

## PRESS RELEASE

# No signs for a decline in HIV transmission across Europe: new ECDC–WHO/Euro report.

Stockholm, 30 November 2011

**Marking World AIDS Day 2011, ECDC and the WHO Regional Office for Europe release their joint publication *HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe 2010*. The new data raises concern about the continuing transmission of HIV in Europe. In 2010, 27.116 newly diagnosed HIV infections were reported across the European Union and the European Economic Area (EU/EEA) indicating an increase of around 4% compared to 2009<sup>1</sup>. In contrast, the steady decrease of AIDS cases continued in 2010 with 4.666 reported cases in the EU/EEA region<sup>2</sup>. This constitutes a decrease of nearly 50% in reported AIDS cases from 2004 to 2010. The HIV epidemics are remarkably distinct in individual countries but overall, HIV continues to disproportionately affect certain key populations, in particular men who have sex with men, persons originating from countries with generalised HIV epidemics and people who inject drugs.**

At a meeting in the European Parliament in Brussels on the eve of World AIDS Day, **ECDC Director Marc Sprenger** stressed: *“We need to demonstrate the political courage to focus on key populations most affected by HIV and to address the issue of late diagnosis of HIV infection which often leads to delayed treatment and higher rates of AIDS-related morbidity and mortality. In this scenario, interventions to control the epidemic should be evidence-based and customised to the country and geographical area: only the knowledge of the characteristics of the epidemic in specific regions allows for effective responses.”*

The new surveillance data shows that across the wider European region the main transmission mode varies distinctively, illustrating the wide diversity of the epidemic in Europe. *“The joint WHO/Europe–ECDC surveillance on HIV/AIDS provides the basis for tailored responses across the whole region. The collaboration our organisations have been fostering since 2008 has been strengthened each year, and the fact that we have more countries reporting than ever before demonstrates this success”,* says **WHO Regional Director for Europe, Zsuzsanna Jakab**.

In the EU/EEA, HIV is mainly transmitted by sex between men, followed by heterosexual contact. Around one third of the cases reported to be heterosexually acquired were diagnosed in persons originating from countries with generalised HIV/AIDS epidemics. In this context, the [ECDC guidance on HIV testing](#) and the joint [ECDC–EMCDDA guidance Prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs](#) provide further assistance: both evidence-based guidance reports assist in shaping effective national HIV/AIDS policies as both people who inject drugs as well as HIV positive persons who are unaware of their infection are main populations at risk for transmission of HIV.

**ECDC Director Marc Sprenger** emphasises: *“In our joint ECDC–EMCDDA guidance we show that a pragmatic public health prevention approach can have a strong effect on reducing the spread of infections. The challenge will be to ensure that this understanding is translated into effective services at national level for those who inject drugs, especially in times of economic challenges. To achieve this, we need closer co-operation between all sectors of health and involvement of all parties across Europe.”*

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**World AIDS Day**

World AIDS Day was introduced by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1988 and is observed on 1 December each year to raise awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by HIV infection.

**ECDC HIV testing guidance**

The ECDC HIV testing guidance helps countries in their efforts to identify HIV infections early: it provides key information on why, where, how and when to test for HIV and aims to inform existing national HIV testing strategies in Member States to adopt a strategic, evidence-based approach to develop and implement effective HIV testing procedures.

**ECDC–EMCDDA guidance *Prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs***

Seven interventions, one aim: no infections among people who inject drugs. Based on expert opinion, best practice and the most robust evidence available ECDC and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and drug Addiction (EMCDDA) have joined forces to identify seven interventions to reduce and prevent infectious diseases in this vulnerable population.

**LINKS:**

**HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe 2010** (available from 30 November 2011):

[http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/111129\\_SUR\\_Annual\\_HIV\\_Report.pdf](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/111129_SUR_Annual_HIV_Report.pdf)

The joint **ECDC–EMCDDA guidance *Prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs*** (long and in brief version):

[http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC\\_DispForm.aspx?ID=757](http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=757)

**Evidence for the effectiveness of interventions to prevent infections among people who inject drugs**

**Part 1:** Needle and syringe programmes and other interventions for preventing hepatitis C, HIV and injecting risk behaviour

[http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC\\_DispForm.aspx?ID=783](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=783)

**Part 2:** Drug treatment for preventing hepatitis C, HIV and injecting risk behaviour

[http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC\\_DispForm.aspx?ID=782](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=782)

**ECDC guidance on HIV testing** is available in a long version and as summary on our website:

[http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC\\_DispForm.aspx?ID=588](http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=588)

The supporting **evidence synthesis for the ECDC guidance on HIV testing** on our website:

[http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC\\_DispForm.aspx?ID=591](http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=591)

**ECDC programme on HIV/AIDS, Sexually Transmitted and Blood-borne infections:**

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/diseaseprogrammes/hash/Pages/index.aspx>

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The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is an EU agency tasked with identifying assessing and communicating threats to human health posed by infectious diseases.

It supports the work of public health authorities in the EU and EEA/EFTA Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> No data available from Austria and Liechtenstein

<sup>2</sup> No data available from Sweden and Liechtenstein