

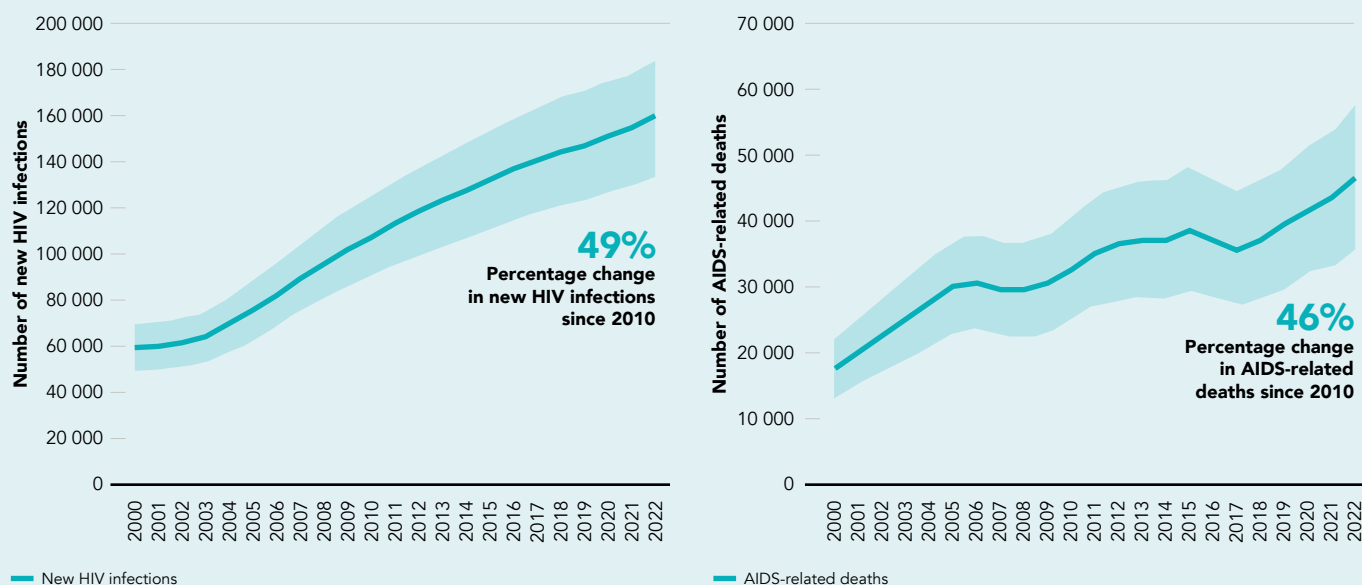
Eastern Europe and central Asia



A challenging legal environment, human rights violations and military conflict are hindering the HIV response. The region is experiencing the sharpest rise in numbers of new HIV infections in the world (49% increase since 2010) and a continuing increase in numbers of AIDS-related deaths (46% increase since 2010) (Figure 7.1). Median HIV prevalence ranges from an estimated 1.2% among adults (aged 15–49 years) in the general population to 7.2% among people who inject drugs (data from 13 countries) (Figure 7.2).

At the regional level, coverage of HIV prevention and treatment services remains insufficient, with only 51% of people living with HIV receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2022. Median coverage of HIV prevention services (receiving at least two HIV prevention services from a specific list of services) was 66.3% among sex workers (eight reporting countries), 51.2% among gay men and other men who have sex with men (seven reporting countries), 49.3% among people who inject drugs (nine reporting countries), and 77.0% among transgender people (three reporting countries).

Figure 7.1 Numbers of new annual HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths, eastern Europe and central Asia, 2000–2022



Source: UNAIDS epidemiological estimates, 2023 (<https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>).

2022 DATA

- **49%** increase in new HIV infections since 2010
- **46%** increase in AIDS-related deaths since 2010
- People living with HIV:
2.0 million [1.8 million–2.1 million]
- New HIV infections:
160 000 [140 000–180 000]
- AIDS-related deaths:
48 000 [38 000–58 000]

