

Theme statement

European Testing Week 2025

Reaching migrants and mobile populations with testing services and related prevention and care for infectious diseases is key to reaching global targets by 2030.

Health, and access to healthcare, is a fundamental human right for all, including migrants and mobile populations!

The European Testing Week's annual theme for 2025 is focused on increasing testing and linkage to care among migrants and mobile populations. It provides an opportunity to put focus on the barriers that prevent migrants from accessing the services they need and that have contributed to an increase in HIV diagnoses among migrant populations in the last 10 years.

Migrants and mobile populations often face specific vulnerabilities, which put them at increased risk of contracting infectious diseases. Moreover, various structural barriers lead to unequal access to healthcare for these communities, including limited or no access to testing and treatment for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs, resulting in poorer health outcomes.

In 2023, migrants accounted for almost half of new HIV diagnoses in the European Union and European Economic Area (EU/EEA)¹. And as an example, the number of HIV diagnoses among migrant MSM increased by 38% between 2014 and 2023. For hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, 38% of all new HBV diagnoses, reported with information available from 24 EU/EEA countries in 2022, were reported as imported infections (defined as infections acquired in a different country from where it was reported). For hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection, among 25 EU/EEA countries with available data on imported infection status in 2022, 19% were reported as imported. For tuberculosis (TB), one third (33%) of TB cases reported in the EU/EEA in 2022 were of foreign origin compared with 4.9% in the non-EU/EEA countries. Moreover, data have suggested that late diagnoses of HIV, TB, hepatitis B/C, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) could be more common among migrants, leading to poorer health outcomes and increased transmission within migrant communities². Some migrant women are subjected to interpersonal violence, poverty and poor living conditions which further prevent them from seeking testing services. Migrants and mobile populations with HIV in Europe generally carry a higher risk for developing AIDS-defining conditions, treatment discontinuation, loss to follow-up and virological failure compared with the general population².

Overlapping migration patterns present urgent public health challenges, particularly around access to care, continuity of services, and ensuring that testing and prevention strategies reach those most

¹ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/hiv-aids-surveillance-europe-2024-2023-data>

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2468266722001748>

affected and mobile across borders. In addition, access to HIV, viral hepatitis, STIs and TB prevention, testing and treatment services for undocumented migrants is not universally guaranteed in the EU/EEA countries, hampering access to services for this group and potentially contributing to onward transmission amongst migrants, mobile populations, and in the broader community. Many migrants are excluded from national health programs, and public health interventions often lack tailored outreach or culturally sensitive and competent services. Furthermore, stigma and discrimination, within and toward migrant communities, as well as fears that positive test results can sabotage asylum status all pose additional barriers for people to seek and access the services, they need³.

To reach global targets and eliminate these infections as public health threats, countries within the European region must adopt inclusive, equitable, and evidence-based approaches that center on the health rights and lived experiences of migrants and mobile populations. Effective strategies must include universal access to prevention, testing, and treatment programmes and services, regardless of legal status, investment in culturally appropriate health education, strong community engagement and peer-led outreach, removal of administrative barriers and the integration of migrant health needs into funded national prevention and control strategies.

The following actions are well documented, highlighted in European guidance and can help plan specific European Testing Week activities:

Focus on the policy level

- The structural barriers that prevent migrants from accessing testing, prevention and care services require changes at the policy and legislative level. Advocate for migrants to have access to low threshold services, regardless of their residency or migration status.
- Advocate to guarantee that migrants' health data provided for national health systems is not accessible to or used for immigration enforcement purposes.

Develop a holistic, integrated and multi-lingual approach

- Advocate for development of a holistic migrant health strategy cutting across disease areas.
- Seek to establish links between health and other services, such as social services, to ensure equitable access to migrant-tailored, non-stigmatising and culturally appropriate health services in languages spoken among target groups.
- Establish formal networks and collaborations between healthcare facilities, NGOs, social services and the third sector. The latter can facilitate care retention and overall better provision of care.

