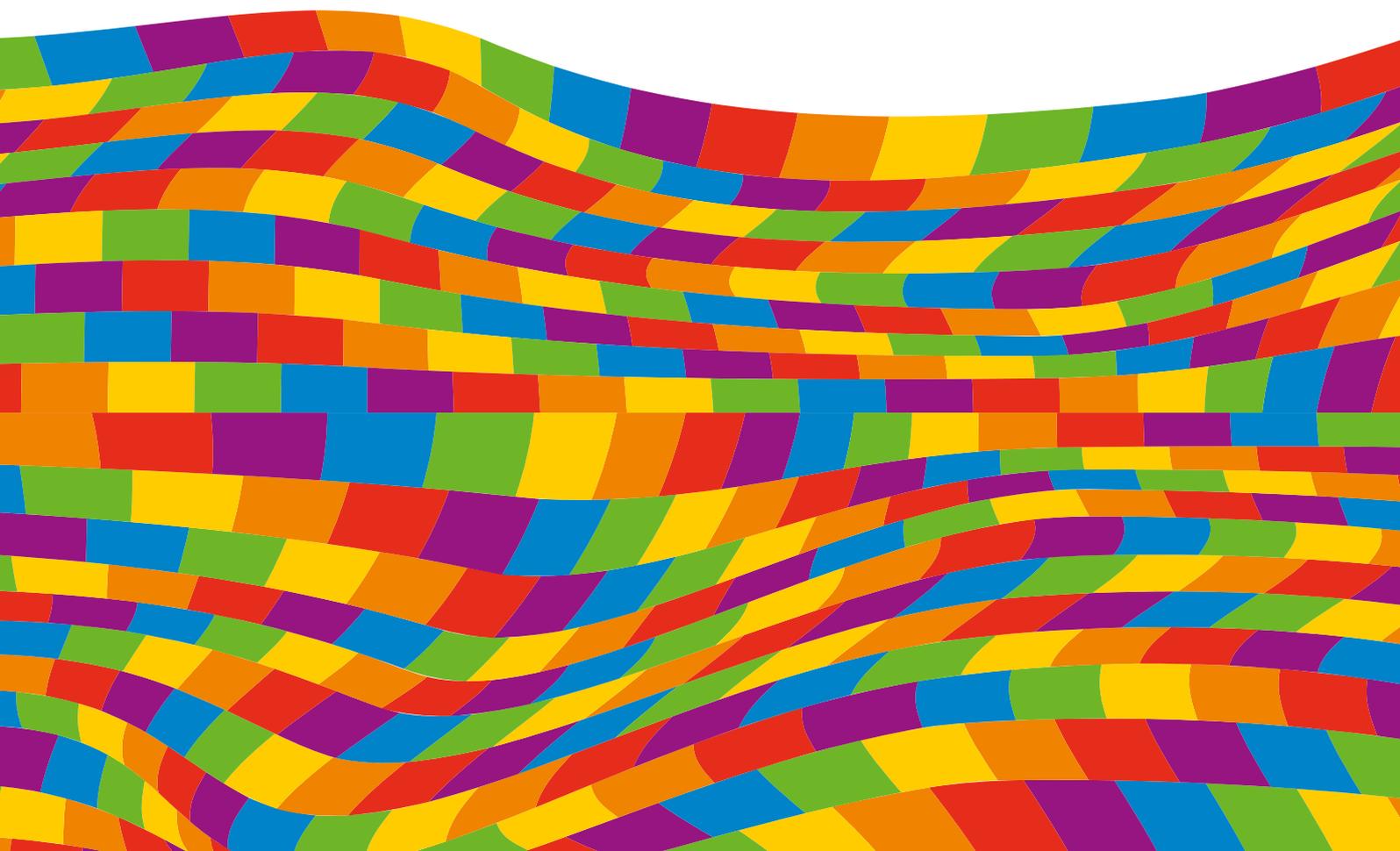




Eurasian Coalition on Male Health

Annual Report

2015



List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BMGF	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CEECA	Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia
ECOM	Eurasian Coalition on Male Health
ECUO	East Europe & Central Asia Union of PLWH
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EHRN	Eurasian Harm Reduction Network
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDAHOT	International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, & Biphobia
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People
MOCAT	Modified Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
MSM	Men Who Have Sex with Men
MSMGF	Global Forum on MSM & HIV
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief
PLWH	People Living with HIV
REG	Regional Expert Group
SR	Subrecipient
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TB	Tuberculosis
TG / Trans*	Describing a person who identifies as transgender, non-binary, or otherwise gender nonconforming, including (but not limited to) transsexual, genderqueer, genderfluid, non-binary, agender, third gender, two-spirit, bigender
TS	Technical Support
UMIC	Upper Middle Income Country
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
WHO	World Health Organization

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Dear Readers,

In front of you is the Eurasian Coalition on Male Health's (ECOM) Annual Report for 2015. Last year, ECOM took a number of important steps forward, which resulted in even more effective activities for the Coalition.

The situation with respect to HIV and LGBT rights in a number of countries in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) remains tense and requires the interventions of community organizations and advocacy at the national, regional and international levels.

