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 Frau Dr. Angela Merkel
 Bundeskanzlerin der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
 Bundeskanzleramt
 Willy-Brandt-Straße 1
 10557 Berlin

MDG 6 Moskau vom 10.-12.Oktober 2011

Berlin, 5.Oktober 2011

Sehr geehrte Frau Dr. Merkel,

im Vorfeld des MDG6 Gipfels übersenden wir Ihnen ein Schreiben wie es auch von mehreren internationalen NGO's an deren Regierungen gesandt wurde mit der Bitte die darin enthaltenen Forderungen in Moskau zur Sprache zu bringen.

Es geht um die katastrophal hohe HIV Prävalenz unter Drogengebrauchern und anderen Randgruppen in den osteuropäischen Staaten und die Untätigkeit Rußlands in Hinblick auf Prävention und Behandlung. Die Haltung Rußlands in dieser gesundheitspolitisch grenzüberschreitend wichtigen Frage hat Signalwirkung auf die osteuropäischen Länder und deren Maßnahmen.

Wir wären Ihnen dankbar, wenn von deutscher Seite auch darauf hingewiesen würde, dass das weitere Ignorieren aller vorliegenden Evidenz seitens der russischen Regierung im europäischen Kontext nicht zu akzeptieren ist.

Freundliche Grüße,

akzept e.V.

Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe e.V.



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Russia and the Millennium Development Goals

We, the undersigned organisations representing affected communities as well as organisations working in the field of healthcare with focus on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment in Germany, address you in advance of the Millennium Development Goal 6 (MDG 6) International Forum taking place in Moscow, Russia on October 10-12, 2011. This meeting is a critical opportunity to urge the governments of countries from the region to live up to their commitments in meeting MDG 6 goals by 2015.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia has one of the fastest growing HIV epidemics in the world, with Russia and Ukraine together accounting for 90% of new HIV infections in this regionⁱ. Injecting drug use remains a major driver of the epidemic in these countries. In Russia the number of opiate users is estimated at 1.7 millionⁱⁱ, the majority administering opiates through injecting. Globally 37% of people who inject drugs live with HIVⁱⁱⁱ; and in some regions of Russia HIV prevalence amongst people who inject drugs is as high as 61 %^{iv}.

Russia has positioned itself as a regional leader in the fight against HIV/AIDS, despite the fact that it is currently providing very limited funding for evidence based HIV prevention among people who inject drugs. Critical HIV prevention programs for drug users including needle and syringe programs (NSP) are currently supported largely through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. This external funding is time-bound and is currently only reaching an estimated 7% of those in need of these vital services^v. Opiate substitution therapy (OST), recognized by the WHO, UNAIDS and UNODC as the most effective means of opioid dependence treatment and of reducing HIV among people who inject drugs, is illegal. Such an approach is untenable given the nature of the epidemic in Russia as well as the wider region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Russia's rejection of these evidence-based policies endorsed by UN member countries in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem leave it ill-qualified to play the role of regional leader in building an effective HIV response.



In other countries of the region, much more has been done to address the HIV epidemic among most vulnerable groups, but a lack of essential harm reduction services has been reported in most of the countries and territories with documented injecting drug use.^{vi} Furthermore, in almost all countries where NSP and OST are available, coverage remains too low to have an impact on the epidemic.^{vii/viii}

We respectfully appeal to our government to use the opportunity of the MDG6 Forum to highlight the following messages:

- Urge the Russian government to support critically needed programming for those most at risk of HIV infection, including OST and NSP for people who inject drugs. Without this support, it will be impossible to meet the MDG by 2015.

- Urge all governments of the region to reaffirm health approach to drugs by scaling up current programs which provide harm reduction and HIV prevention services to people who inject drugs and other most at risk groups.

ⁱ UNAIDS GLOBAL REPORT, fact sheet on Eastern Europe and Central Asia

ⁱⁱ UNODC World Drug Report, 2011, p. 51

ⁱⁱⁱ UNODC World Drug Report, 2009, p. 57

^{iv} Rospotrebnadzor (2010). Country Progress Report of the Russian Federation on the Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS Adopted at the 26th UNGASS, June 2001. Reporting period January 2008-December 2009.

^v Bradley M Mathers, et al, for the 2009 Reference Group to the UN on HIV and Injecting Drug Use HIV prevention, treatment, and care services for people who inject drugs: a systematic review of global, regional, and national coverage. Note that the estimate is done in 2009, before number of NSP sites were closed in Russia.

^{vi} 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, UN GA Special Session on HIV/AIDS, 25-27 June 2001, paragraph 7.

^{vii} Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS UN GA Res 60/262, 2 June 2006, paragraph 14.

^{viii} Cook C. (2010) The Global State of Harm Reduction: Key Issues for Broadening the Response. London: International Harm Reduction Association.