

March 2009

No. 163
March
2009

EURO-LETTER

ILGA-Europe's monthly
electronic LGBT political
and legal news bulletin

**Euro-Letter is published by ILGA-Europe - the European Region
of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender &
Intersex Association (ILGA)**

ISSN 1998-8117

Editor:

Juris Lavrikovs

Contact us:

euroletter@ilga-europe.org

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ILGA-Europe is grateful to **Pantelis Ravdas**, **Danae Panagiotopoulou** and **Evdokia Sakka** for the Greek translations.



This publication is supported by the Directorate-General for Employment, social affairs and equal opportunities of the European Commission.

Its funding is provided for under the European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013). This programme was established to financially support the implementation of the objectives of the European Union in the employment and social affairs area, as set out in the Social Agenda, and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon Strategy goals in these fields.

The seven-year Programme targets all stake holders who can help shape the development of appropriate and effective employment and social legislation and policies, across the EU-27, EFTA-EEA and EU candidate and pre-candidate countries.

PROGRESS mission is to strengthen the EU contribution in support of Member States' commitments and efforts to create more and better jobs and to build a more cohesive society. To that effect, PROGRESS will be instrumental in:

- providing analysis and policy advice on PROGRESS policy areas;
- monitoring and reporting on the implementation of EU legislation and policies in PROGRESS policy areas;
- promoting policy transfer, learning and support among Member States on EU objectives and priorities; and
- relaying the views of the stakeholders and society at large

For more information see:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

In this issue:

ILGA-EUROPE

- Message from Dirk
- ILGA-Europe launches "Be Bothered" campaign on the European Parliament elections 2009
- Forced Out: Report on LGBT people in Armenia

EUROPE:

- EU's Fundamental Rights Agency launches second part of its Report on Homophobia and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination in the EU
- Serbia's National Assembly adopts Anti-discrimination law
- Training manual for diversity management
- New EU Anti-Discrimination materials

LGBT FAMILIES:

- Launch of ILGA-Europe's 'LGBT Families Network'
- MEPs criticise EU Member States on freedom of movement restrictions
- Gay Adoption on its way to be adopted in Denmark
- French Senate recognises foreign same-sex partnerships

EDUCATION:

- IGLYO publish Guidelines for an LGBTQ-inclusive Education

NOTICE BOARD:

- Call for tender
- Call for Papers: Lesbians in Eastern Europe, Special Issue of the Journal of Lesbian Studies
- HIV survey 2009



Message from Dirk

Dear Euroletter readers, ILGA-Europe members, friends and supporters,

ILGA-Europe's just launched the European Parliament Elections 2009 campaign. The elections are taking place on 4-7 June 2009.

The motto for our campaign is **Be Bothered!** We all know how passive most EU citizens are when it comes to the EU politics. We want to turn it around and to energise both the candidates and the electorate to take very active role.

Why? Simply because if we are not bothered, some one else will be! The current Parliament was the most vocal voice for equality, human rights and the rights of LGBT people in the EU and beyond. We still do not have full equality in the EU and we simply cannot afford to loose this voice.

The current economic crisis is already used by various LGBT unfriendly forces to gain support. If we are not bothered and do not vote, those opposing the principles of equality and human rights will only gain more profile and in the end the seats at the Parliament.

We also need to be involved with the candidates to test their commitment to equality and human rights. Talk to them, question them, and challenge them. Now is the time. If we do nothing, we might loose a very important ally for the next 5 years, can we afford it?

Dirk De Meirleir

Executive Director

ILGA-Europe launches “Be Bothered” campaign on the European Parliament elections 2009

ILGA-Europe’s media release, 25 March 2009

Today ILGA-Europe launches its campaign on the European Parliament elections which are taking place on 4-7 June 2009. The motto of this campaign is “Be Bothered. Vote for a human rights friendly European Parliament”.