This report gathers information about everything of importance that ECOM was involved in this past year. We increased the number of staff members and collaborated with a number of consultants across the entire region, allowing us to ensure the presence of all the necessary competencies among our team.

In order to ensure that the voices of men who have sex with men (MSM) and trans* people in the EECA region are heard, ECOM participated in a number of advocacy initiatives and activities, and sought to ensure that international organizations and donors take into account the needs of our communities.

Last year, we laid the foundation for our activities for 2017-2020. Thanks to the involvement of a wide circle of experts, we were able to develop ECOM's regional program and a corresponding request for funding, which was submitted to the Global Fund.

We also did not forget about the members of our Coalition! We supported a number of activities and projects led by our

member organizations and assisted them by providing technical support.

In addition, we carried out an analysis of legislation related to LGBT rights and HIV in nine countries of the EECA region, and facilitated the publishing of the Russian version of an important programming tool on HIV and STIs for MSM. You can read about all of these activities in more detail in the following pages of this report.

I am sure that the New Year will bring both new challenges and new successes to ECOM. Happy reading!



VITALY DJUMA

ECOM's Executive Director



General Situation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Over the course of 2015, it has become clear that Eastern Europe and Central Asia is moving towards a division into two groups of countries: one moving closer towards the rule of law and the other experiencing a strong conservative backlash. These general sociopolitical trends greatly affect LGBT people and determine the direction of LGBT advocacy in the region.

Recent successes in the region include the enactment of a non-discrimination bill that protects LGBT people in Ukraine, the introduction of a same-sex cohabitation law in Estonia, the adoption of antidiscrimination and hate crime protections for LGBT people in Georgia, and the creation of effective enforcement mechanisms for antidiscrimination provisions in Moldova.

However, in other countries of the region, increasing conservatism has led to stronger negative attitudes towards LGBT people, in the form of violence, stigma, and discriminatory laws and practices. For instance, in 2013, Russia introduced a law prohibiting the promotion of "non-traditional sexual relationships" among minors. Unfortunately, Russia's gay propaganda bill has acted as a model for similar legislative initiatives in neighboring countries. There have been proposals to introduce analogous laws on gay propaganda in other countries of the region, including Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. The Kyrgyz bill, introduced in 2015, passed a second, pre-final reading at the end of the year. The bill is even more draconian than Russia's existing law, as it imposes both administrative penalties and

criminal sanctions, and would significantly limit the possibility for LGBT community organizations in the country to advocate for their interests.

 *Anti-discrimination protection for LGBT in Ukraine*

 *Gay propaganda bill discussions in several countries*

Despite certain negative trends in the region, ECOM remains optimistic in its efforts to fight discrimination and homophobia towards gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men and trans* people, and to ensure the access of these populations to HIV services, thanks to recent successes in community advocacy initiatives. The diverse experience of civil society advocacy in countries of the region has demonstrated the need to ensure that LGBT activists and organizations collaborate with various civil society stakeholders and develop coherent advocacy strategies to increase the effectiveness of their actions.

Entering 2016, it is crucial that ECOM and other MSM-service and LGBT organizations in the region continue to demand protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and to build broad coalitions with civil society and international stakeholders in order to counteract the growing homo- and transphobic and discriminatory trends in the region.

ECOM is glad to have a strong team.



ECOM's Internal Developments

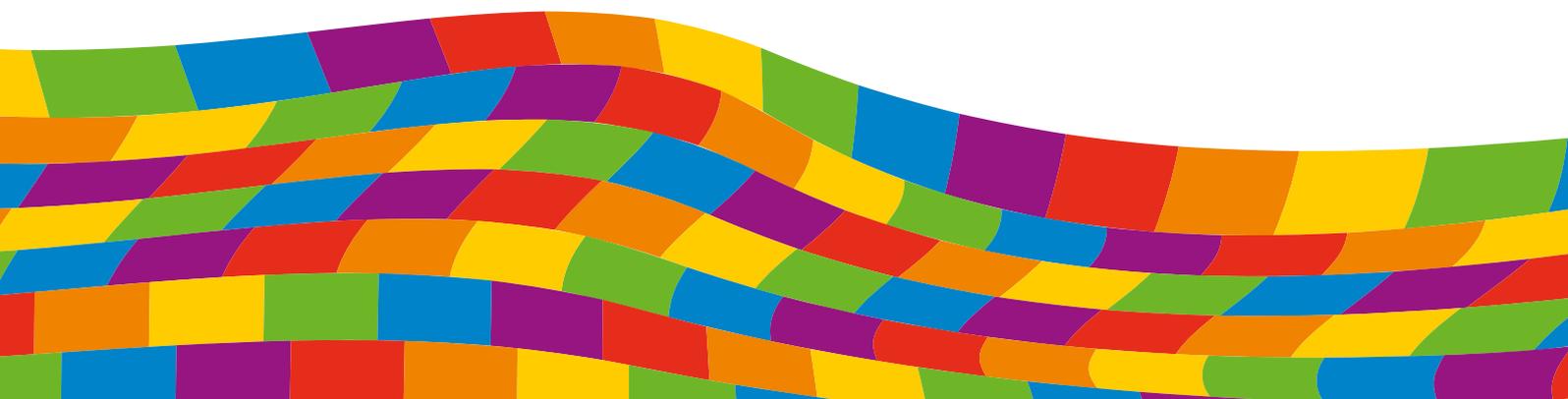
Staff

2015 was a formative year for the development of ECOM as an organization. During the past year, ECOM's Secretariat enlarged its staff, moved to new office premises, and also updated ECOM's logo and digital identity.