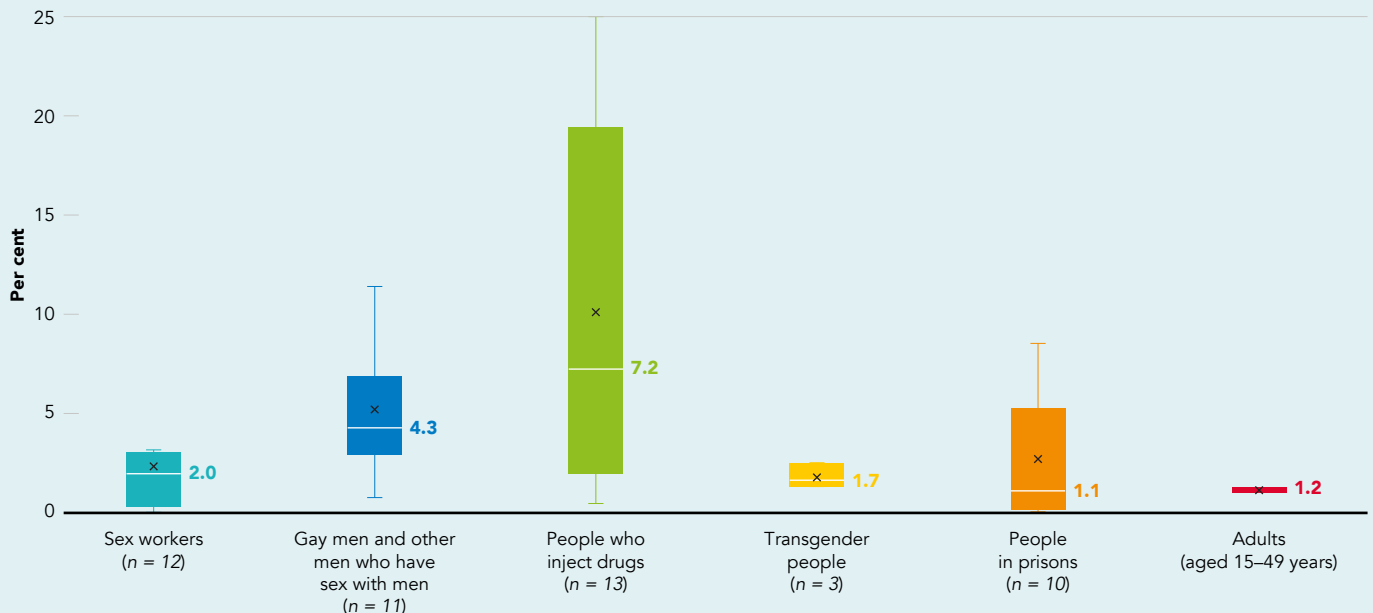
Testing and treatment cascade (all ages):

- % of people living with HIV who know their HIV status:
62 [56–68]
- % of people living with HIV who are on treatment:
51 [46–56]
- % of people living with HIV who are virally suppressed:
48 [43–53]

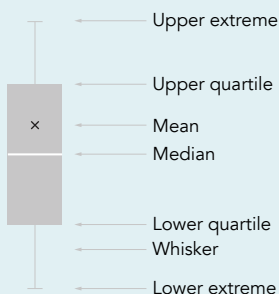
Financing of the HIV response:

- Resource availability for HIV:
US\$ 1.5 billion [60% gap to meet the 2025 target]

Figure 7.2 HIV prevalence among key populations compared with adults (aged 15–49 years), reporting countries in eastern Europe and central Asia, 2018–2022



How to read



The median HIV prevalence among countries that reported these data in eastern Europe and central Asia was:

- 2.0%** among sex workers.
- 4.3%** among gay men and other men who have sex with men.
- 7.2%** among people who inject drugs.
- 1.7%** among transgender people.
- 1.1%** among people in prisons.

The estimated HIV prevalence among adults (aged 15–49 years) is **1.2% [1.1–1.3%]**.

Sources: UNAIDS Global AIDS Monitoring, 2023; UNAIDS epidemiological estimates, 2023 (<https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>).

