

The background is a white canvas filled with various abstract, colorful shapes. At the top, there are large, overlapping semi-circles in shades of pink and yellow. Below these, there are several large, solid-colored shapes: a purple shape on the left, a large purple oval on the right, a blue triangle pointing upwards in the center, a green shape on the bottom left, an orange shape on the bottom right, and a large pink shape at the very bottom. The text is centered within a horizontal band of the purple shape.

THEME OF THIS ISSUE:
ANNUAL COALITION REPORT

DEAR ECOM MEMBERS, DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS



VITALY DJUMA

*Executive Director
of ECOM*

2025 was another year of upheaval for the entire EECA region and especially for the LGBT community. The year began with the suspension of US international funding, which affected HIV programs in many countries across our region

The war launched by Russia against Ukraine continued unabated, affecting the entire region. The authoritarian shift also continued, with repression of non-governmental organizations and activists in Georgia and restrictions on independent media in Kyrgyzstan. Pressure on the LGBT community intensified, too: in Kazakhstan, a law against “LGBT propaganda” was adopted, and ECOM itself was declared an “undesirable” organization in Russia, creating risks for our members in the country.

The HIV epidemic among LGBT people continues to grow, but HIV response programs are not expanding. On the contrary, UNAIDS and WHO have reduced their presence and limited their work in our region. In this annual report, you will learn how ECOM responded to these multiple challenges in the region.

In 2025, the ECOM General Assembly approved amendments to the Strategic Plan, reaffirming the coalition’s mission. Our goal is to maintain work on the protection of human rights and health, as well as to further develop ECOM.

We strengthened our internal structure: following elections, committed allies joined the Steering Committee and the Ethics Committee of the coalition.

We intensified our human rights work. Based on monitoring of human rights violations, we submitted 16 reports and thematic submissions to UN bodies on the situation of LGBT rights in the region. ECOM also provided emergency support to 80 activists from key populations across different countries in the region whose personal safety was at risk.

We actively worked in the field of HIV response, focusing on promoting groundbreaking pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) programs in the region. In particular, a unique online PrEP course was launched, which was included in the official continuing education program for healthcare workers in Kazakhstan.

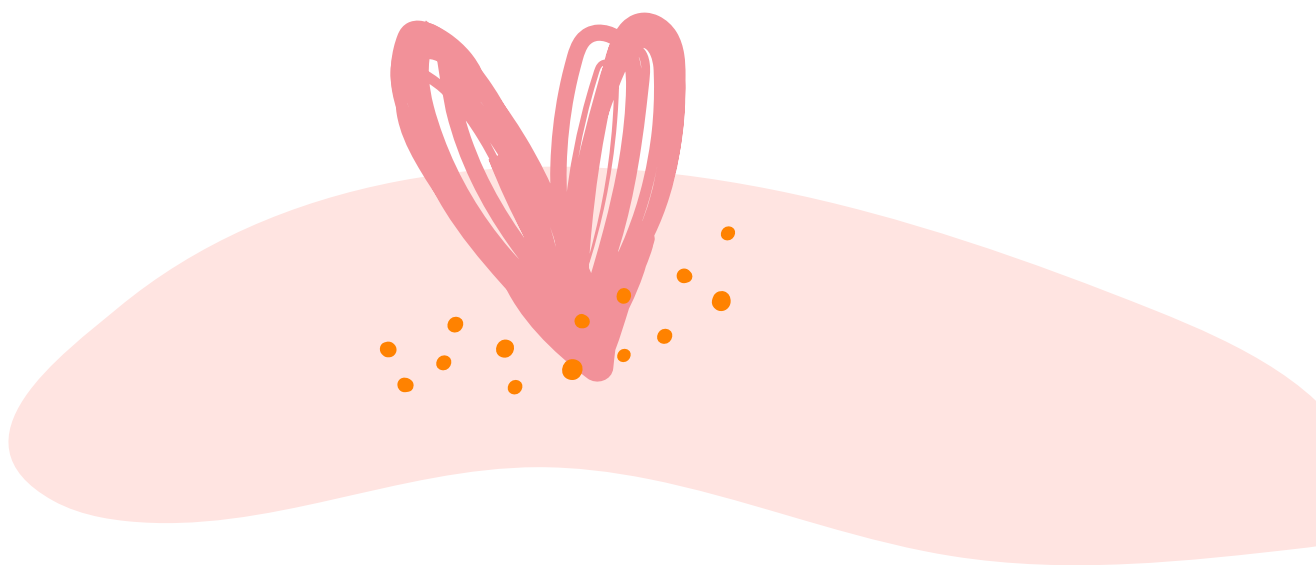
We continued our work with young LGBT people: we organized an online sexuality education academy and conducted a needs assessment of the LGBT youth related to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

We also continued to strengthen solidarity with different communities. To support the sustainability of community organizations in the region, we awarded 18 grants totaling over 410,000 euros.

Thus, we are proud to say that in 2025, ECOM continued to be the voice of the region's LGBTI community on the international stage, directly protecting and supporting the community, as well as strengthening ties with partners and allies.

But we could not have achieved this without your participation in the coalition and without your cooperation. The challenges we continue to face are enormous. But I believe that mutual support and strong partnerships will help us continue to support the development of national LGBT communities, advance human rights, and support the health and social well-being of gender and sexually diverse people in the region.

THANK YOU FOR BEING WITH US!

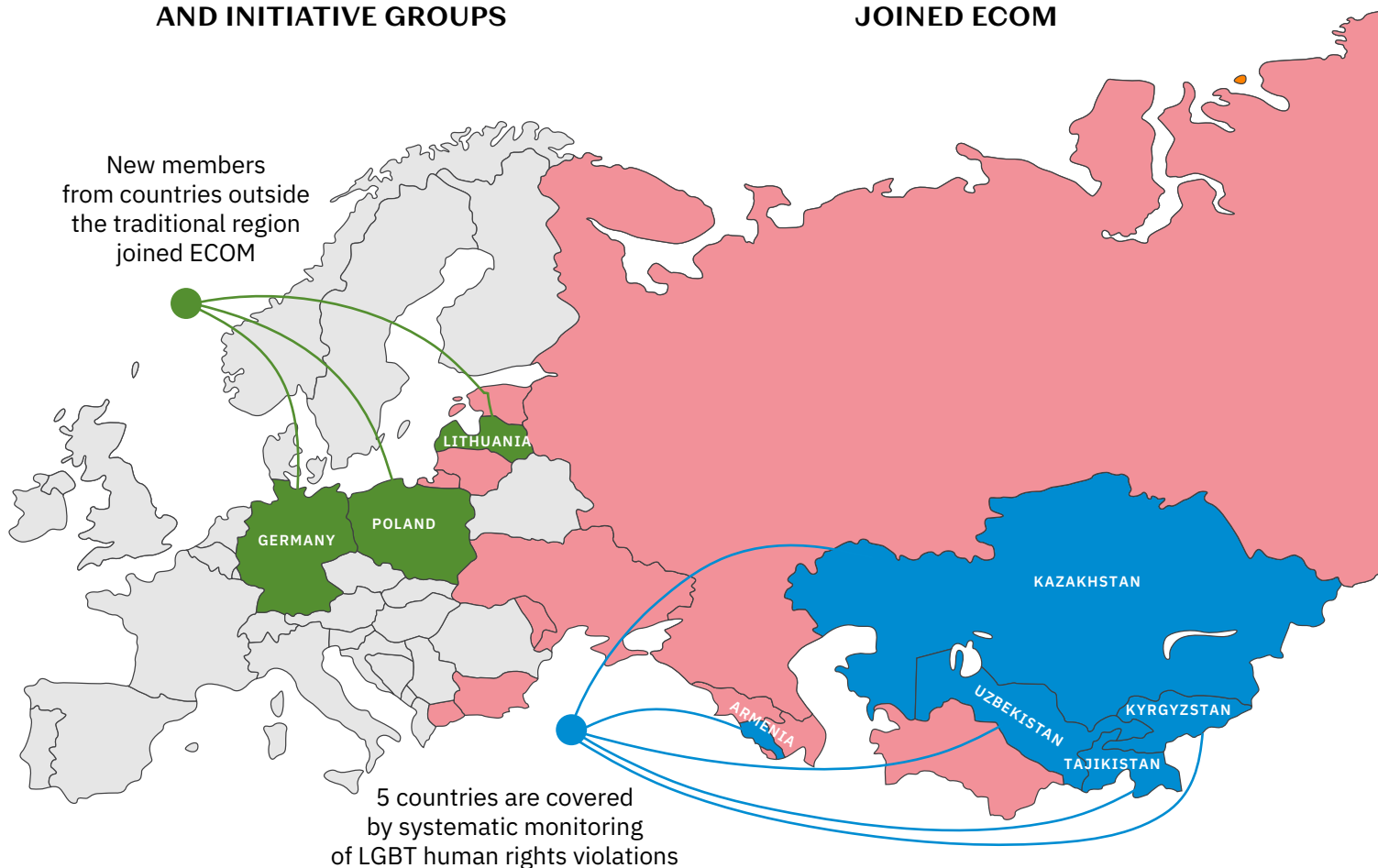


6

NEW ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVE GROUPS

7

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS JOINED ECOM



47

ORGANIZATION

45⁺

organizations participated in a comprehensive needs assessment of organizations working in the field of HIV – as part of the RESILIENT project

17

INITIATIVE GROUPS

8⁺

international documents and reports were prepared and submitted to UN and OSCE bodies. These include shadow reports on the situation in Kazakhstan and Georgia, a report on hate crimes for the OSCE, an analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals for Kyrgyzstan, and an appeal to UN Special Rapporteurs

39

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

6

strategic litigation cases in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan received support to counter police abuse and protect the right to change one's gender marker

ECOM UPDATES ITS DIGITAL RESOURCES: LAUNCH OF A NEW WEBSITE AND E-HUB PLATFORM

In 2025, ECOM announced a major update of its key digital platforms — the official website ecom.ngo and the [E-HUB](#) learning platform.