Following the departure of former Executive Director, Tudor Kovacs, at the end of 2014, ECOM's Steering Committee called

for applications to fill the position and interviewed prospective candidates. After a careful search, Vitaly Djuma was appointed as ECOM's Executive Director on March 1.

Vitaly has been involved in the response to the HIV epidemic for over 15 years, with a focus on the most affected populations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA). Vitaly is a staunch advocate of ECOM's strategic goals. He has been working with



the Coalition since its very beginning, having participated in the 2010 Kyiv Consultation on MSM and HIV in EECA that gave impetus to the creation of ECOM. He later served as a member of ECOM's Steering Committee. Vitaly has extensive experience in program management, strategic planning, and HIV and human rights advocacy and holds a Masters of International Health from the University of Copenhagen.

In November, ECOM hired Ivan Lavrentjev as its Communications Officer. Ivan has worked in a number of civil society organizations in Estonia and has consulted on communications, public relations, policy briefing, translations, editing, and writing for clients ranging from NGOs and foundations to media and state institutions. Ivan is fluent in Russian, Estonian, and English. Ivan is responsible for ECOM's external communications, website and social media presence, and communications strategy.

Office

Because of the need for a larger and more professional workspace, following the addition of new staff members, ECOM's Secretariat moved to a more spacious and modern office in Tallinn, Estonia. The new office has ample workspace for staff members, a meeting area, and storage space for ECOM's substantial library of literature on MSM and trans* issues. The office is equipped with new computers, printers, and other office supplies. The Secretariat is proud to begin working in the new space and believes the new premises reflect ECOM's growth over the past year.

Digital Identity

In November, shortly before the regional dialogue meeting in Istanbul, ECOM released its new digital identity. A designer was contracted to design a new logo for the Coalition. It consists of six basic colors and the Coalition's name either in English or in Russian. "We have chosen vivid colors to emphasize the positive output, we are hoping to reach by our activities, addressing human rights, discrimination and male health issues in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia," Executive Director, Vitaly Djuma explained. In addition to the new logo, ECOM also commissioned new letterhead, staff business cards, and graphics for the website and social media accounts to correspond to the new digital identity.



**We have chosen
vivid colors to
emphasize the
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by our activities.**



ECOM's Regional Concept Note to the Global Fund

The program's three main objectives are:

- 1.** *to contribute to an increase in MSM and trans* community participation in decision-making in national HIV responses;*
- 2.** *to contribute to building the capacity of MSM and trans* organizations by strengthening organizational structures, technical competence and fundraising capacity; and*
- 3.** *to strengthen enabling environments for HIV services for MSM and trans* people, by fighting stigma and discrimination, promoting and protecting human rights, and removing legal and policy barriers.*

In response to the challenge of the disproportionately low access to HIV services of men who have sex with men (MSM) and trans* people in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA), ECOM submitted an Expression of Interest to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in March for the regional program, Right to Health: Community Actions to Increase Access of MSM and Transgender People to HIV Services in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The program is aimed at contributing to an increased uptake and retention across the continuum of HIV care for MSM and trans* people in CEECA.

In August, ECOM was thrilled to learn

that its Expression of Interest was approved by the Global Fund. At this point, ECOM began work on the development of a concept note to formally request funding for the regional program.

In September, ECOM began an online regional consultation to engage community representatives and other key partners in the development of the concept note. 66 people from 12 countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Balkans participated in the consultation and ensured that community involvement in the development of the regional program was a key part of the process from the very beginning. The results of the online consultation

provided ECOM with invaluable information, confirmed the goals and direction of the regional program, and facilitated the development of the concept note.

Following the online regional consultation, ECOM held a two-day regional dialogue consultation meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. Over 60 participants took part in the meeting, including representatives from national community and civil society organizations, regional and international NGOs, CCMs of CEECA countries, technical agencies and partners, and the Global Fund Secretariat. MSM, trans* individuals, and people living with HIV were also specifically invited to the meeting to provide their input and feedback on the proposed regional program. The discussions from the meeting highlighted the need to support the development of communities of transgender people, as well as subgroups of PLWH and sex workers from MSM and trans* populations. In addition, the input received from all stakeholders involved allowed ECOM to progress to the final stages of the concept note writing process. (More information about the regional dialogue meeting, along with photos from the event, can be found in the next section).

In November, following the regional dialogue meeting, the Steering Committee made the difficult, yet strategic choice of selecting the following five countries for implementation of the regional program: Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and

Macedonia. The Steering Committee weighed a number of factors, including the HIV prevalence among MSM/TG, the availability (or lack) of national funding for HIV prevention and treatment activities targeting these groups, the level of civil society participation in shaping national policies related to MSM/TG health, subregional representation, as well as the potential impact of the regional program in both individual countries and in the region as a whole.