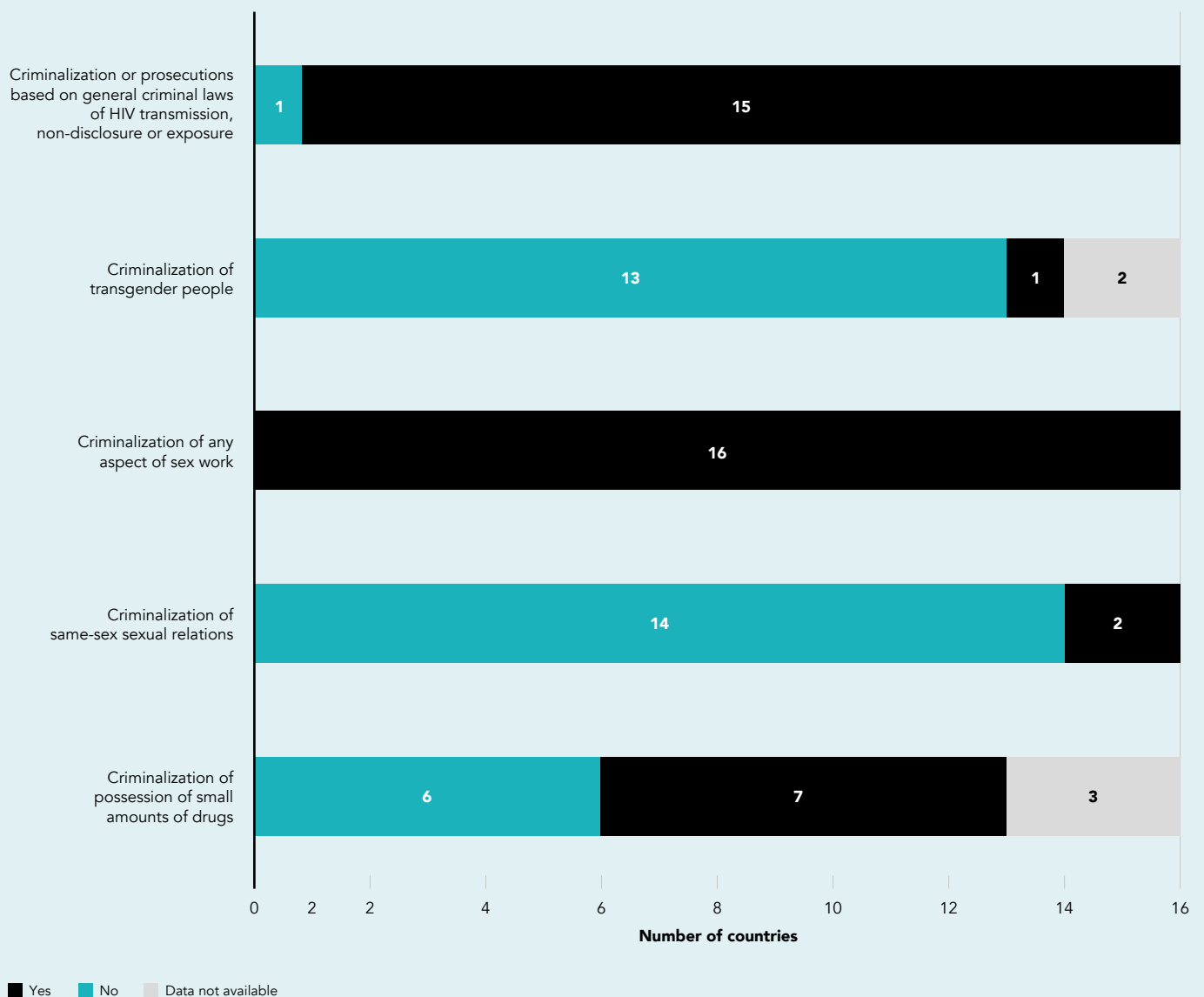
Notes: n = number of countries. Total number of reporting countries = 16.

The adult prevalence uncertainty bounds define the range within which the true value lies (if it can be measured). Narrow bounds indicate that an estimate is precise, while wide bounds indicate greater uncertainty regarding the estimate.

Unsafe injecting practices are a key factor in the region's epidemic. Despite harm reduction programmes being widely integrated into national AIDS plans across the region, no country provides more than 50% opioid agonist maintenance programmes, and no country achieved the recommendation of distributing more than 200 needles and syringes per person who injects drugs. Importantly, the Republic of Moldova has expanded comprehensive harm reduction services across all of its 17 prisons.

Existing punitive laws and policies targeting people living with HIV and people from almost all key populations continue to be barriers. Recent legislative changes, including those in the Russian Federation that restrict human rights and civic space (1), have further jeopardized the provision of essential HIV services (Figure 7.3).

Figure 7.3 Countries with discriminatory and punitive laws, eastern Europe and central Asia, 2023



Source: UNAIDS National Commitments and Policy Instrument 2017–2022 (<http://lawsandpolicies.unaids.org/>); supplemented by additional sources (see references in regional factsheet).