These changes, aimed at improving the community's access to expert knowledge and resources, represent one of the most important achievements of the communications team.



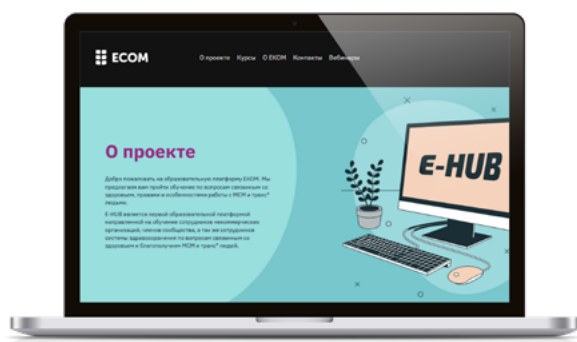
FASTER AND MORE CONVENIENT: THE UPDATED ecom.ngo



The coalition's main website underwent a complete overhaul. It is now **faster**, more **intuitive**, and easier to use. The update went beyond the design and also affected the structure: it became easier to find analytical reports, regional news, and materials in the Knowledge Center, including the library and information maps of EECA countries.



E-HUB: A NEW LEVEL OF ONLINE LEARNING



The ECOM team invites all coalition members, activists, and partners to explore the updates and continue using the resources to strengthen work in the EECA region.

Alongside the website, ECOM introduced an updated version of its educational platform — **E-HUB**. The main improvements concern learning accessibility:

- ✓ **Unified space:** all of the coalition's online courses are now available on a single, modern platform.
- ✓ **User-friendly interface:** simplified navigation makes it easier to start and complete courses on health, human rights, and support for LGBT communities. And yes — it is now convenient to learn on a smartphone.
- ✓ **Up-to-date content:** new learning modules are available on the platform, including courses on HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for health-care workers and materials on working with key populations.



Website



Learning platform

LEGAL TEAM:

“IT WAS A YEAR OF DISRUPTED PROJECT LOGIC AND SECURITY CHALLENGES”

2025 was a year of exceptional uncertainty for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region. Read our interview to learn how Human Rights Coordinator

Elvira and Advocacy Coordinator Jipariza defended community rights in the context of closing borders, shrinking civic space, and dwindling funding.

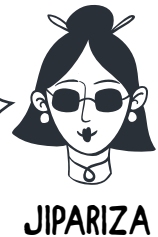


Tell us what plans you had in mind for 2025 and to what extent it was possible to realize them



Our programmatic work, initially planned for three years, is being implemented in a context of rapid changes in the region. This requires us to regularly review our priorities and approaches, making our work more flexible and adaptive. The first challenge at the beginning of the year was a significant reduction in funding. This affected the scope and timeline of our ongoing human rights projects and required us to reconsider certain components of work in this area.

We didn't know what would happen the next day. We had to constantly think not only about implementing activities, but also about the safety of our partners: how to transfer funds safely and avoid putting people at risk.



JIPARIZA



How has the political situation changed in the countries of the region? Which countries are of greatest concern?



We see that the region is “closing down.” Governments of Central Asian countries with ties to Russia have been taking excessive liberties. Where we once documented isolated threats, we’re now facing a major crisis. For example, in Kazakhstan, on November 12, 2025, the Mazhilis unanimously [adopted a new law on “LGBT propaganda,”](#) supported by the ruling party. In Belarus, in July 2025, amendments were made to the Law “On the Rights of the Child,” recognizing information about LGBT people as harmful to children, and in October, the House of Representatives approved at first reading the introduction of administrative liability for this.

Repression against activists has intensified. In Georgia, the application of the FARA law (on “foreign agents”) has been extended to individuals, and violations are now punishable not only by a fine but also criminal liability — up to five years in prison.

Meanwhile, in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, laws on “foreign representatives” and pressure from security services have forced many NGOs to close or cease their advocacy and human rights work, shifting to other formats. In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, consensual same-sex relations between men remain criminalized, and activists there face constant danger.



JIPARIZA



ELVIRA

Nevertheless, even in this reality, we see areas of resilience. Moldova, like Ukraine, remains a regional leader with effective anti-discrimination legislation that explicitly includes SOGI, along with functioning equality bodies.

In Armenia, amendments came into force allowing violence in same-sex relationships to be investigated under domestic violence legislation, which is an important step.

For our team, the year was not only about monitoring these threats, but also about identifying ways for communities to survive.

The problem is that the UN and treaty bodies have ceased to be an authority for governments in our region. We see the influence of new right-wing forces and anti-gender trends around the world, and leaders in the region are embracing them. The President of Kyrgyzstan literally quotes Western conservative politicians in his speeches. In Uzbekistan, the authorities ignore all UN recommendations on decriminalization. In these conditions, it'll take decades of sustained effort to see change. But despite shrinking civic space and legal restrictions, we and organizations in these countries continue to work in this new reality.



JIPARIZA



In 2025, ECOM continued monitoring rights violations in the region. What trends did you observe?



ELVIRA

We documented 207 cases of rights violations in Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. However, due to reduced resources, the number of monitors in these countries decreased, making data collection significantly more difficult. In some countries, such as Kyrgyzstan, government agencies were unable to sign grant agreements due to restrictions, and we had to look for workarounds.

What's particularly concerning is the growing number of “closed” cases. People reach out for help, but they're so frightened that they ask us not to include their stories in public reports at all. In addition, the profile of violators has changed: whereas previously it was mainly police or medical personnel, there's now a growing number of attacks by private individuals. The state promotes an anti-LGBT agenda, and society is responding with increasing aggression, driven by a sense of impunity.



JIPARIZA



How did ECOM help the community not only document problems but also address them in 2025?



ELVIRA

*We supported 6 strategic litigation cases in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. These included cases of police abuse, homelessness, and the right to change one's gender marker. But our main dream, which started to come true in 2025, is the creation of the **Central Asian Lawyers' Network**. We realized that legal assistance was critically lacking and decided to train human rights defenders specializing in SOGI and HIV issues ourselves.*

At the same time, we worked in a rapid response format. In 2025, we received 177 requests for emergency assistance and relocation. We saw difficult situations: people who fled to Georgia in 2024, believing it to be safe, were forced to flee again in 2025 because the situation there sharply deteriorated.



JIPARIZA



What did this year mean to you personally? What conclusions did you draw as experts and as individuals?



ELVIRA

For me, this year was a time of reflection on decoloniality. It became especially clear how much NGOs and regional processes depend on external funding and the political context of certain countries. This pushes us toward seeking more sustainable, independent, and flexible models of work.

The hardest part was the emotional burden. We received messages in which activists were pleading for help because they'd ended up on the street. We felt enormous responsibility because, due to the crisis, ECOM suddenly became a donor organization for many, even though we've always been a partner network.



JIPARIZA



ELVIRA

Moments of joy this year were brief – when you get a message saying that a person, thanks to our support, was able to leave the country in time and is now safe.

BEYOND STATISTICS:

HOW A CHRONICLE OF COMMUNITY SURVIVAL IS CREATED



OKSANA KOVTUN

*sociologist, regional reporting
analyst at ECOM*

My collaboration with ECOM on regional reports started in 2022. For me as a specialist, it's always an opportunity to step outside my own information bubble — in this case, the Ukrainian one — and see the broader context of LGBT rights violations across the entire EECA region. The 2025 regional report is the result of the enormous work of a whole network of people, turning individual stories of pain into a powerful advocacy tool.



METHODOLOGY: FROM TEXT TO SYSTEMIC CONCLUSIONS

The report preparation process is painstaking analytical work. I work exclusively with textual descriptions of cases collected by documenters in the field. I break down each case into a list of variables: who was affected, who was the violator, what rights were violated, and how the incident ended. It's important to understand: our monitoring doesn't claim to be 100% representative — we can't document every single case in the region. However,

we clearly see **key trends and patterns**. To ensure data quality, we conduct webinars for documenters, improving both the completeness of reporting and ethical aspects. After all, the level of detail in each case directly affects our ability to establish a causal link to legislation. For example, in Uzbekistan, we clearly see how laws criminalizing same-sex relations or HIV transmission are used by police for blackmail and coercion.



