

## **Comprehensive testing services in Ath & Thess Checkpoint**



Sophocles Chanos, MSc

Checkpoint Head

## Outline

1. Epidemiological data - background information
2. Rationale behind the creation of the 1<sup>st</sup> CBCT service
3. The Checkpoint initiative and its evolution
4. Checkpoint 6 years milestones
5. CBCT challenges in Greece
6. Goals for 2019
7. Concluding remarks

## EU/EEA VS Greek HIV diagnosis trends 1985 - 2015

MSM

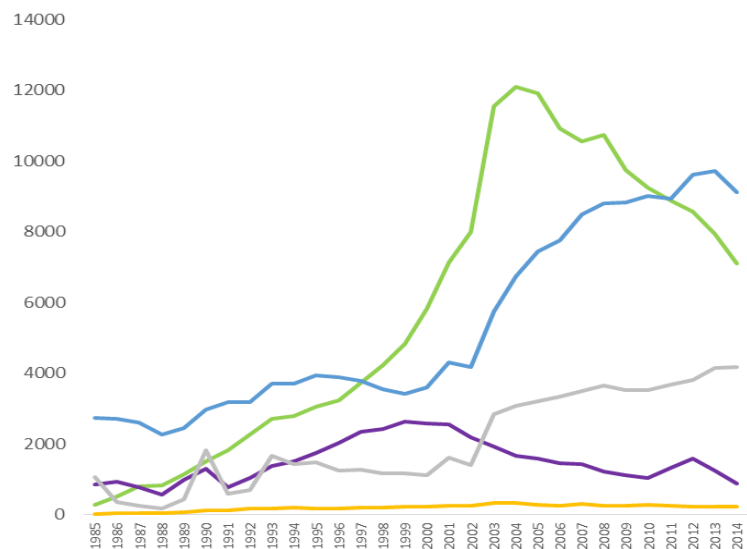
Heterosexual

Other/unknown

