

IUSTI Europe News

November 2020

Introduction

by **Claudia Heller, Chair of IUSTI Europe**

Dear IUSTI-Europe members,

We live in demanding times. COVID-19 is not only greatly affecting our occupational and private lives but as well the possibility to hold and attend conferences and meetings. Hence the 34th IUSTI-Europe conference on Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS to be held at the beginning of September in Bucharest, Romania, had to go virtual. This was the very first IUSTI-online-conference. It was kind of an experiment and the organizers – conference president George Sorin Tiplica and chair of the scientific programme Marti Val Mayans - were pioneers. And it went extremely well! The outstanding scientific programme was presented by highly motivated speakers from all over the world, the technical conditions worked fantastically, the sessions were very well attended and the discussions were lively. Moreover, the lectures could be recalled for more than one month later which was used by many participants.

So the resume of the Bucharest meeting is: It was an extreme success. Congratulations to Sorin and his team!

After the conference is before the conference. It is a pleasure to announce that Henry de Vries will host the **STI & HIV 2021 World Congress, 14 -17 July 2021** which was planned to be held in Amsterdam, but will be a virtual edition as well (<https://www.stihiv2021.org/>). I invite you to join

this meeting which will be a unique possibility to (virtually) meet STI-experts from all over the world.

What lives on is the hope that we will meet face to face very soon!

Please stay well!

Best wishes,

Claudia Heller

Behind the curtains of the 34th IUSTI Europe Congress, Sep 2020

by Prof. dr. George-Sorin Tiplica, 34th IUSTI_Europe Congress President



Debate under way from across Europe...

At the beginning everything was permitted. Following the splendid 2019 IUSTI-Europe Congress in Tallinn, we thought that only an event organized in the opulent Palace of Parliament from

Bucharest - the biggest building in Europe - will probably not be forgotten very soon. Well... it turned-out that even a small room, at the out-skirts of the city can be suited for the job if the spirit of the Congress is kept alive by interesting talks, sparkling discussions and an entertaining debate (fig. 1). There were **390 participants from 44 countries** attending this first virtual IUSTI-Europe Congress. During the Congress days – from 3rd to 5th of September - there were 2922 views, with more than **320 individual participants watching longer than 60 min / day**. It was the scientific program, skillfully prepared by the Chair of the International Scientific Committee that kept us connected to the internet. It was a wonderful journey through the history of IUSTI Europe and from the newest laboratory research in venereology to the clinical practice that included the COVID-19 pandemic consequences. Our colleagues and friends from the **European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology** participated with a clinical symposium and we hope that this will be the start of a beautiful cooperation. The **British Association for Sexual Health and HIV** involvement was demonstrated by the exquisite symposium focused on the Gender and Sexual Minorities (fig. 2) and also by sending a favorable message to our friends in UK who made the biggest country group of Congress participants.



The BASHH Gender and Sexual Minorities symposium

We also recognize the efforts, dedication, and passionate advocacy of a group of persons that had a crucial role in the Congress success. As a virtual meeting, the Congress did not end on the 5th of September but one month later. All presentations and discussions were available “**on demand**” for the **Congress participants** and for the **29** beneficiaries of the grants offered by the organizers for two physicians from each European country represented in the IUSTI-Europe region.

Looking back we can all smile as the Congress proved to be financially viable (but not once bankruptcy was just around the corner) and also functional (even if the first two hours of the event had to be emitted from a back-up internet platform). There are clear advantages of a virtual Congress that brings together without effort the attendees and the speakers. Therefore, together with the whole IUSTI-Europe community, we are looking forward to our next year’s Congress in Amsterdam.





EuroTEST

Working together for integrated testing and earlier care

European Testing Week: 20th to 27th November 2020

IUSTI Europe is pleased to support **EuroTEST's European Testing Week initiative** **#EuroTestWeek** . EuroTEST writes:

Now in its eighth year, the November European Testing Week is from **20 - 27 November 2020**. You can find the **November 2020 Theme Statement** in [English](#) and [Russian](#). The aim is to unite partner organisations throughout Europe for one week to increase access to testing and promote awareness on the benefits of earlier hepatitis and HIV testing

Similar to past ETWs, all organisations interested in participating are asked to [sign-up](#) on the ETW website. By signing up, you pledge to engage in activities for the week. There is no minimum requirement for participation, and you can organise as many activities as you wish.

The ETW secretariat will collect and share your activities within the network so that other organisations can learn from your experience. You can email your plans directly to the secretariat at eurotest.rigshospitalet@regionh.dk or tag us on social media using **@EuroTestWeek** or our hashtag **#EuroTestWeek**

All materials to support testing week are available [here](#)

European Testing Week: free webinars 23-27 Nov

EuroTEST is running a series of **free live webinars** during the 2020 November European Testing Week. The series will focus on “*Challenges and opportunities for testing during the COVID-19 pandemic throughout Europe.*” The webinar series will highlight the different experiences of organisations throughout Europe who have adapted testing services to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Participants will be able to engage with presenters who have practical experiences with these topics and join in the discussion of strategies for ensuring continued testing during the pandemic.

