



*ECOM – Eurasian Coalition
on Health, Rights, Gender
and Sexual Diversity*

2020 25

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends!

The past year has once again shown the sustainable development of ECOM as an organization ready to quickly respond to emerging challenges and adapt its activities to the needs of communities in rapidly changing conditions.

ECOM has strengthened its position in the EECA region, expanded its list of members and gained new allies. We worked actively on health and human rights issues, increased our focus on community-led monitoring, and continued to provide technical assistance to partners. Last year, ECOM held the First (Sub-)Regional Consultation on PrEP among MSM and Trans People in Central Asia, the first large-scale event on this topic, bringing together key stakeholders from Central Asia: representatives of national LGBT communities, health experts, international organizations and donors.

However, the situation in the region with regard to the rights of LGBT people is deteriorating and becoming increasingly tense. In more and more countries of the region, the pressure on our communities is increasing. New homophobic laws have been passed in Russia and Kyrgyzstan that violate the fundamental human rights of LGBT people and directly and indirectly restrict the activities of community organizations and non-governmental organizations working with LGBT people.

This is why we need to take all of our experience and knowledge gained over the years and rethink approaches and strategies so that we can most effectively continue to protect the health and rights of communities, including in countries where discrimination is on the rise.

We believe that by joining efforts, together we can achieve a fairer and more equal society and improve the lives of LGBT people.

Vitaly Djuma
Executive Director of ECOM



INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE BY THE CHAIR OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

Thank you for joining us to look back on our journey over the past year, which was filled with challenges and hardships as we once again proved the strength of our communities and our strong commitment to justice and equality.

The motto «Let Communities Lead» is not only becoming our slogan, but our reality as well. We are joining our efforts and ideas to fight for the values that form the basis of the Coalition. The past year has been a year of challenges and achievements, but our success story is not limited to a specific period of time. It grows like a river, and continually transforms our experience.

We are moving forward despite any difficulties, because we believe in the power of cooperation and respect. Our advocacy and health projects have become examples for other regions, and have inspired change. We have shown that gender and sexual diversity is not only part of our identity, but also an incredible source of strength, where every member of the Coalition can find support and inspiration. We support each other when times get tough and celebrate each victory together. Our Coalition is an example of how diversity can be our strength, not our weakness.

We will still face many challenges in the coming year. But I am confident that if we act together, we can overcome any obstacles. Let's continue to strive for equality, develop our communities and influence policy. We are not just a coalition, we are a movement that embodies change for the better.

Thank you, dear friends, for your efforts, your contributions and your desire for change. Let's face the future together with optimism and determination. We are the Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexuality Diversity, and we are making history. May this new year bring us even more achievements and success.

Thank you. Together we are strong!

Vitaly Vinogradov
Chair of ECOM's Steering Committee

ABOUT ECOM

ECOM – Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity (ECOM) is an international, non-governmental membership association open to non-profit organizations and activists working in the field of rights and health of LGBT communities in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA).

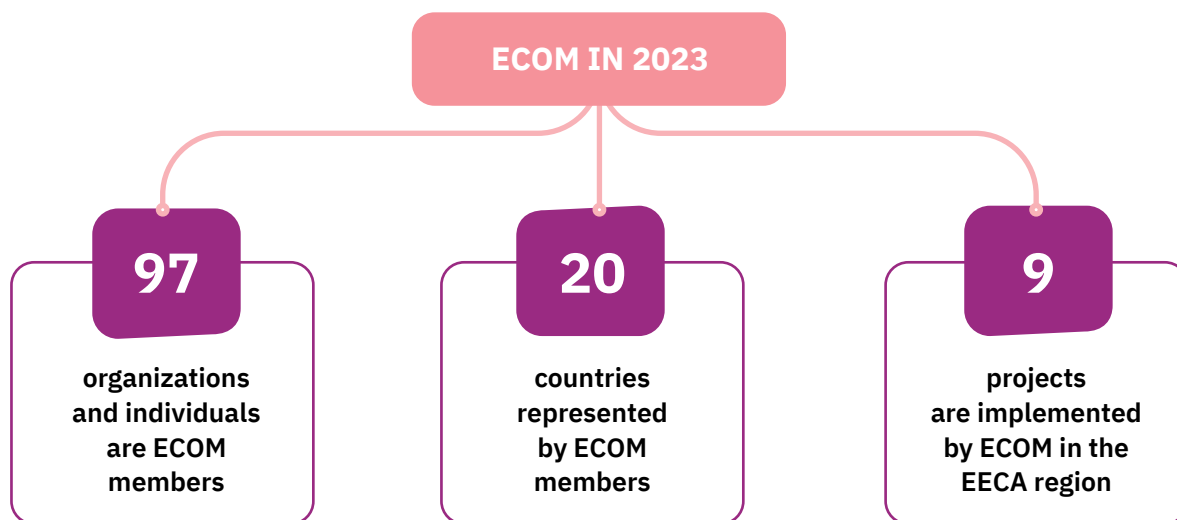
ECOM'S MISSION

Support the development of national LGBT+ communities and their activism, promote human rights, and look after the health and social well-being of people of gender and sexual diversity in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

GOAL OF ACTIVITIES IN 2023

Ensure sustained and proactive attention on health and human rights issues affecting LGBT people in national and international policies and programs, including the necessary funding and technical support for the development of community organizations in the countries of the EECA region.

ECOM IN 2023



2023

MAIN EVENTS

1st (Sub-)Regional Consultation on PrEP among MSM and Trans People in Central Asia – the first large-scale event on this topic, bringing together all key stakeholders: representatives of the LGBT communities of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, health specialists, international organizations and donors.

The second part of the TikTok Campaign «We are alike» (20 unique video clips) collected 5.1 million views (3.2 million unique viewers), as well as 14,000 comments and 37,000 reposts!

28 projects for key populations within the program to reduce the negative impact of Russia's war against Ukraine on the access of key populations to HIV services and humanitarian assistance in the CEECA region received funding amounting to more than 450 thousand euros.

Reports on **4 countries** (Azerbaijan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) were presented as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

A campaign was launched to **popularize PrEP** among MSM in EECA.

431 cases of human rights violations were collected in 6 countries of the region: Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan – this information served as the basis for compiling reports on rights violations and further advocacy.

ECOM'S ACTIVITIES IN 2023: FULFILLING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1

SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE LGBT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVE GROUPS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN EACH COUNTRY OF THE REGION, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT NATIONAL SPECIFICS



SUPPORTING UKRAINE AND STUDYING THE IMPACT OF RUSSIAN MILITARY AGGRESSION ON COMMUNITIES IN THE EECA REGION

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, ECOM has **supported** its members and partners in Ukraine, as well as all community members and Ukrainians in need. These activities have continued into 2023.

«In times of military conflict, support for LGBT people in Ukraine becomes an integral component of the development of a sustainable community. Our efforts are aimed at creating a safe and supportive space where each person can feel accepted and respected, and our community can be more resilient to the challenges and difficulties we face in our daily pursuit of harmony, equality, and peace. We believe that diverse and inclusive coalition members are key to building a sustainable future».

