

Transgender Europe – TGEU
Warthestr. 58, D- 12051 Berlin

Subject: End forced HIV-testing in Greece

05 July 2013

Dear Commissioner Borg,

Transgender Europe is gravely concerned over the re-introduction of sanctioned forced HIV-testing in Greece, which transgender persons are particularly vulnerable to and asks you to intervene for its immediate withdrawal.

On June 1st, Health Minister Adonis Georgiadis, by reintroducing Order GU/39A, gave permission for the Greek Center of Control and Disease (CDC - ΚΕΕΛΠΝΟ) with assistance by the police to perform blood tests on drug users and sex workers without a health insurance book against their will. Reasons are the alleged protection from HIV, HBV and HVC.

The same policy was used in Operation “Xenios Zeus” in summer 2012 when CDC and police rounded up hundreds of women and force-tested them. Seventeen women who tested positively were detained for months and had their photos and names published on the grounds of protecting public health. Transgender women have been amongst those force-tested and detained without legal basis or sufficient care. In May/ June 2013 in the city of Thessaloniki transgender women have been systematically targeted with excessive ID checks including arbitrary detentions, discriminating and derogatory treatment by police officers.

Together with our members, Greek Transgender Support Association, we are greatly concerned about the discriminatory nature of these actions. We fear that the sanctioned forced HIV testing of already marginalized groups will lead to another witch-hunt, further worsening health and well-being of transgender persons, an already very vulnerable population.

In light of a stark increase of HIV infection-rates in Greece public action of integrated HIV/ AIDS programs, including awareness raising and de-stigmatizing of people living with HIV / AIDS are essential. Those who are most vulnerable need to be protected.

Having regard to the subsidiarity principle and acknowledging that matters of individual health care fall into the remit of member state we call upon you to:

- Immediately engage with your counter-parts in the Greek government urging them to withdraw Order GU/39A Article 1 / paragraph 4 and stop any forced blood-tests
- Investigate cases of arrests and forced HIV testing in Greece for discriminatory treatment on grounds of gender, gender identity or expression, health or employment status.
- Engage with Greek authorities to support the development of integrated HIV/ Aids prevention programs and targeted support actions for populations most at risks.

With kind regards,

Dr. Julia Ehrt



Executive Director

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