ECOM representatives visited the proposed participating countries in December in order to present the regional program to CCMs to gain their endorsements, and also met with other stakeholders, including potential sub-recipients. The CCMs of Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Macedonia all voted to endorse ECOM's regional program. Unfortunately, the CCM of Armenia withheld its endorsement of the regional program. However, ECOM is confident that this will not be a significant impediment to the success of the program. ECOM's members in Armenia have given assurances that they can effectively implement the regional program in their country, even without CCM endorsement.

After revising drafts of the concept note, the final version was submitted to the Global Fund on January 29 following the 11-month process. If the concept note is approved by the Global Fund, implementation of ECOM's regional program would commence in 2017.

Regional Program's Proposed Activities

YEAR 1

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES



ECOM Program team



Leaders from 4 target countries

Regional activities provide technical support, capacity building and advocacy guidance for national level activities

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES



SRs



MSM & trans* communities
Coalition of allies

Sub-recipients utilize grants to implement national activities

- Enlist regional experts for REG
- Consultations on data reliability; combination prevention and cascades
- Trainings on org. capacity and human rights
- Development of web resources

Outputs supporting national activities

- TS from REG
- Agendas for data and cascade advocacy
- Trained on MOCAT
- Activists prepared for human rights documentation

- National workshops:
 - Data reliability
 - Cascades
- Mapping community engagement & leadership
- Assessing legal environment
- Setting up human rights documentation framework

MILESTONES

(TBD)

YEAR 2

- Consultation on community representation & leadership
- Training on stigma reduction for public officials
- Continued production of web resources
- Advocacy on human rights

Outputs

- Agendas for leadership advocacy
- TS from REG
- TS from webinars
- Training skills on stigma

YEAR 3

- Consultations on data reliability; sustainability of community response

Outputs

- Agendas for data and sustainability advocacy

- National workshops:
 - Data reliability
 - Cascades
- Mapping community engagement & leadership
- Engagement of human rights activists
- Trainings on stigma reduction

- National workshops:
 - Data reliability
 - Cascades
- Mapping community engagement & leadership
- Engagement of human rights activists

MILESTONES

(TBD)

MILESTONES

(TBD)



Regional Dialogue Meeting

From November 16-17, ECOM hosted a regional dialogue meeting in Istanbul, Turkey devoted to the development of ECOM's regional program, "Right to Health: Community Actions to Increase Access of MSM and Trans* People to HIV Services in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA)." The objectives of the two-day meeting included:

1. presenting key elements of the draft concept note to participants for feedback, comments, and suggestions;

2. gathering final feedback on key activities, targets and indicators, and on the added value of the regional approach; and,
3. clarifying the governance structure of the program, the criteria for selecting target countries, and the process for securing endorsements of the concept note from Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs).

Over 60 participants took part in the meeting, including representatives from international, regional, and national stakeholders working in CEECA countries. Members of national CCMs, the staff of technical partners, including UNFPA, UNAIDS, and UNDP, representatives of national community-based MSM and trans* organizations, as well as staff from the Global Fund Secretariat, were present at the meeting. Speakers from technical partners, including UNAIDS, UNDP, and the Global Fund gave presentations on HIV among MSM and trans* people in ECEA,

"It is important that community-based organizations along with the government start to work on this grant, then it will be easier to obtain favorable conditions for the implementation of activities in the country,"



Oleg Eryomin
a member of ECOM's Steering Committee, Belarus

the status of LGBT rights in the region, as well as on key requirements of Global Fund grant requests for regional programs. In addition, participants were familiarized with the components of ECOM's regional program and were able to discuss the program's objectives, activities, targets, and indicators in small group workshops. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on country and sub-recipient selection criteria, as well as on the added value of the regional approach of the program.

ECOM received important recommendations on various aspects of the program, including the program activities, monitoring and evaluation, country selection, and program governance. In particular, the discussions highlighted the need to support the development of communities of transgender people, as well as subgroups of PLWH and sex workers in MSM and trans* communities.

The regional dialogue meeting marked a key step in the development of ECOM's regional program and its concept note to the Global Fund. Input from all stakeholders

"Following the consultation, I see increased activity of organizations and initiatives of the trans community, it's certainly one of the achievements of the event,"*



Evgeny Sorokoumov
Chairman of ECOM's
Steering Committee, Russia

involved in the fight against the HIV epidemic among MSM and trans* people in CEECA was essential to ensure the regional program's future success. ECOM is extremely grateful to all who participated and provided their feedback and assistance.

The meeting was held in cooperation with the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) and was supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).





ECOM and the Global Fund

Throughout 2015, the Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM) was involved in advocacy efforts at the regional and international levels. As the leading MSM and transgender network organization in the region, ECOM recognizes the importance of giving a voice to MSM and trans* communities in the region and ensuring that the needs of these populations are considered at the highest levels of decision-making. This year, ECOM advocated for greater human rights protections and access to HIV services for MSM and trans* people. ECOM's members and staff attended numerous regional and international conferences and consultations. Meanwhile, ECOM's Secretariat developed a number of advocacy statements, including position papers, open letters, and other publications.



