**To: Mikko Tainio, Executive Director of Finnair Cargo**

**Hans Henry P.Kluge, Regional Director, WHO,**

**Peter Sands, Executive Director of the Global Fund**

**Winnie Byanyima, Executive Director of UNAIDS**

**Mette Petersen, Red Cross EU office Director**

**Alok Ranjan Jha, ambassador of India in Belarus**

**Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission**

**Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, European Commission**

**Milena Hrdinková, State Secretary for European Affairs of the Czech Republic, EU Presidency**

**Letter to Support PLHIV in Belarus**

August 17, 2022

As organizations representing the interests of people living with HIV in Belarus and the broaderwider region, we are writing to ask Finnair to allow shipment of antiretroviral medications (ARVs) via its cargo service to Belarus. These treatments are essential for keeping people living with HIV alive, healthy, and well.

We have been informed that, on August 17 2022, a flight was chartered from Helsinki to Vilnius to deliver ARVs to Belalek (a pharmaceutical company that won the tender), but the carrier Finnair refused to carry the cargo with ARVs. The official rejection is attached.

Most likely, this refusal is related to the current difficult political situation arising from the Russian-Ukrainian war and related sanctions against Russia and Belarus.

However, we are deeply concerned that jeopardizing this delivery this will lead to a stock-out of ARV medicines (Tenofovir/ Emtricitabine) in the Republic of Belarus.

The uninterrupted supply of Tenofovir-Emtricitabine is critical for the treatment of people living with HIV. It is one of the most commonly used , treatment regimens in Belarus and worldwide (as noted in the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, page 19:  <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-MHP-HPS-EML-2021.02>). We are extremely concerned to know that the stocks of this treatment in Belarus will run out at the end of September and there is a significant risk that patients will soon be left without life-saving medicine.

Medicines must not be subject to sanctions, and strongly believe that, regardless of the difficult political situation, people should not face the risk of a lack of access to vitally important medicines. To our knowledge, essential medications are not a part of the sanctions list.

With this letter, we invite you to stand by us to solve the aforementioned problem. We are sure that, with our joint efforts, we will be able to enable delivery of the purchased medicines to patients in Belarus on time and without delay.

Please act urgently to the best of your ability!

We thank you in advance and look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Below are listed civil society organizations that fully share the content of the letter and encourage you to further activities

GNP+

International Treatment Preparedness Coalition in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ITPC EECA)

People PLUS

Georgian Harm Reduction  Network

Regards,

**Pieter Vanholder (he/him)**

Executive Director

**European AIDS Treatment Group**

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