Vitaly Apanasenko, ECOM SC member

Support for mental health services for LGBT Ukrainians — **chatbot for provision of psychological and informational assistance**

Counseling:

- informational
- psychological
- peer-to-peer
- on health issues
- legal

Around **6,000** consultations were provided as part of this work

In the first quarter, a **psychological assistance project was completed in three shelters** in Ukraine (Kryvyi Rih, Zaporizhzhia, Odessa)

In 2023, the following were carried out:

- **51** consultations with a psychologist
- **2** self-help groups for **14** clients

In total, the following were carried out as part of the project:

- **206** consultations with a psychologist
- **10** self-help groups for **75** clients

During the year of humanitarian assistance for Ukrainians (2022–2023), ECOM supported **803** requests for a total amount of **2 221 343,60 hryvnia** (about 530,000 euros)

GRANTS

Following the beginning of the full-scale invasion, ECOM, in partnership with Aidsfonds (Netherlands) and ICF «Alliance for Public Health» (Ukraine), began implementing a [program aimed at reducing the negative impact of the Russian war against Ukraine on the access of key populations to HIV services](#) and humanitarian assistance in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA).

- As part of the program, ECOM held a grant competition in May 2023, during which [17 community organizations were selected](#). ECOM provided 14 medium grants up to 20,000 euros and 3 small grants up to 7,000 euros. The total amount of funding was 293,122 euros.
- In August, ECOM held its [second grant competition](#). In the second round, ECOM received 21 applications. As a result of the evaluation by a group of independent experts, 11 medium grants of up to 20,000 euros were awarded. Three projects were selected from Lithuania, two projects each from Poland, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, and one project each from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. The total amount of funding was 166,214 euros.



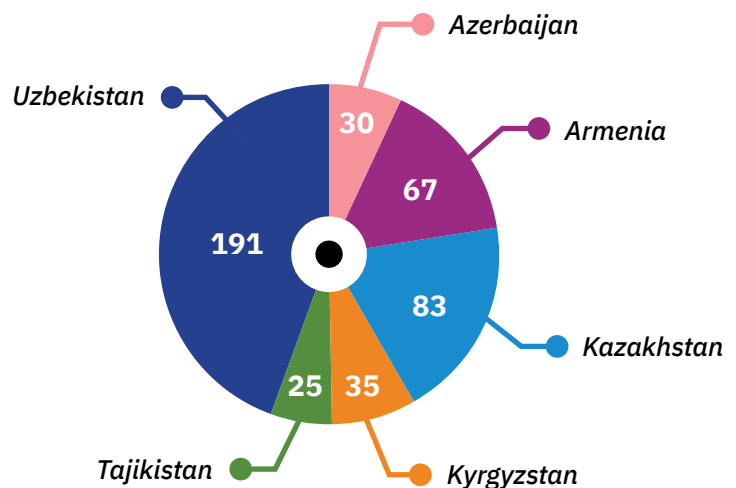
REGIONAL COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT IN RELATION TO SOGI AND HIV IN EECA

An [Analysis of national legislation related to the rights of LGBT people and HIV in 12 countries of CEECA](#) was published. Its goal is to show progress or conversely, in some countries, regression in the development of legislation and law enforcement practice, which enables or restricts LGBT people from enjoying human rights. The report covers the period from the end of 2021 to the beginning of 2023 and contains a list of key advocacy recommendations on issues that need to be brought to the attention of national teams and international organizations to improve the human rights situation in the 12 countries of the region.



MONITORING AND DOCUMENTING VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF LGBT PEOPLE IN EECA

431 cases of violations of the rights of gay and bisexual men, trans people, other MSM, and LBQ women in 5 countries of the region. Cases are used for advocacy, and included in reports submitted to UN Treaty Bodies and the OSCE.



In 2023, ECOM, together with national partners, continued to monitor violations of the rights of LGBT people in EECA countries, in particular, reports were published on rights violations in [Kazakhstan](#), [Armenia](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#) and [Uzbekistan](#) for 2022. This community-led monitoring work continued in the reporting year.

As a result of the analysis, the main causes of rights violations and discrimination were identified, and quantitative data was obtained. Conclusions and recommendations for countries were developed based on this data.



HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY THROUGH THE SUBMISSION OF ALTERNATIVE REPORTS

In 2023, ECOM continued to collaborate with national partners to conduct joint advocacy using international mechanisms. Throughout the year, a number of alternative reports were submitted on issues related to the rights of the LGBT community, in particular:

- to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (Georgia, in partnership with Temida and Equality Movement);
- to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Russia, in partnership with the NGOs «Kyrgyz Indigo» and «Coming Out»);
- to the Committee against Torture ([Kazakhstan, together with Feminita and ALMA-TQ; Kyrgyzstan with «Kyrgyz Indigo»](#)) – as a result, the Committee called on Kazakhstan to «abolish the requirement for compulsory gender reassignment surgery», which is part of the invasive and humiliating process of changing one’s legal gender in the country;
- as part of the [Universal Periodic Review](#) (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Russia);
- to the [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#) (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan);
- to the Human Rights Committee (Moldova);
- to the OSCE ([hate crime cases in 5 countries of EECA](#)).

From 10 to 19 July, 2023, the **High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development** was held in New York, where Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan spoke about how they are addressing environmental, economic and social problems. The countries did not mention LGBT communities in their reports. ECOM participated in the development of a [statement by civil society](#). The **statement on Tajikistan** mentioned the need to include gender identity in the list of protected characteristics in its anti-discrimination law. The statement on Uzbekistan included the need to eliminate discrimination against people living with HIV.



Alina Mirzoyan, Human Rights and Advocacy Coordinator, New Generation Humanitarian NGO (Armenia)

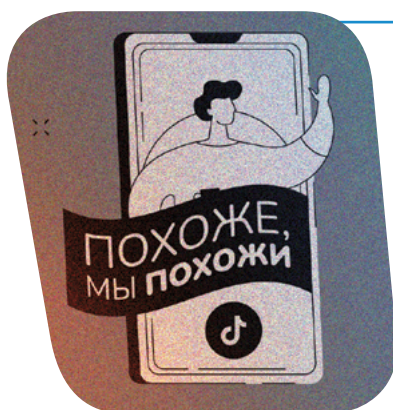
At the 74th session of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in October–November 2023, the Committee considered, among other things, the fourth periodic report of Armenia. Representatives of a consortium consisting of ECOM, the Humanitarian NGO «New Generation», and the human rights NGO «National Trans Coalition» (Armenia) took part in the session, prior to which it presented an [alternative report on economic, social and cultural rights](#). The alternative report, as well as informal discussions between representatives of the consortium and the Committee, raised issues of human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Armenia, in particular the issues of non-discrimination, health, and the prevention of domestic violence.

[ECOM participated in the 44th session of the UPR](#). In this cycle, ECOM prepared an alternative report on Turkmenistan. **ECOM's abstract on Turkmenistan** was adopted in the preliminary session of the UPR for civil society. The preliminary session was attended by the diplomatic missions of states. As a result, Turkmenistan received 15 recommendations on LGBT people, including on the issue of decriminalization.






ECOM prepared an **alternative report on the situation in Uzbekistan**. It also supported the trip of activists from Uzbekistan to participate in the pre-session of the UPR, where they had the opportunity to meet with diplomatic missions and discuss recommendations necessary for the country. As a result, more than 13 states provided recommendations on LGBT issues, including the decriminalization of homosexuality and the unintentional transmission of HIV. Mexico and Ireland made separate recommendations on ending the practice of anal examinations to prove homosexuality.