The aim of ILGA-Europe’s campaign is two fold. Firstly, we want to ensure that the candidates for the next European Parliament express their determination, if elected, to continue the Parliament’s commitment to human rights and equality generally and the rights of LGBT people in particular. As a sign of their commitment, ILGA-Europe and its members will be approaching the candidates and inviting them to sign our **10 points Pledge**. The Pledge summarises the key issues that ILGA-Europe wants to see advanced at the EU level over the next five years. The candidate will be able to sign our Pledge on our website.

Secondly, the campaign aims to energise ILGA-Europe membership, organisations and individuals across the European Union, to be bothered and take active part in this year’s elections. It is a known and unfortunate fact that the European Parliament elections 2004 witnessed the lowest turnout in the history of the European elections. Our message is simple: **if you are not bothered – some one else will be**. Only by engaging with the candidates and actually voting can our concerns be heard, our interests represented, and our rights protected.

Our campaign website will:

- provide the details on how the current MEPs voted to 6 major Parliament’s resolutions which are relevant to the rights of LGBT people;
- contain an interactive EU map which will reflect how many candidates in each EU member States have joined the ILGA-Europe Pledge;
- explain why the European elections are important and where to find more information about the elections;
- suggest what organisations and individuals across the European Union can do to get involved.

Linda Freimane, Co-Chair of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board, said:

"The current European Parliament was the most active and committed EU institution in relation to respect and protection of human rights. We want to make sure that the candidates for the next Parliament continue to 'be bothered' about human rights. The current economic crisis is already conveniently used by some to push equality issues to a lower priority level. It is therefore particularly important to have a human rights friendly European Parliament to stand up for non-discrimination and equality in the coming years."

Martin K.I. Christensen, Co-Chair of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board, adds:

"There is definitely a fatigue among EU citizens when it comes to the European elections. Many people think the European Parliament is a distant and irrelevant institution. This is not true as the European Parliament is the only EU institution on which we have direct influence! We cannot afford not to 'be bothered' and not to vote. Our vote is our voice and we don't want to be silenced."

Be Bothered campaign:

www.ilga-europe.org/EuropeanElections2009

Forced Out: Report on LGBT people in Armenia

by **Maxim Anmeghichean**, *ILGA-Europe's Programmes Director*

ILGA-Europe launches its report on the situation of LGBT people in Armenia – the last in a series of reports about human rights of sexual minorities and transgender communities in the South Caucasus.

Although Armenia has signed most of the relevant international and regional agreements, in practice respect for human rights principles is generally weak, and work to make them a reality 'on the ground' is limited. As in the other countries of the South Caucasus, this is particularly the case with regard to human rights of LGBT people, who suffer from a high level of hostility, discrimination, social exclusion, hate crimes and violence. Homophobia is deeply rooted in the Armenian society. Stigmatisation is so pervasive that most LGBT people are forced out of communities and deprived of any chance to openly express their sexual orientation or gender identity. And yet they are forced to come out and organise into associations and groups if they want to be able to stand up for who they are.

The report is based on information gathered before, during and after a joint COC – ILGA-Europe fact-finding mission in January 2006 by ILGA-Europe's Programmes Director Maxim Anmeghichean. During the mission several working methods were used. In addition to interviews, meetings and analysis of available literature, a legal expert was contracted and a questionnaire developed.

The joint ILGA-Europe and COC report is the first of its kind to be published about same-sex relationships and LGBT people in Armenia. It explores identities, common human rights violations, the landscape of LGBT organising, health and HIV/AIDS, and relevant legal aspects. It also provides recommendations to the Armenian government, donors, LGBT activists and international organisations.

The report is available in PDF format on our website:

[www.ilga-](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/forced_out_lgbt_people_in_armenia_february_2009)

[europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/forced_out_lgbt_people_in_armenia_february_2009](http://www.ilga-europe.org/europe/publications/non_periodical/forced_out_lgbt_people_in_armenia_february_2009)

EU's Fundamental Rights Agency launches second part of its Report on Homophobia and Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination in the EU

ILGA-Europe's media release, 31 March 2009

Today the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) launches its Report on Homophobia and Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in the EU Member States, Part II: The Social Situation.