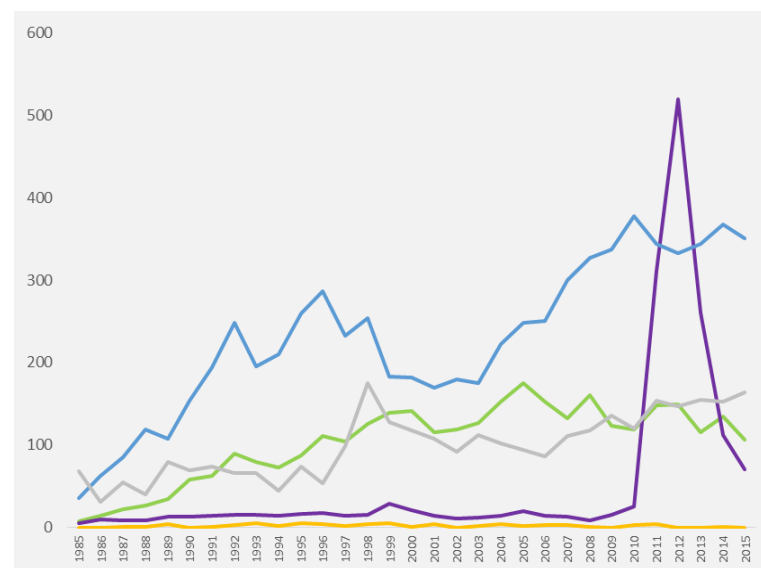
PWID

MTCT

### EU/EEA

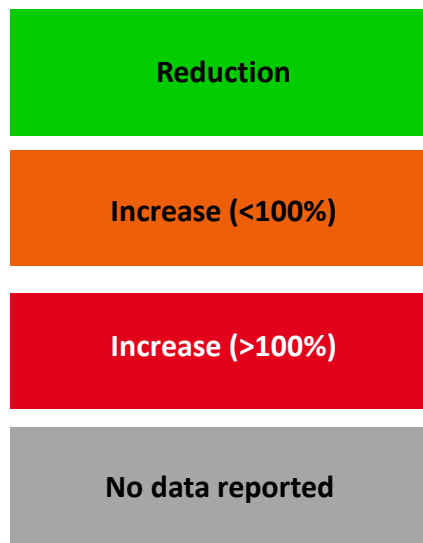


### Greece




## The majority of EU/EEA countries reported an increase of HIV diagnoses in MSM, 2006 - 2015

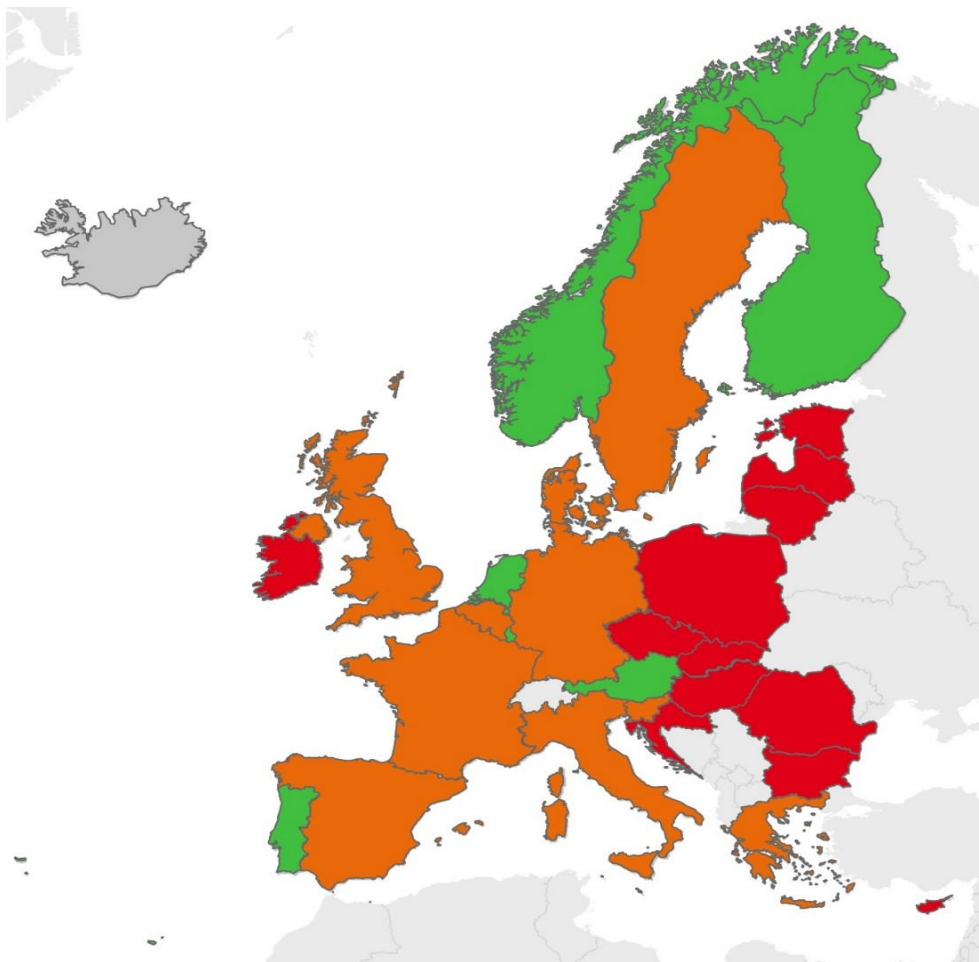
### Change of % new HIV diagnoses in MSM 2006-2015



#### Non-visible countries

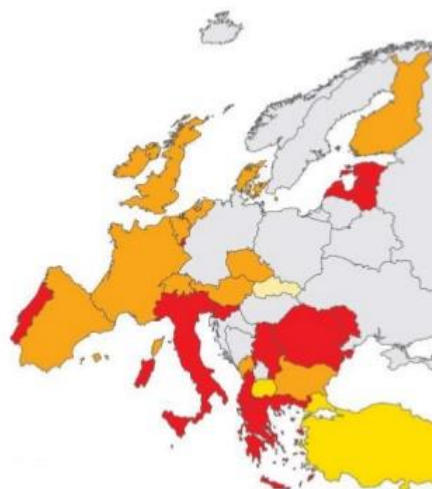
 Luxembourg

 Malta



## Proportion of diagnosed HIV cases with a CD4 count < 350 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>, 2014 VS 2016, EU/EEA

