



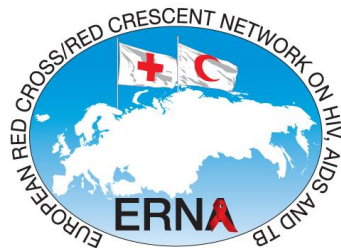
## **«Volunteering: HIV and TB»**

**16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting**

**September 15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> 2012,  
Bazaleti Lake Hotel, Georgia**

**hosted by the Georgia Red Cross Society**





## *“Volunteering: HIV and TB”*

### 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA Annual General Meeting

15-18 September 2012

**Bazaleti Lake Hotel, Georgia**  
**Hosted by the Georgia Red Cross Society**

#### **The Goal of the Meeting:**

- ➡ To reinforce the value of community volunteers of Red Cross and Red Crescent addressing TB and HIV problems in the region







#### **The Key Tasks of the Meeting:**

- ➡ Describe the progress of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Europe in voluntary based HIV and TB Programmes, with their achievements and challenges
- ➡ To learn on experience of key partners
- ➡ Agree on concrete steps to scale up and ways to improve the partnerships


#### **Day 1, September 15<sup>th</sup>, Opening and Introduction**


| <b>Time</b>  | <b>Agenda Item</b>  | <b>Chair / Facilitator</b>   |
|--------------|---|--|
| <b>15:00</b> | ERNA Market place (opened and ongoing for the entire General Meeting last); ERNA Poster, Booklet and EZ IFRC Newsletter presentation                                | Organizational Committee/<br>ERNA Secretariat  |
| <b>16:00</b> | Coffee break  |  |
| <b>17:00</b> | <b>Welcoming words</b><br><br><i>Ms. Natia Loladze, President of the Georgia Red Cross Society</i>  | <b>Chair of Day 1:</b><br><br>Dr. Fabio Patruno,<br>ERNA Chair   |
| <b>17:10</b> | <b>Introduction, goals and objectives</b><br><br><b>Volunteering: the focus of the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting</b><br><b>Dr. Fabio Patruno, ERNA Chair</b> | <b>Facilitator of Day 1:</b><br><br>Ms. Ketevan Mindeli,<br>MD, Head of Health<br>and Care Department,<br>Georgia Red Cross<br>Society |
| <b>17:20</b> | <b>Key Note Speeches:</b><br><br><b>Mr. Irakli Giorgobiani, First Deputy Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia</b>                               |  |

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| 17:30  | <b>Mr. Getachew Ta’a</b> , <i>Head of Corporate Services and National Society Support, Europe Zone, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC)</i>   |  |
| 17 :40   | <b>Dr. Massimo Barra</b> , <i>Member of Red Cross Red Crescent Standing Commission, ERNA Former Chair</i>   |  |
| 17:50  | <b>Key Messages to ERNA from PLHIV Organizations</b><br><br><i>*Mr. Volodymyr Zhovtyak, East Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV/All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV, President/Head of Coordination Council</i><br><br><i>*Ms. Elena Grigoryeva, Belarusian PLHIV Community , Chairperson of AIDS Action Europe</i><br><br><i>*The Representative of Georgia PLHIV Community</i> |  |
| 18:05  | Expectations of participants.<br>Questions and Answers  |  |
| 18:20  | Appointment of the ERNA Annual General Meeting Statement draft committee  |  |
| 18:30  | Organizational issues. Closing of the day   |  |
| 19:30  | Welcome dinner  |  |
| <b>Day 2, September 16<sup>th</sup>,<br/>Power of Red Cross and Red Crescent Volunteers:<br/>Advantages and Challenges</b> |   |  |

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|-------|---|---|
| 9:00  | <p><b>Welcoming words</b><br/> <b>Dr. Viktor Kalbanau</b>, <i>ERNA Vice-Chair, Chair of Day 2</i></p> <p><b>Session 1. How RCRC responds to the HIV and TB situation through community-based volunteering</b></p> <p><b>Technical update on the TB and HIV situation in Europe and Central Asia</b><br/> <b>Dr. Lasha Gogvadze</b>, <i>IFRC Health Department Senior Health Officer, Geneva</i></p> <p><b>Presentations:</b><br/>  Volunteering: the MDR-TB control project<br/> <b>Ms. Nino Osepaishvili</b>, <i>Senior officer of MDR-TB control project, Red Cross Society of Georgia</i><br/> <b>Ms. Ekaterine Sanikidze</b>, <i>Coordinator at the country level, Advocacy, communication and social mobilization to fight TB</i><br/>  Volunteering: Harm reduction project<br/> <b>Ms. Nino Siradze</b>, <i>Harm reduction project psychologist, Red Cross Society of Georgia</i><br/> <b>Mr. Konstantine Labartkava</b>, <i>Director of "New Vector"</i><br/> <b>Mr. Lasha Zaalishvili</b>, <i>Executive Director, Georgian Harm Reduction Network</i><br/>  Involvement of volunteers into TB and HIV projects. Experience of Belgorod regional branch of the Russian Red Cross Society<br/> <b>Ms. Helen Koroleva</b>, <i>Coordinator of TB programme, Belgorod regional branch of the Russian Red Cross Society</i></p> <p><b>Questions and Answers</b></p> <p><b>Group discussions:</b><br/>  The added value of volunteer-based programming in tackling HIV and TB<br/>  How to effectively engage RCRC volunteers in HIV and TB programming?<br/>  Stigma and discrimination:</p> | <p><b>Chair of Day 2:</b><br/> Dr. Viktor Kalbanau,<br/> Belarus RC Secretary General,<br/> ERNA Vice-Chair</p> <p><b>Facilitator of Day 2:</b><br/> Ms. Elena Grigoryeva,<br/> Belarusian PLHIV Community, Chairperson of AIDS Action Europe</p> |
| 9:05  |   |   |
| 9:15  |   |   |
| 9:40  |   |   |
| 10:05 |   |   |
| 10:25 |   |   |
| 10:35 |   |   |

volunteers as agents of behavioural change

 Peer-to-peer awareness raising: reaching further in the communities

 Role of youth in HIV and TB programmes

Report on the group discussions with take-home messages

11:45

Coffee break

12:05

## **Session 2. From advantages to challenges**

### **Introduction**


*Mr. Volodymyr Zhovtyak, East Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV/All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV, President/Head of Coordination Council*


Presentation: "The role of PLHIV community in building partnerships with Government to render assistance to people living with HIV"


12:30

### **Panel Discussion**

#### **"Why volunteers? Challenges"**





 Challenges: volunteer management, adequate training and capacity building, level of volunteers' involvement, long-term commitment, volunteers empowerment, legal constraints

 Cost effectiveness of HIV and TB volunteering

 What support can be provided by ERNA?

#### Participants:

- *Armenian Red Cross Society*
- *Bulgarian Red Cross*
- *Norwegian Red Cross*
- *Croatian Red Cross*
- *East Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV / All Ukrainian Network of PLHIV*

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|  |   |  |
| 13:30  | Lunch   |  |
| 14:30  | <b>Table discussion</b><br><br><b>Identifying 3 top challenges in volunteers involvement in HIV and TB projects</b><br><br>Report from the group and panel discussion with take-home messages   |  |
| 15:30  | Coffee break  |  |
| 16:00  | <b>Humanitarian Diplomacy and Partnerships – updates</b><br><br><i>Dr. Lasha Gogvadze, IFRC Health Department Senior Health Officer, Geneva</i><br><br> UNODC – MoU and follow up<br> Advocacy in TB – Red Cross Red Crescent engagement with country TB goodwill Ambassadors – event in December 2011<br> XIX International AIDS Conference, July 22-27, Washington, DC.<br> TB HIV live Talk Show in Washington |  |
| 16:45  | <b>Presentation of candidates to occupy the positions of ERNA Chair and ERNA Vice-Chair. Nomination of a new European Youth Coordination Committee (EYCC) representative at the ERNA Board</b><br><br><i>Dr. Sylvie Wieviorka, ERNA Vice-Chair, French Red Cross, Medical Director</i>  |  |
| 17:00  | End of the working day  |  |
| 17:40  | Social evening event in Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia  |  |
| <b>Day 3, September 17<sup>th</sup>, Challenges and New Approaches</b> |   |  |
| 9:00   | Report from Day 2   |  |

### Session 3. How to overcome challenges

9:05

#### The introductory comment

**Mr. Sopheak Va**, Asian Red Cross and Red Crescent HIV/AIDS Network (ART), Chairperson


#### Experience and best practices of partner organisations and RCRC National Societies

9:10


Improving the communication among ART Members

**Mr. Sopheak Va**, ART, Chairperson


9:35

 Developing effective harm reduction services for women. **Ms. Ekaterine Jakobishvili**, Harm Reduction International, Human Rights Analyst

9:50


 AIDS. Action. Europe: consolidating of civil society to enable a more effective response to HIV/AIDS epidemics in Europe and Central Asia  
**Ms. Elena Grigoryeva**, AIDS Action Europe, Chairperson

10:05

 Belarus Red Cross Society: role of volunteers in HIV and TB projects  
**Ms. Natallia Matelskaya**, Belarus Red Cross Society, HIV programme coordinator  
**Mr. Dzmitry Rusakou**, Belarus Red Cross Society, TB project coordinator

10:20

10:35

 Eurasian Harm Reduction Network: supporting HIV and TB programs in Central /Eastern Europe and Central Asia  
**Ms. Marija Subataite**, Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), Program Manager, Technical Support Program

#### Questions and Answers

#### Chair of Day 3:

Mr. Sopheak Va,  
Asian Red Cross and  
Red Crescent HIV/AIDS  
Network  
(ART), Chairperson

#### Facilitator of Day 3:

Mr. Giovanni  
Zambello,  
IFRC EZ  
Communications Delegate



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|-------|--|--|
| 10:45 | Coffee break   |  |
| 11:05 | <p><b>Table groups discussion</b> – to focus on the importance of community empowering and participation, involvement, advocacy, good practices, humanitarian diplomacy, cooperation. Good examples and recommendations.</p> <p>Report from the table group discussion with take-home messages</p> |  |
| 12:45 | Lunch  |  |
| 14:15 | <p><b>Presentation of the draft Statement of ERNA annual General Meeting</b><br/> <i>ERNA AGM Statement draft committee</i></p>  |  |
| 14:25 |  |  |
| 14:40 | <b>Open Discussion (big table).</b>  |  |
| 14:50 | <i>Proposals for the draft Statement</i>   |  |
|       | <b>Terms of Reference for ERNA – the new edition.</b>  |  |
|       | <b>Presentation of amendments and additions from the member National Societies and ERNA Board</b><br><i>Dr. Fabio Patrino, ERNA Vice-Chair</i>   |  |
| 15:00 |  |  |
| 15:15 | <p><b>Open Discussion (big table).</b></p> <p><i>Report from the discussion.<br/> Adoption of amendments and additions</i></p>   |  |
| 15:50 | Coffee break   |  |
| 16:10 | <b>ERNA Plan of Action 2013. Proposals</b>   |  |
| 16:50 | <b>Group discussions</b><br>Report from the group discussions.   |  |
| 17:10 | <b>Elections of ERNA Chair, ERNA Vice-Chair and a new EYCC representative at ERNA Board</b>  |  |



*Dr. Viktor Kalbanau, ERNA Vice-Chair*

**17:40**

End of the working day

**Day 4, September 18<sup>th</sup>,  
Looking Ahead**

**9:00**

**Report from Day 3 including the  
Report on the elections**

**9:15**

**Presentation of the final text of  
the ERNA Annual General Meeting  
Statement**

Adoption of the Statement


**Looking ahead:**

**9:40**

 **Report of the  
representative of EYCC at ERNA  
Board**

**Questions and Answers**

**10:00**

 **Report from ERNA  
Secretariat**  
*Dr. Iryna Karanchuk, ERNA  
Secretariat General Coordinator*

**Questions and Answers**


**10:30**

Coffee break

**11:00**

 **Proposals for next ERNA  
General Meeting**

**11:20**

 **Questionnaire feedback  
from 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting  
participants**

**Questions and Answers**

**11:50**

**Final remarks**  
*ERNA Chair*

**12:00**

**Closing of the meeting**

**12:30**

Lunch

**Chair of Day 4:**

Dr. Fabio Patruno,  
ERNA Chair

**Facilitator of Day 4:**

Mrs. Somsri  
Tantipaibulvut,  
Former ART Chair,  
Chief of Psycho Social  
and Behavioral Group,  
Thai Red Cross

# REPORT

## **Day 1, September 15**

### **Opening and introduction**

Fabio Patruno, ERNA Chair, opened the General Meeting. He greeted all the participants and noted that he was very glad to meet his colleagues, friends and partners, with whom he had been in touch during the year, as well as all those who took part in the meeting for the first time.

He hoped that the 4 days of team-work would be successful and that all the opportunities for exchange of experiences, discussions and networking with partners would be fully exploited.

Besides, Dr Patruno particularly thanked the Georgia Red Cross Society for its invitation to hold the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting at such a wonderful place – Bazaleti lake area, as well as the staff and volunteers of the Georgia Red Cross Society for their great efforts to organize the meeting.

The ERNA Chair thanked the representatives of the IFRC offices in Geneva and Budapest and the ERNA Secretariat for making a great contribution to the organization of the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting.

On his demand all the participants made a short self-introduction and presented their organizations.

Fabio Patruno was satisfied to see representatives of many ERNA partner organizations, it attached a particular significance to the meeting. He gave the floor to Ms Natia Loladze, President of the Georgia Red Cross Society.



#### **Natia Loladze, Red Cross Society of Georgia Welcoming words**

Ms Natia Loladze on behalf of the Georgia Red Cross Society greeted the participants in the ERNA General meeting at the Bazaleti lake hotel. She expressed a sincere gratitude to ERNA for a high honor done to the Georgia Red Cross Society in the view of choosing Georgia the host country for the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting.