1. **Testing vulnerable populations in COVID-restricted contexts (organised by [HIV Prevention England](#) / [Terrence Higgins Trust](#) in partnership with European Testing Week)**
 - **Monday, 23 November 2020, 15:00-16:15 CET**
 - Registration: <https://bit.ly/3eIGSCJ>
2. **Integrating testing for HIV and/or viral hepatitis and COVID-19**
 - **Wednesday, 25 November 2020, 16:00-16:45 CET**
 - Registration: <https://bit.ly/35h9z6t>
3. **HIV self-testing – opportunities and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic**
 - **Friday, 27 November 2020, 13:00-13:45 CET**
 - Registration: <https://bit.ly/2ldpSc1>



European Antibiotic Awareness Day

18 November 2020

<https://antibiotic.ecdc.europa.eu/en>



The theme of this day is **“In times of COVID-19, don’t give up on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and stay united to preserve antimicrobials”**

ECDC will publish the annual surveillance reports on antimicrobial resistance and consumption in EU/EEA regions on 18 November 2020 . Follow events on social media at [@EAAD_EU](#) or [fb.com/EAAD.EU](#)

Antimicrobial resistance in STIs: call for papers

A special themed issue of the open-access journal *Antibiotics* “Preventing the Emergence of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in STIs’ will be guest edited by Prof. Christopher Kenyon (*IUSTI country representative, Belgium*). He is seeking manuscript submissions that advance our understanding of how best to prevent the emergence and spread of AMR in bacterial STIs. Submissions dealing with any aspect of the prevention of resistance in bacterial STIs are welcome. Manuscript [submission](#) closes on 31 May 2021

IUSTI Europe Guidelines

by **Andrew Winter**, IUSTI Communications Chair and **Guidelines Group member**

All current and draft guidelines are published here [Treatment Guidelines \(Europe\)](#)

Recently **updated** guidelines include

- [gonorrhoea](#) (Oct 20)
- [molluscum contagiosum](#) (Sep 20)
- [syphilis](#) (Jul 20)

Guidelines under **consultation** include

- [balanitis](#) (comments by **30 Nov 2020** to [Willem van der Meijden](#))
- [proctitis](#) (comments by **3rd Dec 2020** to [Jonathan Ross](#))

The STI Treatment Pocket European Guidelines – new updated version – can be found [here](#).

Through our partnership with EADV we now have [patient information leaflets](#) available in 10 languages (Bulgarian, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Serbian). More translations are underway.



Sexual Health, STI and HIV Updates

by **Tomislav Mestrovic, IUSTI Communications Group**

A persistent burden of hepatitis B and hepatitis C in Europe

[European surveillance data](#) show ongoing transmission of hepatitis B and, despite a recent slight decline, high annual levels of hepatitis C diagnoses. Approximately four in five people living with hepatitis B and three out of four people with hepatitis C infection across the European Union and European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and the UK have not yet been diagnosed. This is a major obstacle on the way towards the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for health in 2030, as highlighted by ECDC.

Cost-effectiveness of sex-neutral HPV immunisation

A recent [study](#) in *Lancet Public Health* utilized a model based assessment to investigate the cost-effectiveness profile of sex-neutral HPV immunisation in European tender-based settings. Although this approach to HPV vaccination is economically attractive in this type of setting in Europe, tendering mechanisms need to ensure that vaccination of boys will remain cost-effective at high vaccine uptake rates.

Lymphogranuloma venereum in Italy

A [study](#) from Italy showed that lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV) accounted for one-third of all chlamydial rectal infections in MSM, with different circulating genovariants. Hence, there is a need for active surveillance and genotyping programmes and measures to reduce re-establishing of LGV infection and curb the epidemic in some parts of Europe.

HIV epidemiology in Europe

ECDC continues with intensive HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe. A recent [report](#) uses survey data collected from countries who participated in the 2018 round of reporting on



implementation of the **Dublin Declaration on Partnership to Fight HIV & AIDS in Europe and Central Asia** (known as 'Dublin Declaration' data) in search for evidence of HIV combination prevention implementation. The latter represents an approach that brings together single prevention initiatives into a comprehensive programme, with the rationale that multiple evidence-based interventions will have a greater impact on HIV transmission than investment in a single strategy..

A recent [study](#) from Catalonia with a monitoring series of almost 25 years reinforces the important role that **community-based HIV point-of-care tests** (POCT) have on the improvement of early HIV diagnoses in key populations, and underscores the importance of monitoring these data and including them in a regional or national HIV surveillance systeme.

Across countries in Europe, the burden of **late HIV presenters** is high (i.e., those with CD4 cell count below 350 cells/mm³ or with AIDS defining disease), with the highest estimated number and excess AIDS-events/deaths found in Eastern Europe. Due to public health consequences and increased health care costs, effective [strategies are warranted](#) to reduce late presenters burden, together with the attributable morbidity and mortality that could be potentially avoided.

Get involved in IUSTI Europe

Join the [IUSTI Europe LinkedIn](#) group

There are a number of committees which always welcome enthusiastic members.

International development - contact Mihael Skerlev: mskerlev@kbc-zagreb.hr

Communication - contact Andy Winter: andrew.winter@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

Scientific Policy - contact Derek Freedman: df@freedman.ie

Education - contact Angelika Stary and Marco Cusini: angelika.stary@meduniwien.ac.at ,
m.cusini@policlinico.mi.it

Membership

IUSTI Europe membership has to be renewed **every calendar year**, so start planning now for 2021. It costs £40 for which you get discounted registrations to IUSTI World meetings, a 40% discount for the International Journal of STD&AIDS, and regular updates from IUSTI Europe and the STI Global Update.

The membership site has moved address following the IUSTI World site update and can be found [here](#). Please do NOT rejoin now **until** 1 Jan 2021.

GDPR

IUSTI Europe controls your personal data in line with the new GDPR requirements in Europe. Your personal data are held on the main IUSTI World membership database which is held in Australia. If you wish to amend your communication preferences or change your contact details please contact the membership secretary iustieuropesecretary@gmail.com.