The impact of military conflict and the related humanitarian crisis has profoundly affected HIV response efforts in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, with over eight million refugees fleeing across Europe (2). A resilient partnership of governments, civil society and donors has ensured continuing access to HIV services in countries hosting refugees and migrants. Since the beginning of the conflict, for example, about 8500 refugees affected by or living with HIV from Ukraine have had full access to public HIV, TB and harm reduction services in the Republic of Moldova.¹

The sustainability of the HIV response remains a major concern. A range of challenges, including the threat of an energy crisis, rising living costs, widening inequalities and a restrictive fiscal environment, have presented additional barriers to an effective HIV response and have strained the already limited domestic resources available for the AIDS response in the region. An economic downturn, insufficient domestic spending, and decreasing availability of civic space for communities have further emphasized the need for additional funding to reverse the region's HIV epidemic. Although HIV treatment is funded mostly with domestic sources, prevention services rely heavily on donor support and are not financially sustainable in the long term.

Legislative change and reform of discriminatory laws, closing the treatment gap, scaling up access to new technologies and modern medicines at lower prices, supporting community-led responses, and advocating for increased domestic funding are crucial to curb the region's growing HIV epidemic.

¹ Personal communication with UNAIDS Country Office in the Republic of Moldova, 29 June 2023.

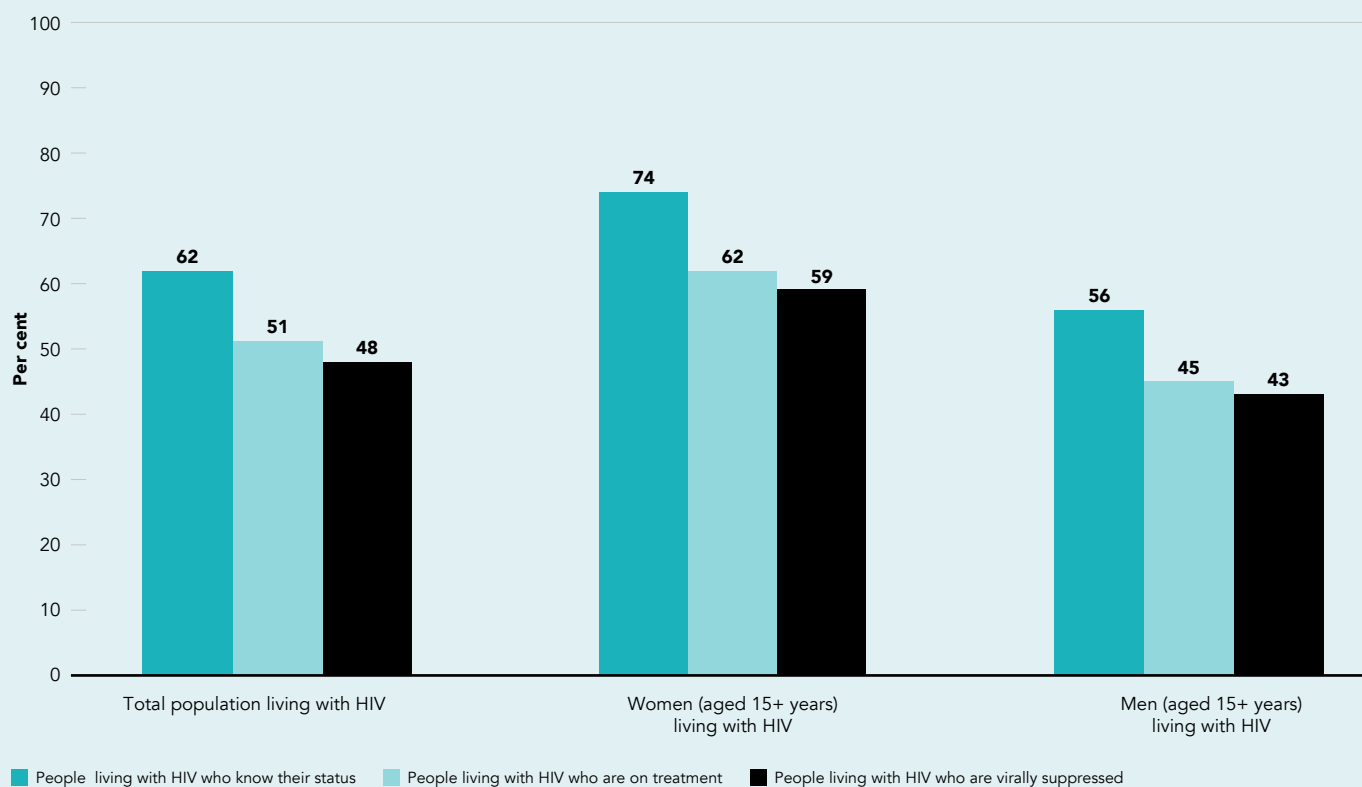
Table 7.1 Reported estimated size of key populations, eastern Europe and central Asia, 2018–2022