The holding of the ERNA General Meeting in Georgia proved that its humanitarian activity in the field of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and harm reduction and NS activities on the whole were highly praised. The Georgia Red Cross Society orients its activities on the most vulnerable groups of population and lends them both material and psychosocial support. These people were a basic daily concern for her National Society. Such international forums like the ERNA General Meeting could give impulse to NS organizational potential, improvement of quality and quantity of rendered services to the most affected people.

The President noted that the agenda of the meeting looked promising and all the participants in the meeting were looking forward to hearing NS presentations of the best practices. The Georgia Red Cross Society would also present its interesting volunteer-based projects.

Natia Loladze wished the participants a fruitful work and success in their further activities in their organizations. No matter where the next ERNA Meeting would be held, she hoped that all the participants in the meeting could tell to what extent the meeting had contributed to the progress at humanitarian activities.

Dr. Fabio Patruno thanked Natia Loladze, President of the Georgia Red Cross Society, for the kind words.



**Dr. Fabio Patruno,**  
**Introduction «Volunteering: the focus of the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting»**

The ERNA Chair reminded the audience that right one year ago we had met in Slovenia in September 2011 for the previous ERNA General Meeting, where we had discussed and shared experiences on one topic that touched all of us very closely in our day-to-day Red Cross and Red Crescent work: Humanitarian diplomacy. The first thing that we pointed out about Humanitarian Diplomacy is that it is a tool, not a goal, a tool that has the idea of “persuasion” at its centre. “If we stick to its definition, Humanitarian Diplomacy is “persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles”.

Pursuing humanitarian diplomacy in favour of people living with or affected by HIV, AIDS and TB is not a choice but a responsibility for the Red Cross Red Crescent, and by means of it the Red Cross Red Crescent advocates for universal access to prevention, care, treatment and support, as well as for a general change of attitudes towards people living with HIV and TB.

Fabio Patruno noted that “one year on, I think now it’s a good timing to remind ourselves of the collective commitment that we took last year to scale up our advocacy efforts towards our respective public authorities, so as to bring the needed changes at the top of their agendas”.

Then Fabio Patruno noted that that year the focus of our General Meeting would be: “*Volunteering: HIV and TB*”.

The topic of volunteering being in the DNA of the Red Cross Red Crescent was a part of our history and represented one of the founding stones of the Movement. Voluntary work was one of the Seven Fundamental Principles and it was contained in Strategy 2020 as one of the pillars of community building, and of what was defined as ‘strong National Societies’.

Volunteering promotes trust and reciprocity. It encourages people to be responsible citizens and provides them with an environment where they can learn the duties of democratic involvement. Volunteering is what makes the Red Cross Red Crescent grassroots approach different from that of other humanitarian organisations, even pursuing the same goals: in the sense that it enables communities to be first and best resource for themselves, thanks to the presence of well-trained volunteers who come from such communities and serve them from within.

So how is the scenario of volunteering applied to the HIV and TB context?

In recent years, both epidemics had continued to spread within most at risk and highly stigmatised groups, such as drug users, prisoners, men who have sex with men, commercial sex workers and migrants, groups who in many countries lived at the margins or outside the public health system and often found themselves unable to access state-run health services, or were too afraid to ask for help for fear of discrimination and prefer to remain in the shadows.

Both the principle of Humanity and Impartiality emphasized the obligation of National Societies to provide assistance to all people in a situation of vulnerability and on the basis of need alone, without any discrimination. Thanks to their auxiliary role to their respective public authorities, and the confidence they enjoyed among the people they served, Red Cross Red Crescent Societies helped bridge the gap between public health services and communities.

In such scenario, a unique role was played by volunteers, as unique ‘insiders’ of the affected communities, who acted as middlemen by facilitating the Red Cross access to the communities themselves. That represented an unmissable opportunity for National Societies to invest in a stronger inclusion of representatives of vulnerable groups as volunteers, as well as in decision making processes.

From its side, in the last years the ERNA Board had been striving to include members of most vulnerable groups and affected communities in planning and decision-making processes: youth, who still represented the most vulnerable group to the HIV infection, had then a permanent representative sitting in the board, whereas a member of the community of people living with HIV had been invited to take part in the Board's meetings. Many illustrative case studies would be presented by National Societies over the next days.

The goal to achieve during the meeting was to raise awareness of participants about the tools needed at National Society level to strengthen existing community-based HIV and TB programmes, which presented the primary tool to scale up NSs efforts in that area, and of the key role that investing in volunteering could play in that process.

The sessions would offer highly interactive dialogue and group discussions, in addition to presentations and case studies. With a cross-cutting focus on the topic of volunteers and volunteering, the proposed case studies would showcase National Societies successful initiatives to address access to HIV and TB services for vulnerable communities, the work with marginalized populations, sustainable partnerships, community benefits, as well as effective advocacy.

Fabio Patruno mentioned that during the last General Meeting in Slovenia, the ERNA Board had presented a comprehensive evaluation of the network, and in the lead-up process to that year's meeting, the Board and the Secretariat had been working on the implementation of the suggestions provided, as you can see in the 2012 Plan of Action and in the two years Strategic Plan.

New amendments over the Terms of Reference had been drafted and shared with all the ERNA members through a consensus process, and during that Meeting the last draft version would be discussed.

During the meeting, according to the ToR, the election of the new Chair and Vice-Chair for the coming three years mandate would take place. The participants in the meeting would have time to present their candidates till the end of the next working day, when the new candidates would introduce themselves officially.

Then Dr Patruno gave the floor to Getachew Ta'a.



**Mr. Getachew Ta'a, Head of Corporate Services and National Society Support, Europe Zone, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC)**

Getachew Ta'a thanked all the participants in the meeting for gathering at the ERNA General Meeting in the beautiful frame of Lake Bazaleti and especially the ERNA Board and the Georgia Red Cross Society for their kind invitation and warm welcome.

Mr. Ta'a noted that it was indeed an honour and a pleasure for him to be there representing the IFRC Europe Zone, and he looked forward to hearing more about the activities of ERNA and National Societies in the field of HIV and TB over the coming days.

The EZ IFRC representative said that HIV and Tuberculosis were long-lasting health and societal issues not only there in the Europe Zone, which that network represented, but in the whole world.

In recent years, National Societies in Europe and Central Asia had put increasing effort into addressing the humanitarian impact of those two diseases, by promoting awareness among the most vulnerable groups, advocating for universal access to prevention, treatment, and care services, fighting

against stigma and discrimination and working on a change in mind-sets at community level. However, the latest figures from WHO showed that the epidemic continued to grow in our region, particular in relation to drug use. That came to us as a strong reminder that more had to be done in the coming months and years by all of us to counteract those trends.

“Where does the Red Cross Red Crescent stand in such scenario?” – asked Getachew Ta’a.

The volunteers and staff of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have a long tradition of involvement in health promotion activities, going back to the Cannes medical conference of April 1919, when Red Cross Societies pledged to develop public health measures for communicable diseases.

As mentioned in the Strategy 2020, the specific contribution of the Red Cross Red Crescent to addressing HIV and TB was part of our strategic goal to build a healthy and safe living, as a tool to strengthen community resilience and ultimately contribute to sustainable development.

Since those years in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the IFRC Secretariat and its member National Societies in the Europe Zone had been working to find solutions that can support prevention, diagnosis and treatment of people living with HIV and TB at community level, and had been doing that through a network of well-trained community-based volunteers.

Volunteers had been the backbone of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement since its inception in 1863. As community members themselves, they were present at local level and served their communities from the inside, thus being able to reach out to the most isolated and vulnerable people that public health systems could not reach. Those included people who were socially excluded or stigmatised because they were affected by HIV or TB, or who had difficult or no access to HIV or TB testing, counselling, treatment and care.

That represented the element that set us apart from any other humanitarian organisation and makes the Red Cross Red Crescent approach different in its ability to bring knowledge, treatment and care to the people within their own communities through their own volunteers.

The year before, as part of the International Year of Volunteers, the IFRC had conducted the first evidence-based research in recognition of the meaningful ways that volunteers were making a difference in their communities. The research showed that the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement currently benefited from the support of over 13.1 million active volunteers in 187 Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies throughout the world, about 50% of whom were youth.

Dr. Ta’s said that through peer education, behavioural change and community engagement, youth played a crucial role in raising HIV and TB awareness among their peers, promoting the “right to know” about substance-related harm, disseminating prevention measures, as well as in fighting stigma and discrimination – sometimes double discrimination, for instance when their status is associated with their sexual orientation or the use of drugs. Youth volunteers and peer educators were themselves the first to benefit from the life-saving information that they disseminated among people of their age, thus learning how to avoid risky behaviours and to best protect themselves from such preventable diseases.

However, in spite of all such knowledge and resources being available at the community level, there was still a lot of untapped potential out there. Volunteers’ added value and impact in the fight against HIV and TB was still unevenly recognised in many of their respective communities; volunteers and beneficiaries were not always involved in all the phases of the programmes in which they brought their action or which they benefited from, and that often failed to give them ownership and leadership in the process. That may also hinder the empowerment of beneficiaries from recipients of support to caring members of their own communities.

In his career, Mr. Ta'a within the Red Cross/Red Crescent, had heard and seen the stories of many beneficiaries who, inspired by the enthusiasm of the volunteers who supported them during the worst moments of the disease, eventually decided to start volunteering, and help those who found themselves in the same situation as they used to be. That indeed, in most cases, paid off to the mutual satisfaction of both volunteers and beneficiaries.

Then Mr. Getachew Ta'a asked all the participants: "What can be the role of ERNA in furthering volunteering in existing HIV and TB programmes, so that these can have a bigger impact in communities?"

ERNA and the individual National Societies that composed it represented an incomparable pool of knowledge, resources and good practices in the field of HIV and TB in Europe and Central Asia, and - since its birth in 1998 - ERNA had been playing a crucial role in bringing National Societies together in tackling those diseases.

The current dramatic situation that that region of the world was experiencing represented a strong call for member National Societies – and those that had not joined yet - to take an even stronger lead in the development of new and effective approaches to the fight against those HIV and TB, and to the stigma and discrimination that they generated.

Red Cross Red Crescent Societies that could effectively deliver HIV and TB services to vulnerable people were National Societies that valued the role of communities themselves to be promoters of their own progress, which could only be sustained through their own leadership and ownership of the process. As mentioned in Strategy 2020, volunteers were at the heart of that community-building process. It is necessary to start from them.

Mr. Ta'a was sure that that meeting would give food for thought on how to best bring forward that important task together and how to make National Societies stronger in addressing it. He congratulated once again ERNA for the valuable work it had done over the past 14 years and wished all of the participants a fruitful and inspiring meeting.

Fabio Patruno warmly thanked Mr. Getachew Ta'a for his speech and emphasized that ERNA was open for further extension of relations, development of cooperation and partnership, exchange of experiences and ideas and improvement of communication. He also expressed his gratitude for the new format of volunteering in the field of HIV and TB. Then Dr. Patruno gave the floor to Massimo Barra.



**Dr. Massimo Barra, Member of Red Cross Red Crescent Standing Commission, ERNA Former Chair**

Dr. Massimo Barra started his speech by thanking the ERNA and the Georgia Red Cross Society for having invited him to take part in the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting. He underlined that he felt himself at home thanks to the traditional friendship between Georgia and Italia and the respective National Societies, links strengthened in particular in connection with the conflict in Ossetia. It was an honour and pleasure for him to be there that day in his role not only as member of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, former ERNA Chair or founder of the Villa Maraini Foundation, but particularly as one of the over 13 million RC/RC volunteers worldwide. While talking about the Red Cross he meant the Red Crescent and vice versa, while talking about the Red Crescent he meant the Red Cross.

Dr. Barra shared his experience at being a member of the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: having joined the Italian Red Cross at the age of 8, the Movement represented to him as well as to many colleagues from other National Societies the chance to play a positive role in the

world, contributing to improve the standard of living of millions, in particular the most vulnerable ones. Life is a hard exercise for all, but for somebody it can even be so much tough as to become unbearable. Many people would like to do something more in order to improve others' standard of living, but finding the way to do it is definitely the hardest obstacle in this effort. The RC/RC shows the way to do that thanks to its network made by 13 million volunteers in some 190 countries with their premises, equipment and means always on the go 24 hours a day. Being part of the Movement then meant the possibility to work together using all those structures and so providing operational outcomes which were, by far, larger than the simple sum of individual efforts. But being RC/RC volunteer is not only an honour, it is also a commitment; that of always working in compliance with the 7 Principles which represent a sort of "Holy book" of the Movement.

Dr. Massimo Barra pointed out once again the relevance of such Principles the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of which would be celebrated in 2015 in a world where constitutions and laws do not often last more than weeks or months. The Fundamental Principles are actually the unifying factor which makes millions working together feel like an "unicum" – in spite of cultural, racial, social and religious differences – and so showing the real "Power of humanity". That expression can result as redundant or even rhetorical to somebody, but he/she is wrong. The "Power of humanity" actually represents the substantial outcome of the work of our volunteers on the ground, people who serve the RC/RC speak the same language and use the same terms all over the world: protection, assistance, Florence Nightingale, Henry Dunant, 2012 Strategy, the most vulnerable people, the women from Castilione, Solferino, "Tutti fratelli". That is one of the added values of the Movement we always have to bear in mind, making the most of it.

"Voluntary service is one of the seven Fundamental Principles that guide the work of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and that represents the unique difference between our Movement and any other humanitarian and civil society organizations worldwide. By acknowledging that people themselves are the most important resource for their own progress and that of the wider communities they belong to, we recognize volunteering as an integral part of the social fabric of our societies".

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Massimo Barra referred in details on the auxiliary status of the RC/RC which allowed us to play a partnership role, bridging the gap between public authorities and citizens at any governmental level. "Our auxiliary status leads us to stay closer to governments: that is both an opportunity and a responsibility. In international meetings at UN level, if NGOs raise their voices in favour of people they intend to protect, there is often an absent-minded reaction from governmental representatives, as if they were used to listening such protests. If the same petitions are promoted by the RC/RC the attention is always greater. That is what happened for instance at the UNODC meetings in Vienna the last years. Participants bored by the everlasting contest on drugs policy issues between governments and civil societies were literally awakened by listening to Lady Keith and Lasha Gogvadze's intervention highlighting the need of emphasizing the humanitarian approach to the detriment of merely repressive policies".

