



**AIDS** 22<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE  
**2018** AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS  
**23-27 JULY 2018**

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**BREAKING BARRIERS • BUILDING BRIDGES**



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# Addressing the Challenge of Human Rights Violations among Gay and Bisexual Men in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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25 July 2018



#AIDS2018 | @AIDS\_conference | [www.aids2018.org](http://www.aids2018.org)

# 2010: “Hidden HIV Epidemic” among MSM



> 5% HIV prevalence:  
Georgia and Ukraine

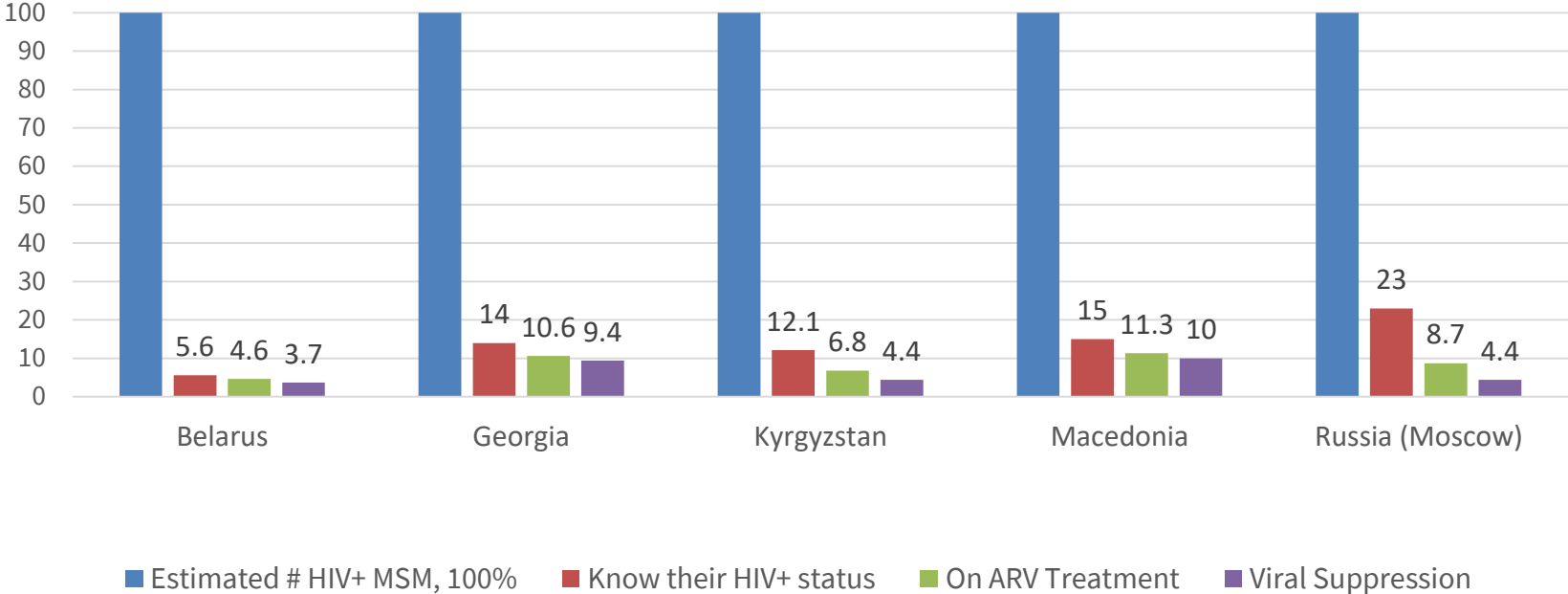
# 2018: Full-Blown HIV Epidemic among MSM



> 5% HIV prevalence:  
13 of 22 countries of South  
Eastern and Eastern Europe  
and Central Asia  
(10 in 14 countries EECA)