Country	National adult population (aged 15–49 years) for 2022 or relevant year	Sex workers	Sex workers as percentage of adult population (aged 15–49 years)	Gay men and other men who have sex with men	Gay men and other men who have sex with men as percentage of adult population (aged 15–49 years)	People who inject drugs	People who inject drugs as percentage of adult population (aged 15–49 years)	Transgender people	Transgender people as percentage of adult population (aged 15–49 years)	People in prisons	People in prisons as percentage of adult population (aged 15–49 years)
Albania	1 300 000									2300	0.17%
Armenia	1 300 000	8100	0.54%	22 700	1.51%	14 000	0.94%	1000	0.07%		
Azerbaijan	5 400 000	31 900	0.58%			60 300	1.10%				
Belarus	4 300 000	18 600	0.43%	32 000	0.73%	80 000	1.83%				
Georgia	1 700 000			18 500	0.99%	49 700	2.94%			10 000	0.59%
Kazakhstan	9 200 000	21 500	0.24%			79 900	0.86%				
Montenegro	290 000										
North Macedonia	1 000 000					6800	0.64%			2300	0.20%
Republic of Moldova	1 200 000	15 800	1.23%	14 600	1.14%	27 500	2.14%				
Tajikistan	5 200 000	18 400	0.36%			18 200					
Ukraine	16 200 000	86 600	0.41%	179 000	0.85%	350 000	1.66%	12 800	0.08%	41 800	0.26%
Estimated global median proportion as per cent of adult population (15–49)^a			0.43%		1.00%		1.38%		0.06%		-

■ National population size estimate
■ Local population size estimate
■ Insufficient data
■ No data

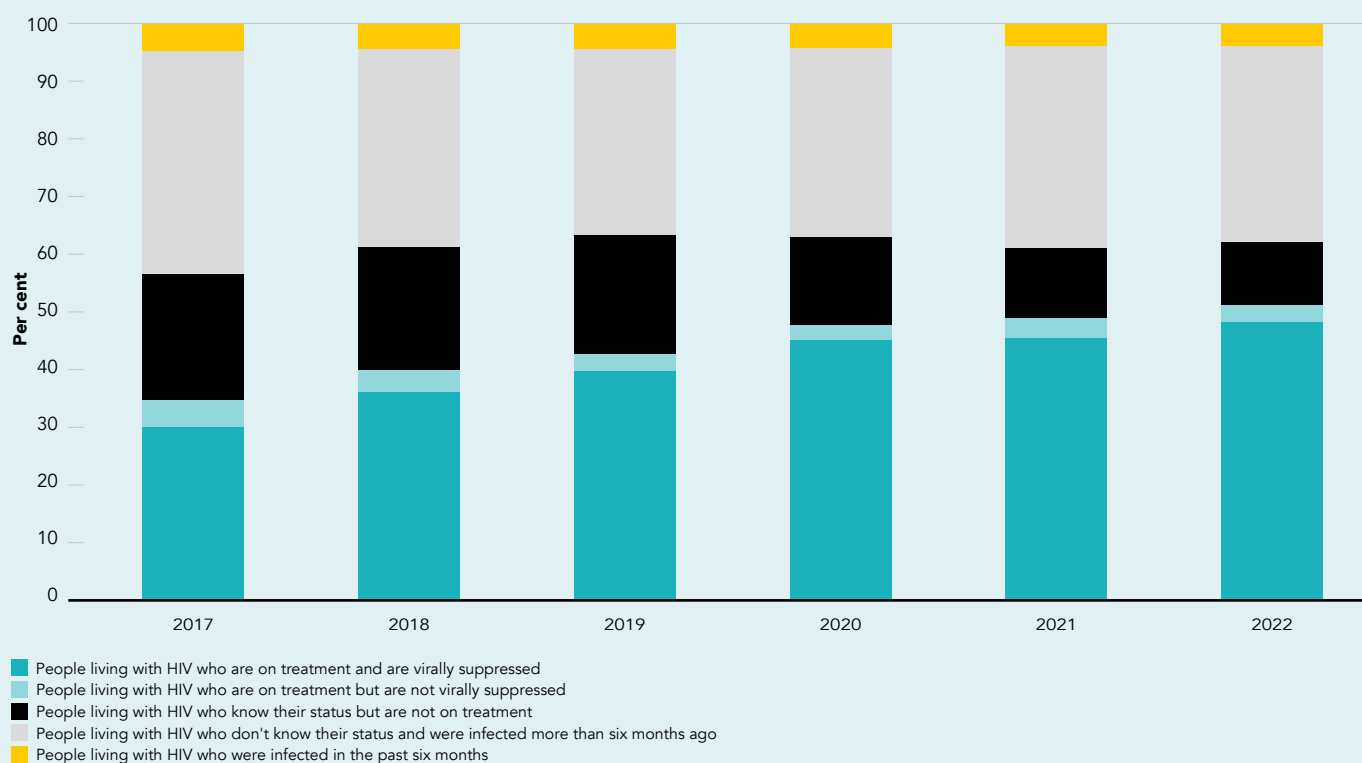
Source: UNAIDS Global AIDS Monitoring, 2023 (<https://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>); Spectrum DemProj module, 2023; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition.
^a Guide for updating Spectrum HIV estimates, UNAIDS 2023 (<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhivtools.unaids.org%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F73D-Guide-for-updating-Spectrum-HIV-estimates.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK>).
 Note 1: Estimates shown are government-provided estimates reported for 2018–2022. Additional and alternative estimates may be available from different sources, including the Key Populations Atlas (<https://kpatlas.unaids.org/>), academic publications or institutional documents.
 Note 2: The regions covered by the local population size estimate are as follows:
 Tajikistan: Six sites.