ECOM's Executive Director, Vitaly Djuma, and other ECOM representatives participated in three high level Global Fund consultations in 2015. The consultations provided ECOM with the opportunity to contribute to important policy decisions that will affect MSM and trans* people in the region in the coming years. The consultations were devoted to topics, including the development of the Global Fund Strategy for 2017-2021, transitioning to domestic funding of HIV and TB responses and programmatic sustainability in EECA, and the participation of communities of key populations in Global Fund policy-making.

Position Paper

In July 2015, ECOM released a position paper on the Global Fund Strategy for 2017-2021. ECOM conducted a survey among its members and partners to develop its position concerning the objectives and directions of the Global Fund's work for the next 5 years so that MSM and transgender people living in EECA receive the necessary protection and support in the HIV response.

The position papers underscores the need to increase the availability of resources for targeted programs aimed at MSM and trans* people, improve information on HIV, protect human rights, and innovate to improve the efficiency of investments.

Open Letters

In addition, ECOM also joined other international, regional, and national

organizations in signing two open letters to the Global Fund Board and Executive Director. The first called upon the organization to commit to an ambitious funding request for the 5th Replenishment to accelerate the end of the AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria epidemics by 2030. The second letter sought to draw attention to certain high priority issues, including the allocation methodology framework and approaches to ensuring the successful and sustainable transition of UMICs from Global Fund support to domestic funding.

Global Fund Processes Report

ECOM's first report on Global Fund processes was published in March 2015. The report details the involvement of MSM and transgender people in country dialogue processes in the countries of EECA. Findings indicate that a lack of reliable epidemiological data, high stigma, and policies that restrict the access of MSM and transgender people to information on HIV preclude these populations from meaningfully participating in country dialogue processes, contributing to HIV/AIDS program planning, and otherwise cooperating with the Global Fund. The report has been used for advocacy purposes and as an important resource for the development of ECOM's Concept Note to the Global Fund.

 Read more on ECOM & the Global Fund at www.ecom.ngo/ecom-global-fund

ECOM's Advocacy Efforts

Position Statements

In addition to ECOM's involvement in advocacy activities with the Global Fund, representatives of ECOM have attended a number of conference and meetings during 2015 devoted to different issues related to HIV, human rights, and other issues affecting the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA).

May 17, 2015 marked the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, & Biphobia (IDAHOT), as well as the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial in order to commemorate the two events, ECOM released a statement emphasizing the link between homo- and transphobia and the growing HIV epidemic among MSM and trans* people in EECA. ECOM called upon national governments in the region to prevent discrimination and violence and protect the human rights of all citizens, including LGBT people and also encouraged LGBT communities to demand the fulfillment of their human rights and civil liberties.

In conjunction with World AIDS Day 2015 (December 1, 2015), ECOM released a position statement highlighting the need for high-quality, strategic information in order to accelerate the eradication of AIDS among MSM and trans* people in EECA countries. In the statement, ECOM pledged to work with communities, medical and academic institutions, government agencies, and with international structures in order to collect strategic information, decrease stigma and discrimination, increase funding of HIV programs targeting MSM and trans* people, and provide the necessary technical support to communities and countries.

In addition to these two position statements, ECOM has released advocacy

statements condemning human rights abuses and homo- and transphobic legislative initiatives in countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. It has also issued statements on important developments in the region, including the Ukrainian Parliament's decision to pass anti-discrimination protections for sexual minorities.

International Meetings

In May, Gennady Roshchupkin attended a meeting hosted by the East Europe & Central Asia Union of PLWH (ECUO), "Strengthening Coordination and Advocacy of Regional Unions of Networks of Key Populations to Achieve "90-90-90" in Eastern Europe and Central Asia" in Yerevan, Armenia. The meeting focused on scaling up access to HIV testing and counseling in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. There, Roshchupkin gave a presentation on voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) among MSM. In addition, Roshchupkin was invited to give a presentation on VCT at a subsequent meeting devoted to the topic in Barcelona, Spain in October.

ECOM's Program & Advocacy Officer, Marcus Oda, traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria in May to participate in the UNFPA's Regional Conference Promoting Health and Rights, Reducing Inequalities: Towards Better Sexual and Reproductive Health Outcomes in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The conference was focused on reviewing the progress made and identifying priorities in advancing sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights in the region, including reducing inequalities in access to sexual and reproductive health services. The conference concluded with the adoption of a declaration of commitment for advancing sexual and reproductive health and



**Latsin Alijev at
Euro Pride 2015**

reproductive rights in the region in the post-2015 development agenda.

In June, Riga, Latvia hosted Euro Pride 2015. Latsin Alijev, a board member of ECOM, traveled to Riga in order to take part in the pride events on behalf of ECOM. Alijev participated in a number of working groups on health and human rights, distributed informational material about ECOM, met with other LGBT organizations, and marched in the pride parade. Later that month, Executive Director, Vitaly Djuma traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark to participate in the regional consultation, WHO Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV and Viral Hepatitis: Towards Universal Health Coverage, 2016-2021.