> 10%	Georgia (25% in Tbilisi), Montenegro, Romania
8 – 10%	Moldova, Russia (22.8% in St. Petersburg), Ukraine (16% in Kyiv)
5 – 7%	Belarus, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Serbia
1 – 4%	Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria (12.7% in Sofia), Kosovo, Macedonia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
< 1%	Albania, Armenia

# HIV Care Cascade for MSM in EECA



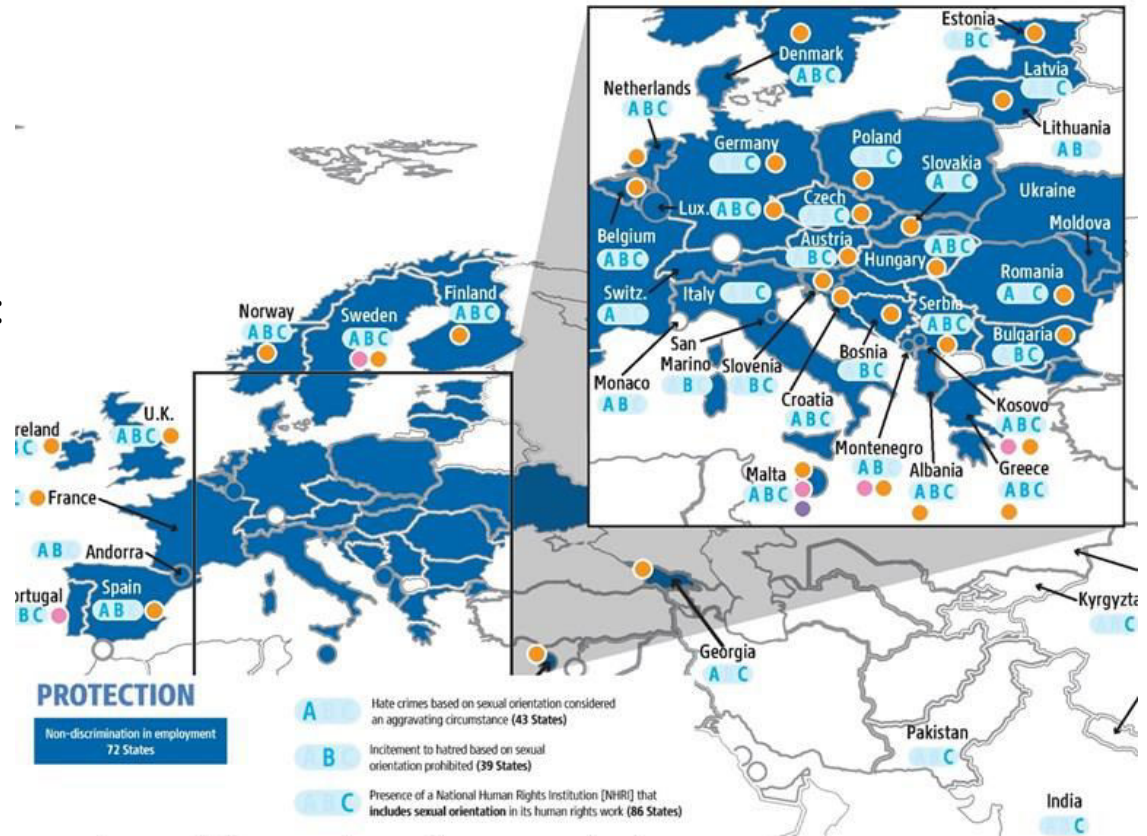
# Legal Environment: Go West

## Protection for LGBTI

### Anti-Discrimination Legislation:

- EU Member States (Baltics)
- South-Eastern Europe
- Moldova
- Ukraine
- Georgia

(No constitutional protection based on SOGI)



Source: ILGA World 2017.