CONDUCTING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ON LGBT ISSUES

Media campaigns at the regional and national levels are a powerful tool for reducing stigma and discrimination against the LGBT community, increasing visibility, and changing the perception of LGBT people in society.



[IT LOOKS LIKE WE ARE ALIKE](#)

-  The campaign began in 2022.
-  It is aimed at creating a more positive attitude towards transgener-ness in society.
-  What's unique is that all the campaign videos were filmed with the participation of trans people.
-  The [second cycle](#) of the media campaign was launched on 18 August 2023.
-  During the second part of the campaign, 20 videos were released.

The campaign «It looks like we are alike» was the most successful media campaign in ECOM's history, receiving a total of [more than 5 million views](#). One video received more than 1.5 million views. The number of subscribers increased from 1,785 to 14,000 (as of 23 December, 2023).

The most popular video clips from the campaign and coverage:

 <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMjQY5rvx> (1.5 million)

 <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMjQY5qQ3> (710,000)

 <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMjQYSGDJ> (585,000)

● NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS UNDER THE REGIONAL CAMPAIGN

Ukraine («Cohort» and «Convictus Ukraine»)

A national media campaign where trans people's stories are individually shared across social media platforms and brought together in a [film on YouTube](#). More than 170,000 total views.

Georgia («Temida»)

National media campaign to combat stigma and discrimination ([TikTok](#), [Instagram](#) – a total of 338,000 views). As part of the campaign, more than 60 posters were developed and distributed, which was covered in print and television media.

PRESENTATION OF ECOM'S DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE ON THE LIVES OF TRANS PEOPLE IN EECA

The idea for the film came from the trans community – the Trans People's Working Group on HIV and Sexual Health in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (RGT).

- 1 First part: [«Trans Ukrainians»](#)
- 2 Second part: [«Butterfly Effect»](#) (impact of the war on Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova and Kyrgyzstan)
- 3 Third part: [«Trans Russians»](#)
- 4 Fourth part: [«Planning Horizon»](#) (how Russia's military aggression against Ukraine changed plans for and perceptions of the future of trans people throughout EECA)

The film is the voice of trans people whose lives were changed by the war

The title of the film, **«Transition»**, is a reference to trans transition, and to the physical crossing of national borders, and how people moved from one phase of life, where they knew everything and lived in comfortable conditions, to another that was previously unknown to them. After all, many of these people had to abruptly change their place of residence and leave not only their home, but also their former well-established life, family and friends.

The ECOM and RGT team worked for more than six months to create the film. Filming took place in different formats, ranging from interviews on Zoom to personal meetings.

«We created a film where we showed the war through the eyes of the trans community, with its fears, anxieties, and experiences».

Anzhelika, RGT member, Belarus

«I was interested in exploring how the war in my country and its consequences affect the lives of people in EECA countries. And this is always best seen based on the lives of people from vulnerable groups. And thanks to trans people, we saw this. There is no area the war has not penetrated: from the economy, to the concept of gender roles, to the rethinking of basic beliefs. Overall, the film is about how closely linked we all really are. About how humanity's ideas about gender change lives. And, of course, about how Russia's war against Ukraine is destroying people's lives; yes, even those who don't wake up to the sound of explosions».

Katerina Maiboroda, film director, Ukraine



ONLINE WEBINARS ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ECOM MEMBERS AND LGBT COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS

WEBINARS FOR COMMUNICATION AND SMM PROFESSIONALS FROM ECOM MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:

- ✓ [How NGOs can promote successful cases of their work on social media](#)
- ✓ [Interaction with the media: how to establish connections with journalists and promote your expertise](#)
- ✓ [Working with news feeds: how to find a topic even on the most boring day](#)
- ✓ [Storytelling for activism: how to advance your agenda using stories](#)



ONLINE WEBINARS ON ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR LGBT PEOPLE IN EECA

WEBINAR	SPEAKER
«Trans people and chemsex: what you should know»	Nikolay Lunchenkov , infectious disease doctor, LGBT Health Coordinator at ECOM
Human rights advocacy for trans people at the national and global levels	Viktoriya Primak , trans activist, Advocacy Coordinator for the ALMA-TQ transgender initiative, expert in the field of transgender rights
Queer safety	Zhanar Sekerbaeva , co-founder of the Kazakhstani feminist initiative «Feminita», doctor of social sciences Pavel Zalevsky , queer non-binary activist



STRATEGIC LITIGATION RELATED TO VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF LGBT PEOPLE IN EECA AIMED AT IMPROVING THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC CASES IN 2023

COUNTRY	CASE DESCRIPTION	LINK
Kyrgyzstan	<p>Case regarding a gay human rights activist who was persecuted by the State Committee on National Security (SCNS) – blackmail with an intimate video, ban on entry into the country.</p> <p>The actions of the SCNS were appealed to the Administrative Court and the Bishkek City Court, and a complaint was filed with the Supreme Court, which upheld the decision. Requests were submitted to the Border Service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and an appeal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was prepared with a request to help resolve the issue of banning a citizen from entering the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.</p>	https://srdefenders.org/kyrgyzstan-alleged-privacy-violations-harassment-and-ban-on-entry-imposed-on-sergey-marinin-joint-communication/
Armenia	Case of bodily harm against a trans person	https://ngngo.net/en/2023/03/13/criminal-proceedings-of-the-case-on-trans-persons-beating-continue/
Armenia	<p>Personal injury case based on perceived sexual orientation and gender identity (ongoing since 2020)</p> <p>On 7 April, 2023, the Court of Cassation issued a decision, and refused to accept the complaint for consideration due to insufficient grounds. Since all protection mechanisms in the national courts of Armenia have been exhausted, the next step was to file a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). The lawyer in the case, Ara Karagezryan, filed the corresponding application with the ECtHR on 9 June, 2023.</p>	

TRAINING

WEBINAR THEME	SPEAKER	DESCRIPTION
Universal Periodic Review in Human Rights Activities	Nargiz Arupova (Director of UPR Info), specialist in the field of UPR, international human rights, development and the rule of law	Nargiz spoke about the UPR mechanism and how civil society and states can cooperate to develop recommendations. She gave recommendations on preparing reports, and on accessing data on recommendations and their implementation.



TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR ECOM'S MEMBERS AND PARTNERS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ECOM provides **technical support** to partners upon request:

- ✓ Translation of a **study to assess the number of trans people in Georgia** from English into Georgian, which will increase the accessibility of the document for representatives of government agencies and the community.
- ✓ **Seminar on engaging with UPR for activists from Russia and Uzbekistan.**
- ✓ **Training on monitoring human rights violations and advocacy** at the request of the LGBT+ organization «Education Community» (Kazakhstan). Following the seminars, the partner organization began monitoring and documenting cases of violations in Kazakhstan using the REAct system.
- ✓ A **list of ombudsman offices in the region** was compiled, which will be useful for the provision of technical assistance and used by ECOM to disseminate information on human rights issues.