CHALLENGES OF 2025: “A CHAIN OF VIOLATIONS BEHIND A SINGLE NUMBER”

Capturing the complexity of incidents in 2025 was particularly challenging. Isolated incidents are becoming increasingly rare. Today, a single case often represents a chain of violations: for example, a healthcare worker discloses a patient's status to relatives, which leads to domestic violence, expulsion from home, and a suicide attempt. Cases are becoming more complex and multi-layered. As a person, I find it emotionally difficult to reread these cases, especially when they are quite brutal. I'm

always amazed by the resilience of field documenters who not only record these events but also directly help those affected to cope with them. In 2025, we recorded a disturbing trend: while previously violations by law enforcement agencies dominated, now LGBT people are increasingly facing violence in their everyday lives — from strangers, neighbors, or even friends. Society is becoming more aggressive against the backdrop of state-sponsored homophobia and transphobia



RESOURCES: TRUST AS A FOUNDATION

In 2025, there were many cases marked “for statistics only, not for publication,” which reflects both a high level of fear and people’s willingness to share their experiences specifically with our network.

However, we’re critically lacking resources to work in small towns and villages. There, cases are usually isolated but extremely severe: from bullying by children to complete expulsion from the community.



Documentation relies on one key resource – trust. Without the reputation and trust between documenters and those affected, the entire system would be a mere formality.



IMPACT: FROM REPORTING TO INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Statistics are a tricky thing. For example, Ukraine leads in the number of cases (about half of all 647 cases in 2025), but this speaks not only to existing challenges, but also to a well-developed reporting system. At the same time, cases from Uzbekistan or Tajikistan, though fewer in number, are striking in their brutality. In Moldova, we see how LGBT issues

are used as a tool for political manipulation. Our report is proof that communities remain resilient even when state systems work against them. However, we still need resources to work in small towns and villages, where violations are often invisible yet extremely severe. We continue this work, turning every number in the statistics into a voice calling for dignity.



ADVOCACY RESULTS

In 2025, ECOM, together with its national partners, played a key role in advancing the visibility and protection of the rights of LGBT communities across Eastern Europe and Central Asia within the UN human rights system.

Over the course of the year, ECOM and its national partners prepared and submitted 16 shadow reports and thematic submissions to various UN treaty bodies, special procedures, and other mechanisms. These materials helped bring the voices and real-life challenges of LGBT people — as well as human rights defenders and healthcare professionals working with key populations — to the attention of international bodies

Inter alia, together with our partners, we developed the following submissions:

- ✔ Committee against Torture — *Tajikistan*
- ✔ Request for information on healthcare workers
- ✔ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women — *Belarus*
- ✔ Submission to Human Rights Council resolution 56/20
- ✔ Submission on SOGI and education
- ✔ Human Rights Committee — *Kazakhstan*
- ✔ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women — *Kazakhstan* (List of Issues)
- ✔ Shadow report “Spotlight” on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals — *Kyrgyzstan*
- ✔ Submission to the thematic report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association for the 80th session of the UN General Assembly
- ✔ Universal Periodic Review — *Georgia*
- ✔ Submission to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders (61st session of the Human Rights Council)



Vitaly Djuma spoke at the launch meeting of the new Global Fund Replenishment cycle

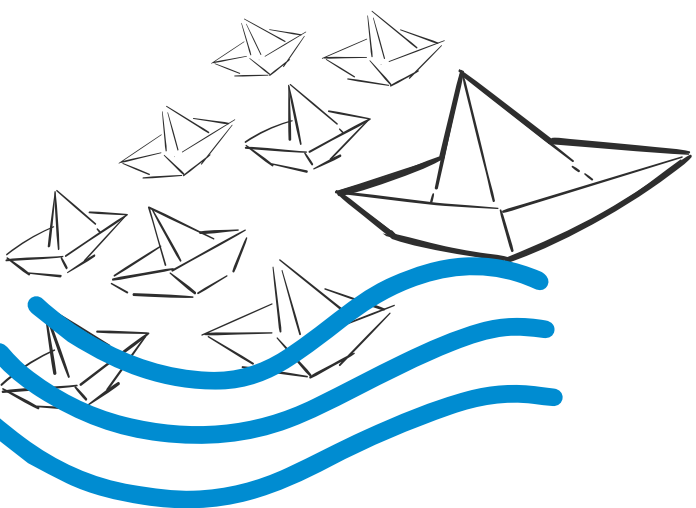




54th Global Fund Board Meeting



Advocacy Visit of Activists to the United Nations



- ✔ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights — *Kazakhstan* (List of Issues)
- ✔ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights — *Tajikistan*. Follow-up report on the implementation of the Committee's concluding observations
- ✔ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Human Rights — *Georgia*. Follow-up report on the implementation of the Committee's concluding observations
- ✔ Submission to the thematic report of the Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity for the 62nd session of the Human Rights Council: "Violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian, bisexual, and queer (LBQ) women"

ECOM, together with the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA), the Eurasian Women's Network on AIDS (EWNA), and the Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network (SWAN), under the RESILIENT initiative, prepared a submission to the call for comments on Draft General Comment No. 38 on Article 22 (freedom of association) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), focusing on challenges to freedom of association for marginalized groups in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the context of rapidly shrinking civic space.

It is especially important that two of these submissions were reflected in the published concluding observations of UN treaty bodies in 2025..

In 2025, ECOM supported an advocacy mission of eight activists from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan to present shadow reports and national perspectives during UN treaty body reviews, as well as during the pre-advocacy week and the Universal Periodic Review session.

This participation allowed the activists to directly engage with representatives of international mechanisms, present regional challenges and proposals on behalf of communities, and strengthen the capacity of local organizations in international advocacy.

Through this work, ECOM significantly increased the visibility of LGBT issues within international UN mechanisms. The recommendations of UN treaty bodies on Belarus and Kazakhstan, as well as the recommendations issued under the Universal Periodic Review for Armenia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan, were a direct result of joint advocacy by ECOM and its partners, providing new tools for national campaigns and legislative reforms.

We provided technical support to ECOM members and partners working on human rights for LGBT people in EECA, including online webinars and exchange of experience between countries. In 2025, the coalition supported strategic litigation related to

violations of LGBT people's rights in EECA aimed at improving the legal environment: 6 cases in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. These included police abuse of power, homelessness, denial of disability benefits, and change of one's gender marker.

We conduct systematic monitoring of rights violations against LGBT people in 5 countries of the region (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan).

ECOM participated in international conferences and meetings, including the annual ILGA-Europe conference and the Civil Society Gathering on HRD Protection in the EU (September 30 – October 1, 2025).



FIVE FACTS ABOUT HIV AMONG LGBT PEOPLE IN 2025

THAT CAN'T BE IGNORED – ESPECIALLY NOW

Sometimes it seems to me that the conversation about HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia moves in a spiral: we take a step forward, then something collapses, and we find ourselves back where we were. But each new cycle brings new nuances: political, social, human. This isn't just an epidemic; it's a mirror reflecting fear, strength, solidarity, and disillusionment. And frankly, 2025 was the year when it became absolutely clear: global partners can make mistakes, can turn away, can betray — but we cannot. We live here, we work here, and only we can decide what the future of the region will look like.



LGBT Health Coordinator

1 HIV INCIDENCE AMONG MSM IS RISING, AND THIS ISN'T ABOUT PERSONAL GUILT BUT A SYSTEMIC VACUUM

When I look at the numbers, the first thing I feel is anger — not at people, but at the circumstances. The rise in HIV rates has long ceased to be a result of behavior; it has become a consequence of the lack of safe, accessible, and respectful services. It's about doctors who think it's normal to give lectures on mo-

rality. About clinics where the lack of privacy turns testing into a social risk. About cities where taking a test feels like an investigation — who will see? who will find out? And the most honest explanation is simple: the epidemic grows where the state chooses to ignore human dignity.

2 PREP HAS BECOME MORE ACCESSIBLE, AND NOW THE REGION IS LEARNING FROM ITSELF RATHER THAN THE WEST

PrEP is no longer an abstract concept — it's now a practice. But access to PrEP is not about pills or protocols; it's about the system's attitude toward the individual. And in this sense, the region unexpectedly became its own teacher. Kazakhstan is one of the most striking examples. Despite the complex political context, clinics and teams have emerged there that treat people not as objects of control, but as human

beings. A simple, functional, and respectful approach: doctors don't ask unnecessary questions, NGOs and the state cooperate, and logistics are well organized. It's not a perfect model, but it works, and it's ours. And for the first time in decades, we don't need to look to the US to understand how to implement prevention. We can look to our neighbors.