That was what he meant when we talked about advocacy. That wording was not particularly neutral, emphasized Massimo Barra. He added that "we advocate in favour of something or somebody else. When we talk about humanitarian drug policy we are against the governments which ban effective treatments for drug users and prefer instead putting them in jail or rehabilitation centres which really look like concentration camps. If we remain silent we will break the first and more important of our Principle, the Humanity one. Actually, even if the RC/RC may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political racial, religious or ideological nature we cannot and must not remain neutral towards human suffering. Human suffering represents, in its various forms, our enemy and we are called to fight in both words and facts, bearing in mind that "advocacy is on safer ground when supported by activities", as stated in our 2010 Strategy".



Then Mr. Barra spent some words on NGOs working in the field of HIV and TB, wishing that mutual cooperation with those entities could improve in the future, also thanks to that meeting. In a globalised and interconnected world it was presumptuous to think that one could act on his own. Massimo Barra said: “Nowadays cooperation is a must and the RC/RC can look with interest at competencies and engagement of many NGOs. As far as the subject of this meeting is concerned, I would look especially at those representing affected people, which action has contributed to radically change the approach of many governments towards HIV, TB, malaria and STDs issues. Thanks to these radical changes the situation has definitely improved”.

Dr. Massimo Barra noted that the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting in Georgia was the living proof that HIV and AIDS remained a stark reality at nowadays global humanitarian scenario, and even more so in the Europe Zone, National Societies of which ERNA represented. Eastern Europe and Central Asia was the only region where HIV prevalence clearly remained on the rise. According to UNAIDS, the number of people living with HIV had almost tripled since 2000 and reached an estimated total of 1,4 million in 2009. A rapid rise in HIV infections among people injecting drugs at the turn of the century caused the epidemic in that region to surge.

Massimo Barra informed that every single RC/RC volunteer around the world was making to carry out our collective fight against HIV and TB. Volunteers could take action in a variety of roles and contexts, from peer-to-peer awareness-raising activities at schools, to condom distribution in nightclubs, to HIV help lines, to help services for drug users. RC/RC volunteers and, in particular, the some 50% youth among them – who were driven by the Seven Principles, were also protagonists of the fight against stigma and discrimination, messengers for a culture of violence and peace and for better understanding and acceptance of diversity.

It is thanks to their unrivalled network of community-based volunteers that National Societies could bridge the gap between healthcare institutions and households, reaching out to the most vulnerable and marginalized people in local communities, such as, in that case, people living with HIV, TB or people injecting drugs.

On Massimo Barra’s opinion, RC/RC could make the difference in the treating of DUs. In that field many countries of the world still followed obsolete policies which rational sank in oceans of prejudice. The prejudice which led many people to think that punishment and violence against DUs worked as deterrent for both community and individuals’ sake. Reality was quite different. Drug addicted people’s life was particularly unhappy and difficult. The ban of more effective treatments, combined with detention and related stigma and discrimination, provoked almost intolerable living conditions where drugs appeared to be the sole relief. That was why in many countries of the world repressive policies against DUs worsened the situation for both community and individuals. Fighting those prejudices in the name of Humanity Principle responded to the general interest. RC/RC volunteers, enjoying the trust of both the authorities and marginalized people were in the best position to intervene by reaching out to and treating individuals who were used to hiding themselves, afraid of repressive measures foreseen for DUs in different countries.

Mr. Barra reminded of an experience which had strongly impressed him: the year before, during the visit to the Tajik RC, he had remarked that many RC premises near the Afghan border had spared room to meet the numerous opiate addicted of that area in order to let them approach substitutive treatments at that time made available by the government, after old preconceived ideas had been overcome by a new, clear scientific evidence recognized at the international level. That was an example of important intervention which could be repeated in other sensitive contexts.

The most powerful examples of voluntary work in case of HIV and TB was that of people who, from beneficiaries of the RC/RC services, became volunteers and caring members of their communities. One of the most telling examples – the experience of Villa Maraini, established by Massimo Barra over

35 years before in the heart of Rome and which over the years became a leading organization in the assistance to drug users and people living with HIV, as well as in the fight against discrimination and stigma of every kind. A social labour cooperative which members were former DUs was established in 1981, with activities such as gardening and typography for external contractors. Several former DUs joined the Italian Red Cross, becoming volunteers and involved in all kinds of the RC/RC activities, both in Italy and abroad. Former drug users made up one third of the staff, so that peer education was not only a concept but a growing reality.

When former RC/RC beneficiaries, who had experienced on their own skin the stigma and discrimination of the HIV and TB, faced the rejection of people and lived through the difficulties of everyday life, decided to start volunteering, they often showed commitment, dedication, experience and as a consequence, quality of service, having no equal. Their unique capacity to reach out to those who found themselves in the same situation gave them an unrivalled advantage, and at the same time enabled them to grow as well adjusted. Responsible and caring members of the communities they inhabited.

Dr. Barra informed that that summer after a long-lasting debate and the pressure put by the Federation GB, the IFRC, the Italian RC and Villa Maraini Foundation had agreed to establish a training and research structure which would work as a reference center of the Movement for issues related to drug use. By attending the ceremony of signature of such an agreement, the IFRC President, Mr. Tadateru Konoe, had testified the relevance of the RC/RC in the activities in favour of DUs and HIV/TB affected people.

Before closing his intervention, Massimo Barra expressed some final thoughts about ERNA. To his mind the regional network truly represented a success story within the Federation, even it had not been easy, especially at the beginning, when many NNSS raised doubts on its creation also considering some unsuccessful similar initiatives.

RC/RC structures sometimes suffer from a lack of collective memory, probably due to rapid staff turnover: many initiatives see the light once, twice, sometimes three times, before sinking into oblivion without any positive feedback for the Federation and National Societies. Massimo Barra noted with gladness that it was not the case of ERNA, as demonstrated by the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting, in particular, those in the Federation Secretariat who had strongly believed in the worthiness of the project, in those years had developed as a powerful tool of training and capacity building. He noticed the contribution of the NNSS which had run the ERNA Secretariat and the ERNA Board members.

Masimo Barra pointed out that the NNSS of Eastern Europe as well as those from Central Asia had offered a greater contribution compared to that expressed by their sister societies in Western Europe, in particular in terms of work on the ground. That probably resulted from the above mentioned increasing widespread of HIV registered in such countries. In that regard, ERNA experience told that there were no first and second category societies and that it was not time anymore for participating societies from rich countries to impose their will and rules on operating societies. ERNA had taught us that partnership with equal rights and duties was the right way to follow. It had also taught us how important leadership and training could be for achieving substantial outcomes, that in our case meant helping more vulnerable people, lessening the widespread of diseases, greater level of happiness – or, more realistically, minor level of unhappiness – in those hit by pathologies which made life difficult to enjoy. Dr. Barra noted that thanks to our common effort many people in our continent had improved their living standard. That was a good reason for taking part all together once again in an ERNA meeting.

ERNA Chair Fabio Patruno thanked Dr. Massimo Barra for his eloquent and thoughtful speech and introduced the guests of the meeting – representatives of the partner organizations, people living with HIV, hearty thanked them for participating in the meeting. Then he gave the floor to Mr. Volodymyr Zhovtyak.



**Mr. Volodymyr Zhovtyak, East Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV/All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV, President/Head of Coordination Council**

On behalf of the East Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV and All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV as well as on behalf of the representatives of International and Eurasian harm reduction networks participating in the meeting Volodymyr Zhovtyak greeted the audience and expressed his gratitude to RC/RC representatives for giving him a chance to take part in the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting.

At first Mr. Zhovtyak underlined that it was necessary to unify the efforts of all the organizations in order to fight TB and HIV rampant in our Region. He expressed hope that the attitude towards HIV and TB infected would be partial and tolerant. “It is a known fact that both the epidemics are spreading fast in the Region. Eastern Europe and Central Asia are the only Region where the spread of it is out of control. Unfortunately, a great number of respected countries denies evidence-based practices to tackle the epidemic, for instance harm reduction strategy. Russia and Uzbekistan are among the aforementioned countries. Our Region, being a really rich one, has a very poor access to antiretroviral therapy. The research carried out last year showed that the best prevention is treatment. Potential risk for transmission of the infections among people who get treatment decreases by 96%”.

On behalf of both his organizations he thanked the RC/RC National Societies for their long-term attentiveness and support for PLHIV. With growing restrictions and global economic crisis sincere and concerned attitude of the RC/RC representatives is really precious. Mutual aid, mutual support had helped PLHIV to create strong organizations of PLHIV in Ukraine and other countries. Mr. Zhovtyak expressed confidence that with the support of the RC/RC, communities and organizations of PLHIV would progress in the fight with HIV and TB. “Nowadays we are fighting to get a 100% access to a high-quality treatment for the needy and to treatment-related programmes without which ART was not effective”.

Organizations of PLHIV are in need of partners support in order to provide access to timely counseling of high quality, timely engagement of PLHIV to treatment and care. Nowadays there is a critical need in diagnostics and medical care for the vulnerable groups affected by HIV and TB. Our experience shows that a direct community intervention while working with the vulnerable is the most effective. Organizations of PLHIV should make efforts in this direction jointly with the RC/RC NSs. We also should fight for the changes of legislation and create favorable conditions for PLHIV to obtain access to treatment and psychosocial support. Mr. Zhovtyak noted that the next day in his presentation he would particularly expand on the role of the community of PLHIV in developing partnership with governments and international organizations. He added that the partnership between the communities of PLHIV and the RC/RC NSs had been long built. The current general meeting should be a new step towards strengthening of the cooperation in the name of people living with HIV. In conclusion Mr. Zhovtyak said that our organizations had a lot of common and the main consolidating factor was the desire to help people, to make the world a better place.

Dr. Patrino thanked Volodymyr Zhovtyak for his speech and noticed that his words were very thoughtful and relevant in the framework of the Meeting. He gave the floor to Elena Grigoryeva.



**Ms. Elena Grigoryeva,  
Belarusian PLHIV Community, Chairperson of AIDS Action Europe**

Elena Grigoryeva noticed with satisfaction that taking part in the ERNA General Meeting was an honour and a very important mission for both Volodymyr and her, representatives of HIV-service organizations. As Chair of the AIDS Action Europe

(AAE), she greeted all the participants on behalf of all the HIV service organizations-members of the AAE from all over Europe and Central Asia and expressed her interest in ERNA as a network and as a potential resource partner.

Ms. Grigoryeva noticed that that she attended the ERNA General Meeting for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. During the past years, she had learnt what ERNA and National Societies were doing, had familiarized herself with the reports and website of ERNA, had taken in the ERNA evaluation, she had go went into the NSs activities and became a part of that enormous and close-knit family. She would like to share that pleasant feeling of belonging to such an organization with the HIV-service NGOs-members of AAE. Before leaving for Georgia, Elena had informed many NGOs-members of AAE about her participation in the ERNA General Meeting. She asked them if they cooperated with the RC/RC National Societies and what they expected from that cooperation. Elena got various answers. Some NGOs said that they highly appreciated what ERNA did and how cooperated with the National Society in their country. The essential is that the cooperation with ERNA and the RC/RC NSs is of interest for many civil society organizations. The essential was to define the framework for further cooperation and partnership. Elena Grigoryeva hoped that during the next days we would define that framework.

Ms. Grigoryeva noticed that she was pleased to have chance to listen to the speech of Massimo Barra on humanitarian activity. On behalf of the NGOs she said that ERNA as a network together with NSs was able to take a dare and responsibility to apply humanitarian diplomacy because. It was well-known that the NSs had special relationships with governments. Opportunities to tackle HIV and AIDS and get access to resources are not the same in Eastern and Western Europe. This is why cooperation and unifying efforts together matter very much. On behalf of all the ERNA partners, Elena Grigoryeva was looking forward to further development of cooperation for the sake of the relief of suffering.

The ERNA Chair thanked Elena Grigoryeva and all the speakers for the excellent speeches. He invited the audience to put questions to the speakers and give recommendations for holding the meeting the most effectively.

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The floor was given to Dr. Lasha Goguadze, IFRC health department senior health officer.

He thanked the organizers of the meeting for the invitation to the meeting and highlighted that the annual ERNA meetings were of a great importance by providing an opportunity for informal communication, discussions, exchange for experiences and innovative ideas regarding HIV, AIDS, tuberculosis and harm reduction both with colleagues from NSs and partner organization representatives. Dr. Goguadze invited the participants in the meeting to work actively, put forward innovative ideas and specific practical proposals which would contribute to our further work significantly.

Fabio Patruno thanked Dr. Goguadze for making important recommendations and informed the participants in the meeting that the General meeting would be summarized in the Statement of the meeting containing specific suggestions for development of volunteering to be adopted by NSs and the ERNA Board as guidelines for action. The ERNA Chair suggested the following membership of the Statement Commission: Mr. Shaban Shaev, deputy Secretary General of the Azerbaijan RCS; Ms. Sylvie Wieviorka, ERNA Vice-President; Elena Grigoryeva, ERNA Board participant, Chair of AIDS.Action.Europe, ERNA partner organization, Chair of the Belarusian community of PLHIV, Giovanni Zambello, IFRC EZ Communications Delegate. All the candidates were approved.

The floor was given to Ketevan Mindeli, chair of the ERNA GM organizational committee, GRCS representative.

Ms. Mindeli warmly greeted the participants in the meeting and wished success at work. On behalf of the GRCS leadership and the Embassy of Japan in Georgia, the longstanding partner of the GRCS,

and Mr. Masayoshi Kamohara, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Japan to Georgia, individually, invited the participants in the meeting to attend the reception at the Embassy of Japan in Georgia, on the occasion of the opening of the General Meeting.

## **Day 2, September 16<sup>th</sup>**

### **Power of Red Cross and Red Crescent Volunteers: Advantages and Challenges**



While opening the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the meeting, dedicated to the advantages and challenges of volunteering, **Dr. Viktor Kalbanau**, told about the peculiarities of working with volunteers:

- volunteers are interested in dynamic and captivating projects
- volunteers are involved for an indefinite period of time
- volunteers are keen on creative activities
- voluntary work is low-cost, but provision of volunteer's safety, learning, equipment and visibility needs financial expenses.