### Proportion of HIV cases diagnosed late (CD4<350 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>), 2014, EU/EEA



**Non-visible countries**  
■ Liechtenstein  
■ Luxembourg  
■ Malta

Source: ECDC/WHO (2015). HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe, 2014

\*Among cases with CD4 count at diagnosis reported

### Late diagnosis, 2016, EU/EEA



% persons with CD4  
<350 cells/mm<sup>3</sup> at HIV diagnosis



Missing data or did not report

**EU/EEA Average: 48%**

**Non-visible countries**  
■ Luxembourg  
■ Malta



Source: ECDC/WHO (2017). HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe 2017–2016 data

## EMIS 2010: The European Men-Who-Have-Sex-With-Men Internet Survey

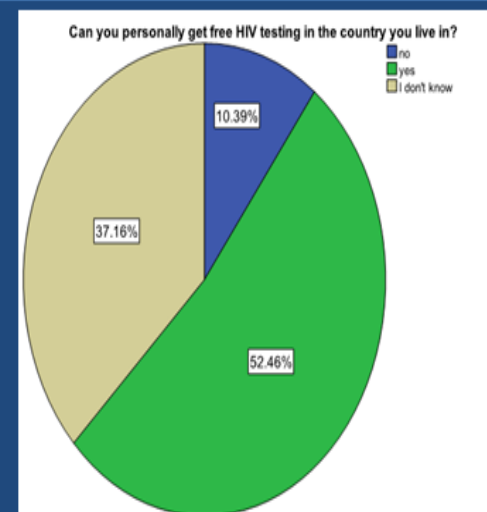
### HIV test - Greece

Never tested for HIV: **936 (1 out of 3)**

Tested at least once for HIV: **1605 (2 out of 3)**

	Never received an HIV test result N (%)	Received an HIV test result N (%)
Athens	359 (27.5)	946 (72.5)
Thessaloniki	148 (38.4)	237 (61.6)
Rest of Greece	429 (50.4)	422 (49.6)

### Free HIV test





- Economic crisis: 2010 onwards...
  - HIV testing severely disrupted
    - Testing facilities' reduction
      - Fee introduction
- Discriminatory attitude towards people
  - Diagnostics stock-outs





CHECKPOINT

---

prevention and testing centers





Joint activity - partnership

**PositiveVoice**  
people+HIV

Hellenic Association PLWHA, Athens, Greece

&



Aids Healthcare Foundation Europe, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Collaborations



Donors - Supporters



abbvie



NOVARTIS

ΙΣΝ / SNF  
ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ  
STAVROS NIARCHOS  
FOUNDATION



John S. Latsis  
Public Benefit Foundation

THE RADCLIFFE  
FOUNDATION

## Philosophy

### OBJECTIVES

- 1) HIV, HBV, HCV, Syphilis **testing**
- 2) Facilitation of **early diagnosis** and **optimal access** to treatment
- 3) Normalization of HIV testing – Creation of a “**testing culture**”
- 4) Using “**peer-to-peer**” pre and post test counseling to promote a **modern** safer sex message through a confidential, candid, non-judgmental way
- 5) Battling stigma and discrimination in the MSM community by informing people of the **beneficial impact of early treatment** and of the **transmission reduction** benefit of antiretroviral treatment (TasP)

### TARGETS

- 1) Reduce the **undiagnosed** fraction
- 2) Reduce the number of **MSM** who have never been tested before

### LOGISTICS

- 1) Central, easily-accessible location and friendly, non-clinical environment
- 2) Convenient opening hours (Mo-Sa: 12-8 pm)
- 3) Scheduled appointments & drop-ins
- 4) Modern diagnostics (rapid testing)



