The 2nd preparatory meeting on Joint Action on Harm Reduction took place in Riga. AAE is applying as associated partner in work package 2 for dissemination under the lead of the Danish institute CHIP.
- March 2015
  - Ferenc joined the office and Olya the SC team.
  - AAE's first external audit was successfully implemented and the final report of 2014 was submitted.



At the end of the review the SC members were asked whether they feel overburdened by the tasks the office is demanding. Nobody feels overburdened from the SC, but Lella notes that the combination of SC membership and CSF co-Chair is quite overwhelming, in particular due to the tremendous work that the CSF work does exact.

### **1.2.2. Financial and Technical Report 2014**

Michael presents the financial report of the year 2014 for the time after DAH took over as host organisation with 104.075 € income and expenditure and the overall 2014 budget including the SANL part of 229.162 €. The financial and technical report was sent to CHAFEA on March 26, after applying for the extension of the deadline of February 28, due to the late signing of the grant agreement, only on December 23, 2014, the necessity of implementing an external audit and the year-end accounts of the financial department of DAH. Financial and technical reports were sent out to CHAFEA without approval of SC members due to tight timeframes. The discussion regarding the annual report that followed revolved around the following topics:

- How can the impact of our work be assessed when it comes to those users who are not directly in communication with AAE, for instance in terms of the effectiveness of AAE's communications strategy? Which indicators would indeed reflect and measure the outcome of AAE's activities?
- In order to improve involvement of members, project development needs to be increased as it was for instance the case with the ROST project. Small funds could already be attractive to participate in project work. In the regions trainings are needed even if they had already been trained. AAE should map the needs of its members in different orbits and engage them.
- Youths and adolescents could be a key population to focus more upon.

At the end of the exchange the annual report was approved by the SC members. A shorter version of the report needs to be prepared and published on the website.

For next year we will aim at a beforehand review and approval from the SC members for the submission of the report within the deadlines.

## **2. Work Plan**

### **2.1. Work Plans, Budget, Fundraising Issues**

#### **2.1.1. European HIV Legal Forum - EHLF**

As an outcome of the EHLF meeting in Budapest, three working groups were formed to achieve the goals that were devised in the application. Based on the pilot project the EHLF



was now rolled out to ten countries. The first work package includes the production of a legal report that wraps up relevant European legislation and results from a survey that summarises the situation in the ten participating countries. A great deal of this work will be performed by a to-be contracted legal expert. The second addresses networking issues and in particular to build a network of legal experts and the sustainability of the work. The third is about collecting and dissemination of good practices and tools. All work packages have to deliver by the end of October; the project will be completed by the end of the year. Due to late start of the project some timelines had to be modified. However, it is still manageable to achieve all goals within the original timeframe. A longer discussion evolved around the question whether a SC member can be contracted as consultant. The majority of SC members hold the view that this would involve a conflict of interest. Hence, SC members are excluded from consultancy assignments of AAE.

### **2.1.2. Voluntary Counselling Testing Working Group – VCT WG**

The working group regarding VCT with Brian, Nenad, Michael and Ferenc met in the evening of the first day. Olga also joined the WG later on.

### **2.1.3. Affordability Working Group**

Marianella, Lella, Nenad and Aigars form the WG on affordability of medicines. Olga also decided to be part of that WG. This WG meets on the second day of the Riga meeting.

### **2.1.4. Quality Action - QA**

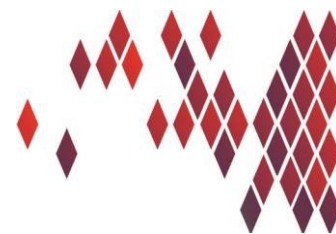
In the midst of June the work package protagonists will meet for a three day meeting in Berlin where application and sustainability of tools and project activities will be in focus.

### **2.1.5. Joint Action on Harm Reduction – HA-REACT**

The JA remains still in the application process. The new submission deadline was set for May 15, 2015. The title was changed to “Zero new HIV, reduced HCV and TB among PWID in the EU by 2020” in order to focus on a broader level. AAE is an associated partner in WP2 for dissemination. AAE will be cooperating with CHIP from Denmark who has the lead in this WP. The JA still displays dissatisfaction regarding the fact that only few NGOs are among the funding recipients.

