

Press Release – for immediate release

European AIDS Clinical Society congress, and the city of Basel, say “No to stigma, Yes to solidarity”

Basel / Lenzburg, November 10, 2019 - On Saturday, the 17th European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) congress came to an end in Basel. The biennial congress brought together HIV researchers, scientists and medical professionals from across the world to present their latest findings.

The EACS congress was accompanied by a wide-reaching civil society campaign. The community used the **#NoHIVStigma** campaign to draw attention to the wide gaps that still exist between the scientific advances in HIV and the social stigma still facing people living with, or affected by, HIV.

"Science has made great progress with HIV, but unfortunately society has not yet caught up" - Alex Schneider, founder of Life4me.plus.

Alex Schneider, and his organization Life4me.plus, spoke at several sessions during the congress. *"The virus in the blood is apparently easier to eliminate than the stigma in the mind,"* says Schneider. *"People who live with HIV, or who are higher at risk of infection, continue to be marginalized, stigmatized and discriminated against."*

Schneider and his supporters planned and implemented numerous actions under the motto **"No HIV Stigma"**. Thanks to a broad partnership with EACS leaders, media and the Basel politicians, the streets were decorated with flags during the congress, announcing the message "U=U".

This simple formula represents the ground-breaking discovery that people living with HIV who are on effective treatment and have an undetectable viral load cannot pass the virus on to their sexual partners. This is known as "undetectable equals untransmittable" or "U=U".

In addition to the flags, banners in public transport, online, and on social media spread the call for solidarity. "Destigmatisation through Enlightenment" was the goal of the **#NoHIVStigma** campaign, which included a solidarity party with dazzling drag queens and later in the week a demonstration march of over 300 people.

"We wanted to show the public that all people have the same rights, with or without HIV," says Schneider, who has been honoured, along with his team, at the by the congress committee for his commitment with an EACS Award. *"We are very pleased that the public has so positively received our message "No to Stigma, Yes to Solidarity" **we are very grateful to all our campaign partners for their support**"*.

The next European AIDS Clinical Society congress will take place in London in 2021. Until then, according to Schneider, the existing HIV stigmatization must continue to give way to greater understanding and solidarity.

Information and pictures of the campaign at www.nostigma.ch

For more information and quotes, please contact:
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