Figure 7.4 HIV testing and treatment cascade, by age and sex, eastern Europe and central Asia, 2022



Source: UNAIDS special analysis of epidemiological estimates, 2023.

Figure 7.5 Distribution of people living with HIV by recent infection, knowledge of status, treatment and viral load suppression, adults (aged 15+ years), eastern Europe and central Asia, 2017–2022



Source: UNAIDS special analysis of epidemiological estimates, 2023.

Table 7.2 Laws and policies scorecard, eastern Europe and central Asia, 2023

Country	Criminalization of transgender people ^a	Criminalization of sex work ^b	Criminalization of same-sex sexual acts in private	Criminalization of possession of small amounts of drugs ^c	Laws criminalizing transmission of, non-disclosure of or exposure to HIV transmission	Laws or policies restricting the entry, stay and residence of people living with HIV ³	Parental consent for adolescents to access HIV testing
Albania	1	1	1	2	1		1
Armenia	1	1	1	2	1		4
Azerbaijan	1	5	14	1	1		2
Belarus	1	1	1	1	1		2
Bosnia and Herzegovina		6	14		13		
Georgia	1	1	1	1	1		1
Kazakhstan	1	15	1	1	1		8
Kyrgyzstan	1	1	1	1	1		1
Montenegro	4	4	4	4	7		4
North Macedonia		10	14		13		
Republic of Moldova	1	1	1	1	1		1
Russian Federation	4	17	14	16	7		4
Tajikistan	2	1	1	1	1		1
Turkmenistan	9	11	14		7		
Ukraine	1	1	1	1	1		1
Uzbekistan	1	12	1	2	1		2

Criminalization of transgender people

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Criminalization of sex work

- Any criminalization or punitive regulation of sex work
- Sex work is not subject to punitive regulations or is not criminalized
- Data not available

Criminalization of same-sex sexual acts in private

- Death penalty
- Imprisonment (14 years–life, up to 14 years) or no penalty specified
- Laws penalizing same-sex sexual acts have been decriminalized or never existed, or no specific legislation
- Data not available

Criminalization of possession of small amounts of drugs

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Laws criminalizing transmission of, non-disclosure of or exposure to HIV transmission

- Yes
- No, but prosecutions exist based on general criminal laws
- No
- Data not available

Laws or policies restricting the entry, stay and residence of people living with HIV

- Deport, prohibit short- and/or long-stay and require HIV testing or disclosure for some permits
- Prohibit short- and/or long-stay and require HIV testing or disclosure for some permits
- Require HIV testing or disclosure for some permits
- No restrictions

Parental consent for adolescents to access HIV testing

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Country	Mandatory HIV testing for marriage, work or residence permits or for certain groups	Laws protecting against discrimination on the basis of HIV status	Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for sex work ^d	Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for sexual orientation ^d	Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for gender identity ^d	Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for people who inject drugs ^d
Albania	1	1				
Armenia	1	1	1	1	2	2
Azerbaijan	1	2				4
Belarus	1	1	2	2	1	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina						
Georgia	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kazakhstan	1	1	1	1	1	1
Kyrgyzstan	1	1			1	1
Montenegro	4	2				4
North Macedonia						
Republic of Moldova	1	1	1	1	1	2
Russian Federation	4					
Tajikistan	1	1	2	2	1	2
Turkmenistan						
Ukraine	1	1	2	1	1	1
Uzbekistan	1	2				