# Legal Environment: Stay East

- Same-sex relations **criminalized** in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
- “**Gay propaganda**” **ban** in Russia since 2013
  - Attempts to introduce in many other countries
- **Shrinking space** for civil society

# Legal Environment: all around

## Gay/bisexual/other MSM blood donation

- Prohibition in several countries

## Criminalization of HIV transmission/exposure

- 14 countries with sentencing that ranges from community service to 15 years prison
- Belarus initiated prosecution of 100 people in 2017



# Rights Violations

## **SOGI-based Violence**

- Domestic violence
- Public attacks on LGBT individuals and LGBT community events
- State violence
- Gay men's hunt in Chechnya in 2017

## **Freedom of assembly**

- Refusal of registration of LGBT non-governmental organizations: Russia, Belarus, Azerbaijan
- Prohibition of LGBT Prides

## **Freedom of speech**

- Closing of LGBT websites in Russia

## **Hate speech**

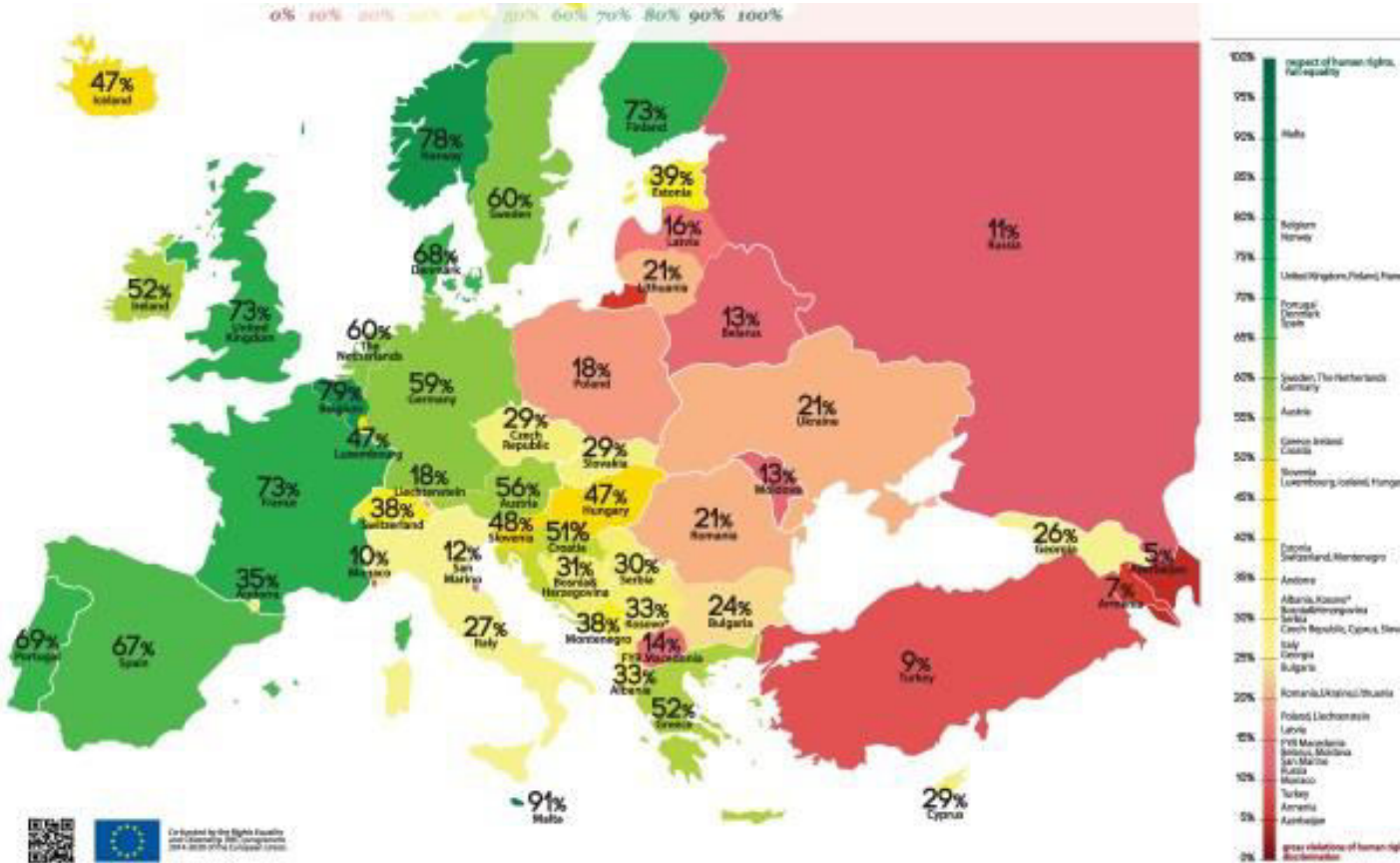
- From public persons, media, clergy, governmental workers

