



Press release
Stockholm, Copenhagen, 24 March 2009

**World Tuberculosis Day 2009:
Every hour, 55 people are diagnosed with TB in Europe, new report says**

According to newly published data, there were 477 327 tuberculosis (TB) cases reported in Europe¹ in 2007. This is the equivalent of 55 cases of TB diagnosed every hour. Worryingly, about 43 600 of the new TB cases were thought to be multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), which tend to emerge in locations with poorly managed TB control programmes. TB control programmes in Europe struggling to halt and reverse the epidemic achieved only a 73% treatment success rate among new cases.

This new data has been released on World Tuberculosis Day 2009 by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe in their first joint *Tuberculosis Surveillance Report*.

The new data show that most countries in the Region have continued to experience a steady decrease in overall TB notification. But the situation remains heterogeneous, with figures ranging from fewer than 5 new TB cases per 100 000 population in Iceland to over 100 per 100 000 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Romania.

The report demonstrates that the incidence of MDR-TB remains very high in the Region. Twenty seven high-priority countries collectively account for 86% of the estimated MDR-TB cases in the world². Of these countries, 15 are in the WHO European Region.

In order to build the commitment needed to dramatically expand action to address TB problems in countries with high burdens of MDR- and extensively drug-resistant (XDR)-TB, WHO is holding a ministerial meeting in Beijing, China from 1 to 3 April 2009. Ministries of health from across the world will discuss ways of achieving better and more rapid diagnosis, strengthened laboratory networks and proper first- and second-line drug management.

Speaking today, ECDC's Director Zsuzsanna Jakab said, "Although the overall number of TB cases being reported in the European Union (EU) has declined slightly, the proportion of MDR-TB being found is cause for concern. More attention needs to be paid to ensure early diagnosis and treatment, as well as equity of access to treatment for vulnerable populations."

"Health systems face serious challenges in responding to TB and achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6: to have halted and begun to reverse the incidence of TB by 2015. We have to make significant efforts if this Goal is to be met. We must not fail in this endeavour,"

¹ The 53 countries of the WHO European Region, plus Liechtenstein.

² *Global tuberculosis control: surveillance, planning, financing : WHO report 2008*. Geneva. World Health Organization, 2008 (http://www.who.int/entity/tb/publications/global_report/2008/pdf/fullreport.pdf, accessed 23 March 2009).

says Dr Nata Menabde, WHO Deputy Regional Director for Europe. “Two years ago, the 53 WHO European Member States signed the Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis³ and committed themselves to providing more political support and resources to control the disease. This year we start assessing the progress made towards meeting the commitments set in Berlin, which should bring closer us to achieving the MDG targets.”

In addition to the surveillance report, detailed data and an analysis of the TB situation in each Member State are available on both the ECDC web site (www.ecdc.europa.eu) and the WHO Regional Office for Europe web site (www.euro.who.int/tb).

Link to ECDC special web page on Tuberculosis:

http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/Health_Topics/tuberculosis/special_report/special_report.aspx

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³ *The Berlin Declaration on Tuberculosis*. Berlin, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2008 (<http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E90833.pdf>, accessed 23 March 2009).