ILGA-Europe welcomes the Report which is the most comprehensive report on the legal and social situation for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in the EU to date. We particularly welcome the set of opinions and recommendations which we believe lay down excellent road map for EU institutions and EU Member States on the actions that need to be taken in order to tackle discrimination and prejudice against LGBT people both at EU and national levels.

This report confirms the worrying situation with regards to **hate crime and hate speech** against LGBT people in the EU. The high numbers of bullying at schools and deadly assaults on transgender people are of particular concern. The underreporting of homophobic and transphobic crimes and the police inadequacies dealing with such crimes is another serious problem. Only 12 EU member States introduced provisions making it a criminal offence to incite to hatred, violence and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

Another worrying trend is widespread of **bullying and harassment of LGBT people in educational institutions** across the EU which negatively affect performance and well-being of individuals. The report notices how little attention is paid to this particular problem by schools authorities in the EU.

The Report points out mobilisation and organised lobbying against improvements of the rights of LGBT people by **religion organisations** in various EU Member States.

The Reports also finds that **transgender people are systematically discriminated against** in all areas investigated by this report. ILGA-Europe is also particularly concerned with the findings on attitudes towards transgender people. The Reports shows that attitudes towards transgender people are significantly more severe than negative attitudes towards LGB people and therefore require a targeted response.

EUROPE:

Dirk De Meirleir, Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, said:

"We are very pleased with this important research conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency. This is the first time the EU institution investigates the extent of discrimination and prejudice LGBT people experience across the European Union in such great details.

Given the worrying picture that this report provides, we hope its conclusions and recommendations will be taken seriously by the EU institutions and EU Member States. The Report is an excellent aid to the institutions and national governments to send homophobia and transphobia to the history books. It is in their powers, what is needed is a political will. ILGA-Europe will provide all its support and expertise to support the European Union and its Member States in this important work."

The full report is available on <http://fra.europa.eu>

Background to the report: In June 2007 the European Parliament asked FRA to develop a comparative report on homophobia and sexual orientation discrimination in the EU Member States to assist the European Parliament's LIBE committee in its deliberations concerning the need for a Directive covering all grounds of discrimination. In response, the FRA launched this project composed of two parts. The first part, published in June 2008, contains a comparative legal analysis of the situation in the EU Member States:

www.fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/products/publications_reports/pub_cr_homophobia_0608_en.htm

Serbia's National Assembly adopts Anti-discrimination law

by *Lilit Poghosyan, ILGA-Europe's Programmes & Policy Officer*

On 26 March 2009, the National Assembly of Serbia has adopted a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, banning discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or other factors.

The law was part of reforms intended to align the national laws and policies with EU *acquis* and to fill the gaps identified by the European Commission's 2008 progress report on Serbia "A comprehensive anti-discrimination law has not yet been adopted. In practice, there is still widespread discrimination, primarily against national minorities, Roma or women as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people."¹

Earlier this month, on March 4, 2009 the draft anti-discrimination law was withdrawn from parliamentary consideration due to pressure from the Serbian Orthodox Church and other religious groups. The main opposition from the religious community to the draft law related to Article 21, prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In response to the withdrawal of the law from parliamentary consideration, ILGA-Europe addressed a letter² to the Government of Serbia urging it to put the current draft anti-discrimination law back on the agenda in the National Assembly without changing the provisions prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity as well as on all other grounds.

ILGA-Europe has also raised the issue with the relevant bodies in the European Parliament and the European Commission to ensure that the Government and the National Assembly of Serbia adopt the current draft anti-discrimination law maintaining non-discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

On March 13, 2009 the Government has resubmitted the law to the National Assembly with certain amendments but without significantly altering non-discrimination provisions on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

In the current version of the law sexual orientation is specifically mentioned as a ground of non-discrimination in Article 21. A clause prohibiting discrimination on the ground of gender identity was removed from Article 21 but an alternative clause prohibiting discrimination against transsexuals was added in Article 20, regulating gender discrimination issues.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key_documents/reports_nov_2008/serbia_progress_report_en.pdf

² Available on our website: www.ilga-europe.org/europe/guide/country_by_country/serbia

Training manual for diversity management

Source: European Commission

Between autumn 2007 and spring 2008, a series of national training seminars were financed by the European Commission and carried out in all EU Member States, Turkey, Norway and Iceland. 1100 participants from NGOs and nearly 300 participants from trade unions were trained in national non-discrimination seminars raising awareness and understanding of national legislation and policy. More than 1000 companies and other interested groups attended the diversity management seminars raising awareness of the benefits companies can gain from managing diversity.

