

## Eastern Europe and Central Asia

### Latest epidemiological trends

- The estimated number of adults and children living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia rose to 1.5 million [1.1–1.9 million] in 2007—almost 90% of those infected live in either the **Russian Federation** (69%) or **Ukraine** (29%). This figure has more than doubled since 2001, when some 650 000 [510 000–1.1 million] were estimated to be living with HIV.
- In 2007, around 110 000 [67 000–180 000] people became HIV-positive, while some 58 000 [41 000–88 000] died of AIDS-related illnesses.
- The largest HIV epidemic in region is in the **Russian Federation**—and it continues to expand, although at a slower pace than in **Ukraine**, where annual new HIV infections have more than doubled since 2001.

### Main modes of HIV transmission

- The region's epidemics are concentrated largely among people who inject drugs, sex workers and their various sexual partners. Of the new HIV cases reported—for which information is available on the mode of transmission—nearly two thirds (62%) were attributed to injecting drug use.
- In the **Russian Federation**, HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs ranges from 3% in Volgograd to more than 70% in Biysk. Prevalence is also high among injecting drug users in **Ukraine**; among surveyed injecting drug users in national diagnostic studies prevalence increased from 11% in 2001 to 17% in 2006.
- As the epidemics in this region evolve, the proportion of women infected with HIV is growing. In 2006, about 40% of newly registered HIV cases in Eastern Europe and Central Asia were among women. In the region overall, it is estimated that some 35% of HIV-positive women were infected through use of contaminated injecting drug equipment, and about 50% acquired HIV during unprotected sex with partners who inject drugs.
- In 2006, less than 1% of newly registered HIV cases (where the mode of transmission was known) were attributed to unprotected sex between men; this is probably an underestimate of the role of this mode of HIV transmission.

### Additional country data<sup>1</sup>

- The annual numbers of newly reported HIV diagnoses are rising in **Azerbaijan**, **Georgia**, **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyzstan**, the **Republic of Moldova**, **Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan**, which now has the largest epidemic in Central Asia.
- Efforts to introduce and, in some instances, scale up harm-reduction programmes in this region continue to progress. In the **Russian Federation**, more than 50 needle- and syringe-exchange projects were operating in 2007, and in **Kazakhstan**, a nationwide programme of more than 120 harm-reduction sites has been in place since 2005. Some

<sup>1</sup> From *Eastern Europe and Central Asia: AIDS epidemic update 2007, regional summary*

countries have introduced pilot projects for treatment with opioid substitutes, including **Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Uzbekistan.**

- The HIV epidemic in the **Russian Federation** is concentrated largely in the country's urban and industrial centres. Nearly 60% of HIV cases reported to date have been in 10 major cities and regions, including the cities of Saint Petersburg and Moscow.
- **Ukraine** has taken substantial steps to limit HIV transmission from mothers to children. In 2006, 95% of all pregnant women were tested for HIV, and 93% of HIV-positive women who gave birth had been receiving antiretroviral prophylaxis to prevent HIV transmission during pregnancy and delivery.
- People who inject drugs account for two thirds of new, reported HIV infections in **Kazakhstan** in 2006. The HIV epidemics in **Kyrgyzstan** and **Tajikistan** are also largely centred on injecting drug use. Only two cases of HIV have been officially reported in **Turkmenistan**, and little is known about the potential for HIV transmission there.
- The HIV epidemic in **Belarus** appears to have stabilized, with the annual number of newly reported HIV diagnoses varying only slightly since 2003, between 713 and 778. Most HIV infections are being reported in and around urban areas, such as the capital of Minsk, and largely among people who inject drugs. More women are also becoming affected by HIV. In wide-scale HIV testing in 2006, 80% of new HIV cases in women were attributed to unsafe sex, up from about 56% in 2003.
- Newly reported HIV cases in the **Republic of Moldova** have more than doubled since 2003, totalling 621 in 2006. Nearly 60% of which were attributed to unprotected sex.

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