3

CHEMSEX HAS BECOME PART OF URBAN LGBT CULTURE, BUT SUPPORT STILL RELIES ON INDIVIDUALS, NOT INSTITUTIONS

Chemsex is no longer an isolated or hidden phenomenon, but acknowledging this reality doesn't automatically solve the problem. People still face anxiety, addiction, loss of control; they're left to deal with it on their own — and in some cases even die. And if there's an example in the region of how to work in inhuman conditions, it's Ukraine. A country where war

became everyday reality, where public services are overwhelmed, but where NGOs fearlessly continue to support people: through peer support groups, counseling, harm reduction services, outreach work. What Ukraine is doing now is a lesson to us all about how to preserve humanity when everything around is collapsing.

4

PUBLIC FATIGUE HAS BECOME A RISK, AND THIS IS WHERE THE GLOBAL POLITICAL “HOT TOPICS” EMERGE

This fact can't be ignored: in 2025, the United States turned decisively toward ideological bigotry. Budget cuts to prevention programs, attacks on the LGBT agenda, political pressure on healthcare initiatives — all of this is undermining a model the world has relied on for decades. You can try to soften it, but the truth is simple: America has betrayed its own principles. And, perhaps for the first time, we find ourselves in a situation where expecting help from them means relying naively on something that no longer

exists. But in this shadow, the region's strength became visible. Georgia, for example, demonstrates a level of epidemiological surveillance and data quality that seems unattainable today for most European countries. Transparent monitoring, timely reporting, a culture of response — and all of this became possible not through external grants, but through internal professionalism. And at this point, it becomes clear: dependence on the West was a habit, not a necessity.

5

THE REGION'S GREATEST STRENGTH LIES IN THE PEOPLE WHO DRIVE PROCESSES FORWARD, EVEN WHEN POLITICAL CYCLES COLLAPSE

Every trip across the region reminds me: real change is driven not by structures, but by people. Those who conduct testing in buses at night. Those who build chatbots for consultations so as not to leave people alone with their fears. Those who create community spaces where honest conversations can take place.

We learn from Kazakhstan how to implement PrEP. From Ukraine — how to work in a time of disaster and not break down. From Georgia — how to build a data system that becomes the foundation of trust. From Kyrgyzstan — how to remain humane in an environment where this is still risky.

“

And most importantly, we no longer look to Washington, Berlin, or London. We look to each other. We see our own models, our own solutions, our own resources. The region hasn't betrayed itself. The region hasn't given up. The region is holding on.

”

To be honest, I haven't felt this much clarity in a long time. Yes, the world has become much tougher. But we haven't. We've become more direct, more courageous, and we're growing up faster. And now, as global centers lose their political relevance, we have

a chance to build protection, resilience, and solidarity — not in someone else's image, but something that has grown here, among our people, in our cities, in our conditions

AND THIS IS PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT OF 2025:
NO ONE IS COMING TO SAVE US — AND THERE'S NO NEED

A large green circle with a wavy line above it, and a fist icon at the bottom right.

WE CAN
DO IT
OURSELVES

60 HOURS OF PREP TRAINING: HOW ECOM IS TRANSFORMING MEDICAL EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

In 2025, ECOM made a major breakthrough in professional education for medical specialists: together with the Kazakh Scientific Center for Dermatology and Infectious Diseases, we developed and launched an [online course](#) on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP),

which received official recognition at the state level. This is not just educational material, but a comprehensive 60-academic-hour program (2 credits), which doctors can officially use for their recertification.



THE JOURNEY FROM A ONE-TIME TRAINING SESSION TO SYSTEMIC RECOGNITION



ELENA GERMAN

*Course Manager,
Capacity Building Coordinator*

The journey to this success took four years. It all began in 2021 with the first training sessions for infectious disease specialists and dermatovenerologists in Kazakhstan. Elena German, the course manager, recalls that it quickly became clear that one-time expert visits were not enough for such a large country. Doctors in small towns, mountain villages, and remote regions needed a continuous, local, and accessible training resource. Unlike many other countries in the region, Kazakhstan has unique prerequisites: PrEP is state-funded and enshrined in the Health Code.

The course's credibility was ensured by its lecturers — leading specialists at the KSCDID, who are well known and respected in the medical community. The coordinator from the scientific center was Botagoz Turdalieva, Doctor of Medical Sciences and Professor, while the course author and speaker was Gulzhakhan Akhmetova, Head of the KSCDID Epidemiological Monitoring Department, an infectious disease specialist, and Candidate of Medical Sciences. This created the foundation upon which ECOM, together with the Kazakh Scientific Center for Dermatology and Infectious Diseases (KSCDID), a CDC-level structure, began building an educational platform.



**Gulzhakhan
AKHMETOVA**

**Botagoz
TURDALIEVA**

To gain legitimacy, the course had to be approved by the scientific council. This approach allowed the training to move beyond activist materials to an academic level.

“The KSCDID was a co-founder of the course, and it was written by doctors who have been implementing PrEP in Kazakhstan since the very beginning of the program. To gain legitimacy, the course had to be approved by the scientific council. This approach allowed the training to move beyond activist materials to an academic level. It was the 60-hour duration that enabled the course to qualify as a professional development program with credit allocation,” Elena

German explained. Localization was also a significant achievement: this is the first ECOM course that is fully available not only in Russian but also in the national language, Kazakh. The speaker for this version of the course was Meiramgul Gabasova. The online format was also an advantage, as it allowed doctors to complete their training at a convenient time and from anywhere in the country.



WHAT IT MEANS FOR ECOM AND WHAT OPPORTUNITIES IT OPENS UP

Спикерки Программа курса Отзывы

Онлайн-курс по доконтактной профилактике ВИЧ для медицинских работников Республики Казахстан

Цель курса: Повысить уровень знаний и практических навыков слушателей по вопросам доконтактной профилактики ВИЧ, способствовать широкому и обоснованному внедрению ДКП в клиническую и профилактическую практику для снижения распространения ВИЧ-инфекции.

Авторизация

Регистрация

For ECOM, the success of this course lies not only in the number of participants (in 2025, 486 people enrolled in the Russian version and 86 in the Kazakh version), but also in a qualitative shift in the organization’s status. However, for this experience to evolve from a local success into a sustainable regional standard, specific resources and political will are required. “Funding is currently the only real obstacle,” Elena says frankly, emphasizing that the technical foundation is already in place. The coalition has a fully developed course that can be adapted to the legislation of any country — for example, Tajikistan — at half the cost of developing it from scratch. Nevertheless,

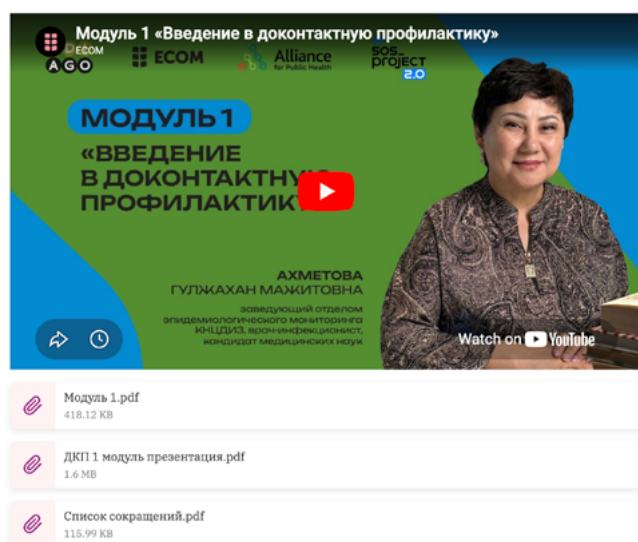
high-quality adaptation is not just translation — it also requires the participation of respected local doctors and the scientific community. “In Kazakhstan, ECOM found incredible partners in the KSCDID, who were themselves committed to innovation and the integration of training into the national system,” Elena noted. “To replicate this in other countries, such as Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, or Moldova, it’s crucial to find partners at the level of ministries and national AIDS centers.” Only official state recognition of the course — its inclusion in continuing professional development programs with credits — makes it truly attractive to doctors and sustainable in the long term.

“We urgently need courses on medical ethics, stigma and discrimination, as well as on the specifics of working with trans people and clients who engage in chemsex.”

Today, there is a demand for new topics that go beyond medical protocols. Curious yet alarming cases at conferences, where doctors fail to distinguish between sexual orientation and gender identity, point to serious knowledge gaps. As Elena notes, “We urgently need courses on medical ethics, stigma and discrimination, as well as on the specifics of working with trans people and clients who engage in chem-

sex.” Without this knowledge, support may remain inaccessible to those who need it most. The development of this course demonstrated ECOM’s ability to create educational products that can be integrated into state systems. This transforms high-quality healthcare from a privilege reserved for residents of major cities into an accessible service for everyone in the region, regardless of where they live.

