



WESTERN-EASTERN EUROPEAN
PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE
ON HIV, VIRAL HEPATITIS AND TB



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“Strengthening research capacity in Eastern Europe through the WEEPI Foundation”

HepHIV 2026 conference side meeting

Time/Date: 13:15-14:45, Monday 2 November 2026

Room: Field Suite 1-2

Participants: The meeting is open to all conference with no pre-registration needed

Meeting Background

The WEEPI Foundation (Western-Eastern Partnership Initiative on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Tuberculosis) was established in 2018 to address persistent gaps in prevention, testing, treatment and research across Eastern Europe. The foundation is unique for being a researcher-led funding mechanisms for research projects in Eastern Europe. By connecting expertise, institutions, and healthcare professionals from Eastern and Western Europe, WEEPI strengthens local capacity and promotes evidence-based solutions to improve health outcomes. The Foundation supports innovative research, professional training, and collaborative partnerships that help reduce barriers to prevention and care, particularly for vulnerable populations. Through knowledge sharing and sustainable capacity building, WEEPI aims to advance equitable access to quality healthcare and contribute to stronger, more resilient health systems across the region.

Meeting Objective

- Increasing knowledge about the WEEPI Foundation
- Increasing capacity for scientific manuscript writing
- Sharing learnings and experiences from WEEPI-funded research work

The meeting will combine presentations by WEEPI’s founders and grantees, discussion among participants and questions from the audience.

Chairs: Jürgen Rockstroh (chair of WEEPI’s Advisory Board) & Dorte Raben (CEO WEEPI secretariat)

Agenda

13:15-13:30: Introduction to WEEPI Foundation and its achievements during the last 5 years (Professor Jens Lundgren)

13:30-14:10: Examples of research projects funded by WEEPI

1. Sarouna Raudonis, Vilnius University, Lithuania: *"Integrated HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis infection testing across multiple healthcare settings in Lithuania"*
2. Myroslava Filippovych, Institute of Public Health, Ukraine: "HCV reinfection after cure among people receiving opioid agonist therapy in Ukraine: a 13-clinic cluster trial of onsite simplified care under different provider payment models"
3. Volodymyr Virchenko, Taras Shevchenko, Ukraine: "Integrating HIV, Hepatitis and STI Services into Mental Health Care amidst Wartime Challenges: Lessons Learned from Ukraine"
4. Lasha Gulbiani, Health Research Union, Georgia: *"Hepatitis B knowledge and self-reported testing and vaccination history among high-risk groups in Georgia"*
5. Svitlana Vynogradova, Public Health Center, Ukraine: *"Feasibility and potential for implementing index self-testing in Ukraine"*
6. Zosia Szulz, ECEE Network, Poland: *"TB/HIV Intersectional Stigma and Its Impact on Tuberculosis Infection Management in Central and Eastern Europe: A Scoping Review"*
7. Gabriela Pawlovska, ECEE Network, Poland: *"From Research to Advocacy: Developing a Multilingual Media Content to Support TB Infection"*
8. Barbara Janíková, Podane ruce, Czechia: *"Screening in People with HIV in Central and Eastern Europe"*
9. Barbara Janíková, Podane ruce, Czechia: *"Breaking Barriers in the Czech Republic: A Unique NGO-Led Model of Integrated Harm Reduction and DAA Treatment for PWUDS"*

14:10-14:20: Discussion on challenges and opportunities

14:20-14:35: Tips and tricks for developing scientific manuscripts (Jens Lundgren & Jürgen Rockstroh)

14:35-14:45: Questions from the audience