## Activities



**Data collection – Research**  
[Euro HIV EDAT, EMIS, ECHOES, optTEST, PrEP, HIV epidemiology, ChemSex, Partner Notification, Cost effectiveness]

**In-premises testing**

**Outreach targeted testing & interventions**

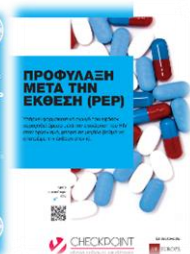
Gay bars-clubs  
Pride festivals  
Detox –Rehab. centers  
Sex cinemas, Saunas  
Prisons  
Refugees' camps

**Checkpoint**

**Informative material distribution**

**Awareness-raising activities**

**Condom & Lubricant dispensation**



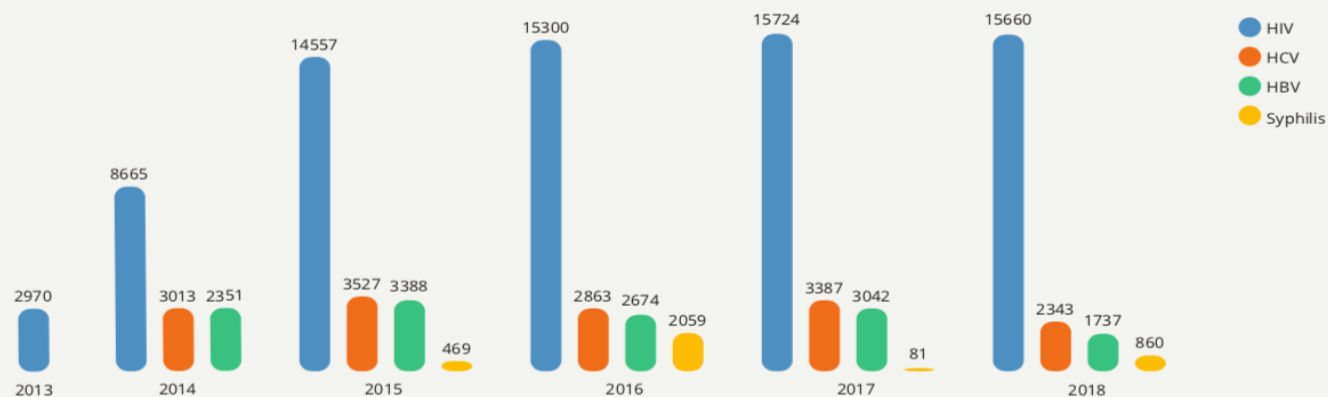


**Checkpoint's presence in every major event..  
World AIDS Day, European HIV/Heps Testing Week, International Condom Day, Pride Festivals**

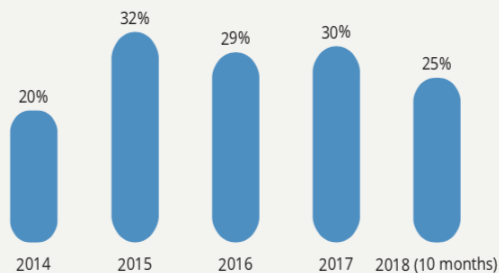


## 6 years Checkpoint Milestones 2013 – 2018

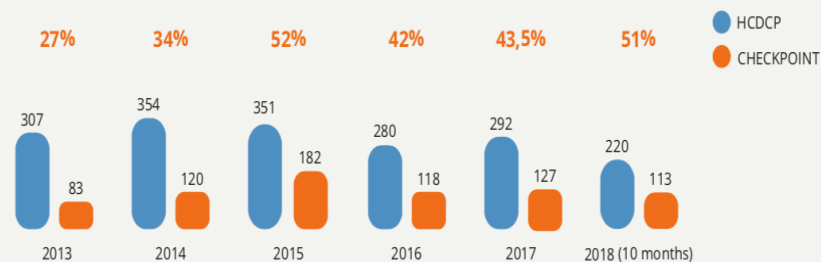
**Figure 1. Checkpoint HIV, HBV, HCV, Syphilis tests per year**