Модуль 1 «Введение в доконтактную профилактику»



Модуль 1 «Введение в доконтактную профилактику»

ЕКОМ Alliance for Public Health SO5 project 2.0

МОДУЛЬ 1
«ВВЕДЕНИЕ В ДОКОНТАКТНУЮ ПРОФИЛАКТИКУ»

АХМЕТОВА
ГУЛЖАХАН МАЖИТОВНА
заведующий отделом эпидемиологического мониторинга, КНЦДЦ ВИЗ, врач-инфекционист, кандидат медицинских наук

Watch on YouTube

- Модуль 1.pdf
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1.6 MB
- Список сокращений.pdf
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Тест к модулю 1

Введите вопрос 1 из 7

1. Понятие о комплексной профилактике ВИЧ-инфекции

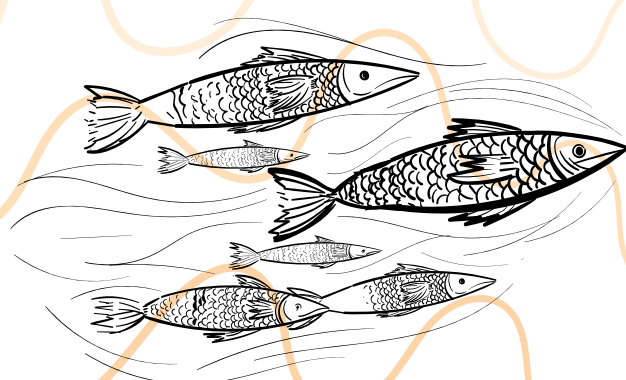
- ☐ лабораторные исследования, медикаментозная терапия
- ☐ структурные, поведенческие и биоповеденческие меры
- ☐ медицинские меры и социальная поддержка
- ☐ нестигматизирующая нормативная база и достаточное финансирование.

Следующий вопрос →

Понравился тест?

Оцените тест

☆☆☆☆☆



RESULTS OF THE HEALTH TEAM'S WORK



- ✓ The Regional Trans People Working Group conducted a study on self-administration of hormone therapy; over 800 respondents took part;



800+ respondents participated in a study on self-administered hormone therapy among trans people

- ✓ Conducted the first-ever [estimation of the trans population size in Kazakhstan](#), with the active participation of trans-led initiatives;
- ✓ Conducted an analysis of barriers and facilitators in the implementation of PrEP in [Kazakhstan](#) and [Tajikistan](#);
- ✓ Completed a technical assistance case for Georgia (with the support of CRG) that focused on identifying legal barriers and developing scenarios for NGOs under new Georgian legislation;
- ✓ Technical assistance visits:
 - Mapping partners and conducting a study on barriers to PrEP in [Tajikistan](#),
 - “Health Ambassador School” training for MSM, participation in a national HIV conference, presentation of the course for doctors, and PrEP training for dermatovenerologists in Kazakhstan;
- ✓ A pilot PrEP project for migrants in Kazakhstan — over 150 clients;



150+ migrants gained direct access to PrEP services in Kazakhstan as part of a pilot project

- ✓ Together with the KSCDID, developed and launched an [online course on PrEP for health-care workers in Kazakhstan](#) — the course is included in the professional development program;

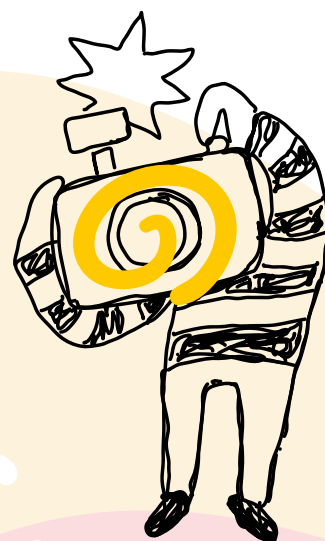


Mission to Tajikistan for Technical Assistance and Mapping

- ✓ Together with the Mental Health Center, developed a training module on chemsex for narcologists and psychiatrists. The module is included in the professional development program for healthcare workers;
- ✓ Launched a [“PrEP by mail” intervention in Tajikistan](#);
- ✓ Provided technical support to sub-grantees of the AIDS FOND project and supported 6 capacity-building cases;
- ✓ Publication of the article [“Prevalence and Correlates of Intimate Partner Violence Among Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men who have Sex with Men \(GBMSM\) Using PrEP in Pre-War Ukraine”](#) in the Journal of Family Violence.



“Health Ambassador School” Training



EVIDENCE-BASED EXPERTISE: HOW RESEARCH BECAME A KEY PILLAR OF ECOM'S WORK BY 2025



For nearly five years, ECOM has consistently relied on evidence-based medicine and invested in scientific research. We spoke with Nikolay Lunchenkov, ECOM Health Coordinator, an infectious disease specialist and researcher, about how, in 2025, research stopped being a mere addition to activism and became a powerful tool for protecting the community's interests.



In 2025, you were able to present a unique study – an analysis of the PrEP program in Kazakhstan. What was the objective, and what approach did you use?

Kazakhstan is one of the few countries in the region where PrEP is 100% state-funded. This is a significant amount of money, and the government needs to understand whether the program is effective and whether it reduces HIV transmission. We were asked

to help measure this. Together with our national partners, we decided to focus on the group of men who have sex with men (MSM), as they are one of the largest groups using PrEP.



How did you measure the impact if the actual number of new HIV cases is unknown?

We can't rely on the number of registered cases: for example, there are about 4,000 per year, but the real figure could be higher. For any meaningful calculation, we need a stable indicator. That's why we chose an indirect but clear indicator: test positivity, meaning the proportion of positive HIV tests among all tests conducted as part of prevention programs. The government knows this figure. And it's quite reliable: even if a person takes a test in a private lab, they still come to a public clinic for confirmation of the diagnosis and subsequent treatment. Analysis showed that in the four years since the introduction of PrEP (the

program was launched in 2021), the number of tests among MSM doubled, while test positivity decreased by 25%. This is a very good result — sorry for pre-



25% – reduction in the proportion of positive HIV tests among MSM in Kazakhstan following the introduction of PrEP programs

tentiousness, but these are dozens of prevented HIV cases. It fully aligns with clinical evidence on PrEP from other countries.

In other words, the program in Kazakhstan is working, and it's working well. We also looked at the proportion of late diagnoses. At first glance, it didn't change, but when you consider that testing volume doubled, it becomes clear: in relative terms, it decreased. This is important. We want HIV to be diagnosed earlier. We calculated that approximately 13–14 people on

PrEP prevent one case of HIV infection among MSM. This is consistent with all existing international data, so we would like to say to our government partners: well done!



13–14 people on PrEP are enough to prevent one new case of HIV among MSM



How do research results influence ECOM's work: its strategy, its interaction with partners?

Research is a powerful advocacy tool. When you have figures and facts recognized by the professional community, they're very difficult to argue with. We base our discussions with government partners on evidence; personal judgments are set aside — emotions are extremely ineffective in this case. Here are the data, here are the confirmed facts, here is where improvements can be made, and here is where the approach needs to be completely reconsidered. As a rule, this works.

An international conference dedicated to the cultural, social, and political dimensions of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Eastern Europe and Central Asia was held in Konstanz, Germany. One of the key sessions was a panel moderated by Dr. Nikolai Lunchenkov, ECOM's

LGBT Health Coordinator, which brought together experts from Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan:

- **Rishat Azikhanov**, Iridium (Kyrgyzstan)
- **Aidar Kapasov**, Human Health Institute Public Association (Kazakhstan)
- **Professor Botagoz Turdalieva**, Kazakhstan Scientific Center of Dermatology and Infectious Diseases (KSCDID).

The discussion focused on national HIV responses, the role of communities in advancing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and emerging trends such as changing patterns of drug use and the phenomenon of chemsex.





Is there an example where data directly influenced a program?

After we conducted the first study in Central Asia on chemsex and drug use in Kazakhstan, we had a conversation with the Global Fund implementation team. The study showed that people expressed a need for a specific format of psychotherapy. We said directly: please, reformat the intervention. This is what the practical application of data looks like.

As soon as we have initial results, we first present them to our communities. Then we prepare analytical briefs for decision-makers and use the data for presentations at meetings and conferences. Publications in scientific journals are more about building an international expert profile. Representatives of the Ministry of Health rarely read English-language journals, and it's not their job, anyway. But I know they read our briefs and hear us at conferences. Although articles, of course, also matter: at a chemsex conference in Barcelona, an epidemiologist from Spain cited my work — without knowing that I was in the room. That's also part of the process.

When I joined ECOM, my team and I also prioritized publications in first-tier journals (top 10 in their fields), and we succeeded. We built a partnership

with the Technical University of Munich. We're seen not just as an NGO but also as an expert institution. This opens doors: we're regular participants in WHO working groups developing clinical guidelines. In particular, I was one of the authors of the WHO guideline on lenacapavir: three people from our region were included in that working group.



*Asia-Pacific Chem-Use Symposium (APCS 2025)/
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia*



How is research organized within ECOM: how many people, how many projects per year?

We consciously avoid turning into a research organization. We try to conduct no more than one or two major studies per year — that's about as much as our staff and resources allow. Any research costs a lot of money. In terms of the team, it's Elena and me. She's my reliable partner, someone I can talk to and who

can offer a completely different perspective and approach to my work. She also helps in other areas and, overall, makes my work not only easier but also more enjoyable. Plus our partners: local NGOs and universities.