Mandatory HIV testing for marriage, work or residence permits or for certain groups

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for sex work

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for gender identity

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Laws protecting against discrimination on the basis of HIV status

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for sexual orientation

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Constitutional or other non-discrimination provisions for people who inject drugs

- Yes
- No
- Data not available

Notes: ^aLaws criminalizing transgender people refers to laws that criminalize the gender expression of transgender and gender diverse people, including laws against cross-dressing or impersonating the opposite sex.

^bCriminalization of sex work refers to criminalization of any aspect of sex work, including buying sexual services, selling sexual services, ancillary activities associated with buying or selling sexual services, and profiting from organizing or managing sex work.

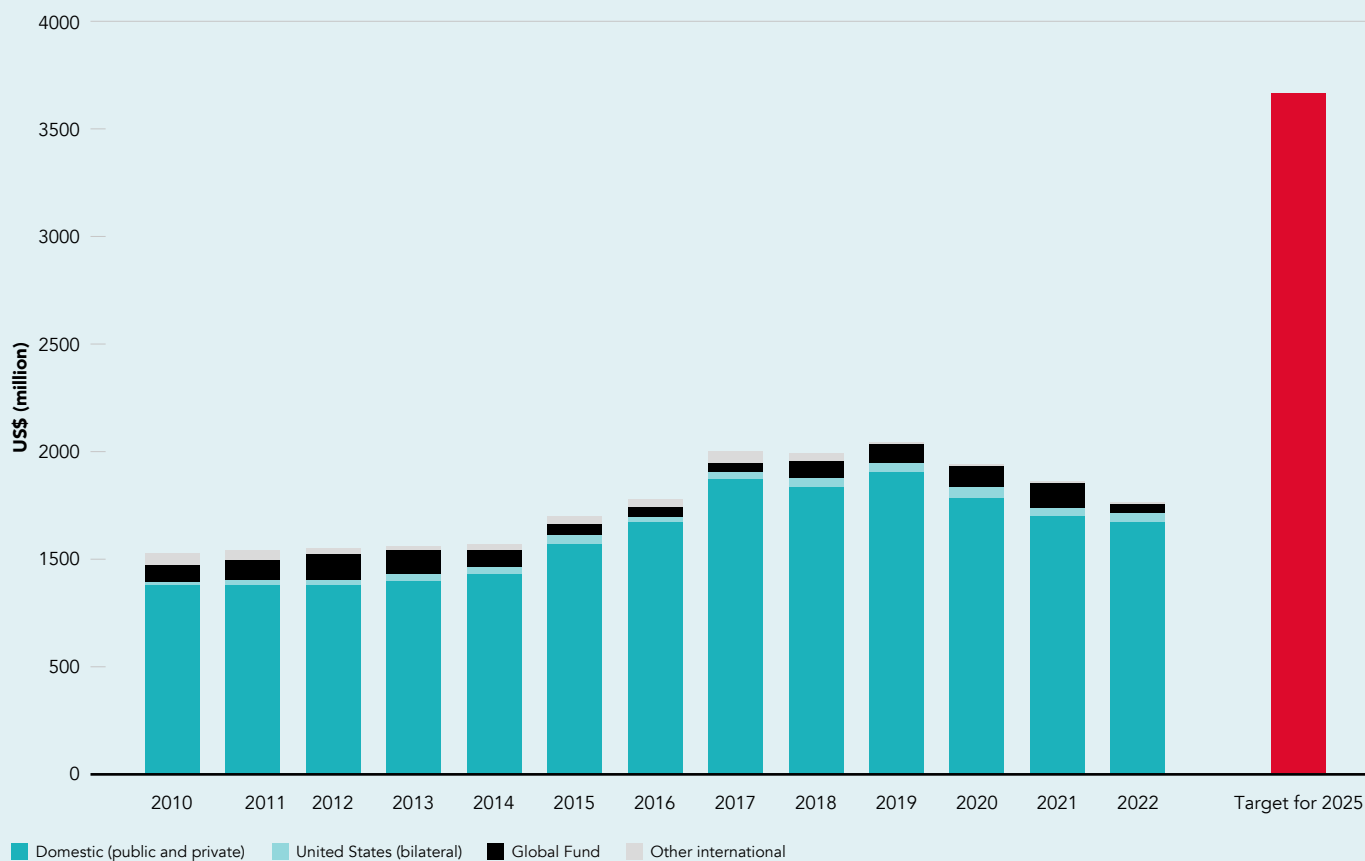
^cCriminalization of possession of small amounts of drugs refers to the criminalization of possession of any quantity of drugs, including possession of a quantity of drugs sufficient only for personal use. A country is still considered to criminalize possession of small amounts of drugs, even if use or possession of marijuana has been decriminalized.

