



PRESS STATEMENT

Lithuania confirms no restrictions on entry, stay and residence for people living with HIV

Relevant provisions of the 2011 UN General Assembly Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, the European Convention on Human Rights and EU legislation adhered to in the Republic of Lithuania

VILNIUS / GENEVA, 17 September 2015—The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) welcome confirmation by the Ministry of Health of Lithuania that it applies no restrictions on the entry, stay and residence for people living with HIV.

“I am pleased to clarify that there are no HIV-related restrictions on entry to, travel, work, and temporary or permanent residence in the Republic of Lithuania”, said Rimantė Šalaševičiūtė, Minister of Health of Lithuania.

The announcement, aligned with the 65th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in Vilnius, signals that the Lithuania’s laws and policies regarding HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence are in line with international and European public health and human rights standards. These include the 2011 UN General Assembly Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which specifically encourages Member States to remove any existing HIV-related travel restrictions, the European Convention on Human Rights ratified by Lithuania in 1995, and EU legislation guaranteeing freedom of movement.

“Freedom of movement is a right for everyone to enjoy, regardless of HIV status,” said UNAIDS Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Vinay P. Saldanha. “UNAIDS welcomes Lithuania’s confirmation that it abides by its international commitments. UNAIDS urges the remaining 35 countries, territories and areas around the world that still apply such restrictions to take immediate steps to end punitive laws and practices that are barriers to ending the AIDS epidemic.”

“There is no evidence that HIV-related travel restrictions protect public health or prevent HIV transmission,” said Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe. “I congratulate Lithuania for meeting their commitment to eliminate HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence.”

With this positive clarification in Lithuania, UNAIDS lists 35 countries, territories and areas that still maintain laws and policies regarding HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence..

Contact

UNAIDS Geneva | Norha Restrepo | tel. +41 22 791 2511 | RestrepolopezN@unids.org
WHO/Euro | Tsvetelina Parvanova, | tel. + 45 21 19 4374(mobile) | tpr@euro.who.int
Ministry of Health of Lithuania | Ms Giedrė Maksimaitytė | tel. + +370 5 266 14 15 | Mob.: +360 8699 42285 | giedre.maksimaityte@sam.lt