



IN THIS ISSUE

1. JOINT LETTER TO G8 LEADERS FROM RUSSIAN AND BRITISH LEGISLATORS	1 -
2. LAUNCH OF THE GLOBUS PROJECT IN 10 RUSSIAN REGIONS: JOINING GLOBAL EFFORTS AGAINST AIDS	1
3. JOINT DELEGATION FROM U.S. THINK TANKS CSIS AND BROOKINGS INSTITUTION VISITS RUSSIA ALONG WITH U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS	2
4. PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS PROTEST IN FRONT OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION	2–3
5. EXPERT ROUNDTABLE EMPHASIZES COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND NGOS	3
6. WORLD NEWS BRIEFS	3–4
7. TPAА EVENTS CALENDAR, MARCH–APRIL 2005	5

* * *

1. JOINT LETTER TO G8 LEADERS FROM RUSSIAN AND BRITISH LEGISLATORS

One of the outcomes of the visit of the Russian Interfactional Deputies' Working Group on Prevention and Fight Against AIDS to the UK Parliament (November 14–16, 2004) was an agreement by working groups to compose a joint letter to G8 leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin. The letter was co-signed by legislators from both countries who were participating in meetings involving the visiting Russian parliamentarians and members of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on AIDS. The letter urged G8 leaders to focus attention on the emerging HIV/AIDS epidemic and to include international cooperation in the fight against AIDS on the agendas of the two upcoming G8 leaders' summits—in the UK in July 2005 and the following year in Russia.

* * *

2. LAUNCH OF THE GLOBUS PROJECT IN 10 RUSSIAN REGIONS: JOINING GLOBAL EFFORTS AGAINST AIDS

The goal of the GLOBUS project is to stimulate an effective strategic response to HIV/AIDS in the Russian Federation. The project is supported by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), and focuses on 10 regions in the country: Buryat Republic, Krasnoyarsk Kray, Nizhni Novgorod Oblast, Orenburg Oblast, Pskov Oblast, St. Petersburg, Tatarstan Republic, Tomsk Oblast, Tver Oblast and Vologda Oblast. The project budget is \$88 million for five years (2004–2009). GLOBUS is implemented by a consortium of

1

as of March 1, 2005 there were 311,414 people living with HIV/AIDS officially registered in Russia (according to the Ministry of Health Federal AIDS Center data) • 4 out of 5 Russians living with HIV/AIDS are young people under 30 • 39.4 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide; 2.2 million of them are children under 15 • the number of people living with HIV/AIDS increased by 4.9 million worldwide last year (2004) • 3.1 million individuals died of AIDS in 2004 alone

five Russian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including Open Health Institute (OHI), Focus-Media and AIDS Infoshare, and international NGOs including AIDS Foundation East-West (AFEW) and Population Services International (PSI).

This launch marks the first time that the implementation of such a comprehensive Global Fund project has been delegated to an NGO consortium, a development that indicates the increasing importance and acceptance of involving NGOs in vital initiatives to halt the epidemic in the Russian Federation.

Additional information about the GLOBUS project can be found at www.ohi.ru

February 15, 2005: M. Grishankov, First Deputy Chair of the State Duma Committee on Security and member of the Interfactual Deputies' Working Group on Prevention and Fight Against AIDS, had a working meeting with A. Bobrik, GLOBUS project director (Open Health Institute), and S. Votyagov, Manager for Policy and Leadership Program, Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS (TPAA). The meeting was initiated by Grishankov, who expressed his interest in the GLOBUS project activities. The goal of the meeting was to provide Russian legislators with extensive information about the GLOBUS project, including financing, goals and implementation strategies.

* * *

3. JOINT DELEGATION FROM TWO U.S. THINK TANKS, THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CSIS) AND THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, VISITS RUSSIA ALONG WITH U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

The visit, which took place in February 2005, was part of an initiative designed to strengthen U.S. government and Congress leadership in battling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The delegation members included CSIS President and former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Dr. John Hamre; Brookings President and former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott; U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and other high-level politicians; and officials from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundations. The goal of the delegation was to discuss ways to make fighting AIDS one of the principal components of U.S.-Russian government relations. Among the State Duma Deputies who participated in one of the delegation's meetings on February 21 were the following members of the Interfactual Deputies' Working Group on Prevention and Fight Against AIDS: V. Ryzhkov, G. Safaraliev and V. Zubov. Delegation members said they would prepare a report, based on the results of the visit to Russia, to be submitted to the U.S. government and Congress in the spring.

* * *

4. PLWHA PROTEST IN FRONT OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

On February 15, 2005, 20 activists chained themselves together and blocked the entrance to the Russian Ministry of Justice in Moscow to draw attention to the problems faced by inmates living with HIV/AIDS. A key focus of the activists, from FrontAIDS, was the lack of HIV treatment within the prison system despite federal legislation guaranteeing its availability.

* * *

5. EXPERT ROUNDTABLE EMPHASIZES COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND NGOs

On March 21, 2005, TPAA held a roundtable discussion, “Forms of Cooperation between NGOs and Governmental Organizations to Resolve HIV/AIDS-Related Social Issues: Analysis and Prospects,” with participation of representatives of government agencies and Russian NGOs working on HIV/AIDS issues. Participants considered recommendations on how to develop and improve mutually beneficial cooperation between non-governmental and government organizations in addressing social issues. The discussion focused on social contracting as one of the key means to foster successful implementation of HIV/AIDS-related programs in Russia.