Prior to getting acquainted with the best practices of volunteering at NSs, Dr. Kalbanau invited Dr. Lasha Goguadze, IFRC Health Department Senior Health Officer, to present technical update on the TB and HIV situation in Europe and Central Asia.



**Dr. Goguadze** informed that HIV epidemic in Eastern European and Central Asian countries continued to grow, provided that Europe had the highest level of drug-resistant tuberculosis in the world. More worrisome fact was the disproportion between the incidence rate and the quantity/quality of services (only some 23% of PLHIV in need get antiretroviral therapy). Over ¼ among injecting drug users are diagnosed. Viral hepatitis C infection and TB are among the leading causes of death among people living with HIV, particularly those who are also dependent on drugs, providing that drug users tend to be a marginalized group with restricted access to health information and life-savings interventions impact.

HIV, tuberculosis and harm reduction should be a priority for the RC/RC National Societies in Europe and Central Asia, noticed Lasha Goguadze. What mattered most was advocacy, infection control, prevention, community activities, resource mobilization, engagement of volunteers, learning, planning and knowledge management.

The speaker expanded on the most important subjective internal barriers hindering the RC/RC to be in the forefront of fight with those diseases. He made a pointed reference to the expected problems/difficulties and potential scenarios. He also noted that programmes needed to move gradually from service provision activities to a community participation/behaviour change approach. Programmes should address new challenges and dimensions: problems among mobile population, urban settings, link with NCD's; more evidence through operational research; better information system for performance monitoring and recording ; better information system for performance monitoring and recording.

While implementing the programmes, the RC/RC NSs should maximize the impact of the RC/RC interventions through strategically focused interventions for most at risk populations; increase efficiency and effectiveness of networks and partnerships; promote community or individual rights and equitable access to health services in an integrated manner

In conclusion, he formulated key assumptions contributing to successful activity in the field of HIV, TB and harm reduction:

- Principal institutional commitment at NS and Secretariat level.
- Knowledge and understanding at all levels: problem, ongoing activities, partners, funding opportunities, regular capacity and expertise building

- To continue dialogue with government and other technical partners.  
(read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 2)

Dr. Kolbanov thanked Lasha Goguadze for the important and useful information, which would be a good introduction to the day. The floor was given to Dr. Ekaterine Snikidze, country coordinator for advocacy, communication and social mobilization to fight TB.



At first **Dr. Ekaterine Sanikidze** said that so far much work had been done in the field of the fight with TB in Georgia in the framework of the National TB project (NTP). To fulfill the tasks, they had created a plan of action which involved public organizations, celebrities, volunteers into its implementation. While presenting TB epidemiology in Georgia, Dr. Sanikidze particularly noted that TB rate remained the same and did not intend to decrease. Meanwhile the stability had been won through the great efforts to break the barriers at the individual, group and system/state levels. The barriers at the individual level could be broken through the involvement of volunteers.

The GRCS TB programmes and projects on awareness-raising, psychosocial support of TB-patients, promotion of adherence to treatment had being implemented since 2008. But since 2010 he NTP had been actively working with the Georgia RCS in the framework of the ACSM strategy (advocacy, communication and social mobilization) by actively involving and mobilizing former TB-patients and their families, volunteers (students, pupils, teachers, former medical staff, clergymen and others). The ACSM strategy was developed due to the efforts of the GRCS staff. The GRCS volunteers raised awareness and gave physical, moral and material support to TB-patients. They identified the feasible reasons of why patients do not start or complete the course of treatment.

The GRCS and volunteers took an active part in all the activities, prescribed at the NTP (read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 2).

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**Ms. Nino Osepaishvili**, senior officer of MDR/TB project at the GRCS, did a follow-up on the topic. She told about the project goal being to improve health status of 50 target MDR-TB clients and to reduce the level of stigma and discrimination associated with TB. She noted that 140 volunteers (including youngsters and former patients) were involved in the process at all the phases: seek care, go to DOTS, complete diagnosis, begin treatment, continue treatment, complete treatment. Ms. Osepaishvili highlighted that they achieved good results thanks to the cooperation with key stakeholders and partners, such as: Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (MoHSA) through National Tuberculosis Control Program (NTP) and National Center for Tuberculosis and Lung diseases (NCTBLD), country strategy on TB ACSM.

#### **Main achievements over a period from 2008 to 2011:**

- 140 trained volunteers (youth) - as trainers (20-member teams at HQs and in each 6 target regions);
- 21 593 community members from the 7 target regions raised awareness on TB prevention, transmission and treatment – Through informational-educational work done by the GRCS project staff and 140 volunteers.
- Established the GRCS advocacy team – 15 GRCS beneficiaries, volunteers and staff established;
- Regional trainings for key stakeholders in 5 region of Georgia.
- 50 volunteers mobilized and trained on ACSM - to involve them in the relevant activities as treatment supporters

In conclusion Ms. Osepaishvili highlighted the 3 advantages of volunteering for the project (without volunteers – no results achieved; good volunteers improve the image of GRCS; experience and knowledge of volunteer beneficiaries play a huge role; important role in process of identification and



overcoming of main problem), as well as challenges related to the support to volunteers (absence of incentive, lack of time (employment), social mobilization and isolation of TB-patients) (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 2*).

Viktar Kalbanau, Chair of the day, thanked Ms. Osepaishvili and Ms. Ekaterine Sanikidze for the interesting presentations of the impressive GRCS experience in the fight with TB and gave the floor to Ms. Nino Siradze, harm reduction project psychologist at the GRCS.



**Ms. Nino Siradze** presented the project “Prevention of HIV/AIDS, combating stigma and harm reduction activities” aimed to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS, reduction of stigma/discrimination related to HIV/AIDS and drug use. Ms. Siradze briefed on the project goal and objectives, target groups and locations, main activities, achievements over a period of 2009-2012 she expanded on the opportunities provided by volunteers, challenges and ways for overcoming the problems.

#### **Opportunities provided by volunteers:**

- Trainings conducted by the 140 GRCS trained volunteers for dissemination of information among peers – at HQs and in 6 target branches (20 volunteers per branch);
- Involvement of volunteer beneficiaries in Outreach activities (educational-informational, referral) and in advocacy;
- Involvement of psychologist volunteers in psychological group meetings.

#### **Challenges:**

- Maintaining volunteers: social marginalization and isolation of former drug users, absence of incentive, lack of time (employment);
- Legal base in the country: outreach (arrest), distributing syringes (cooperation with the “New Vector”).

#### **Ways for overcoming the problems:**

- Elaborating methods for maintaining volunteers (e.g. incentive, different arrangements, providing with mobile and transport expenses etc.);
- Resource management;
- Continuation and strengthening of the advocacy campaign;
- Demonstration of project achievements at the local level → strengthening cooperation, fundraising etc. (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 2*)

The presentation of the Georgian partner NGOs was carried followed by Konstantine Labartkava, director of the “New Vector” organization.



**Mr. Konstantine Labartkava** greeted the participants in the meeting on behalf of his organization and thanked for the invitation. He confessed that that was the first time he took part in the ERNA GM. It was a pleasure to him to present the self-organization experience of the New Vector.

The mission of the organization is to contribute to the improvement of health and socialization of IDUs, people living with HIV and Hepatitis B and C. An important part of the human resources besides social workers, former IDUs, people living with HIV and Hepatitis B and C were volunteers. The main activities of the «New vector» carried out jointly with the RC/RC and the GRCS volunteers were harm reduction among IDUs, street activities, counseling/testing, psychotherapist/general practitioner, social support, strategic planning, research, lobbying and development of a drug use policy, trainings, rehabilitation, advocacy, dentist services, prevention of overdose.



Mr. Labartkava also presented past year's achievements, particularized the partners, companies and events, which had been organized jointly with the RC/RC with the participation of volunteers (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012> Day 2*).



The Chair of the day hearty thanked Konstantine for the interesting presentation and gave the floor to **Mr. Lasha Zaalishvili**, deputy director of the Georgian Harm Reduction network who was going to present his organization.

The mission of the organization is developing cooperation for implementing effective drug policy and expanding medical, social and legal services for drug users in Georgia. Its strategic goals are adopting effective drug policy based on public health principles and protection of human rights, increase of the quality and coverage of harm reduction services for drug users in Georgia, improvement of the GHRN existing management and operational capacities. Mr. Lasha Zaalishvili focused on the following issues: history and scope of work, role and partnerships in the prevention of HIV and AIDS, donors, the best practices, legislative initiatives, advantages and possibilities of volunteers, for instance personal empowerment through opportunities to affect personal, social and community change; use of knowledge and experiences to impact others in positive ways; provision of direct support and referrals, engagement in an ongoing educational process on relevant community issues, current trends and concerns; connection with other volunteers, service providers, community groups, organizations and businesses, personal development and development of skills (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012*).



**Ms. Elena Koroleva**, Coordinator of TB programme, Belgorod regional branch of the Russian Red Cross Society, presented the involvement of volunteers into TB and HIV projects, experience of Belgorod regional branch of the Russian Red Cross Society.

Elena Koroleva told about the organizational structure of Belgorod branch of the Russian RCS, funding (including governmental sponsorship), programmes and projects (including those related to HIV prevention in the Russian Federation), support to PLHIV, fight with TB, support to IDUs. At first she emphasized that volunteers were the core of all the projects. 5122 volunteers are engaged in a variety of activities. Among them: 45% – youth, 40% – children and teens, 10% – working adults, 5% – elderly people. Professional groups: students (55%), school social workers (25%), медицинские работники (10%), public officers (2%), others (8%). 216 volunteers represent the target groups: TB-patients, PLHIV, alcohol-addicts, drug users.

The RRCS volunteers are involved in the following activities:

- personal, social and health education;
- collection of membership fees and donations;
- participation in projects, events, month events;
- dissemination of knowledge among peer-students;
- implementation of DOTS and social support to patients;
- TB case finding;
- participation in the RRCS peer support groups and attending clubs of anonymous alcoholics and drug users while rehabilitation.

The RRCS stimulates and encourages the volunteers by inviting them to attend round-tables, contests and competitions, feasts in Belgorod, awards certificates, letters of gratitude and valuable prize or invitations to cultural events, tours and excursions (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 2*).

The Chair of the day thanked Elena for the interesting presentation and invited the participants to watch the film by the Georgia RCS “One day in the life of the harm reduction outreach service”.

#### Questions and comments

**Dr. Fabio Patruno** noticed that within the 2 past days he got acquainted with the GRCS activities held in Tbilisi, thanked the Georgian colleagues for having provided him with that opportunity. He briefed about his new knowledge that he had recently got in Georgia i.e. about the production and usage of the drug named a “crocodile” in Georgia. He noted that drug dealers and drug users were very creative and produced a lot of home-made drugs. The “crocodile” was made from codeine pills mixed with gasoline. That drug was called a “crocodile” because it made a consumer putrefy alive. “Personally we must encourage governments to work constructively with these people instead of blocking the use of drugs and other chemical substances by force”.

After the coffee break Dr Viktor Kalbanau invited the participants and guests of the meeting to take part in group discussions dedicated to volunteering in the field of HIV and TB.

### Group discussions

All the participants in the meeting divided into 4 groups. Each group was given a theme and objectives for discussion as well as guiding questions. After discussion the groups reported on their take-home messages and conclusions.

#### **Group 1**

**Theme: How to effectively engage RCRC volunteers in HIV and TB programming?**

#### **Topic to be discussed**

As community members themselves, Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers serve their communities from the inside. Volunteers and peer educators of HIV and TB programmes are themselves the first to benefit from the life-saving information that they disseminate among people of their communities, thus learning how to avoid risky behaviours and to best protect themselves from such preventable diseases.

As unique “insiders” of the communities, volunteers know the community, the language and the customs, they are familiar with local needs and resources and can match the two, and they can operate in places where outsiders are not welcome. Volunteers are at the heart of this community-building process and their action is crucial to reach out to the most vulnerable people. Their action is recognized and valued by the communities themselves.

Volunteers are involved at the starting point of all community-based activities and in all phases of the programmes in which they bring their action or which they benefit from, which gives them ownership and leadership in the process.

#### ➡ **Objectives of the group discussion:**

- To share within the group the different NSs’ experiences in terms of youth engagement in HIV and TB programmes, and analyze the challenges present at national level.
- To come up with a comprehensive SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Maximum three items each) of the current situation in Europe and Central Asia, which reflects and balances the different national contexts of group members.
- To come up with maximum five priorities for National Societies and ERNA Secretariat to improve the engagement of youth in HIV and TB programming over the next two years. Priorities will then feed into the final declaration of the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA Annual General Meeting. Please make sure identified priorities are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely).

#### ➡ **List of guiding questions**

- Are volunteers engaged in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the HIV and TB programmes in which they bring their support?
- Are there training opportunities available for volunteers willing to get engaged in HIV and TB programmes?
- Which are the advantages for both volunteers and RCRC Societies to increase volunteer's participation in all phases of such programmes?

**The take-home messages and conclusions of Group 1** were presented by Dr. Sinisa Zovko, Croatian Red Cross.

Regarding the first question Dr. Zovko noticed that on his group's opinion NS volunteers were engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities rather than in the planning because HIV and TB projects were very specific ones. The Italian RC was an exception because its volunteers were engaged in the programme planning, based on the spread of information about HIV and healthy life style promotion.

All the members of Group 1 agreed that volunteers should be provided with opportunities to take part in various trainings, or else they would not be effective and would not know how to address HIV and TB issues correctly and competently.

As for the priorities of the RC/RC programmes in general, particularly those in the field of HIV and TB, Dr. Zovko noted that the main priority was how to engage a greater number of volunteers into programmes and how to do it.

## **Group 2**

### **Theme: Role of youth in HIV and TB programmes**

Youth play a crucial role in disseminating vital HIV and TB prevention information among their peers, through peer education and awareness-raising programmes, as well as other suitable approaches. They also promote the "right to know" about substance-related harm, by increasing peer-education and community participation, and they act to eliminate stigma and discrimination associated with tuberculosis, HIV, and drug use.