### **2.1.6. EUROPACH**

The EUROPACH Project is a research project aiming at “Disentangling European HIV/AIDS Policies: Activism, Citizenship and Health”. EUROPACH examines the impact of HIV/AIDS policies in Europe, how they have materialized, transformed and travelled across and within Europe. The researchers will focus on how previous attempts to know and intervene in the HIV/AIDS epidemic have been shaped the current state of policies in Europe on local, national and supranational levels. The first phase of research will employ policy analysis; interviews with activists, persons living with HIV/AIDS (PWA), governmental and non-governmental policy-makers as well as participant observation of relevant activist initiatives and policy discussions at non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and governmental policy-making bodies to describe the specificities of HIV/AIDS policies covering four European



countries – the UK, Germany, Poland and Turkey – as well as the entirety of the European region as defined by various supranational policy-making bodies.

AAE is asked to be a partner and could provide space in the Clearinghouse to publish results and outcomes of the project.

## 2.2. Civil Society Forum

Lella presents the draft agenda of the next CSF meeting. The agenda is based on topics remaining from previous meetings and on input from CSF members. For this meeting – July 6-7, 2015 - most of the agenda points originate from the lively discussion of the previous CSF meeting in November 2014. Apart from the always occurring agenda points, the topic of stock-outs will be reintroduced for this meeting. Other topics will be PrEP; prevention among MSM – with focus on travelling gay men and other MSM and impact of smart phone applications among other issues; home testing; prevention among youth and other adolescents; how to work with EU presidencies to keep HIV, HCV, TB and STIs on the agenda; Quality Action; community involvement in research and the ECUO application to the GFATM.

**Discussion:** The discussion very quickly moved to the most recent development of introduction of compulsory HIV testing for key populations in the Czech Republic. The CSF already drafted a letter to the Czech Minister of Health that also will be addressed to other GO and NGO representatives.

Regarding the CSF meeting agenda, Anke emphasises that UNGASS 2016 and aligned activities are missing out on the agenda so far and should be added.

During the discussion the little involvement of NGOs in the JA HA-REACT came up again. Against this background, the general concept and effectiveness of Joint Actions was questioned. Civil Society should discuss with the Commission and with the Think Tank members whether the instrument JA itself is apt to function at European level, considered that only little funds are reaching the community and GO and NGO collaboration is not really developed.

Since the application of the JA is evaluated by external consultants by the means of objective criteria the critic has to be precise, constructive and diplomatic. However, the setup of the JA HA-REACT bears enough irregularities to criticise upon.

## 2.3. Re-Launch of the Clearinghouse 2015

Ljuba gives a presentation (see annex A) about the re-launch procedure of the Clearinghouse. There are questions about the importance of the involvement of stakeholders (SH) in the procedure. The office is planning a SH meeting and this assessment indicates who should be there. According to the SGA the new CH website has to be online and functioning by the end of the year. The beta version should be up by December but we need to consider that over 1300 documents are on the CH.

The discussion focused on the composition of the SH meeting, as for instance whether regional representation should be considered and what the added value for AAE members compared to general users is. Involving SHs is a good idea but perhaps you can do much of





the consultation via email or TCs. A CH is a very difficult thing to manage: quality of uploads, maintenance etc. One format should be introduced for uploaded documents, although that might bear limitations. A mobile app for the CH was also brought up as a good idea.

### 3. Review of the day/Discussions

At the end of the first SC meeting day, Anke reviews the discussions and outcomes. It has been a very interesting day with new ideas on how to work as SC and a network. Having quite a few new people on board might slow down the agenda but discussions are very valuable. Part of the day was turned into a brainstorming session which was very important in terms of achieving our goal of increased involvement of members in our activities. With the decision of excluding SC members as consultants due to a potential conflict of interest, the SC has shown its capability of governance. The re-launch of the CH is on its way with a lot of preparatory work being implemented but a whole lot of work is still to be done.