What was your greatest personal achievement in 2025?

A grant for a [study on lenacapavir](#). This is my first grant purely for research: not for an intervention, but for science itself. When you receive money for a project, it is confirmation that you're doing the right thing. We all have an inner critic that always has doubts.

And also the fact that we managed to complete the PrEP analysis. Methodologically, it was very challenging; I'd never done anything like it before. I submitted the article to the journal on December 31st, literally on my last legs.



How do you assess 2025 overall?

It could have been worse. We live in a world where, if things don't get worse tomorrow, that's good enough. I've seen organizations in our sector collapse. That didn't happen to us, and that's good. We kept working, advocating, conducting research. On a scale from one to five, it's a 4+. When you have a lot of plans with partners (USAID, CDC, and other major global organizations), and then you find out these people were simply laid off overnight, it's very upsetting. You're

running a project, you have big plans, and suddenly someone is fired — because the President of the US decided no one needs it. It wasn't just the termination of programs that was upsetting, but also the fact that very good specialists lost their jobs. The question is simple: do you continue working with five dollars or millions — they're different realities. But we didn't stop anyway, we'll continue doing what we're doing.



What was frustrating?

Lack of human resources is a constant problem. I'd really like to pass on knowledge, to create some kind of exchange between European researchers and colleagues from the region. Forgive my wording, but I need working hands and people willing to learn and work at a serious, professional level. I understand

that if work is dependent on one person, it's a risk. I've seen situations where the departure or death of one researcher halted an entire field of work. I'd like to prevent that from happening here. We must convey one simple message: science and advocacy are inter-related; you can't separate them.

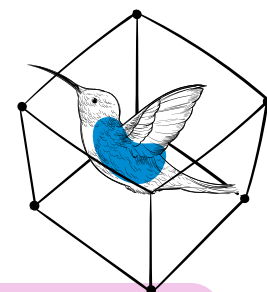


And what brought satisfaction?

There's a lot of work in Kazakhstan — and it's high-quality work. Partnerships have become closer there. People have become even closer, and I personally can't imagine my work without these people. Trips, meetings, conferences. When people invite you, when they want to talk, it means you're needed.

We received a new request from the Mental Health Center in Kazakhstan: to analyze the effectiveness of their substitution therapy program over 20 years. This means ECOM's approach is working, and people notice it.

SURVIVAL INFRASTRUCTURE FOR LGBT COMMUNITIES



How the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights is becoming the foundation of community resilience in the region.

The year 2025 demonstrated that ECOM's work on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is not a set of separate projects. It is an infrastructure

that sustains the survival and resilience of communities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.



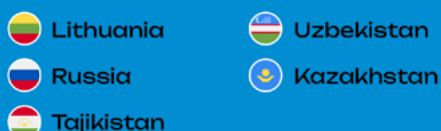
WHY A PROJECT-BASED APPROACH IS NOT ENOUGH

SRHR SYSTEM INCLUSIVENESS LEVEL

Highest



Lowest



Data from the study 'Exploring the SRHR Needs, Barriers, and Perspectives of LGBTQI+ Youth in Eastern Europe, South Caucasus, and Central Asia: Informing Inclusive Policy Development'

When work relies exclusively on a project-based model, its coverage depends directly on the availability of funding: when a project exists, work is carried out; when it ends, coverage disappears. The result is fragmentation rather than continuity, and a lack of comprehensive, sustainable impact.

At the same time, SRHR work within the coalition is rather a portfolio of interconnected components, each reinforcing the others. These include the Emergency Support Fund (ensuring continuity of services in crisis situations), human rights advocacy, relocation of activists at risk, research on service accessibility, comprehensive sexuality education, and coalition- and network-building in the region. Together, these elements form a genuine survival infrastructure.



CRISIS MODE AS A TEST OF THE SYSTEM

In 2025, the region operated under constant turbulence: new legislative initiatives, shrinking civic space, reductions in donor funding worldwide, and the ongoing war in Ukraine. In such conditions, emergency response could have become an end in itself — a perpetual cycle of firefighting. Paradoxically, it was timely emergency response that became a

prerequisite for achieving long-term goals. Without rapid-response mechanisms (emergency grants, support for services on the brink of closure, and urgent relocation of activists), the consequences for communities could have been significantly worse. Harm reduction work here and now became essential for protecting the right to health.

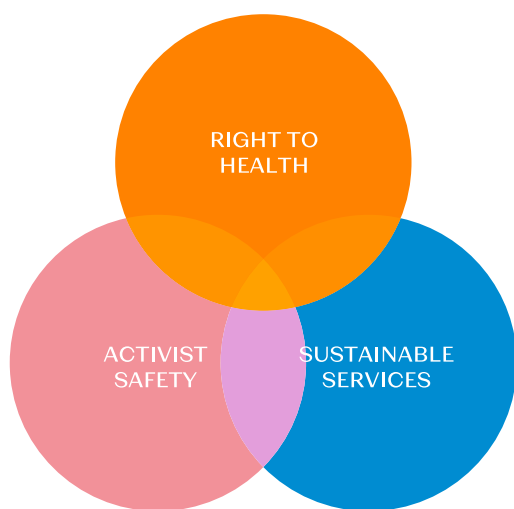


105 REQUESTS AND PRIORITY-SETTING

In 2025, ECOM received 105 applications for emergency assistance and relocation. The Emergency Support Fund operated in four areas: supporting self-organization and new initiatives, funding service organizations, supporting advocacy against new repressive legislative initiatives, and mitigating the impact of existing laws. When it became clear that global cuts in donor funding threatened the continuity of services in a number of countries, the team made a strategic decision to reallocate funds from other areas to service-related requests. This helped organizations maintain their operations during a period of greatest uncertainty. Such decisions were not easy; each request was discussed collectively. We weighed arguments, debated, reassessed situations, and refined criteria. It was extremely challenging, because approving one request meant declining another.



WHAT NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED IN 2026



Survival Infrastructure

New youth organizations and initiatives that emerge in their place require assistance: training, support in organizational and institutional development. This is also part of the infrastructure — perhaps its most long-term and important component. Overall, the experience of 2025 demonstrated that real change

Of all the elements of the established infrastructure, two are the most critical to preserve: services and advocacy. Services — because they directly impact people's lives. And without advocacy, any service achievements remain vulnerable to the next wave of restrictive policies.

The issue of continuity requires special attention.

When activists are forced to leave their countries, they take with them their expertise, connections, and institutional memory.

requires long-term, comprehensive investments: in programs rather than projects; in system resilience rather than isolated activities. This experience requires further reflection, documentation, and reinforcement, both in strategic planning and in dialogue with international partners.

FROM SERVICE RECIPIENTS TO EXPERTS: HOW ECOM'S NEW TOOL IS CHANGING THE APPROACH TO LGBT YOUTH HEALTH

In 2025, as part of its youth-focused work, ECOM introduced the SRHR Service Inclusivity Assessment Tool, fundamentally changing the role of young people in the healthcare system. Youth are no longer

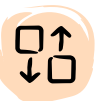
viewed merely as service recipients; they are also experts whose opinions form the basis for reforming medical and social services in the EECA region.



PARADIGM SHIFT: COMMUNITY VOICES INSTEAD OF EXTERNAL AUDITS

Traditional approaches to assessing the quality of healthcare services typically rely on the opinions of external experts or reports from providers themselves. ***The Inclusivity Assessment Tool, developed by ECOM with the involvement of LGBT youth themselves, works differently: it is completed only by those who have actual experience accessing sex-***

ual and reproductive health (SRHR) services. This approach ensures a high level of data validity and helps identify hidden barriers that often go unnoticed during official audits. The tool assesses the extent to which services are ***safe, non-discriminatory, and friendly*** to young LGBT people.



HOW IT WORKS: FROM ASSESSMENT TO CHANGE

The tool has become a powerful mechanism for strengthening accountability in service provision. The assessment results are turned into an evidence base that youth activists use for constructive dialogue with:

- healthcare service providers;
- government agencies;
- international donors.

The implementation of this tool is part of ECOM's broader efforts to strengthen youth leadership in 2025. ***The Inclusivity Assessment Tool embodies the principle of meaningful youth participation.*** Young people act as co-authors of quality criteria and experts of their own experiences, which strengthens their agency and influence in healthcare.

