



PRESS RELEASE

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European HIV Conference 2011 takes place in Estonia

Registration to the European HIV Conference with a special focus on the accomplishments and challenges concerning HIV prevention, treatment and care in Eastern European countries has been opened. The Conference will take place in Tallinn, Estonia, from 25th to 27th of May, 2011. It is expected to bring up to 500 public health experts to Tallinn from nearly 53 countries of European Region.

The event is organised by the Estonian National Institute for Health Development in cooperation with World Health Organisation, United Nations Offices on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and other international organisations. European HIV Conference 2011 has been funded by the European Health programme 2008-2013.

„It is generally known that many Eastern European countries experienced the fastest growing HIV-epidemics in the world in the last decade,“ says Dr Maris Jesse, Director of the National Institute for Health Development „By today, experience has been accrued in this European region which will be of help tackling the disease globally. As a response to the growing need to share best practice and expertise we hold this open forum of public health experts to strengthen cooperation with different stakeholders and organisations.“

HIV infection remains one of the main public health threats posed by communicable diseases in European Union and wider European Region. HIV has increased 33 % in the number of reported cases of HIV infection, from 2000 to 2008, leading to an average of 57 cases per million citizens. In 2008 the highest proportion of cases were reported in Eastern European countries (179 cases per million citizens) – two times higher in comparison to Western European countries (72 cases per million citizens) and ten times higher than in Central European countries (15 cases per million citizens).

According to European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) the highest proportion of cases were reported in Estonia (410 cases per million citizens), followed by Latvia (160 cases per million citizens) and United Kingdom (20 cases per million citizens). The lowest rates were reported by Slovakia (10 cases per million citizens) and Romania (8 cases per million citizens). A sizable proportion (an estimated 30 %) of people living in the European region do not even know they have HIV.

The focus of the Conference is on people injecting drugs, who are the major risk group in Eastern Europe in terms of HIV infection. Seminars and discussion groups will examine prevention and health care measures directed to the particular target group. HIV testing and systematic availability of health care services to infected persons are important discussion topics. One of the expected outcomes of the event is to agree upon recommendations to the European Commission, European governments, international organisations and other initiatives on how to improve collaboration between countries in the region.

The Conference welcomes political and community leaders, representatives of EU, WHO and other international organisations, scientists, HIV programme managers, media covering HIV issues, people living with HIV and others who have been impacted.

Registration and further information to the Conference is available at www.aids2011.com and also in Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/aids2011>

Sincerely Yours,

AIDS2011 Secretariat

E-mail at secretariat@aids2011.com.