Best practices: successful capacity building of community organizations in the region through technical support provided as part of the «Trans* Map in EECA» project

- ★ National partners have mastered the organizational capacity self-assessment tool **ECAT** and the **TRANSIT**, important tools for their activities and for training partner organizations.
- ★ **Fundraising strategies, a strategic plan, and roadmaps for holding various types of events** were developed.
- ★ Consortium members have strengthened their operational capabilities through targeted training and ongoing technical assistance from ECOM.
- ★ Through coordinated regional and national advocacy efforts, trans people successfully identified and prioritized solutions to critical health issues, including those related to HIV.
- ★ Various groups led by trans people have been established.
- ★ In Ukraine, a working group of trans people was established under the program committee of the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) to improve understanding of trans issues and to promote the interests of trans people in the CCM.
- ★ The organization «New Generation» (Armenia) established the Armenian Trans People Working Group (ATPWG), which has a unique format and consists of trans organizations and individual trans activists. During the implementation of the project, group members strengthened their capacity and had a positive impact on the implementation of project activities. The ATPWG held a total of 15 official meetings.

ECOM has significantly improved its expertise on trans issues and its image in the eyes of the international trans community. In 2023, a separate pool of experts was established, which included only trans and non-binary people. There are more trans people vying for expert positions in the Coalition. ECOM is establishing contacts with ILGA-Europe, TGEU and the Trans Coalition on issues related to working with trans people.



QUEERATHON REGIONAL YOUTH WORKSHOP FOR LGBT YOUTH (30 MAY – 02 JUNE, TBILISI)



QUEERathon is a unique annual intensive educational course for LGBT youth in the EECA region organized by ECOM.

The [«Activist QUEERathon»](#) is a continuation of the tradition started in 2022: several days of intensive training and networking for aspiring LGBT activists from the EECA region. The event was attended by 10 participants and 3 mentors, who are graduates of the previous QUEERathon.

The goal is to help young LGBT activists find their calling. Over four days, participants delved into the concept of human rights, learned how to defend their rights and fight for equality, familiarized themselves with tools for influencing public opinion, and were taught how to communicate with opponents. In addition, participants learned how to write and speak about rights and sex education in a way that resonates with others.

«For me, as an LGBT activist, interacting with other activists from other countries is extremely important. Changing attitudes towards queer people is not a process of just one country, it is a process that must take place all over the world, so it is important for us to share experiences, support each other, and participate in changes in all countries. For me, participating in the QUEERathon is part of my activism; it involves interacting with very interesting and diverse people. This is what makes our joint work for social change better and more impactful. We must cooperate with each other and become a common movement».

Anzhelika Frolova, lead QUEERathon trainer and LGBT activist from Moldova



COLLECTION OF TOOLS FOR STRENGTHENING THE HIV RESPONSE AMONG MSM AND TRANS PEOPLE



In 2023, a unique collection «*Collection of tools for strengthening the HIV response among MSM and trans people*» was developed and presented. It gathers and systematizes the main methodological, programmatic, and practical materials prepared by the ECOM team in 2020–2022 as part of various programs and projects.

The collection is available in the [public domain](#) and will serve as a useful tool for individuals and organizations whose work addresses various issues affecting MSM and trans people. It also relates to the development and implementation of national HIV prevention programs among MSM and trans people, including as part of Global Fund grants.

2

DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY PROTECT SEXUAL AND MENTAL HEALTH, INCLUDING IN CONNECTION WITH HIV INFECTION, STIS, AND OTHER ISSUES, WITHIN THE LGBT+ COMMUNITY



PREP (*pre-exposure prophylaxis*)

THE 1ST (SUB-)REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON PREP AMONG MSM AND TRANS PEOPLE IN CENTRAL ASIA



On 21-22 November, the [1st \(Sub-\)Regional Consultation on PrEP among MSM and Trans People in Central Asia](#) was held in Almaty. This is the first consultation of this scale, which brought together more than 100 participants representing all key stakeholders: the LGBT community of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, health specialists, international organizations and donors.

The goal of the consultation was to develop common stakeholder approaches to accelerate national and regional efforts to scale up PrEP uptake among MSM and trans people in Central Asia. The main outcome of the consultation was a [communiqué](#) with recommendations for countries on expanding PrEP programs in the region of Central Asia. The communiqué was developed based on the work of more than 100 consultation participants over two working days and seven thematic sessions, during which experts discussed current issues related to expanding PrEP programs in the region.



«While the HIV epidemic is steadily growing among gay men, other MSM and trans people in EECA, we know that PrEP can prevent transmission of the virus by 99%. This is why ECOM is focused on promoting this highly effective method. We co-organized a consultation on PrEP in Central Asia to provide partners in the region with a platform for sharing knowledge and experience. It is important that community organizations are involved in the planning and implementation of PrEP programs from the outset. As the consultation showed, the countries of Central Asia have much to be proud of in this regard».

Vitaly Djuma,
Executive Director of ECOM

CONDUCTING AN INFORMATIONAL CAMPAIGN ON PREP IN THE EECA REGION



In November, as part of the SoS_project 2.0, ECOM launched a [campaign to promote pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV](#) among men who have sex with men in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Its goal was to provide information about PrEP and to make PrEP more accessible and attractive for all men who have sex with men.

Promotional materials for posts, stories, posters, and leaflets were available in [Russian](#) and [English](#). In addition, some of the images were translated into 7 national languages: [Armenian](#), [Georgian](#), [Kazakh](#), [Kyrgyz](#), [Romanian](#), [Tajik](#) and [Ukrainian](#). The campaign was launched on all of ECOM's communication channels.

DEVELOPMENT OF ONLINE COURSES ON PREP AND RELATED TOPICS

The [course on pre-exposure prophylaxis](#) is a specialized online course designed to equip outreach workers, psychologists, peer trainers, and consultants from national organizations with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively promote access and adherence to PrEP and provide people with education and support in connection with this method of HIV prevention. PrEP is a vital tool in preventing HIV transmission; this course covers the benefits of PrEP, strategies for using it, and related challenges



COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING (CLM)

TRAINING COURSE ON «COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING»

ECOM developed a special [course on CLM](#), which provides answers to questions about what CLM is and what role it plays in assessing the quality of services. The course consists of several main sections:

- What is CLM and what role does it play in assessing the quality of services.
- What health services can a community monitor and how can it do this.

- What are the areas and stages of implementing CLM?
- What are the various qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, and what types of data exist.
- How to organize work in order to avoid common mistakes.
- What are the basic ethical principles for conducting research.
- How to carry out CLM of services related to the provision of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV infection.
- How to use the results of monitoring in advocacy and improve the quality of services provided in medical institutions and at the state level.

● CONDUCTING CLM OF PREP SERVICES



A [training](#) was held on 13-15 June in Yerevan as part of a series of training events for Coalition members to increase their level of knowledge about CLM methods.

«Through such trainings, communities increase their expertise, which helps them advocate for the changes that they really need. Previously, monitoring could only be carried out by expert organizations that had no relationship with communities, and in which people from communities did not work. This was wrong because they did not really understand the needs of the community. Only end users of services, those who are the beneficiaries of services, can give quality feedback and evaluate their impact».

Nataliya Sidorenko, trainer



Fourteen employees of non-governmental organizations and initiative groups working in the field of HIV prevention among MSM and trans people in the EECA region took part in the training.