As the most vulnerable group to HIV themselves, youth are the first to benefit from the prevention information that they disseminate, which allows them to grow from beneficiaries into well-adjusted, responsible, and caring members of the communities they inhabit. Youth have also a facilitated access to their peers and can more easily reach out to other youth of their communities (even virtual communities) in the dissemination of HIV and TB information.

#### **➡ Objectives of the group discussion:**

- To share within the group the different NSs' experiences in terms of effective activities to tackle HIV- and TB-related stigma and discrimination, and analyse the challenges present at national level.
- To come up with a comprehensive SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Maximum three items each) of the current situation in Europe and Central Asia, which reflects and balances the different national contexts of group members.
- To come up with maximum five priorities for National Societies and ERNA Secretariat to improve the engagement of RCRC volunteers in activities to tackle HIV- and TB-related stigma and discrimination in HIV and TB programming over the next two years. Priorities will then feed into the final declaration of the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA Annual General Meeting. Please make sure identified priorities are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely).

#### **➡ List of guiding questions:**

- Does your National Society include youth in HIV and TB programmes and do they receive regular training on HIV and TB prevention?
- How can National Societies empower youth to better reach out to their peers through prevention messages and how can they create an “enabling” environment for youth volunteers’ engagement in HIV and TB programming?

**The take-home messages and conclusions of group 2 were presented by Ms. Veronika Agapova, Russian Red Cross Society.**

Group 2 comprised of 9 Russian-speaking National Societies. All the group members agreed on the core importance of the involvement of youth into HIV and TB projects. Youth is the most active part of society, being also one of the vulnerable groups affected by the infections. While discussing the members of the group shared their experience, but focused on the proposed questions. Their group had to identify the RC/RC NSs threats, weaknesses and strengths and opportunities in working with youth.

#### *Strengths*

Everybody agreed that the strongest point was an opportunity to engage young people including representatives of youth from the target groups. It happened that participation into the RC/RC projects was the only opportunity for the youth from target groups to approve themselves and become useful to society. In general that was an important priority for youth. An additional point to add was that all the NSs had practical experience and rich methodological background, which could be implanted in work. The other strong point was that the RC/RC NSs were well-known and had access to youth at different levels and in different regions. Work with youth is network-based.

#### *Weaknesses*

depend on specific objectives at which our HIV and TB activities are aimed. It should be noted that people living with HIV and TB are exposed to stigma on the part of all the social groups including authorities on whom depends the advancement of the RC/RC initiatives. Besides, providing that among the RC/RC volunteers most are youth, it is important to decrease stigmatization among young people in small and larger groups and drop the attitude to the problem. It is a long-lasting and challenging process.

#### *Threats*

- lack of instruments to get youth interested and involved in HIV and TB projects. Youth has quite a big amount of alternative leisure activities aside volunteering.
- approaches to working with youth are not sufficiently advanced and exclude several vulnerable groups such as migrants especially in ex-USSR Republics.
- some governments have an unfavorable attitude to harm reduction programmes. The RC/RC NSs have particularly ample opportunities for involvement of youth in healthy life style promotion programmes.

#### *RC/RC capacities:*

- we can be agents of the state policy in terms of increasing the activity of civil society. It is relevant in all the countries and the RC/RC could be a reliable partner;
- RC/RC can involve youth as volunteers, create opportunities to fulfill themselves and take an innovative approach;
- RC/RC can give an opportunity to create a platform for exchange of experience.

#### *Threats*

- repressive and aggressive government policies due to imperfect legislation and a high level of stigma (weakness);
- involving youth in HIV and TB programmes states a problem of observing principles of infection control (TB demands airborne precaution).

Group 2 identified 5 priorities for their further work:

- HIV and TB awareness-raising of general public especially among youth;
- large-scale implementation of “peer-to-peer” approach while working with youth. “Peer-to-peer” principle is effective both in the case of HIV and TB;

- adoption of the law on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Society (4 NSs out of 9 NSs presented in Group 2 have such a law), because it enables advocacy work;
- finding new ways to encourage volunteers for their retention;
- a larger infection control awareness-raising among youth with the view of prevention of infections.

As for ERNA it was a platform for the exchange of priceless experiences and best practices, said Veronika Agapova. ERNA was also expected to adapt all the proposals methodologically. Methodology is a complicated process requiring many charges.

### **Group 3**

#### **Theme: How to strengthen volunteer-based HIV and TB peer education programming?**

##### **Topic to be discussed**

Evaluations have shown that well-designed, well-targeted and well-implemented volunteer-based peer education programmes are successful in improving knowledge, attitudes and skills for HIV and TB prevention. Peer education can also enhance the sexual and reproductive health of target populations.

In volunteer-based HIV and TB peer education programmes, members of a specific group are trained and volunteer to educate members of their peer group about HIV, TB and related topics. Through HIV peer education, information is shared among peer group members, and a dialogue around HIV and TB prevention and related topics, such as gender, relationships, sex and sexuality, injecting and other drug use is established so that group members can be motivated to bring about a change in knowledge attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

##### **➡ Objectives of the group discussion:**

- To share within the group the different NSs' experiences in terms of effective activities to tackle HIV- and TB-related stigma and discrimination, and analyze the challenges present at national level.
- To come up with a comprehensive SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Maximum three items each) of the current situation in Europe and Central Asia, which reflects and balances the different national contexts of group members.
- To come up with maximum five priorities for National Societies and ERNA Secretariat to improve the engagement of RCRC volunteers in activities to tackle HIV- and TB-related stigma and discrimination in HIV and TB programming over the next two years. Priorities will then feed into the final declaration of the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA Annual General Meeting. Please make sure identified priorities are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely).

##### **➡ List of guiding questions:**

- Does a comprehensive definition of volunteer-based HIV and peer education programming exist across the Europe Zone? What do we mean by that and which are its characteristics?
- What are the barriers that National Societies face in mobilizing and managing volunteers in HIV and TB peer education programmes?

**Take-home messages and conclusions** of Group 3 were presented by **Ms. Heather Fitzke**, Chair of the EYCC.

She emphasized that her group had identified that a number of National Societies had peer education programmes, for instance the Croatian Red Cross. The group listed the following priorities:

- to engage and widely use expert support;
- to ensure active involvement of volunteers (especially among vulnerable groups) in all the RC/RC events;

- to ensure peer education including an interactive approach;
- to motivate volunteers and analyze the reasons of why volunteers join and leave the Red Cross, to ensure volunteer succession, the transfer of skills;
- to encourage volunteers and invite them to help implement all the projects and campaigns;
- to provide psychological assistance to the volunteers participating in awareness-raising campaigns aiming at vulnerable groups.

**Dr. Sisiza Zovko** wondered by what means all the aforementioned priorities could be accomplished.

**Ms. Heather Fitzke** answered that the aforementioned could be brought about, providing that an effective volunteer management was established. That should be a priority for each National Society;

In addition Giovanni Zambello emphasized that volunteers and representatives of vulnerable groups should be engaged in RC/RC management and decision making.

#### **Group 4**

#### **Theme: Stigma and discrimination: volunteers as agents of behavioural change**

##### **➡ Topic to be discussed**

Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers are key players in the fight against stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and TB. As ‘insiders’ of the communities where they bring their action, volunteers are powerful agents of behavioural change towards people who are living with HIV and TB and campaigners of a culture of non-discrimination. Through awareness-raising activities and campaigns, as well as non-cognitive methods (i.e. arts and music), volunteers help de-construct the prejudices connected with HIV and TB infection and which represent the primary cause of stigma and discrimination. Volunteers can be powerful humanitarian diplomats, both informally (within the community) and formally (with decision- and policy-makers), enabling a general change of mind-sets towards people living with or affected by HIV and TB.

##### **➡ Objectives of the group discussion:**

- To share within the group the different NSs’ experiences in terms of effective activities to tackle HIV- and TB-related stigma and discrimination, and analyze the challenges present at national level.
- To come up with a comprehensive SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Maximum three items each) of the current situation in Europe and Central Asia, which reflects and balances the different national contexts of group members.
- To come up with maximum five priorities for National Societies and ERNA Secretariat to improve the engagement of RCRC volunteers in activities to tackle HIV- and TB-related stigma and discrimination in HIV and TB programming over the next two years. Priorities will then feed into the final declaration of the 16<sup>th</sup> ERNA Annual General Meeting. Please make sure identified priorities are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely).

##### **➡ List of guiding questions:**

- Does your National Society’s HIV and TB programme have a component related to tackling stigma and discrimination and what is the role of volunteers in that?
- How can volunteers be better equipped and empowered to carry on and further develop this type of activities?



**Take-home messages and conclusions** of Group 4 were presented by **Dmitry Rusakov**, Belarus RCS.

The group defined the following priorities for involving the RC/RC volunteers in the fight against stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS:

1. To create a sustainable staff within 2 years (in plants, in prisons) being together at the same place long time in the view to peer education for a greater coverage of target groups.
2. To develop an effective mechanism of involving former patients into peer groups. We must consider who will participate in these groups, how to motivate protect and insure them.
3. Within 2 years to create the psychosocial support outreach system in order to tackle stigma.

Regarding Item 3, **Marat Mirzajanov**, the group trainer, added that as a rule outreach volunteers were engaged in working with hard-to-reach vulnerable groups. Their work is emotionally challenging and the volunteers are bent to emotional burn-out syndrome.

In addition **Ciril Klajnscek**, Slovenian Red Cross, said that marginalization, stigma and discrimination are not conditioned by individual or technical problems, but it is a social process. That is why it is important to launch volunteer-based programmes aiming at tackling stigma, discrimination, criminalization.

**Heather Fitzke** mentioned her recent visit to the Russian resource centre for psychosocial support to children living with HIV. She was ready to expand on that issue with anyone who felt like getting to know more information about that interesting place.

**Viktar Kalbanau** summarized the first session. The session was a success because the presentations by the Georgia RCS and Russian RCS had met with a generous response and provided the basis for the group work.

## ➤ **Session 2. From advantages to challenges**



The floor was given to Volodymyr Zhovtyak, East Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV/All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV, President/Head of Coordination Council.

Mr. Zhovtyak noticed that he preferred the issue of challenges rather than that of advantages because his life experience had shown that challenges, having been overcome, turned out to be advantages. He decided to dedicate his presentation to the role of communities of PLHIV in establishing partnerships with governments in the view to support PLHIV. He focused both on challenges and advantages.

He told about the All-Ukrainian Network of PLHIV and Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV and its strategic goal. He expanded on the PLHIV community objectives and on the measures taken at the national and international levels. He presented Ukraine's experience:

- ✓ GF grants of 1,6 and 10 Round have been drawn into the country with PLWHA Community's participation
- ✓ The PLWHA Network is one of the implementers of these grants, and consequently one of the implementers of the National Program
- ✓ A number of approaches to rendering and calculation of the cost of services, effective use of the resources has been elaborated within the framework of the grants with direct participation of the PLWHA Network
- ✓ The tried and tested methods and approaches can also be successfully used in the State Health System

Volodymyr Zhovtyak expanded on the cooperation with state establishments and HIV community contribution to change a state HIV/AIDS policy. He particularly dwelled on the issue of advocacy aimed at getting access to treatment and illustrated it with a number of original and effective volunteer campaigns in Ukraine.



Volodymyr presented the EECA countries experience, ECUO's coordinating role in scaling up the access to treatment and reducing the cost of ART in the region (In 2010-2011, the policies and practices in the countries of the region were changed also owing to the active involvement of PLWHA into the work of the key committees at the national level in Tajikistan. Moldova, Estonia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan. Volodymyr particularly noted that PLWHA Community is the catalyst of the required changes of the Public Health Systems (*see the presentation on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*).

The theme of the panel discussion which followed the lunch break was "Why volunteers? Challenges".

Viktar Kalbanau listed the problems and questions to be discussed, the participants had to identify the 3 main threats to engage volunteers in HIV and TB projects. He introduced the participants in the discussion – Narine Matevosyan (Armenian RC), Milena Ivanova (Bulgarian RC), Eirik Eide (Norwegian RC), Sinisa Zovko (Croatian RC), Volodymyr Zhovtyak (East Europe and Central Asia union of PLHIV) and Elena Grigoryeva, AIDS Action Europe Chair and a panel discussion facilitator.

Ms. Elena Grigoryeva invited Ms. Narine Matevosyan to talk about volunteer management and its objectives and explain why organizations involve volunteers, what motivates volunteers, what is a volunteer management programme, how to get to know whether volunteer management is effective, what a good volunteer management is. She also presented the advantages and value of volunteering and then gave shiny examples of the most successful volunteer-based HIV and TB campaigns and projects in the Armenian Red Cross (*see the presentation on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*).

Elena Grigoryeva suggested that the participants in the panel discussion discussed legal restrictions and difficulties in volunteer management, upgrading of level of training and involvement, capacity building and empowerment of volunteers. She also suggested that they discussed economical effectiveness of volunteering in the field of HIV and TB and identified what NSs should do in order to overcome challenges and raise effectiveness of volunteering.

Volodymyr Zhovtyak: "the willingness to overcome challenges is essential. Secondly, the experience shows that while overcoming a challenge, a few new challenges emerge. Organizations of PLHIV use financial, technical, professional and other means to overcome emerging challenges. One more difficulty is an insufficient sponsorship of volunteering".

Elena Grigoryeva highlighted that the RC/RC was experienced in overcoming the challenges of involvement and support of volunteers' activities aiming at stopping the spread of HIV and TB in the region. Volunteers are the most effective resource for it but not all roses and some problems need to be solved.



Sinisa Zovko noticed that for a successful cooperation with volunteers they had to understand what volunteers mattered for the Red Cross, what contribution they made and this helped to manage them and their knowledge and experience. One of the challenges is volunteer retention. We teach them and they leave the Red Cross for different reasons and all our efforts are wasted. We in the Croatian Red Cross work on changing the situation, try to preserve and spread knowledge, know-how and volunteer experience, create succession to new volunteers. It's very important that all working for the RC/RC, volunteers and all carrying out humanitarian activities not only knew but followed seven basic RC/RC principles and most importantly the principle of voluntary involvement.

