

## **SINNERS' DISEASE – Directors Statement:**

### **Why this film?**

We think that this film is important not only for Russia. Everywhere in the world, public health service excludes whole groups of people, because they are too poor or their condition is their "own fault". In Europe, intolerance and aggression against marginal groups (drug-users, squatters, Muslims, homosexuals) also quickly develops. The situation in Russia is a warning about what can happen to all of us. Societies are not ready for solidarity anymore. In Russia's case, it is a grievous sign of the country's turn back to its authoritarian past, a development which sometimes is difficult to grasp, but very present in the last years.

Moreover, the AIDS epidemic from Russia is threatening Europe, and with open borders this threat becomes very realistic, especially concerning the growing number of resistant HIV cases, spread among all layers of the population. Russia is not anymore an isolated country as it used to be: millions of Russians live and work in the West, and thousands of Russian tourists come to visit.

For us filmmakers this film is also important to make for a personal reason. We both studied in Russia in 1990's, and we felt this country was in crisis and chaos, but at the same time full of new energy: everything seemed possible. Putin's regime put an end to this development. Free media and civil movements have been suppressed, while the country is being kept stable due to its oil export. More and more people base their decisions on fear.

Of course, Sasha's story appeals to us, because we know her personally. But this is not only her story, but also that of over a million Russians. Here human lives are endangered by extremely conservative politics; this is why we think that this story can appeal to the viewers in many parts of the world.

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