Kiromiddin Gulov, an ECOM member from Tajikistan, represented ECOM at the UNFPA Consultation on Young People from Key Populations in November. The consultation took place in Tbilisi, Georgia and brought together participants representing governments, NGOs, and young people from eight EECA countries to discuss findings from focus group discussions, and to identify commonalities and the way forward to ensure young key populations exercise their rights to sexual and reproductive health and HIV services.

In December, Executive Director, Vitaly



Gennady Roschcupkin at the 4th National Conference of MSM Services and LGBT Communities of Kyrgyzstan

Djuma, was invited to speak at the Funders Concerned About AIDS Meeting in Washington, DC. Djuma engaged private donors to increase support for human rights interventions and to consider investing in the safety of both clients and staff of LGBT organizations. He also encouraged participants to lobby the US Congress in order to change its current approach to global HIV funding, which ignores middle-income countries.

The 4th National Conference of MSM Services and LGBT Communities of the Kyrgyz Republic was also held in December and attracted more than 30 participants, representing civil society organizations, healthcare workers and public officials. Communication Officer, Ivan Lavrentjev, participated in the conference, held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The conference was aimed at facilitating an exchange of experiences between participants and ensuring a better understanding of the challenges, faced by the LGBT community in Kyrgyzstan due to the volatile legal and social environment and a decrease in funding opportunities for HIV-related services. A joint declaration formulated at the conference emphasized the need for further cooperation between civil society organizations, other NGOs, and public authorities.



Trans* Consultation in Kiev

The Dialogue of Trans* Community Representatives from Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) took place in Kiev from December 16-17. Nearly 30 representatives of trans* communities from 9 countries of the region, including Ukraine, Russia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Belarus, Tajikistan, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, participated in the meeting. The meeting was organized by the Ukrainian trans* organization HPLGBT in cooperation with ECOM and was attended by

an authorized representative of the Supreme Council of Ukraine on Human Rights.

Over the course of the meeting, participants were presented with information on ECOM's Regional Program and Concept Note to the Global Fund, the experience of working with trans* communities in different countries, as well as on the HIV prevalence among trans* people in the region.

The participants shared their experiences and discussed priorities for capacity

building activities targeting the trans* community with respect to healthcare, including the provision of sexual services in the context of HIV and STIs. Other topics of discussion included coordination between trans* community organizations and activists from different countries, the development of network cooperation to increase the effectiveness of advocacy efforts at the international level, and support of advocacy initiatives at the national level aimed at protecting the health of trans* people in the context of HIV and STIs.

Participants, noting a serious shortage of comprehensive data on the HIV prevalence among trans* people in EECA, developed and later approved the Resolution of the Dialogue of Trans* Community Representatives from EECA, which was addressed to governments, organizations, activists, and researchers in the region.



The Resolution of the Dialogue of Trans* Community Representatives

from EECA calls upon national governments to recognize the rights and freedoms of its citizens, regardless of their gender identity, to demonstrate the political will to ensure mutual dialogue with civil society, and to involve and consult with trans* people and organizations on the development and implementation of policies and legal measures that affect their interests.

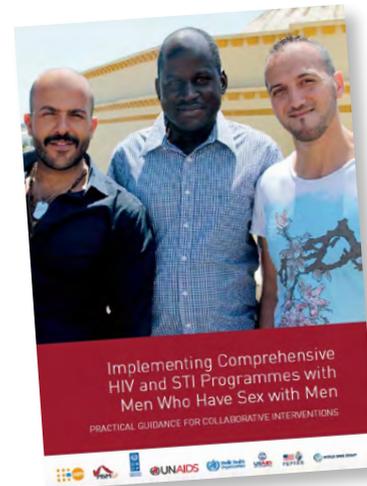
In addition, the participants demanded that governments of EECA:

1. ensure the legal recognition of gender, based on the principle of self-determination and without requiring

long and complex procedures involving physicians or psychiatrists;

2. develop rapid, transparent, and accessible procedures based on self-identification to facilitate changes in name and gender on birth certificates and other identity documents;
3. ensure that these procedures are available to all people regardless of age, sexual orientation, marital status, education, or any other classification;
4. change medical procedures regarding the examination of trans* people to conform with human rights and non-discrimination principles; and,
5. recognize the existence of and put an end to the systematic discrimination and violence towards trans* people.

MSMIT: Practical Guidance for Collaborative Interventions



In September, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) released a new and comprehensive tool for implementing STI and HIV programs targeting MSM. *Implementing Comprehensive HIV and STI Programmes with Men Who Have Sex with Men: Practical Guidance for Collaborative Interventions* (MSMIT) was developed by the UNFPA and the Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) in conjunction with UNDP, WHO, USAID, PEPFAR, BMGF, and over 100 international experts.

The MSMIT targets health care officials, NGO workers, public health officials, and other stakeholders in the HIV epidemic among MSM. It explains how to implement the WHO's *Consolidated Guidelines on HIV Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations* among MSM. The MSMIT focuses on six main areas, which include

- community empowerment,
- violence against MSM,
- condom and lubricant programming,
- delivering healthcare services,
- integrating information and communication technology into programming,
- as well as program management.