ORGANIZATIONS IMPLEMENTING CLM OF PREP AND THE RESULTS OF THEIR WORK

GENDERDOC M (Moldova)

The results of CLM are formally presented to the Committee on Key Affected Populations (CAP). It is planned to advocate for a revision of the National Clinical Protocol on PrEP in the first quarter of 2024.

NEW GENERATION (Armenia)

The results of CLM in Armenia are actively used in national dialogue and for the preparation of Armenia's country application to the Global Fund.

EQUALITY MOVEMENT (Georgia)

The final report on CLM in Georgia will be published by the end of January.



PrEP project discussion meeting, Armenia

OTHER CLM PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY ECOM

Community-led monitoring of HIV services for MSM and/or trans people

Armenia (New Generation)

Assessing access to services in the context of analysis of the cascade of continuous care for MSM in connection with HIV infection

Four areas of recommendations have been developed that will be used in advocacy work, as well as in the process of national dialogue at the request of the Global Fund for the treatment of the next country grant

Uzbekistan (team of independent researchers from Central Asia)

Studying motivations for undergoing HIV testing

The report is provided to stakeholders at the international level

ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF HOMOPHOBIA – THE «SECRET CLIENT» METHOD

Assessing the quality of services in the field of prevention and testing on HIV among MSM and trans people in AIDS centers in Tajikistan

- Carried out by staff and community activists.
- The results can serve as an element of advocacy for inclusion of trans people in the list of groups vulnerable to HIV.

Express attitude assessment medical personnel testing rooms for HIV in Belarus

- Introduction of the results for discussion at a meeting of the CCM.
- A letter to the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus was drafted regarding the need to monitor the compliance of healthcare institutions with current legislation.

PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON CONDUCTING CLM, INCLUDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT VISITS ON ISSUES RELATED TO PREP

- Development of a research protocol and methodology, as well as recommendations for using the results of monitoring.
- Development of tools to determine the access of MSM and trans people to PrEP and existing barriers, and to assess community members' preferences regarding PrEP delivery models.
- Provision of expert assistance as part of CLM (online meetings with national partners).

Technical assistance provided to organizations to conduct community-led monitoring improved community engagement, data quality, and program effectiveness. This joint work demonstrates the importance of community empowerment and strengthening organizational capacity to ensure the continued success of HIV prevention and treatment programs.



DEPATHOLOGIZATION AND CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS TRANS PEOPLE. COORDINATION AND REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF THE TRANS COMMUNITY

● CONDUCTING REGIONAL RESEARCH ON THE VULNERABILITY TO HIV OF TRANS MASCULINE AND NON-BINARY PERSONS

Data obtained suggests that the prevalence of HIV and risky behavior among trans men in EECA may be lower than in other regions. Respondents assessed their risk of infection as quite low, which was the main reason for refusing testing. The majority preferred to receive HIV services from NGOs. The following approaches to improving the quality of services were noted: recruiting peer consultants to HIV-service organizations, increasing staff awareness about transgenerness, offering the option not to indicate passport data, and guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality.

● CONDUCTING A REGIONAL TRAINING OF TRAINERS (TOT) ON COMBATING STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TRANS PEOPLE



The two-day intensive training, [«Training as a component of advocacy activities»](#), was devoted to the main forms and methods for conducting educational activities that can be used in the advocacy activities of trans NGOs and initiative groups in the countries of the EECA region. Over the course of two days, 10 activists from Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine took part in the training. During the two days, participants examined the theory of conducting training events for various target groups, learned how to manage group dynamics, gained skills for working with difficult participants and applied them in practice, and practiced conducting trainings and other informational events and advocacy activities.

«In my practice, this is the second training of this kind and I can say that it strengthened my theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This is important for future work as we advocate to ensure that our national legislation is not discriminatory and that we have a trans-competent healthcare and service-delivery system. To do this, we must train people who make decisions and provide services, especially in the field of healthcare. Now, because of Russia's war in Ukraine, we have lost friendly doctors. Therefore, one of our priorities will be to train more doctors on how to work with trans people».

Anastasia Eva Domani, HO «Cohort», Ukraine

SUPPORTING THE ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZING FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS OF THE TRANS PEOPLES WORKING GROUP



The Trans Peoples Working Group on HIV and Sexual Health in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (RGT), which was established with ECOM's support in May 2019, is the **only regional group on health and HIV whose members and experts are exclusively comprised of trans people**. An important function of the group is to review and approve guidelines, modules, protocols, studies and other documents developed by ECOM. The group's work process is coordinated by the RGT facilitator.

At the end of May, a [meeting of the RGT](#) was held, the purpose of which was to updating the situation in the countries of the region and renewing the action plan. The main result of the meeting was an updated work plan for 2023-2024, and soon, the group plans to present an updated analysis of legal barriers for trans people in the countries of the region.

Areas of work for 2023-2024:

- ✓ analysis of barriers to receiving HIV services in NGOs for trans people aged 40+;
- ✓ analysis of barriers to accessing trans-competent and trans-sensitive services for trans migrants in the EECA region;
- ✓ analysis of the introduction of ICD-11 and other depathologization processes in the region.


«This is a truly unique working group that covers all topics and issues related to health, rights, community-building, safety, and the development of the trans movement in the region. The plans that we discussed and developed are an opportunity to help everyone who is in one way or another involved in assisting and supporting trans people. I believe in the productivity and effectiveness of our team, and hope that very soon we will be able to share new results of our work and new expert information that will enable global changes».


Viktoriya Primak, trans activist, human rights defender (Kazakhstan)


LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS FOR TRANS PEOPLE



National schools for training leaders on HIV issues are a powerful and important tool for trans activists to gain the knowledge and skills needed to advocate for the rights of their communities.

 **Ukraine:** Through courses of the leadership school on HIV held from February 2022 to July 2023, **42** lessons were taught and **458** participants were enrolled, including 295 individual trans participants. This is an outstanding result, given the fact that the training took place during the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, when many trans people changed their place of residence and found themselves outside the influence of advocacy projects (implemented by the NGO «Cohort»).

 **Armenia:** A leadership school was held with the participation of 20 trans and non-binary people from all over Armenia. Over the course of 4 days of active and intense work, participants developed their leadership skills and familiarized themselves with national mechanisms and tools related to HIV (implemented by «New Generation»).

 **Georgia:** In February, a leadership school training was held, which included two sessions on trans-competence and advocacy (implemented by «Temida»).

INTERNSHIPS FOR PARTICIPANTS OF LEADERSHIP SCHOOLS: PARTICIPATION IN OPEN MEETINGS OF CCMS AND IN THE WORK OF OTHER COORDINATING BODIES

The participation of trans people in decision-making bodies has increased significantly: 11 people are participating in the activities of 6 decision-making bodies.

 **Ukraine:**

- Six people in CCM bodies.
- Regulations were developed to ensure the representation of organizations representing the interests of trans people in the National Council.
- A working group of trans people in the CCM program committee meets once every three months; 6 of the 12 members of the group are trans activists.



GEORGIA:

- Two representatives of the trans community participate in Georgian HIV platforms.