Sinisa Zovko shared his personal experience in working in the Croatian Red Cross and noticed that having joined the Red Cross, young volunteers attend the RC/RC trainings, get actively involved in harm reduction projects, cooperate with ministries (for instance, the Ministry of Internal Affairs), visit

prisons by reaching inmates. But having acquired experience they leave the Red Cross and join the aforementioned organizations).



**Eirik Eide:** in Norway the involvement of volunteers is supported by the state. Volunteers are attracted from everywhere. Most of them are youth but elderly volunteers are strongly sought-for. Volunteers among sociology students are very appreciated at the Red Cross. Providing them with work and basic opportunities for practical activity, learning and exchange of knowledge is both a duty and a challenge for the Red Cross. National Societies should provide volunteer succession and transfer of skills. It's is crucially important to pay attention to the social status of beneficiaries and volunteers working with them and not to upset the balance of what volunteers can do and must do.

Frequently we do not get the expected feedback from volunteers. Often volunteers present only descriptive information lacking important figures and statistics. This factor hinders the process of further activity planning immensely.

**Milena Ivanova:** Common difficulties have been discussed during the teamwork in the morning session. What concerns the Bulgarian Red Cross it faces the same challenges as the Norwegian Red Cross. Moreover there's no adequate legislation to regulate volunteer activities what poses a problem as well. Unfortunately only 5% of population is involved in this kind of activities. However the Bulgarian Red Cross is proud of the work carried out by its volunteers and its cooperation with authorities.

Another obstacle in volunteer management is that professional support is required for Harm Reduction projects, however, at the same time we need to diversify volunteer work with drug addicts. What's more we shouldn't forget the problem of aging because many volunteers stop their activities when shifting to the older age group. They leave the Red Cross moving to another place or changing the profession.

Milena Ivanova highlighted the importance of new approaches for attracting, engaging and motivating volunteers meeting their interests and needs in order to enhance volunteer influence on the results. Milena Ivanova also encouraged the cooperation with partner organizations in order to take over experience and put it into practice in volunteer activities.

Elena Grigorieva thanked colleagues for their contribution to the panel discussion and offered participants of the meeting to share their opinions on how to overcome the difficulties and ask questions related to the subject.

**Sinisa Zovko:** I asked meeting participants that had ever been volunteers to raise their hands. About 60% raised their hands. Dr. Zovko said: There is a trend in Croatia that if parents are volunteers their children are likely to follow their steps.

This trend is supported by volunteers of his project. Volunteers of all ages young and advanced in years join the project. The volunteer selection is a complicated process. It's important to take into account personality and values of every prospective volunteer.

**Marat Mirzadzhanov** confirms that among volunteers there are people of different ages, social status, professions (medical workers, lawyers, teachers, etc.). Frequently they come to the RC/RC to apply their skills they couldn't apply in the previous workplace and to spend their free time devoting to those who need their help. This category of volunteers requires individual work as well.

**Heather Fitzke:** "It is important to investigate the motives and reasons of why volunteers join organizations, develop mechanisms to attract them and strive for long-term volunteer participation. We need to apply flexible approach to this process. However sometimes we require volunteers only for a short term during a particular event".

**Eirik Eide:** "There's diversification of volunteer activities along with a system of volunteer engagement in the Norwegian Red Cross starting from schools where short presentations are made for students and teachers. The Red Cross workers visit other organizations to attract volunteers for short and long periods of time".

**Lasha Gogvadze** noticed that in some countries across the world governments invested in volunteering. Public authorities in many African countries pay community volunteers for their work unlike the Red Cross which do not pay volunteers. That is why retaining of volunteers poses a problem

to the RC/RC NSs. NSs should find the valid methods to encourage the RC/RC volunteers with the view to retain them. He asked the participants if they were applying such encouragement methods.

Sinisa Zovko: “the RC/RC is respected everywhere across the world. Being a RC/RC volunteer and being a part of the powerful Movement is an honor. Certainly, the RC has to meet the expenses on volunteer visibility, training etc. Wearing the logo (emblem) of the organization to which volunteers belong matters to most volunteers. In fact volunteers appreciate what they do because their work let them feel valued, fulfill their potential, knowledge, skills, make their ideas fly, establish partnerships with other NGOs, especially in our context, with communities of PLHIV and state organizations. Volunteers are paid in the countries where professionals cost too much”.

Ramin Bahrambegi (American Red Cross) noted that the discussion was very interesting and useful. He had recently talked to his colleagues over the need to adopt the policy of engagement, retention and encouragement of volunteers. In the USA, for instance, prospective university students who are volunteers enjoy bonuses while enrolling at a university, students-volunteers can get a better paid job.

Ekaterine Jakobishvili (International Harm Reduction) told about the volunteer working in the area of human rights who had taken her to the HRI.

Tinatine Kikabidze, Georgia RCS HR mobilization specialist, told about her 6-year-long engagement in the GRCS peer education programmes as a volunteer.

Ciril Klajnscek wondered who among the participants was well-armed with knowledge, instruments, leadership skills and emotional stability. He said that those working with the vulnerable were in need of all the aforementioned qualities and must be psychologically dynamic. He suggested returning to that complicated issue during the next day's sessions.

Anna-Maria Ruggerini (Italian Red Cross) highlighted that “volunteers need to be psychologically trained. It is very important. In her childhood she was a church volunteer. Church is a powerful instrument of mobilization. In case of the RC/RC, motivation is one of the instruments which help to retain volunteers in the Red Cross and make them work successfully. Relationships with volunteers should be positive and constructive.

Marina Akulova (Russian Red Cross): “we have listened to many interesting messages and speeches on up-to-date practices. We are pondering over how to raise the professionalism of volunteers, how to make their work valuable and respected by society. In this case ERNA is expected to help by analyzing, collecting the best practices and formulating guidelines to less-experienced NSs. Marina Akulova mentioned the Russia RCS, having a HIV/AIDS resource centre, its successful practices can be shared with the other NSs. It is necessary that we work out universal approaches to ensure quality and professionalism of volunteer activities, as well as to provide them with a specific status. It would be good if all the useful materials were available at the ERNA website”.

To conclude Elena Grigoryeva thanked the participants for the fruitful discussion and emphasized that the issue would remain open until the General Meeting was over.

Following the coffee-break Viktor Kalbanau gave the floor to Lasha Gogvadze.

Lasha Gogvadze dedicated his message to the updated information about partnerships and humanitarian diplomacy in the field of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and harm reduction.

**Dr. Gogvadze** reminded that in May 2011 the IFRC and the UNODC signed the Memorandum of understanding to enhance responses to humanitarian challenges. Their joint efforts will address individuals and groups at risk of drug abuse, HIV and related illnesses; victims of human trafficking and other criminal activities; and smuggled migrants, their families and affected communities. A major role in the cooperation is played by the RC/RC NSs due to their experience in community-based volunteering. The first meeting in July 2012 resulted in a draft plan of joint efforts. The plan of joint efforts will be finalized at the second meeting scheduled for September. The plan comprises of specific events which will be carried out together with National Societies at the national and international levels.

Drafting the Agreement between the IFRC, Italian RC and Villa Maraini occurred to become a major step towards the implementation of the MoU between the UNODC and the IFRC. During 7 years,

the IFRC and the Italian RC had been cooperating with Villa Maraini Foundation. Their cooperation culminated in the tripartite Agreement between the IFRC, the Italian Red Cross and Villa Maraini Foundation concerning the RC/RC training and research partnership on substance abuse signed in May. The partnership will be overseen by a steering committee (composed of 2 representatives from each of the 3 partners) in Geneva (*Read the Agreement on the ERNA website: [www.erna.by>Library>Agreements](http://www.erna.by>Library>Agreements)*).

Dr. Patruno added that aside the ERNA website, all the useful materials could be available on Facebook where the members of the ERNA group exchanged information on a regular basis. He invited all those who had not joined the open ERNA group, to do it.

Dr. Goguadze told about the meeting of 10 representatives of the RC/RC NSs from Africa, Europe and America with goodwill ambassadors and journalists in Geneva in December 2011. The meeting was sponsored by the IFRC jointly with the StopTB Partnership. The meeting was more like a seminar dedicated to the issue of strengthening TB advocacy jointly with partner organizations.

Lasha briefed on the 19<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference hosted by Washington, USA, in July 2012 and on TB/HIV live talk show arranged by the IFRC and the Stop TB Partnership with the assistance of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, Global Health and Diplomacy, UN Foundation, UN Television and others.

Dr. Goguadze invited Anders Melendez-Solgado, senior HIV/AIDS advisor at the American Red Cross and Conference organizer and participant, to expand on the issue.



**Mr. Anders Melendez-Salgado** informed about the meeting for those engaged in HIV/AIDS programmes arranged by the American Red Cross prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> AIDS Conference, July 22, 2012. Representatives of 30 RC/RC National Societies, gathered at the meeting, discussed how to reach a better promotion HIV/AIDS activities, how to enhance project planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation; how to increase advocacy, the fight with stigma and discrimination, protection of human rights; how to effectively collaborate, establish communication, exchange experiences, upgrade skills and support each other. There was a barrage of criticism at the meeting. The discussion resulted in developing guidelines which would be included in the Statement of the meeting which is in work now.

What had been done since the International AIDS Conference 2011 in Vienna was summed up. The agenda comprised of a variety of issues such as “People Living with HIV in the Workplace with RCRC+, IPPF+, UN+”; “Ensuring access to HIV services for populations affected by Humanitarian crisis”; panel discussion dedicated to stigma and discrimination; “Why the HIV/AIDS Community should support the decriminalization of drug use”; HIV and the elderly. Anders Melendez-Salgado briefed on the session for the young RC/RC leaders, held within the Conference. The theme of the session was “Youth Leadership in the HIV Response: Realities and Recommendations for Programming and Advocacy”.

Prior to the Conference a new website providing a collection of all the useful conference materials was designed. Anders displayed the website and presented its helpful materials.

#### Comments:

Heather Fitzke, Ramine Bahrambegi and Iryna Karanchuk highlighted that the ERNA website played a very important role for the effective exchange of information. They agreed that the materials placed on the site would be helpful to the ERNA members and invited the ERNA Secretariat to use up-to-date interactive technologies and social networks.

The Chair of the day gave the floor to Dr. Sylvie Wieviorka, ERNA Vice-chair, French Red Cross, to introduce candidates to occupy the positions of ERNA Chair, ERNA Vice-chair and new EYCC representative to the ERNA Board.

As **Sylvie Wieviorka** was going out of office as ERNA Vice-chair, she heartily thanked the ERNA Chair, Board and Secretariat and all the network representatives Europe wide for the interesting fruitful

cooperation during past years. She expressed her gratitude to the Georgia RCS for the excellent organization of the meeting.

Sylvie Wieviorka informed that the following candidates had been proposed for the ERNA Board for 3 years:

- Fabio Patruno, Italian Red Cross, as ERNA Chair (reelection for a second term)
- Sinisa Zovko, Croatian Red Cross, as ERNA Vice-chair.

The proposed candidates were well-known to the ERNA members, because they had been working in the network long time.

Dr. Patruno and Dr. Zovko told about their activities in the frame of ERNA, expanded on the priority objectives and problems of ERNA and made improving proposals. The NSs representatives were given time to consider the candidates until the next day.

Viktar Kalbanau reminded of the necessity to appoint EYCC representative to the ERNA Board. Former representative Ms. Lia Khacharyan (Armenian Red Cross) had perfectly coped with her duties and enriched ERNA with progressive ideas. She had left the Red Cross and ERNA for personal reasons. A new representative had to be appointed.

The second day of the meeting was closed by the excursion to Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia.

### **Day 3, September 15<sup>th</sup>** **Challenges and new approaches**

Prior to the opening of the day, Dr. Viktar Kalbanau, Chair of the day, briefed about the second day off the meeting. He thanked Dr. Lasha Gogvadze for the very valuable exhaustive information about HIV and TB incidence in the region. He also highly appreciated professional and innovative approaches of the Georgia RCS and Russian RCS project managers. The group and panel discussions were a brainstorm indeed. The group work had led to the understanding of problems and challenges and helped to find feasible solutions to overcome them and upgrade volunteering. Volodymyr Zhovtyak's presentation showed that the East Europe and Central Asia Union of PLHIV was taking a principled stand, putting questing point-blank, was effectively monitoring its own and partner activities (including government institutions). The network was responsive and creative. Viktar Kalbanau thought that their methods were worthy of being emulated. He thanked Lasha for informing about the partnerships in the area of humanitarian diplomacy and Anders Melendez-Salgado for his captivating presentation of the AIDS Conference 2012 in Washington and the sessions arranged by the American Red Cross jointly with the Federation.

Then Viktar Kalbanau gave the floor to Dr. Va Sopheak, Chair of the Asian Red Cross and Red Crescent HIV network, who chaired the third day of the General Meeting.

#### **➤ Session 3. How to overcome challenges**



**Dr. Va Sopheak** hearty thanked the ERNA Chair for the invitation to the meeting. He was also particularly grateful to the Georgia Red Cross Society for the hospitality and providing comfortable work environment and to the ERNA Secretariat for providing the support.

The third day of the meeting was dedicated to how to overcome challenges of volunteering, reminded Va Sopheak. He suggested that the ART network did its presentation first and talked about its challenges and the ways to overcome them by the example of improving communication among the ART members.

First went the general information about the ART network (established in 1994 to response to unfavourable epidemiological context on HIV in Asian Region. The network comprises 15 member



National Societies. The main areas of activity are: advocacy, resource mobilization, exchange of information, mutual technical support to member NSs. The main challenges are frequent NS representatives' changes, internal resource mobilization, active participation beside the meeting arenas, network promotion, and fruitful internal communication.

How to overcome the challenges?