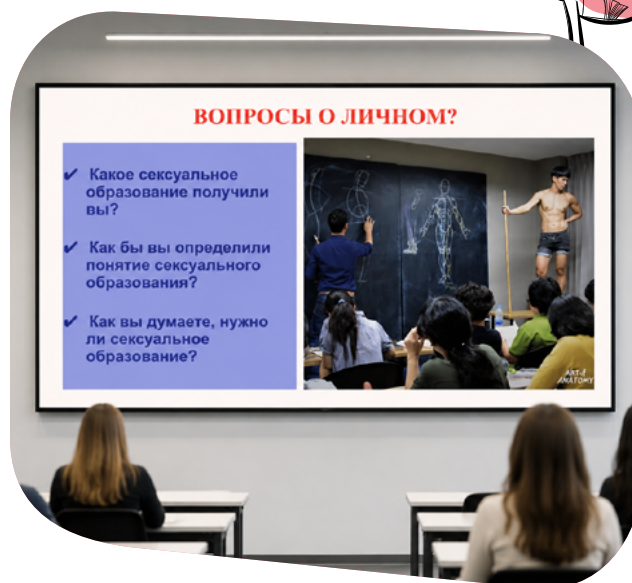


SEXUALITY EDUCATION ACADEMY FOR LGBT YOUTH: FIVE DAYS OF KNOWLEDGE, SAFETY, AND SUPPORT



From November 10 to 14, 2025, ECOM held the Sexuality Education Academy for LGBT Youth — an intensive training program aimed at developing inclusive approaches to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and strengthening young leaders in the region. A total of 64 applications were submitted for the Academy, once again confirming the high demand for inclusive sexuality education in the region. Following the selection process, 35 participants from Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia joined the program. The Academy combined theory, practice, and experience sharing, covering key aspects of sexual health, rights, and well-being of young LGBT people.

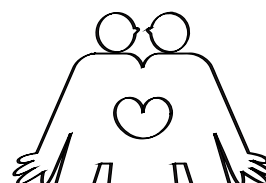
The Academy program covered the full range of topics necessary for modern, inclusive sexuality education. Participants explored the principles of comprehensive sexuality education and learned step-by-step how to create their own CSE programs — from identifying audiences and resources to creating safe spaces and developing mini-sessions. Dedicated modules



addressed chemsex, HIV and STIs, reproductive health of lesbian, bisexual women and trans men, as well as SOGI, self-acceptance, and mental well-being. Key topics included consent, personal boundaries, prevention of sexualized and gender-based violence, and advocacy and leadership skills development.



WHY DO WE NEED SUCH AN ACADEMY?



Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Coordinator at ECOM, Uluk, emphasizes the importance of a systemic approach:

“Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia urgently need inclusive and honest sexuality education. LGBT+ youth are too often left without information that reflects their real lives — about health, consent, relationships, pleasure, safety, and emotional well-being. At ECOM, we take a systemic approach: we’ve developed a guide on how to launch CSE programs, trained young people to use it, and openly discuss complex topics that many are afraid to raise. This is especially important now, when the

space for human rights work is shrinking, so-called ‘LGBT propaganda’ laws are being adopted, and access to information is becoming restricted. These laws haven’t made LGBT youth heterosexual, nor have they addressed their real needs — they’ve created new barriers. The CSE Academy gives young people back what’s being taken away from them: knowledge, safety, support, and the opportunity to become leaders in their communities.”



VOICES OF THE ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS

The Academy was my starting point in the field of sexuality education. It creates a truly safe space where you can ask any questions without shame or fear. The lecturers explain complex topics in a simple way, and practical exercises help you feel more confident about your boundaries, relationships, and health. It was eye-opening to connect with LGBTQ people from different countries and learn about their realities. This is especially important now, when LGBTQ rights issues are complex in Kazakhstan. This Academy provided support, knowledge, and understanding that it's not too late to fight for your rights.

For me, as a trainer and activist, participation in the Academy was a very meaningful experience. I gained structured knowledge on CSE, new tools, and inspiration for developing projects in Armenia. Thank you to the team for the support and incredible atmosphere!

K.A.

Sexuality education is key to a healthy and balanced life. But due to political pressure, it's often pushed out of the public sphere, leaving people vulnerable. I'm grateful to ECOM for the opportunity to join a community of competent and inspiring professionals who create safe spaces and train CSE trainers.

Zhenya Skvortsova, coordinator of Gasp Magazine

I got a lot of useful information from great experts: about health, CSE, conducting sessions, advocacy, and much more. I met like-minded people from different countries and learned more about the LGBTQ+ rights situation in neighboring countries, which is inspiring for building an international community. The Academy was intensive and required full engagement, but that's actually a plus!

Aydana



THE CSE ACADEMY — AN INVESTMENT IN THE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF LGBT YOUTH

The Academy became not only an educational course but also a space for mutual support, leadership development, and strengthening regional ties. ECOM will continue to develop sexuality education so that

young LGBT people receive the knowledge they are entitled to, regardless of political context and restrictions.

EMERGENCY FUNDS AND PROJECTS

- Emergency Support Fund:

➡ **105** applications received

✓ **49** approved

- UNAIDS LGBTI Emergency Support Fund — an interregional mechanism that operated in the EECA and Asia-Pacific regions.

➡ **>130** applications were received across the two regions

✓ **11** small grants selected following a call for proposals

✓ **10** cases supported through emergency response

- As part of the RESILIENT project, a needs assessment of HIV service organizations was conducted. Based on the results, a technical assistance plan for 2026–2027 was developed.

➡ **>45** organizations participated in the survey

- Advocacy at the level of UN Treaty Bodies — independently by ECOM and within the Rise&Decriminalize consortium.
- Webinars on digital and physical security were conducted.

A key achievement of 2025 was that emergency support evolved into a systemic mechanism for protecting communities, rather than a set of fragmented responses. ECOM's emergency funds continued to operate even in the face of a sharp reduction in donor presence, ensuring continuity of support for both individuals and organizations. Most importantly, it was possible to build a connection between emergency response and long-term sustainability, training, and advocacy.

177

APPLICATIONS

for emergency assistance and relocation of activists and community leaders

56

CASES

received direct support (safe accommodation, relocation, legal and psychological assistance)

100⁺

GRANT APPLICATIONS

from organizations

↓
22

PROJECTS

were supported with amounts ranging from **\$5,000 to €50,000**

20⁺

REQUESTS

for technical support on digital and physical security

↓
10

REQUESTS

were supported

The coalition systematically monitored developments across the EECA region in several areas: tracked the adoption of laws on “foreign agents” and “propaganda” and government pressure on NGOs and activists which led to shrinking civic space; regularly collected information on risks and incidents from regional partners; documented how people lose access to healthcare and social services — due to treatment interruptions, service closures, or direct repression. In 2025, we provided intensive support to activists and community leaders facing direct threats:

- safe accommodation within countries;
- urgent relocation in critical cases;
- legal support and assistance;
- psychological support and crisis intervention;

- coverage of basic needs after relocation (food, transport, medication);
- digital security support.

When organizations faced crisis situations, ECOM responded rapidly: provided emergency funding for office and operational expenses, helped sustain hotlines and medical and social services at risk of closure, and supported teams in the process of re-registration in other countries. Where old structures were collapsing, ECOM also supported the launch of new initiatives and organizations. In 2025, ECOM distributed small grants in several areas: provided crisis sub-grants for rapid response, helped organizations restore and maintain services, strengthened community self-organization and resilience, and funded advocacy against repressive measures.



Meeting with partners in Tallinn: Non-profit Association
“Eesti Transinimeste Ühing” (MTÜ Eesti Transinimeste Ühing)

WHAT AWAITS US IN 2026?

ECOM's goals will remain unchanged — to protect the health and rights of LGBT people in EECA countries. We will continue to monitor the human rights of LGBT people. We will continue to help strengthen HIV programs. We will continue to advance the interests of EECA communities internationally.

But we will have to do this in a constantly changing environment.

It is already clear that the multi-crisis period our region and the entire world have experienced over the past few years is becoming a permanent reality. Resources for our work will likely become even more limited. Pressure on civil liberties and human rights in the region will likely intensify. Non-governmental organizations may find it even more difficult to operate. At the same time, of course, there will also be progress. These times may well create momentum for new partnerships that will help the coalition withstand these crises.

It is therefore timely that ECOM will develop a new strategic plan in 2026. We'll need to understand how the coalition should adapt without losing the experience and achievements accumulated over the past 15 years. And I'm looking forward to interesting discussions with colleagues and allies. This is our main task for the year — to determine how we will continue fulfilling our mission in light of new circumstances and forecasts.



BECAUSE I SINCERELY
BELIEVE IN THE POWER
OF COMMUNITIES.
ALWAYS.

We would like to thank the donors and partners who stood with us in 2025 — one of the most challenging periods for communities in the region. Your support

allowed us not only to respond to crises, but also to preserve space for assistance, solidarity, and change.



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING US
WHEN IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT.

IN 2026, WE WILL STRIVE TO MAKE OUR COLLABORATION
EVEN MORE PRODUCTIVE.