# Stigma and Discrimination in Healthcare Settings

## Obstructed Access to Healthcare for Gay Men

- Refusal of services based on SOGI
- Breach of confidentiality of health status or behavior
  - Major implications for other fields: losing a job, losing family, hate attacks
  - Blackmailing by healthcare workers– reported cases in Armenia, Belarus
- Turning from state institutions to private sector and NGOs

# Human Rights for LGBTI



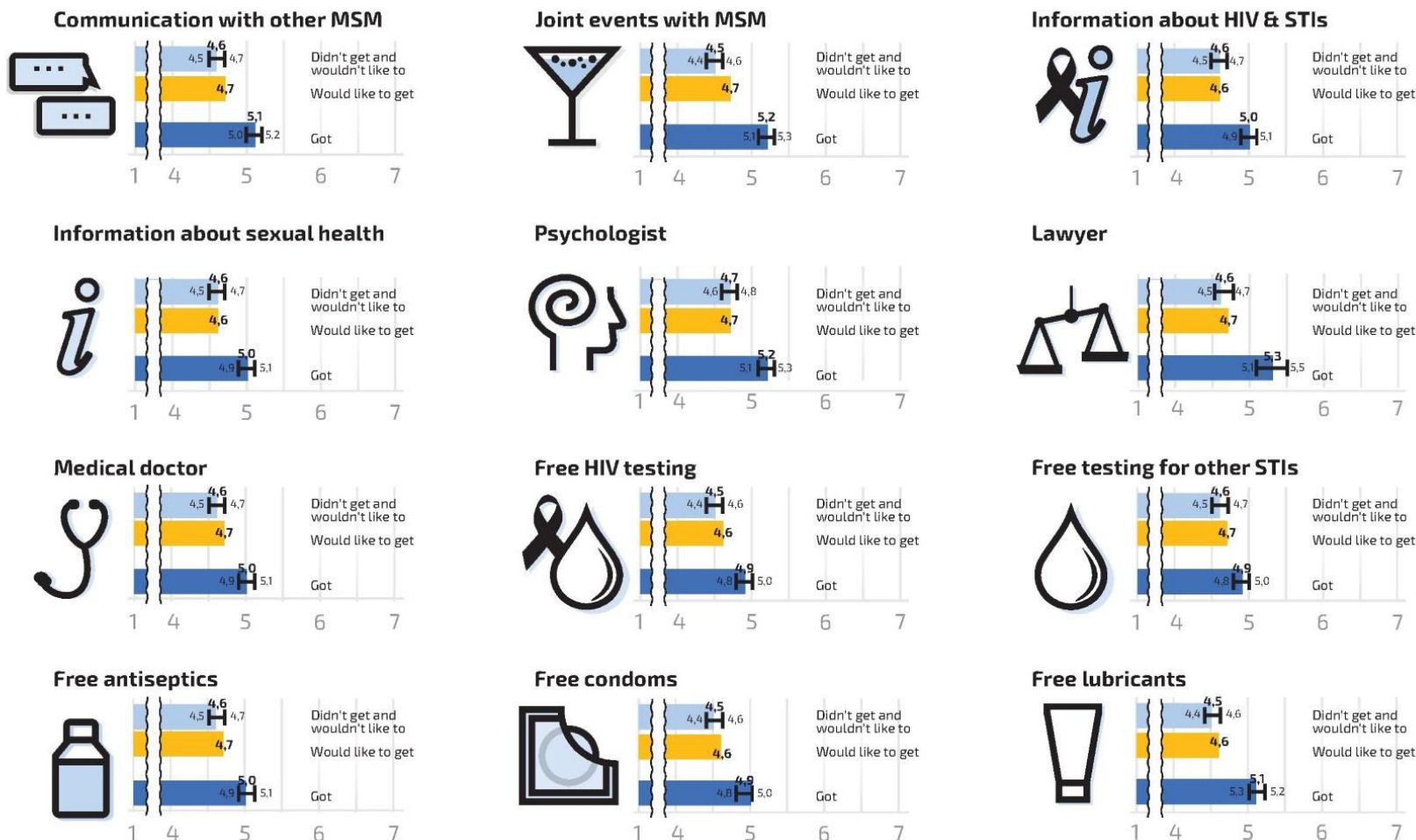
Source: ILGA-Europe, Rainbow Map 2018

# ECOM: Study of Internalized Homonegativity and HIV Epidemic among MSM in EECA

- Negative attitude to own homosexuality that gay men acquire in a homophobic society.
- Online survey, August – October, 2017
- 8,239 respondents in 12 countries
- 64% gay men and 27% bisexual men
- 30 years old median age
  
- Most respondents accept own homosexuality. Average acceptance in a country: 4.4. to 5.6 on a 1-7 scale
  - Internalized homonegativity might be higher in general gay male population



# Associations Between Use of HIV Services and Internalized Homonegativity



Scale of own homosexuality acceptance: 1 - Total non-acceptance, 7 - Total acceptance

# Internalized Homonegativity and HIV Epidemic among MSM in EECA

Greater acceptance of one's own homosexuality is associated with more regular use of HIV testing and prevention services



# Counteracting Human Rights Violations



- **Raising awareness of healthcare and social workers on SOGI issues**
  - ToT module and regional trainings of trainers
  - Supporting local trainings of healthcare workers
- **Monitoring and documentation** of cases of SOGI-based discrimination in healthcare settings
  - 35 cases in 2017
  - Reports to UN Treaty Bodies (Belarus - Committee against Torture and HRC, Macedonia - CEDAW).