The main tools used for the training seminars include training manuals for NGOs and training manuals on diversity management available in all languages:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=427&langId=en&moreDocuments=yes>

New EU Anti-Discrimination materials

Source: European Commission

The 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' campaign has produced new tools – three Power Point presentations.

These tools are designed to include all five grounds of discrimination which fall under the campaign (race or ethnic origin, religion, age, sexual orientation and disability) within the context of employment. The campaign hopes these tools will become useful to support actions and activities by anyone involved in equality and anti-discrimination work.

There PowerPoint presentations available which are aimed at employees and employers:

- A monthly calendar which provides practical suggestions for achieving a discrimination-free workplace
- A quiz to help people recognise discrimination and gain awareness of how they are protected
- A tool to help businesses with diversity training which explains what discrimination is, EU Directives etc.

More information and links to the presentations (in English only currently with all EU language versions to follow shortly) are available online at <http://www.stop-discrimination.info/index.php?id=5319>

Launch of ILGA-Europe's 'LGBT Families Network'

by **Silvan Agius**, *ILGA-Europe Policy & Programmes Officer*

Following the successful '*Different Families, Same Love*' Conference that ILGA-Europe held in Slovenia during 2008, we are now proceeding with the launch of an email information exchange group dedicated to LGBT families' rights.

Anyone interested in learning more and/or sharing information about developments regarding LGBT families nationally and at European level is welcome to join this email group by sending a blank email to lgbtfamilies-subscribe@ilga-europe.org and follow the simple instructions in the auto reply.

MEPs criticise EU Member States on freedom of movement restrictions

by Juris Lavrikovs, ILGA-Europe's Communications Manager

On 17 March 2009, the Civil Liberties Committee of the European Parliament voted on the Vălean report which examines how the EU Member States comply with one of the most fundamental EU principles – the freedom of movement of the EU citizens. The Committee identified a number of major infringements of EU citizens' fundamental rights and pointed out various misinterpretations of the free movement directive. According to the MEPs, the concepts of "family member" and "partner", in particular with regard to same-sex partners, are also misinterpreted. On these points, MEPs urge Member States to mutually recognise not only spouses of different sexes but also same-sex couples. They point out to Member States that the recognition of free movement for same-sex couples does not necessarily entail recognition of marriage of same-sex.

Full text of this report:

www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5666312¬iceType=null&language=en

Gay Adoption on its way to be adopted in Denmark

by **Nanna Moe**, *IGLYO Board Member*

20 years ago in 1989, Denmark was the first country in the world to introduce registered partnership and got known for its proactive legislation concerning LGBT rights. 10 years ago in 1999, Denmark was the first to allow same-sex couples to be legal parents. Nevertheless, by now the small Scandinavian country is lacking behind numerous countries in the fight for equality. Finally in mid March 2009, the Danish Parliament voted for an amendment in the legislation that will give same sex couples access to apply for adoption.

In 2006 after years of debate, a ban on assisted fertilisation for lesbians was removed from the Danish legislation. But there was still a need to clear out other important issues in Danish law, where non-traditional families are discriminated against. Among these is the adoption law, which discriminates same sex couples denying access to adopt children on the same basis as heterosexual couples. Now, however, a Parliamentary Resolution, which commits the Danish Government to present a bill to the Parliament, has been passed with 62 votes in favour of the proposal and 53 votes against.