ARMENIA:

- One representative in the CCM.
- The organization «New Generation» participated in the formation of the new CCM and was chosen as one of the community organizations that will be represented in it. A representative of the trans community, the coordinator of the «Trans*Map» project, was chosen to represent the organization in the CCM, which helped draw attention to the issues of trans people among CCM members and in general.
- Through advocacy work, trans people were separated from MSM and included as a separate key population in the context of HIV in the National Strategic Plan.



KYRGYZSTAN:

- Two representatives of the trans community in the CCM.

PRESENTING STRATEGIC DATA ON REGIONS AND TRANS COMMUNITIES ON INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS: ONLINE AND OFFLINE PRESENTATIONS

Articles in electronic Russian-language academic journals published in 2023:



Review of experimental psychological diagnostic tools for gender dysphoria and gender incongruity in the context of the transition to ICD-11. Neurological Journal. 2022; LIV(2):69-84. <https://journals.eco-vector.com/1027-4898/article/view/105198>



Sexual and reproductive health of transgender and non-binary people: a review: <http://bulleten-nriph.ru/journal/issue/view/161>

These articles are used not only to educate the general public, but also for advocacy purposes. For instance, Yana Kirei, an ECOM researcher, as part of a campaign to counter a transphobic bill introduced in Russia, cited articles written based on research conducted as part of an ECOM project. The articles were read in the Ministry of Health and the State Duma. For example, one of the initiators of the bill mentions this campaign (for obvious reasons, in a negative context): <https://t.me/nikpnik/892>. In addition, clinical recommendations were developed, based on these articles, which will be submitted to the Ministry of Health: <https://www.academia.edu/107255807/>.

Main barriers according to the study results	Opportunities for improving access to HIV care	Data obtained as a result of the study
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of or insufficient knowledge related to HIV ● Stigma ● Suboptimal organization of medical care ● Lack of knowledge and sensitivity among medical staff ● Barriers related to gender identity ● Financial barriers ● Lack of support for family and loved ones ● Intersectional discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training medical staff on transgender issues ● Integrating HIV services and transgender health ● Expanding the diversity of testing and prevention methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HIV prevalence, prevention and treatment ● Factors increasing the risk of infection ● Sociocultural norms (misogyny and tolerance of violence, homophobia, transphobia, negative attitudes towards sex work) ● Legal norms ● Comprehensive response to HIV (highlighting trans women as a key population, combining HIV services with gender-affirming activities, participation of trans women in the development of policies related to their health and rights)

The review was published in the «Journal of the N.A. Semashko National Research Institute of Public Health» (<http://bulleten-nriph.ru/journal/article/view/2492>).



EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES AND SHARING BEST PRACTICES

VISITS TO PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Monitoring visits provide ECOM staff with a good understanding of the country context. During such visits, it is possible to assess important details related to the specificities of the country, and which affect the activities of partner organizations, the dynamics of relationships between partner organizations, the presence/absence of community trust in the organization/initiative, and much more. This makes it possible to be sensitive to certain issues, respond appropriately to requests, and to build equal partnerships. Such visits show the successes and weaknesses of project implementation in a timely manner, strengthen relationships between partners, increase trust, and build solidarity.

Main monitoring visits in 2023

COUNTRY	ORGANIZATION	AREAS IN NEED OF ECOM SUPPORT
Armenia	New Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advocacy for the law on legal gender recognition ✓ Promoting transition from ICD-10 to ICD-11 ✓ Support for local trans initiatives
Armenia	National Trans Coalition of Armenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advocacy for the law on legal gender recognition ✓ Advocacy for the transfer of ICD from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Health ✓ Depathologization of transgenerness in general ✓ Preparing for Yerevan Pride ✓ Adapting and promoting a comprehensive package of services for trans people
Georgia	Temida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advocacy for the law on legal gender recognition ✓ Promoting transition from ICD-10 to ICD-11 ✓ Technical support for the development of a document on human resources ✓ Adapting and promoting a comprehensive package of services for trans people
Moldova	Initiative Group «Felis Advocacy Initiative»	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Procurement of hormone therapy and testing ✓ Conducting a media campaign about trans people (creating quality content) ✓ Institutional support for advocacy for improving legislation governing transgender transition ✓ Launch of the Global Fund pilot project on trans people ✓ Training endocrinologists ✓ Assistance in organizational development

● COLLECTION AND PUBLICATION OF BEST PRACTICES ON ACCESS TO SOCIAL CONTRACTING FOR LGBT AND/OR HIV-SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN EECA



«[Social contracting and LGBT community organizations: reality or myth?](#)», a review of the best practices for obtaining budget funding in various EECA countries, provides an analysis of the most common situations, their positive and negative aspects, as well as opportunities for further support.

This collection is useful both for experienced organizations working in the field of providing services to the community, and for young organizations that are just beginning their activities.

The document was developed as part of ECOM’s community-led monitoring work.

● SUCCESS STORIES OF ECOM MEMBERS: COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES FOR SUPPORTING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS IN THE EECA REGION



«[Success stories of ECOM members: collection of best practices for supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EECA region](#)» is a description of success stories and various strategies and methods which ECOM members used in their activities to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights in the EECA region.

The brochure presents 10 stories related to the promotion of SRHR in 5 countries of the EECA region.

We collected stories about different approaches that are sure to be helpful in your work to support sexual and reproductive rights and health. They range from the publication of a variety of informational videos, to opening a safe LGBTQ+ youth center, to collaborating with family medicine educators to raise awareness about working with trans people.

● PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ECOM’S PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

In 2020–2023, ECOM became one of the most sought-after providers of technical assistance in the EECA region as part of the Global Fund’s Strategic Initiative on Communities, Rights and Gender. For the second time, the Global Fund designated [ECOM as a prequalified provider of technical assistance](#) in the region for 2024–2026.

«The fact that we were chosen again speaks volumes about the high quality of our work. We are pleased to announce that over the next three years, we will have the opportunity to provide technical assistance to communities in the EECA region».

Elena German, Capacity Development Coordinator at ECOM

Main cases of technical assistance provided in 2023

COUNTRY	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	RESULTS
Azerbaijan	Analysis of the implementation of the international tool for implementing programs for sex workers (SW) SWIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The smart guide on the SWIT was translated. ✓ A training was held for 25 participants from community and government organizations to familiarize them with the tool. ✓ An overview of the development of the HIV epidemic in Azerbaijan among sex workers was developed, based on which a tool for analyzing the implementation of the SWIT was developed. ✓ Focus groups were held with cisgender and trans sex workers, social workers, project coordinators, and other stakeholders. ✓ Based on the data obtained, recommendations were prepared to expand the basic package of HIV prevention services among SWs and specific recommended interventions were identified. ✓ ECOM consultants developed a tool for calculating the cost of a basic and extended package of services for SWs, which also includes a forecast for 3 years. A calculation of the proposed package of services was carried out, which was subsequently used during the national dialogue. ✓ The results of the case were presented at a meeting of the CCM of Azerbaijan.
<p><i>This is one of the most complex and successful cases implemented by EKOM in 2023</i></p>		
Azerbaijan	Conducting the national dialogue	ECOM's technical assistance identified one of the main problems: the weak development of civil society, in particular of community-based organizations, which are a minority in Azerbaijan. The country application included a component on the development of community organizations, and recommendations on combating stigma and discrimination were developed for the national strategic plan
Kazakhstan	Preparation of a development and mobilization strategy for the community of former prisoners	At the request of the initiative group «Health in Prisons», a training was held for 17 community representatives to familiarize them with the procedures of the Global Fund; proposals for what to include in the country application were also discussed. After the training, a development strategy and proposals for what to include in the country application were discussed in focus groups, after which they were finalized and approved by the community.
Kazakhstan	Conducting the national dialogue	ECOM consultants conducted online focus groups with representatives of key populations, after which all interventions were described and ranked in order of priority. The experts writing the application were also provided with a cost estimate for the interventions. At the final stage of preparing the application, an analysis of the priority interventions was carried out, and they were included in the final version of the country application.