### Tuesday, April 21, 2015

#### 4. Communications Strategy

Ljuba introduces the topic by giving a presentation on the communication strategy. (see Annex B)

**Discussion:** Several propositions for improving AAE's communications strategy referring to Ljuba's presentation were discussed. Regular Facebook posts such as Member Monday could be (re)-introduced. Google gives support for non-profit organizations to set key words in search engines. Gayromeo also gives small grants and visibility options. Messages from conferences etc. could be tailor-made for different communities, for instance to the gay community on PreP. Communications also include other visibility of the network such as presence at meetings, member meetings, etc. Also a new format of the Newsletter should be considered as it takes a lot of time in creating and doesn't seem to have the impact it should have considering the work invested.

As for the next steps, the office will work on a strategy aligning with the time span of the new Strategic Framework, e.g. from 2016 to 2017. A draft of the strategy should be ready by the next SC meeting. After discussion it should be edited and then finally approved in order to have it ready with the beginning of next year.

Furthermore, the concept of a member/stakeholder meeting is discussed. For the next SC meeting an external facilitator should be hired to develop a concept for this kind of event together with the SC members. The idea is that once a year people should come together in order to feed back on the work of AAE as well as on future plans.



## 5. Situation of HIV in Latvia

Aigars gives a presentation about the HIV situation in Latvia (see Annex C). In preparation of the Round Table Discussion in the afternoon, , among other issues the discussion centred on testing and treatment policies for pregnant women; the number of doctors providing care and treatment for PLHIV, the treatment guidelines and reasons to stay with the treatment initiation at <200CD4 count threshold. Moreover, the proceedings of the Round Table Discussion were agreed upon. The role of the SC members would be to interact with comments and their views during discussions.

## 6. Strategic Framework 2015 - 2017

After working on the Strategic Framework for the last five months, the SF is now up for final approval. A change on the wording in the final version is indicated: under “Who we are” “activists” is now replaced by “activist- and community-based groups of ...”

A final change is identified regarding the wording on page 8: Since GFATM is not a regular attendee of CSF meetings but it would be good to see GFATM among those strategic partners that are invited regularly the new text will be: “regularly invites stakeholders such as the GFATM, UNODC etc. that are relevant to the agenda of the meeting.”

## 7. Governance

### 7.1. CSF co-chair from 2016

A new co-Chair needs to be elected. His/her organization has to be member of AAE and he/she has to have attended at least one CSF meeting. Both Tamás’ and Lella’s term ends at the end of 2015. A call should go out asap, to AAE members and also to the members of the CSF. In the upcoming CSF meeting the call should also be announced. The new co-chair could attend the December meeting and get advised and supported by Lella already. Since there has to be an open call, there may be a co-chair coming who is not a member of the SC. The existing ToR for the co-Chair needs to be revised before the call is sent out, e.g. they should be ready by midst of May and then should be discussed during the next TC. The call should be sent out in June before the next CSF meeting. Applications should come in until the end of July and the incoming applications could be discussed during the TC on September 8, 2015. The election should be finalised latest in October during the next SC meeting.

### 7.2. SC Chair from 2016

Apart from the CSF co-chair ToR, also the SC chair ToR needs to be rewritten. Anke’s term as chair ends by the end of 2015. According to the existing ToR, Anke can reapply for a second term. The existing ToR is not very clear and leaves room for interpretation when it comes to extension of the term and the duration of the SC membership. The office is assigned to prepare a draft with different scenarios by June 5, the day of the next TC.



### 7.3. SC Member ToR

The ToR for SC membership also needs to be rewritten. The office will prepare a draft by June 5, 2015.

### 7.4. Overview of Current Terms of SC Members

The terms of current SC members diverge on the website. They need to be aligned.

## 8. Outcomes of the Round Table Discussion with Latvian GO and NGO representatives

- The Round Table Discussion was held in an interesting and supportive manner. AIDS Action Europe was well represented and indicated its preparedness to support CS organisations efforts. Aigars will prepare a draft letter to the Cabmin that will be further worked on by the office and Anke.

