



CALL FOR ACTION

Activists and civil society organizations of and for people living with HIV in Central and South East Europe want to emphasize:

We know that the number of HIV infections is growing steadily in Central and South East Europe. While HIV prevalence is still relatively low, we still encounter problems in access to HIV treatment.

The challenges we face include:

- limited and outdated treatment options, including limited pediatric treatments;
- dangerous and unacceptable treatment interruptions that can lead to resistant forms of HIV;
- inadequate planning of budget for treatment and inefficient funding mechanisms;
- lack of registered medicines and delayed decisions for reimbursement;
- systemic obstacles to timely start of antiretroviral therapy, such as lack of health insurance for certain affected individuals or groups.

These are due to the lack of attention and commitment, strategic planning and sufficient funds to ensure a sustainable supply of quality medicines and diagnostic tools, as well as comprehensive care.

Therefore, we call on governments, the pharmaceutical companies, and the affected community to increase their efforts in securing sustainable and quality treatment.

We call on governments and the ministries of health:

- To budget for ARVs based on the available epidemiological data and taking into consideration the actual prices of medicines in our region;
- To optimize costs for providing treatment by creating conditions for increased market competition in the field of antiretroviral medicines and by considering regional pooled procurments;
- To invest in HIV testing and early detection, so that people can benefit from timely treatment, while the governments save money in the long run;
- To negotiate with pharmaceutical companies, while also including the affected community, in order to provide the latest treatment options on time and at affordable prices;

We call on pharmaceutical companies, both originator and generic:

- To recognize that patients are more than consumers, treatments are more than products, and access to the best possible treatment and care are basic human rights and benefit public health;
- To promptly register their medicines in all of our countries and establish affordable prices;
- To cooperate and enter into negotiations, in good faith, with governments and the affected community;
- To support early detection of HIV, especially through targeted community-based testing;
- To support treatment education for clinicians and people living with HIV or co-infections and co-morbidities;
- To learn about individual country situations around the region.

As a community we pledge our cooperation to fulfil these important duties. **We call on our members to contribute to improved access to treatment through continuous monitoring and providing evidence-based recommendations.** Therefore, we commit ourselves:

- To build capacities in order to ensure our meaningful involvement;
- To continue educating patients about treatment and adherence and to provide support to ensure the best outcome of treatment;
- To raise awareness about HIV and contribute to early detection by increasing HIV testing in community settings;
- To engage in negotiations on equal basis with other stakeholders;
- To address stigma and discrimination.

Stronger Together, Association for Support of People Living with HIV

The Network of Low HIV Prevalence Countries in Central and South East Europe (NeLP), including activists from Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.