COUNTRY	TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	RESULTS
Moldova	Preparation of a report on the impact of drug policy on public health and the HIV epidemic in the Republic of Moldova	<p>On 27 February, a public hearing was held in the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, during which the report was presented. ECOM, as a technical assistance provider of the Global Fund CRG initiative, provided support for this study.</p> <p>The ECOM regional consultant, together with national consultants, not only prepared a review of existing drug policy documents in Moldova, but also held several focus groups with clients of the drug reduction program, employees of community organizations and key experts. The report was first presented to communities during the national dialogue, following which a roadmap for changing drug policy in Moldova was also developed, which contains specific recommendations and actions.</p>



Presentation of the report on the impact of drug policy on public health and HIV epidemic in the Republic of Moldova



REGULARLY UPDATING EPIDEMIOLOGICAL INFORMATION RELATED TO THE HEALTH OF MSM AND TRANS PEOPLE, AND INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN COUNTRY PROFILES



[HIV situation among MSM in EECA.](#)



[HIV situation among trans people in EECA.](#)

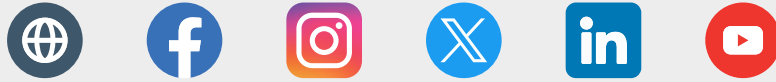


Information on human rights is presented in the [country maps](#).

3

DEVELOP ECOM AS AN INFLUENTIAL INTERNATIONAL (REGIONAL) LGBT+ COMMUNITY NETWORK THAT OPERATES BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

ECOM's informational channels



INFORMATIONAL PROMOTION OF ECOM MEMBERSHIP

In 2023, [three video clips](#) were produced introducing ECOM and the benefits and importance of membership in the Coalition. LGBT community activists, bloggers, and influencers from the EECA region were recruited to promote them.

A total of 12 advertisements were published on Instagram involving activists/bloggers from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Ukraine.



INFORMATIONAL SUPPORT FOR ECOM MEMBERS

In the run up to World AIDS Day, ECOM released a series of podcasts «Leadership for Communities: The Voice of Activists» under the World AIDS Day slogan «LET COMMUNITIES LEAD». Podcast participants included members of ECOM' Steering Committee.

The participant of the [first podcast](#) is [Vitaly Apanasenko](#) from Odessa. He is a member of ECOM's Steering Committee (2022–2025) and a representative of the youth community movement «Partner». Vitaly spoke about how he became part of the activist movement, his work with the LGBT community in Ukraine, and why community leadership is a critical element of our fight.

The participant in the [second podcast was Vitaly Vinogradov](#), a specialist in the field of HIV prevention in Kazakhstan, and chair of ECOM's Steering Committee. In the podcast, Vitaly discusses how he began his journey in activism, what organizations support the LGBT community in Kazakhstan, and the state of HIV prevention and treatment and the rights of LGBT people in the country. In addition, you will learn how Vitaly discovered ECOM and how our partnership developed.

In addition, there is a column «**Activism in Faces**» on ECOM's social media pages, in which we talk about ECOM members and their work:



[Anzhelika Frolova](#) (Moldova)



[Nino Bolkvadze](#) (Georgia)



[Viktoriya Ray](#) (Kazakhstan)



ECOM'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK OF INTERNATIONAL BODIES



- ECOM officially became part of [Youth4Health](#), a network of youth organizations in the European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO), which plays an important role as a platform that promotes collaboration with young people, and ensures their active participation and involvement in various fields of activity. The network's activities include identifying problems, policy development, implementation, evaluation, and subsequent realization of regional strategic plans and programs.

- ECOM's Executive Director, Vitaly Djuma, was appointed as an acting Board member from the [Developed Country NGO Delegation](#) to the Global Fund Board. Vitaly joined the Developed Country NGO Delegation in 2019 and took the place of an alternate member of the GF Board in 2021.
- ECOM is a member of the [WHO Civil Society Commission](#), whose mission is to strengthen dialogue, promote collaboration and provide guidance to support the WHO in its engagement with civil society at the global, regional and national levels to achieve health for all and the goals of WHO's overall program of work, and to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the field of health.



ACTIVITIES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE, INCLUDING ONLINE MEETINGS AND SYSTEM OF REPORTING TO ECOM MEMBERS

In 2023, ECOM's new Steering Committee (SC) began work and was elected for a three-year term. In total, 9 SC meetings were held this year (in person and online).

Following a Steering Committee meeting on 8 September, 2023, it was agreed that the Coalition's governing body should be balanced in terms of HIV status, gender identity, geographic representation, thematic diversity, and key populations. In connection with this, a General Assembly of ECOM members was announced, at which it was decided to expand the number of members of the current Steering Committee to 7 people and to announce additional [elections](#) to be held among trans members of ECOM. Based on the results of online elections, Diana Aliyeva and Daniyar Mayitikov were [elected](#) to ECOM's Steering Committee for the period from December 21, 2023 to December 20, 2025.

REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR 2023

«In a world where every moment is a step forward towards change, ECOM's Steering Committee embodies the spirit of innovative initiatives and the undeniable power of solidarity. The year that has passed since we last addressed you has become a time of tireless movement forward, to new heights and unprecedented achievements».

Vitaly Vinogradov, Chair of ECOM's Steering Committee



This year is not just a series of events and numbers, it is a living story of change to which each member of the Steering Committee has contributed their energy and passion to make our commitment to positive change visible in every corner of the region.

At the beginning of the year, the new composition of the Steering Committee began its work.

Steering Committee members:



Aydar Kapasov



Vitaly Vinogradov



Arman Saakyan



Rishat Azikhanov






Vitaly Apanasenko

Vitaly Vinogradov was selected as the Chair of the SC.

In 2023, the Steering Committee focused its efforts on defining strategic priorities, while the Secretariat effectively implemented projects and ensured sustainable cooperation between the SC, and ECOM's partners and members. This cooperation allows us to ensure the successful implementation of the strategic plan and the achievement of ECOM's goals.

The Steering Committee actively engaged with the Secretariat during the drafting of position papers, playing a key role in their development, approval and updating. The SC provides strategic leadership by defining principles and values that reflect the overall position of the organization and expresses the views of coalition members in unity and solidarity, thereby creating a positive framework for important strategic and ethical issues in light of the Coalition's mission and goals.