  - Shadow reports to UPR, alternative reports to Ombudsman office
  - Examples used in trainings for healthcare workers
- **Safety and protection in emergencies**
  - Support to a local Emergency Response Group;
  - Personal protection of LGBT health activists.

# Counteracting Human Rights Violations



- **LGBT community rights sensitization and literacy**
  - Training module
  - Regional trainings of trainers
- **Small grants for community mobilization and advocacy building**

## “Gender Zed” NGO

- Project on stigma and discrimination within HIV counselling and testing services.
- ‘Secret clients’ – openly gay people – visited 92 institutions, received services only in 37
- Report with recommendations to the Provincial Health Department
- Training on SOGI issues delivered for 100 staff of all VCT institutions in the region
- Provincial standards of services reviewed





# Recommendations



## To LGBT communities and LGBT community-based organizations

[chasevirus.org](http://chasevirus.org)

- Decrease internal homonegativity;
- Invest in community mobilization, raise awareness and knowledge of own human rights;
- Identify and document cases of SOGI-based discrimination and violence;
- Demand protection from SOGI-based discrimination;
- Build coalitions with other communities.

## For decision-makers

- Decriminalize same sex relations;
- Introduce and implement anti-discrimination legislation;
- Eliminate legal barriers for NGO, incl. LGBT NGOs;
- Address specific needs of LGBT and PLHIV in health services, ensure their availability and quality;
- Raise SOGI-related awareness of healthcare staff.



**Chase**   
  
**not  
people**

**Eastern Europe  
and Central Asia (EECA)  
communities campaign  
to stop stigma and discrimination**

[chasevirus.org](http://chasevirus.org)