

**Ministerial policy dialogue on HIV and related
comorbidities in eastern Europe and central Asia**

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**Mövenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre
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Scope and purpose**Background**

The European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) is the only WHO region where the number of new HIV infections is increasing. In 2016, over 160 000 people were reported as newly diagnosed with HIV in our Region, nearly 80% of them from eastern Europe and central Asia (EECA). Despite the progress achieved in reducing tuberculosis (TB) morbidity and mortality, countries in eastern Europe and central Asia also have a significant burden of TB, particularly drug-resistant TB, as well as viral hepatitis. TB/HIV coinfection has also increased fourfold in the Region over the last decade, meaning that 12% of TB patients are now coinfecting with HIV.

At its 66th session in September 2016, the WHO Regional Committee for Europe endorsed, in its resolution EUR/RC66/R9, the Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region.¹ The Action plan guides Member States in accelerating their response to the HIV epidemic. The goals and targets are in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the multisectoral strategy for 2016–2021 of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the WHO Global health sector strategy on HIV, 2016–2021.

On 25 and 26 September 2017, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, in collaboration with UNAIDS, convened a meeting of HIV programme managers, at which representatives of EECA countries and States not members of the European Union or European Economic Area presented the status of their national HIV strategies and action plans. Many good examples were identified that deserve to be acknowledged as pioneering practices in the Region. Countries reported national efforts to revise and optimize their HIV testing and treatment policies. Several countries have started the “treat all” approach² and others have endorsed new national HIV testing and treatment protocols and/or implemented nationwide innovative interventions, such as self-testing, and increased national funding. Building on the lessons learned from successful interventions and programmes, there is an urgent need to scale up effective preventive measures, early diagnosis and quality treatment and integrated/coordinated care for all, including key populations, to curb the epidemic. In addition, various countries in the EECA region are currently in a process to transition from international donor funding towards national funding of the HIV response. Finding innovative and inclusive mechanisms for financing the HIV response in this context is a pressing topic within the EECA region.

¹ Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2016 (EUR/RC66/9; http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/315649/66wd09e_HIVActionPlan_160560.pdf, accessed 17 January 2018).

² Antiretroviral treatment is recommended for all people with confirmed HIV infection, however severely affected their immune system, i.e. regardless of their CD4 count.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe in collaboration with the Government of the Netherlands and UNAIDS will convene a high-level meeting entitled “Ministerial policy dialogue on HIV and related comorbidities in eastern Europe and central Asia” on 23 July 2018, back-to-back with the 22nd International AIDS Conference (Amsterdam, Netherlands, 23–27 July 2018).

Aims and Objectives

- to present the countries’ pioneering approaches to sustainable, innovative, and evidence based response to HIV and related comorbidities and discuss the opportunities to scale these up in line with the resolution EUR/RC66/R9;
- to exchange information on sustainable financing;
- to launch the compendium of good practices for the implementation of the Action plan for the health sector response to HIV in the WHO European Region.

Expected outcomes:

- Good practices on political commitment in response to HIV and related comorbidities are shared among countries.
- A report of the event including conclusions and the next steps is prepared