In addition, the MSMIT incorporates examples of best practices from around the world, which demonstrate how HIV programs targeting MSM have managed to effectively address the epidemic in challenging legal and social environments. The MSMIT places a strong emphasis on community empowerment, as MSM communities are often best

situated to determine what their specific needs are and what challenges they face.

The MSMIT is an invaluable and innovative tool for combating the HIV epidemic among MSM and will serve as a basis for future programs targeting MSM, including ones funded by the Global Fund.

For the first several months after its publication, the MSMIT was only available in English. However, in November, the UNFPA and ECOM began collaboration in order to make the tool available in Russian as soon as possible. ECOM member Yury Sarankov provided a community review of the UNFPA's Russian translation of the MSMIT, ensuring that the language corresponded to community standards and was sensitive to the specifics of the MSM population.

Thanks to the hard work of the joint UNFPA and ECOM team, the Russian translation was released in early 2016. The staff at ECOM's Secretariat widely distributed both the English and Russian versions of the MSMIT. The tool is currently available in its entirety in both languages on ECOM's website, as well as in an interactive, chapter-by-chapter format. Over the next several months, ECOM will distribute hard copies of the MSMIT to interested organizations and will also release online presentations and other materials in order to guide readers through the document.

➤ [Read more on MSMIT at
www.ecom.ngo/msmit](http://www.ecom.ngo/msmit)

Technical Support

Throughout 2015, ECOM played a key role as a provider of technical support to MSM and LGBT community organizations in the region. The provision of technical support to ECOM's partners in the region is aimed at increasing the capacity of MSM and LGBT community organizations and ensuring that they will become sustainable and capable stakeholders in the response to the HIV epidemic and the fight for LGBT rights.

As ECOM's Technical Support Coordinator, Gennady Roshchupkin was involved in a number of technical support activities in different EECA countries. Roshchupkin represented ECOM at a meeting of the HIV/AIDS Coordination Committee of the Russian Federation. Roshchupkin was responsible for developing a document with objectives and guidelines for Committee members to use when conducting project site visits. This document was later adopted as the official Committee guidelines. In addition, he developed a Terms of Reference document for the Russian Federation MSM and HIV Expert Group. The document included provisions on the group's working procedures, as well as guidelines for electing group members. The Principle Recipient of the Global Fund grant and LGBT community representatives involved in the Committee used this document to hold elections for the expert group and to begin its operations. At this meeting, Roshchupkin also provided LGBT community representatives on the Committee with a consultation on reducing conflicts of interest, implementing oversight mechanisms, and on improving community engagement.

ECOM recently provided technical support to its member organization, NGO "Vstrecha" from Belarus. Roshchupkin



Gennady Roshchupkin facilitating Trans Dialogue Meeting in Kiev

assisted "Vstrecha" with analyzing its organizational capacity. Roshchupkin also developed a road map to ensure "Vstrecha's" future participation and contribution to ECOM's upcoming regional program.

In December, Roshchupkin also participated at the Dialogue of Trans* Community Representatives from Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Kiev, Ukraine. In conjunction with the Trans* Dialogue Meeting, Roshchupkin prepared a number of presentations and also acted as the meeting facilitator.

In 2016, ECOM hopes to develop its technical support program and to continue providing partners with the needed support to increase their capacity and to continue to engage in the fight against the HIV epidemic in the region.

Legislative Analysis

The Eurasian Coalition on Male Health recently carried out an analysis of legal and regulatory documents and acts related to the HIV epidemic and the rights of MSM and trans* people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA). The project aims to document the worrying legal situation and current legislative trends in the region, and will also serve as an advocacy tool to support future advocacy actions aimed at securing greater protection of rights and increased access to HIV services. The legislative analysis project identifies existing gaps and problematic points in legislation regarding access to HIV services or the rights of LGBT people and also documents best practices in community-led advocacy initiatives.

The analysis was conducted in cooperation with the Regional HIV Legal Aid Network. The Legal Aid Network contracted

experts in 9 countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine) to conduct a survey of their country's legislation relating to HIV, MSM, and trans* people and its conformity to international and regional standards. In addition, national representatives of MSM and trans* communities from ECOM cited examples of successful community advocacy initiatives that resulted in changes to such legislation and gave examples of best practices in community advocacy. Each country pair submitted a final report on their country.

Despite the existence of anti-discrimination laws in some EECA countries, virtually no legal provisions exist that adequately protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. At the same time, there is a worrying trend

"In addition to an increased risk of HIV infection, MSM and trans people in the region are subject to discrimination, stigma, violence, and other human rights abuses on a daily basis. Social stigma, discriminatory legislation, and homo- or transphobic violence are pervasive in countries of the region. Despite these problems, governments have refused to implement greater human rights protections for these vulnerable populations. As a result, MSM and trans* people suffer from high rates of depression, suicide, and HIV and STI infection, and, in many cases, are unable to fulfill their potential and live productive lives."*

(from Analysis of Legislation Related to LGBT Rights and HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia)



towards the adoption of homophobic and transphobic laws that infringe on the freedom of expression through bans of so-called "homosexual propaganda". Calls for adopting such laws have been heard in many countries of the EECA region. Acts of violence against LGBT community members are frequently reported from almost all EECA countries, however, existing laws do not adequately address hate crimes. National standards and guidelines for HIV and STIs prevention and treatment also do not adequately reflect the specificity of MSM & trans* needs. MSM and trans* community groups often are ill equipped or do not have the capacity to lead advocacy initiatives aimed at amending such legislation.