ECOM STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2023–2025



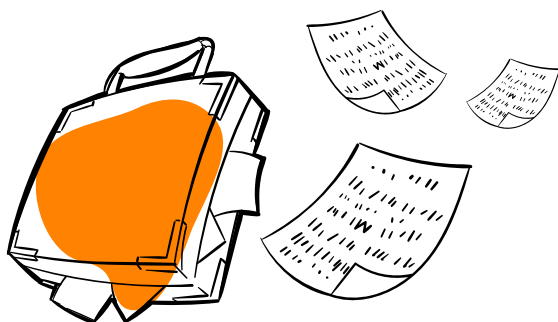
IN A WORLD WHERE EVERY MOMENT IS A STEP, EVERY IDEA IS A TOOL,
AND EVERY INITIATIVE IS A WINDOW INTO THE FUTURE

★ INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the work of the ECOM Steering Committee for the period 2023–2025. These were years of significant challenges, but also meaningful achievements. The report outlines the main areas of work, the results of the current term, as well as key priorities and recommendations for the future.

★ COMPOSITION OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee was elected at the ECOM General Assembly and remained actively engaged in the coalition's development throughout 2023–2025. Despite external challenges, the team maintained its resilience and cohesion. Some changes in its composition reflected natural renewal processes and contributed to work dynamics.



★ KEY CHALLENGES OF THE PERIOD

- ✓ Limited financial and human resources.
- ✓ Political and social changes in the region affecting the work of member organizations.
- ✓ Risk of staff burnout and team overload.
- ✓ Need to adapt to new working formats and a changing external environment.

★ HOW THE COMMITTEE WORKED

The Committee operated in both reactive and proactive modes. On the one hand, it fulfilled its core functions as defined in the Charter of the Steering Committee, including oversight, support, and strategic guidance. On the other hand, it took on initiatives beyond routine governance work — contributing to the development of new strategic approaches, preparing statements, and supporting coalition members during critical periods.

★ WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE PERIOD 2023–2025

- ✔ Expanded the partnership network and established new international connections despite political challenges.
- ✔ Increased the number of coalition members, both organizations and individual participants.
- ✔ Supported the development of ECOM's internal structure: strengthened the Secretariat and improved transparency and reporting.
- ✔ Introduced new monitoring and evaluation tools, which made it possible to measure work results more accurately.
- ✔ Implemented programs aimed at protecting human rights and supporting vulnerable communities.
- ✔ Actively contributed to the development and promotion of political statements on behalf of ECOM.
- ✔ Organized the Committee members' participation in key regional and international events.

★ FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The financial situation remained tense yet balanced. We managed to maintain budget stability and continued to seek new sources of funding. Importantly, expenditures were primarily directed toward program implementation and strengthening partnerships. Further diversification of funding sources remains a priority.

★ PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

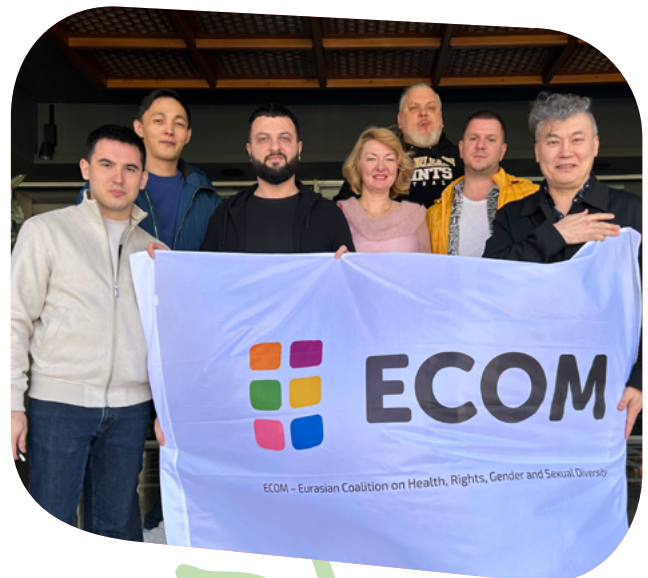
- Strengthening institutional resilience.
- Expanding partnerships and interaction with donors.
- Even greater transparency and community engagement.
- New approaches to monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthening advocacy and human rights promotion.

★ STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

- ✔ Optimize resources, focusing on initiatives with the greatest impact.
- ✔ Ensure flexibility in strategic planning and adaptation.
- ✔ Involve local communities in decision-making and program implementation.
- ✔ Maintain a high level of transparency and regular reporting.
- ✔ Develop and strengthen financial sustainability through new funding sources.

★ CONCLUSION

The 2023–2025 period was an important stage for ECOM. Despite the challenges, the coalition grew and strengthened. The Committee is confident that, by maintaining the chosen course and taking into account the recommendations, the organization will be able to fulfill its mission of protecting human rights and supporting communities even more effectively.





BARRIERS AND FACILITATORS FOR PREP DELIVERY IN KAZAKHSTAN

Theme: Health

Year: 2025

Language: RUS | ENG

Publication prepared by: Nikolay Lunchenkov, Elena German

This technical desk review provides a comprehensive assessment of the factors influencing the delivery of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Based on an analysis of national legal acts, ministerial orders, clinical protocols, and programme reports, it outlines the country's progress in integrating PrEP into the national HIV prevention framework.



BEST PRACTICE: PROVISION OF PREP THROUGH A PHARMACY CHAIN IN KAZAKHSTAN

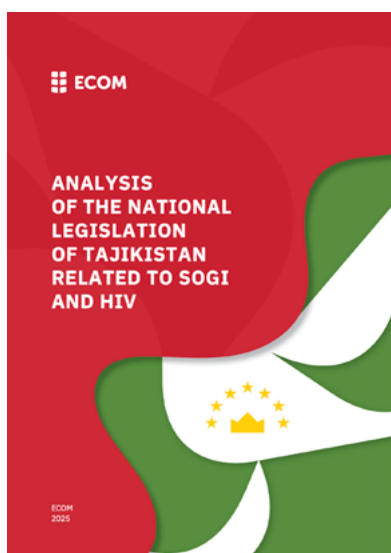
Theme: Health

Year: 2025

Language: RUS | ENG

Publication prepared by: Miroslava Andrushchenko

Kazakhstan is a leader in Central Asia in terms of implementing innovative models for the provision of PrEP. In 2023, PrEP was made available through six partner NGOs and began being offered in pharmacies in Almaty. In 2024, access to PrEP through pharmacies was expanded to Astana. This document describes the creation of an alternative form of access to PrEP through the pharmacy network.



ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL LEGISLATION OF TAJIKISTAN RELATED TO SOGI AND HIV

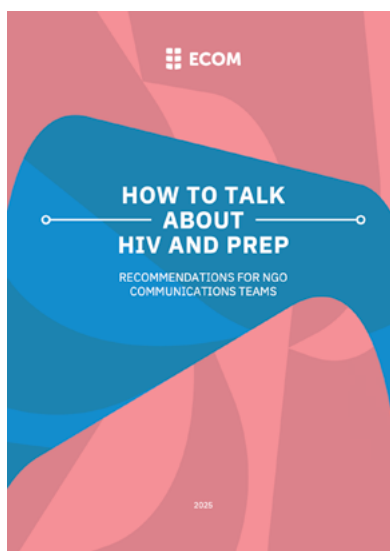
Theme: Human Rights Strategic Information

Year: 2025

Language: RUS | ENG

Publication prepared by: a human rights activist and expert from Tajikistan, Elvira Tilek kyzy, Jipariza Jumagazieva

The purpose of this comparative analysis is to identify and systematize the legal and institutional barriers that hinder the realization of the rights and freedoms of LGBT people, as well as people living with HIV. This analysis updates the 2020 study and reviews legislation and practice covering the period from 2020 to 2025.



HOW TO TALK ABOUT HIV AND PREP: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NGO COMMUNICATIONS TEAMS

Theme: Health

Year: 2025

Language: RUS | ENG

Publication prepared by: Kostya Andriiv

The topic of HIV remains challenging for open discussion. It's not only about medicine—it also involves social prejudice, stigma and discrimination that directly affect the lives of people living with HIV. Any message on this subject can evoke a wide range of emotions—from anxiety to resistance. That's why it's especially important for human rights organizations and communications specialists to pay close attention to wording, tone and context

THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (In Euros)

	31.12.2025	31.12.2024
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	215 712	324 576
Receivables and prepayments	59 768	104 382
Total current assets	275 480	428 958
Total assets	275 480	428 958
Liabilities and net assets		
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Payables and prepayments	5 724	7 639
Grants with special terms	144 251	290 104
Total current liabilities	149 975	297 743
Total liabilities	149 975	297 743
Net assets		
Accumulated surpluses (deficits) from previous periods	131 215	125 902
Surplus (deficit) for the period	-5 710	5 313
Total net assets	125 505	131 215
Total liabilities and net assets	275 480	428 958

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENSES (In Euros)

	2025	2024
Revenue		
Grants and donations	1 261 831	1 692 041
Other income	530	714
Total revenue	1 262 361	1 692 755
Expenses		
Direct cost of projects financed by grants for special purposes	-673 644	-1 041 036
Grants and donations	-564 553	-649 870
Other operating expense	-294	-5 652
Total expenses	-1 238 491	-1 696 558
Surplus (deficit) from operating activities	23 870	-3 803
Other financial income and expense	-29 580	9 116
Net surplus (deficit) for the period	-5 710	5 313

