

HIV/AIDS IN EUROPE AND EURASIA 2010

Overview: Eastern Europe and Eurasia¹ (E&E) is currently experiencing one of the fastest-growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world; **over 1.5 million people in the region are living with HIV, a 66% increase from 2001.** HIV in E&E is predominantly transmitted through injecting drug use, accounting for 57% of new HIV cases in the region, but relatively little is being done to support prevention programs for most at risk populations. According to the 2009 UNAIDS report, even though a number of countries in the region have expanded access to antiretroviral therapy, treatment coverage remains relatively low. By December 2008, only 22% of adults in need of antiretroviral therapy were receiving it.

USAID's **programming in the region under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) primarily focuses on reaching high risk populations** by providing assistance to local governments and organizations to improve access to effective and high-quality services. Programming includes prevention of sexual and biomedical transmission, improvement of care for HIV positive people, strengthening of health systems, and policy work to encourage high-level political commitment and to address stigma and discrimination. Assistance is also provided to support Global Fund applications.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

	2001	2008
Population with HIV	900 000	1,500,000
Newly infected adults and children	280 000	1,10,000
Adult HIV prevalence	0.5	0.7
AIDS-related deaths	26,000	87,000

Statistics and graph source: AIDS Epidemic Update 2009, UNAIDS



HIV/AIDS Campaign: USAID/Ukraine

Important HIV/AIDS Issues in Europe and Eurasia

- In the E&E region, the Russian Federation and Ukraine make up almost 90% of all newly reported HIV cases. At 1.6% prevalence, **Ukraine has the highest prevalence rate in Europe.**
- An estimated 3.7 million people currently inject drugs in the region, and roughly one in four are believed to be HIV-infected (UNAIDS 2009). Injecting drug users, however, are the least likely to receive antiretroviral therapy when they are medically eligible.
- **Sexual transmission of HIV is increasing** throughout the region, 42% of transmission in 2007 was reported through sexual transmission (UNAIDS 2009), although evidence suggests that this is still closely tied with injection drug use.
- Official statistics show that **male to male sex as a route of transmission** is a relatively small proportion of new HIV infections (>1%). However, it is believed that the epidemic might be thriving among this group but is being kept hidden and underreported (AVERT website).

¹ Countries include Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Though several countries are now EU members and the Central Asian Region is now managed through USAID's Asia Bureau, the 28 countries are tracked for comparisons and trends.

Examples of USAID HIV/AIDS Programs

The **Georgia** HIV Prevention Project aims to support HIV prevention among high-risk groups in Georgia. The activities focus on: prevention in primary risk groups such as intravenous drug users; men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers; interventions with secondary risk groups most likely to be infected next (youth); and stigma reduction. *Implementer: Research Triangle Institute*

In **Ukraine**, USAID is developing a pilot program of methadone-based Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). Through this pilot, 10 service sites in five regions provide 300 HIV-infected male and female injecting drug users with access to an integrated package of services that includes MAT and related medical, legal, social and psychological care and support. The pilot program will provide Ukraine with a service model for comprehensive care for HIV-infected injection drug users that can be replicated throughout the country. *Implementer: Alliance Ukraine*

A **regional E&E bureau** activity is developing a Medication Assisted Therapy (MAT) Policy Toolkit. The toolkit will include tools and information for advocates and policy makers in the region to support the implementation of MAT for injection drug users as a means of HIV prevention. *Implementer: Futures Group International*

The Support to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Palliative Care Initiatives of Faith-Based Organizations in **Russia** program provides expert technical advice and support to leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church and other religious groups to promote appropriate policies and programs in response to HIV/AIDS. Activities aim to reduce stigma and discrimination, prevent transmission of HIV with a special emphasis on vulnerable youth, and to deliver palliative care, including psycho-social and spiritual support, to people affected by or living with HIV/AIDS. *Implementer: UNDP*

USAID HIV/AIDS Success Stories

- Through USAID-supported programs in **Georgia**, use of shared injecting drug equipment was reported to decrease from 79% (2002) to below 43% (2005) and increased condom use among commercial sex workers from 86.7% (2002) to 94.4% (2005) at the program locations.
- USAID funding allowed government of **Georgia** clinics to offer voluntary testing and counseling, and clinical services for sexually transmitted infections to most at risk populations (MARPS), and supported behavioral surveillance within these groups. The HIV epidemic is mostly concentrated in male injecting drug users (IDUs) in Georgia; IDU sexual partners, female sex workers (FSW) and men who have sex with men (MSM) are the other MARPS in the country. Customer friendly, anonymous and confidential services were accessible for target groups at several service-providing sites; street outreach services and voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) were provided in three major cities; and mobile laboratory van commuted to two project target cities to increase coverage of target groups with VCT services.
- Since 2005, **USAID/Russia**, Johnson & Johnson, HealthRight International, and local partner Doctors to Children have been collaborating on a community reintegration and HIV awareness program for vulnerable youth in St. Petersburg. With support from the St. Petersburg City Administration, the alliance established a municipal drop-in center and an overnight shelter for HIV-positive street youth.
- The mother-to-child HIV transmission rate has been cut in half in **Ukraine** due in part to USAID supported HIV/AIDS programs that directly provided HIV counseling and testing to over 500,000 pregnant women.

For more information on USAID supported HIV programs, please visit:
http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/health/