The lack of legislative protections for MSM and trans* people and the trend towards greater restrictions on their rights in

"Moldova can be seen as a leader in the region, as it has implemented not only legislation to protect sexual minorities from discrimination, but has also created a mechanism to enforce this legislation."

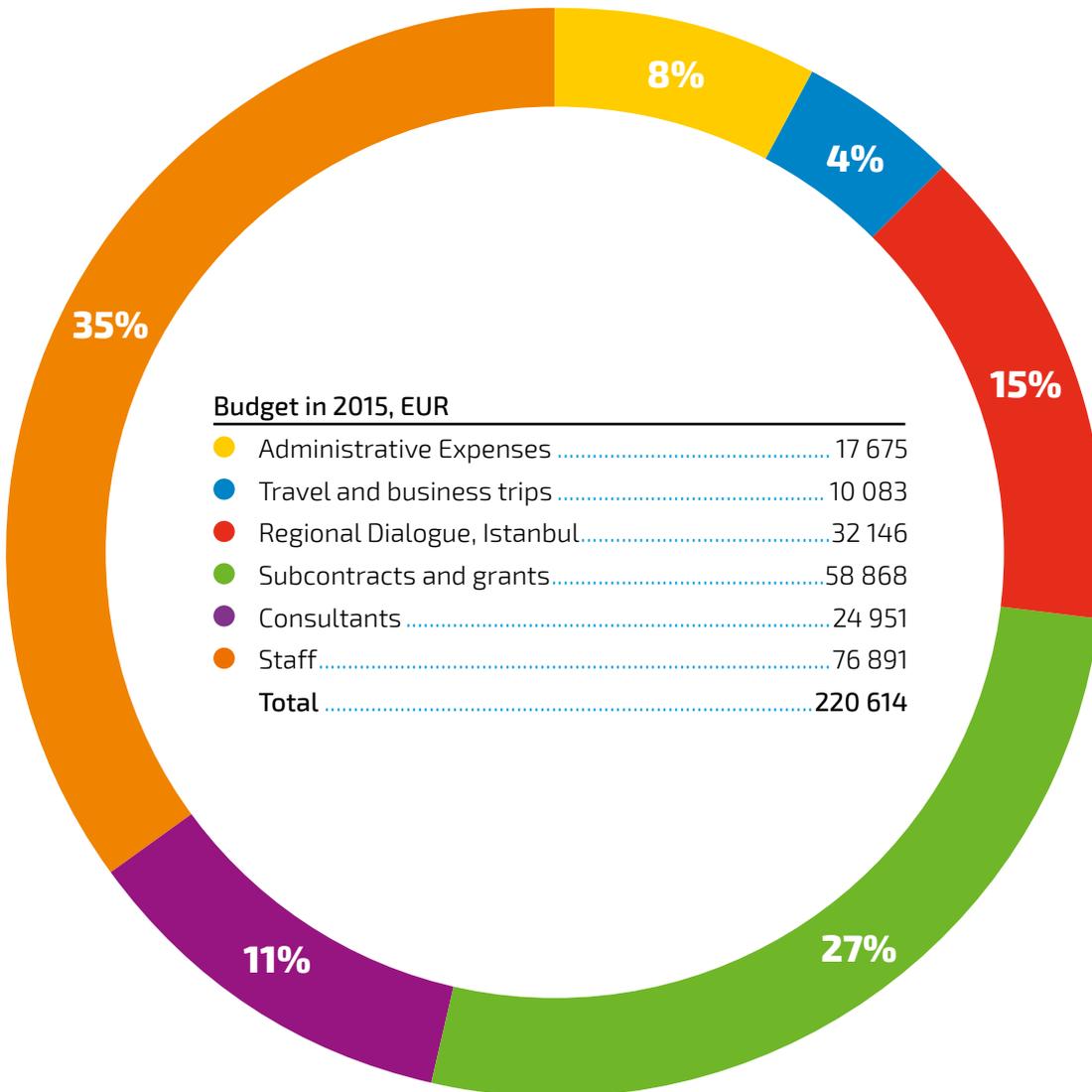
(from Analysis of Legislation Related to LGBT Rights and HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia)

many countries of EECA is deplorable from a human rights perspective. At the same time, such legislation has serious implications for the sexual health of these key populations and increases their risk at contracting HIV. The final legislative analysis report will be available on ECOM's website and will be presented in 2016 at regional and international conferences.

Read more on the Legislative Analysis project at www.ecom.ngo/laws



Budget



ECOM appreciates the support from its donors in 2015



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