- High commitment and advocacy at all the levels (ART members participate in workshops on communication and steady exchange of information and on how to compose and post articles on the ART website)
- Financial steadiness, expanded internal resource mobilization, consent on double increased annual membership fee

Dr. Fabio Patruno and Dr. Va Sopheak agreed that "Harm Reduction and Mobile Population" could be the main area for cooperation between both the networks till 2015 because that topic was relevant for both the Regions. In that regard the main focuses could be capacity building, project designing, project implementing, monitoring and evaluation, project re-designing) (*see the presentation on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*)

### Questions:

Heather Fitzke: "European Region has its RC/RC European Youth network. How cooperation with youth is managed in your region? Do you plan to establish the RC/RC Asian Youth network?"

Va Sopheak: the issue of establishing the RC/RC Asian Youth network will be placed on the agenda of the IFRC cooperation meeting in Tokyo which will be held in the nearest future".

Fabio Patruno wondered how each ART member could post information of the ART website independently.

Va Sopheak: "each ART member is given his own password to the ART website by the ART Secretariat".

Then the partners and ERNA members presented their experience and best practices in volunteering.



**Ms. Ekaterine Jakobishvili**, human rights analyst at the Harm Reduction International was invited to report on "Developing effective harm reduction services for IDU women"

First of all Ms. Jakobishvili announced that the International harm reduction conference «The values of harm reduction» would be held in Vilnius (Lithuania) in June, 2013. She reviewed the statistics on injection drug use and made a pointed reference to the Conference website [www.ihra.net](http://www.ihra.net), which contained a lot of useful information. She presented the overall observations related to HIV incidence among IDUs and Hepatitis B/C associated HIV. There was no systematic analysis of the prevalence of IDU among women internationally. As a rule data were not disaggregated by gender.

Ekaterine Jakobishvili submitted selection of countries representing different regions (Asia, Americas, MENA, Eastern Europe/Central Asia, Africa). There were scarce data generally – and very little known on women injecting drug use. There are altogether 625 000 women in prisons around the world. 1/3 of all of them are convicted of drug offences.

She also outlined the data on women and injecting drug use in prisons in Germany, Italy, Denmark and Sweden and showed the difference between male and female drug use, common barriers for women in accessing the services, 'women specific' services for IDU women. In conclusion she highlighted once again the importance of participating in the upcoming HR Conference in Vilnius and invited all the HR specialists to take part in it. (*see the presentation on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*)

Comment by Ciril Klajnscek: the past years he had visited inmates together with an ombudsman (an official appointed to investigate individuals' complaints against a company or organization, especially a public authority). He got to know with what kind of treatment the HIV-infected inmates were being provided according to a special medical protocol. 2/3 of the inmates are estimated to be drug users. Their treatment is a problem. Following the examination of the prisons, Ciril Klajnscek submitted improving proposals. The ombudsman took a stand of his proposals and suggested implementing them in prisons of his country. And that was done! Aside advocacy, the cooperation with ombudsmen could help enhance the conditions in prisons and save many lives.

Ekaterine Jakobishvili confirmed that in many countries of the world harm reduction for inmates IDUs and treatment for HIV-infected inmates were neglected. That's why international initiatives and directives to monitor PLHIV and IDUs in prisons jointly with ombudsmen were very important. That was the potential area for cooperation.



**Ms. Elena Grigoryeva**, Chair of AIDS Action Europe did the presentation entitled « AIDS. Action. Europe: consolidating of civil society to enable a more effective response to HIV/AIDS epidemics in Europe and Central Asia».

Ms. Grigoryeva expressed gratitude to ERNA for providing an opportunity to introduce her organization, that she had chaired since 2011. The AAE was created in 2004 and comprises a variety of over 450 NGOs from 45 countries. The network focuses on regional work. The main donor is the European Commission. Membership is free and open to all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Europe and Central Asia, that are active in the field of HIV/AIDS. To become a member it suffices to endorse the mission and guiding principles and ethical code of the network and register as a member. Local and international organizations become members of the AAE to exchange experiences with other NGOs; to strengthen organizations' knowledge and increase the impact of their activities; to present concerns and priorities to key players at the European level; to become part of the European civil society.

Elena Grigoryeva told about the AAE governance, mission, strategic objectives (Strengthen civil society's contribution to a more effective response to the HIV epidemic by:

- Making an effective and meaningful contribution to regional and national policies related to HIV and AIDS
- Facilitating continuous exchange among NGOs on good practices and lessons learned related to HIV and AIDS
- Developing a stronger, more effective organisation and network).
- She briefed the participants in meeting on the main projects of the network. A honor to the AAE is a clearinghouse. The clearinghouse is a special web database of HIV/AIDS good practice materials. Technical management is as follows: a registered member can edit or delete previous uploads in his language. There is a variety of different languages on the clearinghouse. The AAE staff grades the data according to topics. The AAE translator summarizes crucial materials. The AAE is an advisory body to the European Commission as an NGO representative.

Elena Grigoryeva reminded that she had been involved into the ERNA activity during the past 3 years and tended to promote ERNA among the AAE member NGOs. Most members are highly interested in ERNA and have already established partnership with the RC/RC NSs. ERNA and the AAE have exchanges strategic plans. She expected to get more concrete recommendations to expand further cooperation (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*).

Fabio Patruno thanked Elena Grigoryeva for the informative presentation and wondered about the conditions of membership for the RC/RC National Societies and ERNA.

Elena Grigoryeva: "Probably, among our member organizations there are some NSs. We need to check it. In any circumstance the RC/RC NSs have taken part in none of our events so far".





Then the floor was given to **Mr. Dmitry Rusakov** from the Belarus Red Cross Society to do 2 presentations on the role of the BRCS volunteers in HIV and TB projects.

1. Belarus Red Cross Society: the role of volunteers in HIV projects.

The BRCS applies Youth and Volunteer Policy approved by the Presidium. The BRCS perceives volunteers and youth as one of the main source of human resources and potential of the BRCS activity. The BRCS has developed and implemented volunteer management. Most of the BRCS volunteers involved in HIV programmes are youth. Among them some are instructors, trainers, participants and organizers of many events, campaigns, exhibitions, mass events. Among volunteers there are representatives of the vulnerable and the BRCS staff (experts) as well as musicians, designers, photographers, TV and radio hosts, sportsmen and others.

Every year the Belarus Red Cross Society organizes the School for young leaders which agenda includes the sessions covering the issues of HIV and TB. Traditionally every year the BRCS arranges the volunteer contests “The best Belarus volunteer of the year” (comprising 9 nominations) and “The best volunteer initiative of the year”, which are well-covered by the media (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*).

2. Belarus Red Cross Society: Role of volunteers in HIV projects.

The main areas of activity of the BRCS volunteers in the field of fight with TB :

1. Informational campaigns dedicated to significant dates: World Tuberculosis Day, World No Tobacco Day;
2. Realization of mini projects on prevention of tuberculosis;
3. Conduction of preventive campaigns targeted to the homeless;
4. Psychosocial support to the patients of MDR-TB department and children`s department of the tuberculosis hospital.

National campaigns dedicated to the World Tuberculosis Day (24 March) with the participation of 2000 BRCS volunteers were conducted in 70 towns from 2008 till 2012, in which more than 200 000 people took part. 25 projects on tuberculosis prevention have been implemented since 2010. The target groups: TB-patients; prisoners; homeless people; factory and manufactory workers; pupils and students.

Volunteers of the BRCS emergency response units conducted about 100 campaigns targeted to the homeless. As a result more than 1800 people got able to be given TB-examination and treatment.

Since 2012 volunteers of the unit have been working with the MDR-TB patients. Their goal is to increase motivation for undergoing the full course of treatment.

The project on psychosocial support to TB-patients has being carried out since 2012 on the basis of the Republican research and practice center for phthisiology and pulmonology. The first target group comprises children undergoing long-lasting treatment in the centre. The activity is supported by volunteers practicing clown-therapy and volunteers from among Belarusian show-business celebrities (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*).

Comments: Dr Patrino thanked Dmitry Rusakov for the very inspirational and informative message. He was really impressed by the creativity and flexibility of the BRCS staff to engage volunteers and work with the vulnerable..



Va Sopheak gave the floor **Ms. Marija Subataite**, Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), Program Manager, Technical Support Program. Her intervention was entitled «Eurasian Harm Reduction Network: supporting HIV and TB programs in Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia»

Marija Subataite informed that the EHRN Established in 1997 to enhance the

communication and coordination of harm reduction activities and programs in the region of CEECA. The organization is granted a special consultative NGO status by the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC).

The Secretariat is located in Lithuania and is close to 400 institutional and individual members from 29 countries in CEECA

The speaker outlined **the main objectives of the EHRN**:

- Advocate for drug policy reform to protect human rights of people who use drugs and for financial sustainability of harm reduction in EECA;
- Strengthen organizations and networks of PWUD and OST clients to implement and advocate for services that meet health needs of people who use drugs and for realization of their human rights;
- Strengthen regional cooperation and build the capacity of harm reduction and health care service providers to develop and deliver quality services for PWUD.

The aforementioned objectives are followed up by consultation, training and advocacy projects: AIDS and Drug Policy Hubs, Capacity-building training sessions and online consultations for ENPUD, Trainings on “Gender-sensitive harm reduction programs”, Knowledge Hub 12 training modules with new -“TB treatment among IDUs”, Training for SR/SSRs of the Global Fund TB grants for Russian and English speaking countries, Advocacy network of MDR-TB, Documentation of harm reduction best practices.

The technical support is provided to civil society organizations, target groups through:

- Harm Reduction Knowledge Hub for Europe and Central Asia
- Civil Society Action Team (CSAT) assisting civil society involved in the Global Fund

[www.csactionteam.org](http://www.csactionteam.org);

*While*

- Engaging people who use drugs in advocacy and building their technical expertise and capacity

- Increasing civil society engagement with the Global Fund

The EHRN coordination committee works on a voluntary basis, with no financial support. While preparing for the ERNA General Meeting dedicated to volunteering in HIV, TB and harm reduction programmes, the EHRN staff members were considering how to engage volunteers, what challenges exist, how to teach and motivate volunteers.

Marija Subataite proposed the following areas for cooperation with ERNA: technical capacity building, advocacy, involvement into training process both at the regional level (between the RC/RC NSs) and local harm reduction networks.

The participants in the meeting were invited to attend the International Harm Reduction Conference in Vilnius in 2013 and submit abstracts to the Conference steering committee (*read the full version on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 3*).

Questions:

Eirik Eide, Norwegian Red Cross: “could you talk about advocacy initiatives in prisons?”

Marija Subataite: “currently we are not implementing any projects, but we have recently completed the project supported by the UNODC and state organizations on reaching a greater access to inmates living with Hepatitis C, HIV and TB in Albania, Macedonia and Serbia”.

Following the lunch break, the chair of the day Dr. Va Sopheak gave the floor to Giovanni Zambello, who suggested that all the participants divided into **5 groups** in order to discuss the **Statement of the meeting**.

The final amendments and additions made are the following:

- ✓ To notice that HIV/TB volunteering should be integrated in national programmes;

- ✓ To highlight the need to cooperate with other organizations in order to use an integrated approach;
- ✓ Aside the need to extend the network partnerships, to notice partnership key objectives
- ✓ To amend Preamble by adding «*Both epidemics are spreading rapidly within most at risk and highly stigmatized populations...*» after «Tuberculosis also remains a long-lasting health and social issue in the Europe Zone, with eighteen countries sharing the 86% of the regional TB burden»
- ✓ To state “both the epidemics” instead of “infections” or “diseases” (most participants agreed)
- ✓ To be careful that terminology is used correctly, especially that related to stigmatized groups, give the preference over conventional terminology
- ✓ PLHIV and other beneficiaries should be actively involved into volunteering.
- ✓ To amend Preamble by adding «as well as decision- and policy- makers...» after «... that National Societies can bridge the gap between households and healthcare institutions»

The Statement commission was charged to summarize the amendments and submit the final draft of the document the next day.

The second part of the day was chaired by Lasha Gogvadze.

He suggested that the participants divided into groups and discussed the final draft of the ERNA Terms of reference. They were given 10-15 minutes to amend the document.

The ERNA Chair submitted the amendment list to the ERNA **Terms of Reference**, made by the ERNA member National Societies and the Board. He particularly noted that the first amendments had been made at the ERNA General Meeting in Jurmala, second ones were made in Minsk 3 years ago. The 2012 revision of the document reflected the recommendations brought about by the ERNA Evaluation. The ERNA member National Societies and the ERNA Board were drafting the ToR during the whole year. The final draft of the document comprised all the amendments and additions including a new section on the ERNA Board obligations.

#### Suggestions:

On behalf of Group 1, **Heather Fitzke** suggested:

- to amend the section “ERNA Board” as follows: *EYCC of RCRC EYN is invited to nominate ...at the ERNA General Meeting. This reflects ERNA's commitment, in line with the IFRC Youth Policy, to the active participation of youth in decision making processes at the national and international level, promotion of youth leadership and exchange of concrete ideas, innovations and activities.* - To amend the section related to the ERNA Secretariat as follows: *Act as a focal point for the EYCC representative to share information and good practices between ERNA and the European Youth Network.*

On behalf of Group 2, Ilhom Rahimov proposed the following addition to the section “ERNA Board” as follows “the other Vice-President is elected for three years at the General Meeting. He/she should be a representative of his/her National Society”.

On behalf of Group 3 Eirik Eide proposed the following additions to the section related to the ERNA member National Societies: “to be committed to fulfillment of the Statement of the General Meeting”.



Then Dr. Lasha Gogvadze gave the floor to **Ms. Heather Fitzke**, Chair of the European Youth Coordination Committee (EYCC). She told about the RC/RC European Youth network and its cooperation with ERNA. Lasha informed the participants in the meeting that Ms. Lia Khachatryan, had quited as EYCC representative to the ERNA Board prior to the General Meeting for personal reasons.

Ms. Heather Fitzke thanked the organizing committee for the invitation and highlighted that her participation was a new milestone in the cooperation which started in 2009.