It was the seventh time that the proposal was up for discussion and voting in the Danish Parliament. First time it was proposed was in 2002-2003, but it fell because the parties in Government, i.e. the Liberals and Conservatives, together with the supporting party, Danish People's Party, all voted against, while the whole opposition voted for. It was the openly gay MP, Simon Emil Ammitzbøll (independent) who proposed the resolution just before Christmas 2008. This time the situation was different, since a handful of Liberal members had decided to vote in favour of the proposal - and therefore against their own party. This was a repetition of the situation from 2006 when the ban on assisted fertilisation for lesbians was removed. Also here a handful of members of the Liberal party together with the opposition constituted a majority and secured a victory in the fight for equality in Denmark.

French Senate recognises foreign same-sex partnerships

by **Juris Lavrikovs**, *ILGA-Europe's Communications Manager*

On 25 March 2009, the French Senate (the upper house of the French Parliament) voted to allow other foreign civil partnerships the same recognition in France as a French PACS.

If this is given the final seal of approval in the National Assembly (the lower house of the Parliament) this will make a big difference to the lives of many same sex partners in France, whose partnerships at present have no official recognition here.

The member of the European Parliament's LGBT Rights Intergroup congratulated France for this move:

"We congratulate the French Senate for finally moving forward to solve this unfair situation which is discriminatory on the grounds of nationality as well as a hindrance to freedom of movement within the EU," said Michael Cashman, President of the Intergroup. "We have been approached by many European citizens, especially British, who suffer discrimination because their same-sex partnership is not recognised in France. One man was forced to sell his house after his partner's death because he could not afford to pay 60% inheritance tax. Otherwise this tax is not applicable to same-sex married spouses or couples in a French partnership".

"I encourage the French government to do everything in their power to quickly move the amendments through the National Assembly and stop the suffering of same-sex couples from other EU nations residing in or visiting France," added Michael Cashman.

IGLYO publish Guidelines for an LGBTQ-inclusive Education

by **Bruno Selun**, *IGLYO Board member*

The International LGBTQ Youth and Student Organisation just published their Guidelines for an LGBTQ-inclusive Education.

The document, available online and in print for free, presents 10 key points to make schools and universities more inclusive for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students. It contains advice and short case studies about mainstreaming, the curriculum, anti-bullying policies, networking or community support, and how these can make a positive difference in the school lives of LGBTQ young people in Europe.

The work results from a 2007 joint seminar organised with OBESSU, the European school student union when 30 young people, LGBTQ and school student activists, gathered to share their experience of LGBT-inclusive school policies during a week. The results are now published in English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, and soon Lithuanian, all available online:

www.iglyo.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=69

The Guidelines also contain online resources for human rights education, classroom debates and other organisations.

At a time of debate around the new European anti-discrimination directive, IGLYO reassert that education needs to be included in Europe-wide measures against discrimination. Findings from the joint ILGA-Europe-IGLYO report in 2006³ indicate that school remains the first place of discrimination for young people in Europe (61% of respondents have been discriminated against at school). With ILGA-Europe, IGLYO will continue to push for education to be included in the horizontal anti-discrimination directive.

For more information about the Guidelines please contact: bruno@iglyo.com

The Guidelines are available on our website:

www.iglyo.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=69

To obtain a printed copy please contact office@iglyo.com

³ www.iglyo.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=103&Itemid=68

Call for tender

Source: European Commission

Call for tender: study on the use of age, disability, sex, religion or belief, race or ethnic origin and sexual orientation in financial services, in particular in the insurance and banking sectors

Deadline

4.5.2009 (16:00)

The study will identify current practices of financial services providers with regard to the use of age, disability, sex, race/ethnic origin, religion/belief and **sexual orientation** in the supply and design of financial products, as well as problems of discrimination and measures to prevent discriminatory practices. The study has a twofold aim:

- provide an objective basis for a dialogue with the financial services industry and other stakeholders on the use of age and disability as factors in risk assessment;
- provide additional information for the review of the current practices of Member States in relation to Article 5 of Directive 2004/113/EC.