* * *

5. WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

Premier of the State Council of China, Wen Jiabao, visits people living with HIV/AIDS on Chinese New Year Eve (February 9, 2005). Wen’s unprecedented visit took place in Henan province, one of the regions of China hardest hit by HIV/AIDS. The situation had deteriorated to the point that in 2004, local government officials had to station special working teams in 38 villages of the province to provide assistance and state-funded antiretroviral treatment to needy PLWHA. In his speech the premier highlighted the importance of HIV prevention for the future of the nation and urged local authorities to pay more attention to prevention efforts. Experts say that if Chinese authorities do not take the necessary steps to fight the epidemic, the number of people with HIV/AIDS in China may reach 10 million by 2010; according to UNAIDS, there were 840,000 people living with HIV in the country by the end of 2003, and more than 100,000 have died of AIDS. By the end of 2004 HIV cases had been reported in every province, autonomous region and municipality in China (31 administrative units in total).

Nelson Mandela discloses that his eldest son died of AIDS, urges mankind to fight HIV. After publicly announcing his son Makgatho Mandela’s death at the beginning of January, 86-year-old Mandela, ex-president of the Republic of South Africa and one of the most prominent world leaders, said: “Let us give publicity to HIV/AIDS and not hide it, because the only way of making it appear to be a normal illness.” According to most estimates, more than 5 million people are living with HIV in South Africa today—the largest number of any country in the world.

Former UK Culture Secretary Chris Smith Reveals He is HIV positive. Smith’s announcement in January 2005 came in the wake of Mandela’s statement. According to Smith, “For many months I have been thinking whether it is time to reveal to the public that I have been HIV positive for 17 years. I hope that being open will help demystify some of the prejudice in our society, will bring confidence to people affected by this problem, and free them from fear and shame....By his simple speech Nelson Mandela has defeated all my worries. Talking about his son’s death, he was brave and clear in saying how important it is for all of us to be open and understanding when discussing HIV and its influence. I understood how right he was, and decided to speak up.”

3

as of March 1, 2005 there were 311,414 people living with HIV/AIDS officially registered in Russia (according to the Ministry of Health Federal AIDS Center data) • 4 out of 5 Russians living with HIV/AIDS are young people under 30 • 39.4 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide; 2.2 million of them are children under 15 • the number of people living with HIV/AIDS increased by 4.9 million worldwide last year (2004) • 3.1 million individuals died of AIDS in 2004 alone

Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise Endorsed by G8 Leaders

The establishment of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise was endorsed by G8 leaders at their annual summit on July 11, 2004 in Sea Island, Georgia, USA (the full text of the declaration can be found on the official Internet website of the President of Russia: <http://www.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2004/06/75546.shtml>). The leaders agreed that a strategic plan to prioritize the scientific challenges to be addressed, coordinate research and product development efforts, and encourage greater use of information sharing networks and technologies would be prepared in time for the 2005 annual summit, to be held in the United Kingdom in July 2005.

More than 20 years have passed since the first attempts to identify an HIV vaccine were undertaken. Since then, over 70 vaccines have been developed and tested (about 30 more are under preclinical or clinical trial at the moment), but none of them has proved effective enough to be employed in clinical practice.

The Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise calls for the creation of an international network of scientific and research centers and laboratories, which would work according to the same scheme and exchange information and data on a regular basis. It was expected that the enterprise stakeholders would meet in the UK at the end of April to discuss the next steps in the strategic plan implementation. The first projects within the Enterprise' framework, which were expected to come into force by the end of 2005, will include establishment of the Center for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology (CHAVI), sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (USA), and a research grants program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

* * *

6. UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MARCH–APRIL 2005 (TPAA CALENDAR):

- MARCH 30, MOSCOW. Russian Business Summit on AIDS – 2005: “Developing Public-Private Partnerships in Fighting AIDS in Russia,” a joint initiative of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation, the Coordination Council of Unions of Entrepreneurs of Russia, the World Bank Group and TPAA.
- APRIL 5, MOSCOW. Roundtable discussion: “Overview and Analysis of Russian Legislation Providing for Non-discrimination Policies at Workplace and Protecting Rights of Employees Living With HIV/AIDS,” organized jointly by TPAA and the European Commission project “HIV/AIDS Prevention and Combating, Phase I, RF”.
- APRIL 14, MOSCOW. Roundtable discussion devoted to the publication of “HIV/AIDS, Law and Human Rights: A Handbook for Russian Legislators,” which was developed collaboratively by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and TPAA.

THIS DIGEST IS PRODUCED BY
Policy and Leadership Program,
Transatlantic Partners Against AIDS
 Gazetny Pereulok 5, 3rd Floor
 123001 Moscow, Russia

Phone: +7 (095) 229-7344 • Fax: +7 (095) 510-5371 • <http://www.tpaanet/>

4

as of March 1, 2005 there were 311,414 people living with HIV/AIDS officially registered in Russia (according to the Ministry of Health Federal AIDS Center data) • 4 out of 5 Russians living with HIV/AIDS are young people under 30 • 39.4 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide; 2.2 million of them are children under 15 • the number of people living with HIV/AIDS increased by 4.9 million worldwide last year (2004) • 3.1 million individuals died of AIDS in 2004 alone