**Figure 2. Percentage of Checkpoint HIV diagnoses per year (compared to HCDCP)**



**Figure 3. Percentage of Checkpoint MSM HIV diagnoses per year (compared to HCDCP)**





## 6 years Checkpoint Milestones 2013 – 2018

- Knowledge and **best practice transfer** to Albania, Bulgaria, Skopje, Moldova and Cyprus
- Ath & Thess Checkpoint: **Cost effective**
- 2016 **European Citizen Award** and 2017 **Healthcare Business Awards**
- > **90 %** of the reactively tested beneficiaries was successfully linked to care
- Dispensing of > than **5 million** free condoms and **400.000** informative material
- **Mobile Unit** acquisition (testing services to the **Roma** community around Greece)

European  
Citizen  
of the year  
2016



## Community-based testing challenges

1. Operation (grey zone) – legal framework
2. De-medicalization of rapid testing
- 3. More Checkpoints**
4. Notion of routine testing
5. Expansion of services
6. **Second generation surveillance instruments** (in need of new tools i.e. avidity tests, a way to check incidence in a community so that we are sure about our effectiveness and M&E our activities)
7. Discrimination & HIV-related **stigma** issues
8. Further research to measure knowledge, perceptions and attitudes in MSM
- 9. Funding**

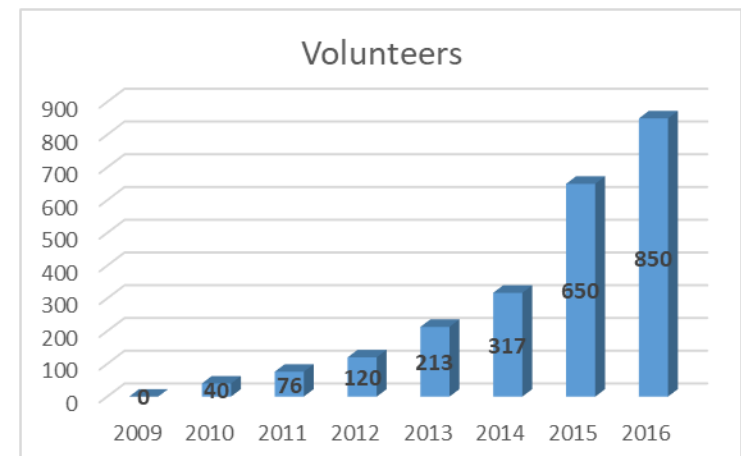


## 2019 Checkpoint goals

- Acquisition of **4rth generation** rapid tests
- Point of care: **viral load measurement** and other STIs
- Assisted Anonymous **Partner Notification**
- Advocacy for **self-testing**, **PrEP**, **sexual education** in schools mainly through the upcoming National HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan
- Increase the number of **MSM beneficiaries & seropositivity rate** achieved so far
- Increase the **targeted outreach testing**, e.g.: saunas, porn cinemas
- Enhance our presence in **refugee camps** run by the State for testing and counseling
- Upgrade the **electronic system** regarding data collection

## Concluding remarks

1. Community-based, friendly, non-judgmental, free testing had a huge impact to Greece
2. Reduction of new diagnoses / infections
3. Checkpoint = “success story” in intensifying public health through it’s testing and awareness-raising activities
4. The Checkpoint has managed to change the landscape of the attitudes, perceptions and knowledge in the MSM community





## Arson attack, March 11<sup>th</sup> 2019



## Ath & Thess Checkpoint team





## Athens, Thessaloniki and rest of Greek regions' volunteers



Thank you !

Sophocles Chanos, MSc  
Checkpoint Head

[schanos@athcheckpoint.gr](mailto:schanos@athcheckpoint.gr)  
[www.mycheckpoint.gr](http://www.mycheckpoint.gr)  
[www.facebook.com/myCheckpointGR/](https://www.facebook.com/myCheckpointGR/)