^dConstitutional or other non-discrimination provisions refer to whether constitutional prohibitions of discrimination have been interpreted to include discrimination on the grounds of sex work/sexual orientation/gender identity/drug use or dependency by courts and/or government policy, and/or whether there are other legislative non-discrimination provisions specifying sex work/sexual orientation/gender identity/drug use or dependency.

Source:

- 1 UNAIDS National Commitments and Policy Instrument 2022. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; 2022 (<https://lawsandpolicies.unaids.org/>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 2 UNAIDS National Commitments and Policy Instrument 2021. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; 2021 (<https://lawsandpolicies.unaids.org/>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 3 United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Development Programme. Explainer: still not welcome: HIV-related travel restrictions. Geneva: United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS; 2019 (https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/hiv-related-travel-restrictions-explainer_en.pdf, accessed 6 July 2023).
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- 6 Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sarajevo: Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. (<https://rm.coe.int/bih-criminal-code-consolidated-text/16806415c8>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 7 Cameron S, Bernard EJ. Advancing HIV justice 3: growing the global movement against HIV criminalisation. Amsterdam: HIV Justice Network; 2019 (<https://www.hivjustice.net/publication/advancing3/>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 8 Order of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 20, 2020 No. 285/2020, Chapter 2: Articles 9.1 and 9.2. Astana: Government of Kazakhstan (<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/112718/140961/F-606983908/KAZ-112718.pdf>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 9 Chiam Z, Duffy S, Gonzalez Gil M, et al. Trans legal mapping report 2019: recognition before the law. Geneva: ILGA World; 2020 (https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_World_Trans_Legal_Mapping_Report_2019_EN.pdf, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 10 Criminal Code of North Macedonia: Article 191. Skopje: Government of North Macedonia ([https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/66834/135908/F-1025739791/MKD-66834%20\(EN\).pdf](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/MONOGRAPH/66834/135908/F-1025739791/MKD-66834%20(EN).pdf), accessed 6 July 2023).
- 11 Criminal Code of Turkmenistan: Articles 138–142. Ashgabat: Government of Turkmenistan (<https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text/330150>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 12 Criminal Code of Uzbekistan: Article 131. Tashkent: Government of Uzbekistan (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_127504.pdf, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 13 Database. Amsterdam: HIV Justice Network (<https://www.hivjustice.net>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 14 Mendos LR, Botha K, Lelis RC, et al. State-sponsored homophobia 2020: global legislation overview update. Geneva: ILGA World; 2020 (https://ilga.org/downloads/ILGA_World_State_Sponsored_Homophobia_report_global_legislation_overview_update_December_2020.pdf, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 15 Criminal Code: Article 271. Astana: Government of Kazakhstan (https://adilet.zan.kz/eng/docs/K970000167_, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 16 The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, No. 63Fz of June 13, 1996: Article 228, amended in 2012. Moscow: Government of the Russian Federation (<http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ru/ru080en.pdf>, accessed 6 July 2023).
- 17 The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, No. 63Fz of June 13, 1996: Article 241. Moscow: Government of the Russian Federation (<http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ru/ru080en.pdf>, accessed 6 July 2023).

Figure 7.6 Resource availability for HIV, eastern Europe and central Asia, 2010–2022, and estimated resource needs for HIV by 2025



Source: UNAIDS financial estimates and projections, 2023 (<http://hivfinancial.unaids.org/hivfinancialdashboards.html>); Stover J, Glaubius R, Teng Y, Kelly S, Brown T, Hallett TB et al. Modelling the epidemiological impact of the UNAIDS 2025 targets to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. *PLoS Med.* 2021;18(10):e1003831.
 Note: the resource estimates are presented in constant 2019 US dollars.

References

- 1 Latest updates. Geneva: ILGA World (<https://database.ilga.org/latest-updates>), accessed 17 July 2023).
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