While particular attention will be paid to the differentiation and discrimination on grounds of age, disability and sex (the latter including gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity) which seem to be the most problematic ones, the other grounds listed in Article 13 EC Treaty will also be examined where relevant and necessary. The analysis will cover different financial products, such as various types of private insurances (health, life, accident, housing, motor, travel, etc.), banking services (loans, mortgages, credit cards, etc.) and other financial services (private pensions, investment products, etc.). The assessment will cover all 27 EU Member States and EFTA/EEA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) for which data and information shall be collected and analysed by the contractor. In addition, the contractor should also compare the situation with at least 2–3 other OECD countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia and Switzerland, depending on their relevance for this study.

Further information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=625&langId=en&callId=200&furtherCalls=yes>

Call for Papers: Lesbians in Eastern Europe, Special Issue of the Journal of Lesbian Studies

by *Anna Borgos and Judit Takács, Guest Editors*

The Journal of Lesbian Studies, a peer-reviewed academic journal published by Taylor & Francis, invites essay submissions for a special issue on the subject of lesbians in Eastern Europe, guest-edited by Judit Takács and Anna Borgos.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Eastern European lesbian herstory, spaces and communities
- Coming out and the construction of lesbian identities in Eastern Europe
- Lesbians in families and lesbian families in Eastern Europe
- Lesbian motherhood in Eastern Europe
- Lesbian partnership issues in Eastern Europe
- Equal treatment and discrimination of lesbians in Eastern Europe
- Violence and (internalised) homophobia
- Cultural/media representations of Eastern European lesbians (in art, film and literature)
- Lesbians and psychiatry in Eastern Europe
- Lesbian transwomen in Eastern Europe

Please send a one-page overview of your proposed contribution (no more than 500 words) to Judit Takács at takacs@socio.mta.hu and/or Anna Borgos at borgosanna@gmail.com by **April 30, 2009**. Proposals will be evaluated for originality and writing style as well as how all the contributions fit together.

After initial review of the proposals, the selected authors will be contacted in order to arrange their final contributions. Final essays should be no more than 10-15 double-spaced pages, including references. (To facilitate anonymous review, essays should contain no identifying information, the author's name, email and postal address should appear only in the message that accompanies the electronic submission.)

Final deadline of essay submission: September 30, 2009

For more detailed information about submission guidelines—including copyright ownership and preparation of tables, figures and images—please see the homepage for the Journal of Lesbian Studies at www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~db=all~content=t792306903~tab=submit~mode=paper_submission_instructions

HIV survey 2009

by Health Consumer Powerhouse

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection remains an item of major public health importance in Europe, with evidence of increasing transmission of HIV in several countries. To be efficient in dealing with the HIV situation in Europe there are some essential changes to be made very urgently, such as: education for the general public (e.g. better quality sex education in schools), more support and information for those already living with HIV.

There is a need for an extra effort to approach all those persons at very high infection risk, in order for these people to get testing, counseling and care they need.

It is also necessary that several countries within Europe revise and change laws, which discriminate and stigmatize people living with HIV, refusing essential human rights.

Those are the first observations made after starting the **Euro HIV Care Index**, a comparative analysis of the performance of healthcare systems in Europe from the HIV/AIDS patient's point of view.

For four consecutive years the Health Consumer Powerhouse has launched the annual Euro Health Consumer Index, which measures what could be graded as Europe's most consumer-friendly healthcare system by comparing European country performance. With the same philosophy the HCP is currently working on the first edition of the Euro HIV Care Index (EHIVI).

A number of indicators were selected with the assistance of the Index Experts Panel, which represents wide knowledge and experience related to HIV: doctors, nurses, members of patient associations and individual patients. The objective is to measure the performance of healthcare systems and other public health efforts.

The EHIVI measures the healthcare performance of 29 countries: all the 27 EU members plus Switzerland and Norway.

As part of the EHIVI work, HCP is conducting an online survey to people with HIV in all the 29 countries. The survey allows people with HIV to contribute to HCP's forthcoming Euro Consumer HIV Index 2009 (due to be published freely available on the Internet later in 2009) by offering their views on how well their country's healthcare system helps people with HIV.

www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=KLo4IVSms561bEcHe7nM2w_3d_3d