Both the networks tend to intensify networking within the Movement and join efforts for the benefit of the vulnerable. Heather familiarized the attendees with the RC/RC European Youth network organizational structure, the European Youth coordination committee members. The main aim of the network is “To strengthen the NSs youth programmes and structures by sharing relevant knowledge and experience among RC/RC Youth leaders who can ensure a multiplier effect by empowering NSs youth volunteers and implementing programs to improve the lives of vulnerable people in their communities”.

She presented the main areas of the youth policy, the Youth Policy three key functions of the Network (knowledge management, community building, amplification and advocacy), reported on the EYCC representative’s cooperation with ERNA. She identified the following challenges that both the networks shared:

- Recognition of Network & demonstrating impact
- Strategic focus and innovation
- Engagement with members between meetings
- Inclusion and empowerment of beneficiaries
- Advocacy
- Volunteer motivation & retention

ERNA and EYCC shared priorities: Promoting the visibility of ERNA/EYCC outside of Networks; capacity building; enhanced cooperation and mapping of new partnerships; collaboration with Government / external stakeholders; sharing good practices, tools and approaches (*see the presentation on [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012>Day 4*).

#### Questions:

Ekaterine Jakobishvili mentioned the International Harm Reduction Network for young IDUs having the headquarter in London and asked if the RC/RC European Youth network was cooperating with that network.

Heather Fitzke: “there are no specific programmes being implemented, but there is an opportunity to exchange information and promote these organizations”.

Marija Subataite: “are there any EYCC members representing EECA?”

Heather Fitzke: “Until quite recently, Lia Khachantryan had represented EECA. This region is expected to get its own subregional youth organization”.

Following the coffee break, elections of the ERNA Chair, Vice-chair and the EYCC representative to the ERNA Board took place.

Dr. Kalbanau informed the participants that any candidates had not been recommended aside Dr. Fabio Patrino (a candidate for the ERNA Chair) and Sinisa Zovko (a candidate for the ERNA Vice-chair). In his turn Dr. Kalbanau proposed Ms. Heather Fitzke as a candidate for the representative of the EYCC to the ERNA Board because during the meeting she had shown her perfect qualities and a great commitment to the Youth network and interest in cooperation with ERNA.

The participants in the meeting decided to hold an open ballot as far as there was one candidate per position.

#### Election results:

1. Fabio Patrino, ERNA Chair, Italian Red Cross:  
«Aye» - unanimously (there were no negative votes nor abstentions)
2. Sinisa Zovko, ERNA Vice-Chair, Croatian Red Cross:  
«Aye» - unanimously (there were no negative votes nor abstentions)
3. Heather Fitzke, representative of the European Youth Coordination Committee to the ERNA Board, British Red Cross:  
«Aye» - unanimously (there were no negative votes nor abstentions).

## **Day 4, September 26<sup>th</sup>**

### **Looking ahead**

The forth day was chaired by Dr. Patruno, ERNA Chair, and Somsri Tantipaibulvut, former ART Chair, Chief of Psychosocial and behavioural group, Thai Red Cross.

Fabio Patruno reviewed the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the Meeting and pointed out the impressive presentation by Dr. Va Sopheak. He thanked the partners from the network of ART for fruitful cooperation and expressed hope for its further successful development. He also expressed his gratitude to Elena Grigoryeva for the interesting presentation of the activities of AIDS Action Europe and highly appreciated her great contribution made within the past years. The ERNA Chair thanked Ms. Ekaterine Jakobishvili, Harm Reduction International, and Ms. Marija Subataite, Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), for their speeches, interesting presentations and active involvement in discussions. He was assured that a creative approach to the partnership would enrich the joint activity and would stimulate fundraising.

The Chair of the day highly appreciated how the Belarus RCS engaged volunteers to the HIV and TB programmes. He was impressed by the creativity of the BRCS staff and the effectiveness of their work, especially the ERNA contact persons attending the ERNA GM.

Fabio Patruno thanked the participants in the meeting for analyzing and discussing the proposed amendments to the ERNA ToR, taking part in the elections for the Board and finalizing the Statement of the Meeting. He then gave the floor to Giovanni Zambello, Chair of the Draft Commission.

Giovanni Zambello submitted the final version of the Statement completed by the latest amendments proposed while group discussions the day before. After a 10-minute-long discussion of the Statement a few new amendments were proposed:

- Dr. Va Sopheak suggested approaching the terminology related to the vulnerable with caution. For instance in Cambodia the term “sex workers” is not common, because it carries a tinge of stigma. In his country they are called “entertainment workers”. He also could not but reminded of the need to use both the terms “Red Cross” and “Red Crescent” Societies. Finally he stressed the importance of trainings for volunteers and of the further monitoring of their activity.

- Milena Ivanova insisted on using commonly accepted terminology.

- Hether Fitzke welcomed the suggestion by Va Sopheak and noted that trainings and monitoring were of a great importance. It was necessary to assess the quality and quantity of the work of volunteers.

- Ms. Somsri Tantipaibulvut suggested completing the Statement by the following item “To actively promote the role of ERNA in order to create and maintain strategic partnerships”.

**Fabio Patruno**, ERNA Chair, thanked the speakers for the comments to be added to the Statement. He charged the ERNA Secretariat with the aid of Giovanni Zambello with finalizing the document and disseminating it among the ERNA NS-members and partners during 3 weeks since the meeting.



The report on the ERNA activity was presented by **Iryna Karanchuk**, ERNA Coordinator. The report included concrete measures taken to reach all the goals and objectives – outputs and outcomes (read the full version of the report on [www.erna.by: Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012](http://www.erna.by:Meetings%20and%20Events%20Meetings%202012)). The ERNA Coordinator particularly noted that the ERNA Secretariat staff fulfilled the Secretariat duties prescribed at the ERNA Terms of reference: support to the ERNA Board for ERNA governance; support to NSs for fulfilling the main ERNA mission; contacts with internal and external partners. The ERNA Coordinator highlighted that the ERNA Secretariat report had been composed in accordance with the 2012 Plan of action.



1. Iryna Karanchuk pointed out that the ERNA Secretariat together with the Board and NSs had worked to the best of their ability to increase the exchange of experiences, information and the best practices with the members and partners of the network. The ERNA Board and Secretariat promoted the setting up of innovative initiatives and reproduced them in other National Societies by adapting them to the beneficiaries. Meanwhile, some items of the plan (those regarding the exchange of experiences among NSs by means of partner visits) had not been put into practice because of the lack of funding. It was planned to prepare a questionnaire about achievements of the representatives who had participated in the trainings in Villa Maraini. The questionnaire and mapping results of activities on harm reduction and relevant information would be shared with NSs.

2. The ERNA Secretariat had to prepare and disseminate questionnaires on harm reduction (for Villa Maraini trainees), HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.

Throughout the year the ERNA Board and Secretariat were cooperating with a number of partner organizations and agencies which focused their activity on HIV, AIDS and tuberculosis and harm reduction. The partnership within the International Movement of the RC/RC and the IFRC offices in Geneva and Budapest and other networks had been strengthened. The ERNA Secretariat was in touch with the NSs-non-members of ERNA. Iryna Karanchuk highlighted that within the year of 2012 the ERNA Secretariat had managed to strengthen partnership with partner-organizations of PLHIV. The representatives of PLHIV had taken part in the ERNA Board meetings and the General Meeting on a regular basis.

Elena Grigoryeva noticed that during the previous ERNA General Meeting in Slovenia it had been agreed on building the capacity of National Societies and ERNA in the field of humanitarian diplomacy. The skills in humanitarian diplomacy should be applied in the framework of HIV and TB programmes. She informed the participants that the ERNA website had been updated with a new section dedicated to humanitarian diplomacy (About ERNA>Humanitarian diplomacy) where the ERNA Secretariat could place Professional “Humanitarian Diplomacy Guidance Series” (following its finalizing by the IFRC office).

Dr. Karanchuk made a pointed reference to the ERNA booklet published in English and Russian that each participant could find in is handout, and informed that the Eurozone newsletter dedicated to ERNA was being drafted. She invited all the NSs, especially the NSs of the Red Crescent to provide some information to be included in the newsletter during 1 month since the General Meeting.



Iryna Karanchuk particularly noted the importance of the ERNA website. She reminded that the website [www.erna.by](http://www.erna.by) was a useful interactive tool for exchange of information, discussions and professional communication. The information posted on the site was being updated on a regular basis. To brief the participants on the website the floor was given to **Natallia Goilova**, ERNA Coordinator assistant, being in charge of the website maintenance. Ms. Goilova overviewed the sections and expanded on the sections “National Societies activities”, “Library”, “News”, “Forum”, “Blog” that NSs could use for sharing updated information. She also reminded of the mail-out on the ERNA website, intended to disseminate important announcements among NSs and partners and also informed them about ERNA website updates. Natallia Goilova invited to actively use the ERNA website and join the open Facebook group of ERNA. She also highlighted that the ERNA Secretariat had created the Google Analytics account to monitor the visitors (language, location) of the site and the Google Analytics reports would be regularly submitted to the ERNA Board .

Then the word was given to the ERNA Coordinator. Dr. Karanchuk presented financial updates regarding the ERNA activities for 2012:

***CONTRIBUTIONS TO ERNA ON 01.09.2012***

| Donor NS | Date | Amount, EUR |
|----------|------|-------------|
|----------|------|-------------|



|               |                |                                      |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Latvian RC    | 19.04.20<br>12 | 288,00                               |
| Croatian RC   | 04.06.20<br>12 | 1.000,00                             |
| Italian RC    | 07.08.20<br>12 | 29.200,00 (1 <sup>st</sup> transfer) |
| French RC     | 08.08.20<br>12 | 9.985,50                             |
| <b>TOTAL:</b> |                | <b>40.473,50</b>                     |

**STATEMENT OF THE ERNA ACCOUNT**  
**January 1 – September 1, 2012 z.**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Balance as of January 1,<br>EUR   | 45.459,61  |
| Balance as of January 1,<br>BYR   | 6224210,00 (equiv. 1.568 EUR<br>according to the average exchange rate<br>BYR/EUR in 2011) |
| Total contributions, EUR          | 40.473,50  |
| Bank %, EUR                       | 65,73  |
| Converted EUR into BYR,<br>EUR    | 17.095,00  |
| Total expenditures, EUR           | 32.183,61  |
| Total expenditures, BYR           | 169095767,00   |
| Balance as of September 1,<br>EUR | 36.720,23  |

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In order to fulfill the shaped plans and further successful development, ERNA needs to do the following:

- **From ERNA “corporate spirit”, when all the members actively cooperate and are personally interested in effective joint action;**
- **Join efforts of ERNA and partners for holding a greater number of events;**
- **Establish contacts and develop cooperation with community-beneficiaries;**
- **Fulfill the ERNA budget on a regular basis and reach financial stability.**

Comments on the ERNA Coordinator’s report:

- **Ramine Bahrambegi**, American Red Cross representative:

“It is important to promote the ERNA website more actively. The American Red Cross is fully ready to contribute to its promotion”.

- **Sinisa Zovko**, Croatian Red Cross representative and a newly elected ERNA Vice-President:

“Apparently, the funding of ERNA is not enough and is decreasing from year to year. To fulfill all the shaped plans ERNA needs more money. The situation should be changed. It is time to implement annual fee. The fee could be amounted to some 500 EUR per year for each NS”.

- **Heather Fitzke**, EYCC Chair:

It desirable that the cooperation between both the networks is widelier covered on the ERNA website. She reminded that the Global RC/RC Youth Conference 2012 would be held in Vienna and she would like that announcement to be placed on the ERNA website too.

Iryna Karanchuk thanked for comments and assured that they would be put into life.

Then the ERNA Chair suggested that NSs presented their proposals regarding the 17<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting.

Then the floor was given to Ilhom Rahkimov, the RCS of Tajikistan. On behalf of his officials he suggested holding the 17<sup>th</sup> ERNA General Meeting in Tajikistan. The participants in the meeting agreed on his suggestion.

Dr. Patruno noticed that straight after the meeting the RCS of Tajikistan should submit an official letter to the ERNA Board. He also noticed that he was particularly impressed by the activities carried out by the RCS of Tajikistan while visiting the Tajik National Society together with Massimo Barra the previous year. The ERNA Chair suggested that the participants gave their comments.

The floor was given to **Medea Margania-Avaliani**, GRCS Secretary General. As an alternative, she suggested holding the coming general meeting in Georgia, for instance in Batumi.

Dr. Patruno thanked the Secretary General for having made great efforts to organize the current general meeting and the GRCS hosting initiative. He also pointed out that the GRCS had tried to hold the meeting since 2008 but political conflicts had not enabled it until 2012. The ERNA Chair noted that each ERNA member NS should be given a chance to develop its capacity. That's why it was desirable to alternate hosting National Societies.

The ERNA Chair suggested that the participants in the meeting filled up evaluation questionnaires (see the results on the ERNA website: *Meetings and Events>Meetings>2012*).

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#### Closing remarks

**Dr. Patruno** and **Dr. Zovko** expressed their sincere gratitude to the Georgia Red Cross Society for the organization of the General Meeting and called up the participants to actively share information and for any problem issues contact the ERNA Secretariat.

**Dr. Kolbanov** also thanked the Georgia Red Cross Society for creating a friendly climate at the meeting. He pointed out that successful implementation of the GM Statement would give a chance to NSs to revise and update their volunteering policy. He then proposed a theme for the next ERNA General Meeting «Formation of NS national policy on HIV and TB».

**Heather Fitzke** thanked the organizers for a very well-done work and appealed to develop volunteering and encourage volunteers.

**Elena Grigoryeva** thanked ERNA for partnership and pointed out that the ERNA General Meetings are unique events different from the meetings of other NGOs. That was why all the attendees were interested in development and strengthening of cooperation with ERNA.

**Va Sopheak** on behalf of the ART network thanked ERNA for invitation and the Georgia Red Cross Society for the perfect organization. Together with Somsri Tantipaibulvut and Dr. Tashiharu Makishima the ART Chair presented the ERNA Board and the GRCS Secretary General with souvenirs.

At the close of the meeting **Medea Margania-Avaliani** thanked all the participants for the kind words and expressed a hope to meet on the Georgian land again.