Establish culturally competent outreach services in communities

- Ensure the provision of services developed and provided by members of the target group, including the use of cultural and linguistic mediators. This can reduce levels of suspicion (e.g., in the context of testing) among some migrants, levels of stigma, and the delivery of culturally appropriate services.
- Develop migrant-sensitive interventions in partnership with civil society and community-based organisations led by peer migrants and refugees, ensuring culturally competent and targeted interventions as well as empowerment of migrant groups.

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35460600/>

- Enhance the capacity of community organisations working directly with migrants and mobile populations who have the expertise and knowledge on how and where to engage these groups and involve them in testing.

Use mobile and digital health solutions

- Make use of mobile and digital solutions, such as mobile clinics, virtual consultations, and digital platforms for testing and other services where possible, to provide greater flexibility and reduce the stigma associated with accessing services.

Resources

1) Evidence for the need to increase screening

- Prevention and treatment of infectious diseases in migrants in Europe in the era of universal health coverage
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2468266722001748>)
- HIV among migrants in precarious circumstances in the EU and European Economic Area (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352301822000327>)
- Strengthening screening for infectious diseases and vaccination among migrants in Europe: What is needed to close the implementation gaps?
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1477893920301836>)
- Prevention strategies for sexually transmitted infections, HIV, and viral hepatitis in Europe
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/science/article/pii/S2666776223001576>)
- Addressing sexually transmitted infections in Europe: challenges and strategies
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com.ep.fjernadgang.kb.dk/science/article/pii/S2666776223001850>)
- Universal health coverage for undocumented migrants in the WHO European region: a long way to go ([https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762\(23\)00222-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanepi/article/PIIS2666-7762(23)00222-3/fulltext))
- HIV and migrants in the EU/EEA - Monitoring the implementation of the Dublin Declaration on partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia: 2024 progress report (2023 data) <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/hiv-and-migrants-eueea-monitoring-implementation-dublin-declaration-partnership>
- National policies for delivering tuberculosis, HIV and hepatitis B and C virus infection services for refugees and migrants among Member States of the WHO European Region (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36426801/>)
- Annual Epidemiological Reports (AERs) database
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/monitoring/all-annual-epidemiological-reports>
- STI cases continue to rise across Europe – Annual Epidemiological Reports
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/sti-cases-continue-rise-across-europe>

- IOM strategic objectives on Migration Health (<https://www.iom.int/migration-health>)

2) Recommendations for increasing screening

- Action plan for refugee and migrant health in the WHO European Region 2023–2030.
(<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/375061/WHO-EURO-2023-8966-48738-72475-eng.pdf?sequence=1>)
- WHO regional action plans for ending AIDS and the epidemic of viral hepatitis and sexually transmitted infections 2022-2030:
<https://www.who.int/europe/publications/i/item/9789289058957>
- Public health guidance on screening and vaccination for infectious diseases in newly arrived migrants within the EU/EEA
(<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Public%20health%20guidance%20on%20screening%20and%20vaccination%20of%20migrants%20in%20the%20EU%20EEA.pdf>)
- Opinion of the Health Security Committee on Sexually Transmitted Infections
(https://health.ec.europa.eu/document/download/53af906f-8221-4d16-ad9b-77c77f837ac4_en?filename=security_sti_opinion_en.pdf)
- WHO action plan for TB: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/361921/72bg06e-AP-TB.pdf>
- WHO-led paper on tuberculosis screening among migrants in Europe:
<https://publications.ersnet.org/content/erj/62/4/2301537>
- Prevention and treatment of infectious diseases in migrants in Europe in the era of universal health coverage
(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2468266722001748#cesec90>)

Most recent data on progress toward the SDGs for HIV, viral hepatitis, TB and STIs in the EU/EEA:

- ECDC report on progress toward the SDGs: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/making-next-five-years-count-europe-not-track-reach-2030-sustainable-development-goal>

What is European Testing Week?

[European Testing Week](#) (ETW) is a biannual awareness campaign held every May and November to promote early diagnosis of HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Since its launch, over [800 diverse organisations and institutions](#) across Europe have taken part.

Throughout the week, community-based groups, healthcare providers, policy bodies, and educational institutions host a range of local events to increase awareness and improve access to testing.

Join the movement - [sign up](#) now to participate and help accelerate progress toward eliminating HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs as public health threats!

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