In 2023, the SC approved 3 position papers:

-  [ECOM's position paper on the initiation of a foreign influence transparency law in Georgia](#)
-  [Empowering LGBT sex workers](#)
-  [ECOM's position paper regarding the decision of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation to recognize the LGBT movement as «extremist» and ban its activities in the country](#)

The Steering Committee serves as a platform for the exchange of new ideas in the field of fundraising and financing. Its members actively share experiences, identify effective practices and propose innovative approaches to raising funds. This exchange of ideas contributes to the diversity of approaches to the financial support of the organization, increases its competitiveness and contributes to the successful implementation of projects and programs.



In 2023, the SC paid special attention to the analysis and discussion of key indicators and results of the Coalition based on quarterly reports from the Secretariat containing information on progress made towards achieving strategic goals, as well as on the implementation of projects and programs. This promotes organizational transparency and helps identify potential problems and opportunities for growth.

The Steering Committee plays an important role in the process of recruiting and approving new coalition members. The procedures and criteria for admission are defined by the Coalition's charter and regulations, and the Steering Committee is responsible for complying with them. In total, 14 new members were admitted in 2023, including 3 individuals, 3 initiative groups and 8 organizations (8 from Kazakhstan, 2 from Russia, and 1 each from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Lithuania and Belarus). One application for membership was not approved due to non-compliance with ECOM's ethical principles.

These decisions and proposals are an important step towards strengthening the activities of the Steering Committee and maintaining effective interaction with ECOM members and other partners.

At the end of 2023, Diana Aliyeva and Daniyar Mayitikov joined the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee of the Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexuality Diversity is a strategic body that actively shapes and implements strategies to help strengthen the organization in its mission. It ensures the stability of funding by developing financial strategies aimed at the Coalition's sustainability and the implementation of important projects. The Steering Committee maintains interaction with partners, and creates favorable conditions for the exchange of experiences and resources. It also actively tracks the implementation of strategic goals by regularly monitoring and evaluating the Coalition's activities. In addition, the Steering Committee supports innovative initiatives, and stimulates the development of new approaches and solutions in the work of the Coalition.

PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED BY ECOM IN 2023

Primary projects:

- 1 MSMGF consortium project [«Sustainable Health Advocacy for Gay Men»](#) (SHAG)
- 2 «Health equity or decriminalization advocacy to improve access to health of LGBT people in Uzbekistan» with financial support from the Open Society Foundation
- 3 [«Sustainability of Services for Key Populations in the EECA Region»](#), (#SoS_project) with support from the «100% Life» Network and financial support from the Global Fund
- 4 [Trans* Map in EECA](#) with financial support from the Elton John AIDS Foundation
- 5 [«Moving Together towards Quality and Equality: Improved Sustainable Services for ISPs in EECA»](#) with financial support from the Robert Carr Fund
- 6 [«Organizational capacity building and SRHR for LGBT youth in EECA»](#) with financial support from the UNFPA
- 7 [Psychological assistance hotline for LGBT Ukrainians during the war](#)
- 8 [Emergency Assistance Fund for Ukraine and Neighboring Countries](#)
- 9 [Strengthening the response of KP of the region to the challenges caused by the war in Ukraine](#)

ECOM'S FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial Performance in 2023

DONOR	PROJECT	Funds Utilized, EUR*
Aidsfonds – Soa Aids Nederland	Emergency response for people living with and vulnerable to HIV in Ukraine and neighboring countries	515 554
Elton John AIDS Foundation	Trans*Map in EECA	255 162
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**	Sustainability of services for key populations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia region	342 044
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	Service provider for technical assistance	78 749
Open Society Foundations	Work with the rights groups in the Eurasia region to promote right to health and equality	44 024
Open Society Foundations	Maintain sustainable organization development for LGBT initiatives in Uzbekistan	31 814
Other projects	Other projects	119 109
OutRight Action International	Rapid Support for LGBT Ukrainians	63 287
Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund***	Moving Together Towards Quality and Equality: Improved Sustainable Services for ISPs in EECA	250 364
Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund****	Sustainable Health Advocacy with Gay Men	115 097
UN Agencies	Various projects	117 772
Total		1 932 976

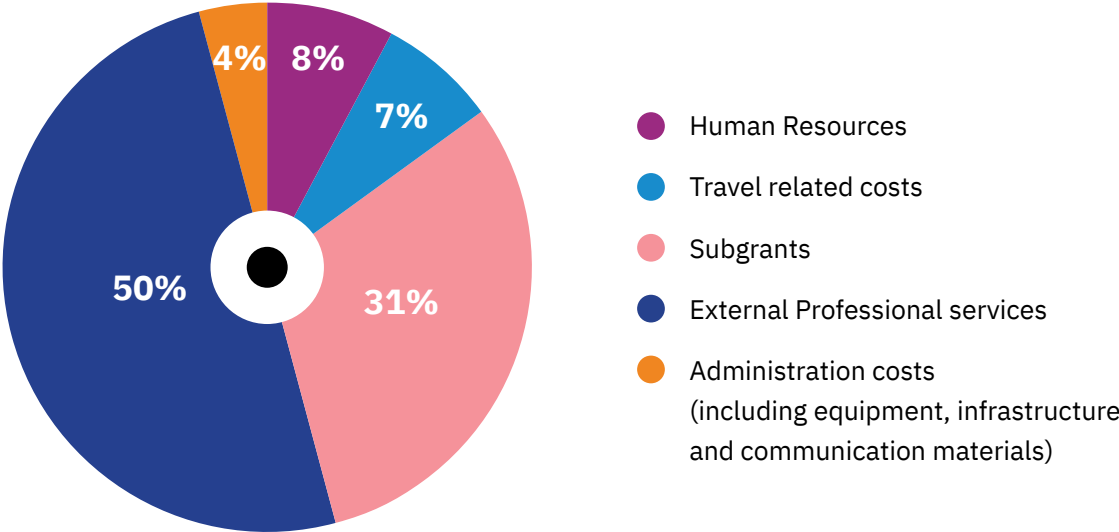
* – EUR equivalent is calculated based on the annual average exchange rate used in FMS. The final EUR expenses will be presented after Annual audit of the ECOM Financial Statement prepared on Accounting basis according to Estonian law.

** – funded through 'All-Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS' (CO 100% Life)

*** – funded through Eurasian Harm Reduction Association

**** – funded through The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MPact)

Breakdown of Expenditures by Cost Categories in 2023



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CCM	Country coordinating mechanism
CEECA	Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia
CLM	Community-led monitoring
CO	Community organization
CRG	Global Fund Community, Rights and Gender Technical Assistance Program (The Community, Rights and Gender Strategic Initiative)
ECAT	Enterprise Capacity Assessment Tool
ECOM	Eurasian Coalition on Health, Rights, Gender and Sexual Diversity
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
LBQ	Lesbian, bisexual, and queer people
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PrEP	Pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV
REAct	«Rights-Evidence-Action», a platform that allows you to record violations of the rights of representatives of key populations vulnerable to HIV and tuberculosis
RGT	Trans Peoples Working Group on HIV and Sexual Health in Eastern Europe and Central Asia
SC	Steering Committee
SOGI	Sexual orientation and gender identity
STIs	Sexually transmitted infections
SW	Sex workers
SWIT	Sex Worker Implementation Tool
TRANSIT	Implementing Comprehensive HIV and STI Programmes with Transgender People
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WHO	World Health Organization