## 9. Review

Following issues were discussed during the day:

- Next steps for the creation of a new communication strategy were fixed and the set up for an AAE network day is on the agenda. A first draft of a communications strategy 2016-2017 should be presented to the SC members during the next SC meeting.
- Also, the next steps for revising the governance documents were agreed upon.
- The working groups met and report the following: A mapping exercise will be conducted in both WG in order to collect already existing activities and approaches to avoid duplications. Apart from good practice approaches, also bad practice and failure will be analysed to understand what does not work out of which reasons. These experiences are important to recommend the “right” things. The affordability WG will focus on research how prices are negotiated and creating advocacy tools. The VCT WG will be predominantly focus on legal circumstances for checkpoints and other VCT outside medical settings facilities.

## 10. AAE meetings and teleconferences in 2015/2016

The following AAE meeting and teleconference dates stand this year .

AAE meetings	Teleconferences
October 8-9, 2015 in Berlin	June 5, 2015 (11 am) July 14, 2015 (11 am) September 8, 2015 (11 am) November 3, 2015 (2 pm) Dec 15, 2015 (2 pm)



## 11. Any other business

- The SC agrees that minutes of the TC will be sent out earlier than before, e.g. shortly after the last TC. If wished for, they can be sent out again shortly before the next TC.
- UNAIDS PCB NGO is looking for a new European representative. Ferenc applied last time. There is an interest of AAE nominating someone. Since the seat on UNAIDS PCB NGO is an unpaid position and there is an estimated workload of 10 hours a week, no SC member is interested in applying.
- Upcoming conferences that are attended by SC members or office staff:
  - Olya: Yerevan, May 20, 90-90-90 UNAIDS meeting
  - Olya: Yerevan, May 22-23, EECA regional networks of key populations
  - Anke, Michael: AIDS Impact, Amsterdam, July 28-31, AAE is co-hosting the CHAFAEA symposium
  - Anke: UNODC, Kiev, end of May, 26-27 Regional preparatory meeting for the UNGASS on Drugs
  - Ferenc: International HIV conference, Prague, May 28
  - Brian: World Hepatitis Summit, Glasgow, September 2-4
  - Brian: EACS Conference in Barcelona, October 21-24
  - Anke: International Harm Reduction Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, October 18-21

## 12. Evaluation of this meeting

- The feedback round provides very positive results. The SC members are happy with the achievements of the meeting, with the organisation, with the whole SC and office staff set up, as it is perceived as very harmonic. It was good to be in Latvia and have the Round Table. There is a lot to follow up on. Although there are still a lot of issues to catch up on, with Ferenc and Ljuba on board the office is much more likely to achieve the objectives set for this year.



## ACTION LIST

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
<b>A</b>	Address all member organisations to find out in particular whether they still exist and whether their email addresses are correct; create a strategy how to involve members to update their contacts regularly	Ljuba	Next SC meeting
<b>B</b>	Change signature for AAE Office emails	Office	asap
<b>C</b>	Working group on VCT outside medicals settings: set up activity plan; mapping and find good practice and failures	Brian, Nenad, Ferenc	ongoing until end of 2015
<b>D</b>	Working Group on affordability of medicines: set up activity plan; mapping and find good practice and failures	Marianella, Lella, Nenad, Aigars,	ongoing until end of 2015
<b>E</b>	Review the procedure of annual reporting of the last year with SANL	Chair - Anke	Next SC meeting
<b>F</b>	After approval of the Annual Report 2014, create a web-version, translate and publish it	Office	asap
<b>G</b>	Prepare a session during the next SC meeting to brainstorm ideas for an AAE network event with the support of an external facilitator	Office and chair	Next SC meeting
<b>H</b>	Revise Communications Strategy and prepare a draft	Ljuba	Next SC Meeting
<b>I</b>	Revise and rewrite the governance documents (ToR) and send out a draft by next TC	Ferenc, Michael	Next TC, June 5
<b>J</b>	Draft a letter to the Latvian Cabmin as outcome of the round table discussion	Aigars, Anke, Michael	May 5
<b>K</b>	Share results for WGs about affordability and testing	Ferenc	End of May, early June
<b>L</b>	Share re-Launch Clearinghouse Plan with SC Members	Ljuba	May 11



## ANNEXES

ANNEX	NAME
ANNEX A	Presentation: Re-Launch of the Clearinghouse
ANNEX B	Presentation: Communication Strategy
ANNEX C	Presentation: HIV Situation in Latvia

