
FEATURE

First meeting of the European Tuberculosis Laboratory Initiative (ELI): Capacity to diagnose M/XDR-TB strengthened across Europe

ELI members from 21 countries, mainly those where TB is a high priority, came together for the first time in Bilthoven, Netherlands on 15–16 October 2012 to discuss measures to improve the TB laboratory network in the Region, quality control, biosafety and implementation and scale-up of rapid diagnosis of M/XDR-TB. The event was co-organized with the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) in the Netherlands.

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NEWS

[Panel of experts to provide online support for rapid diagnosis and effective treatment of drug-resistant TB](#)

A consilium will be established by WHO/Europe and the European Respiratory Society (ERS) to provide physicians throughout the WHO European Region with online access to peer consultation in the management of drug-resistant and other difficult-to-treat cases of TB.

[Joint WHO/ECDC country visit to Latvia](#)

WHO/Europe together with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) visited Latvia on 22–26 October 2012 to assess the performance of the National TB Programme.

[WHO explores the possibility of expanding its supranational tuberculosis reference laboratory network to the Russian Federation](#)

Two WHO representatives conducted a mission on 27 September–5 October 2012 to assess the key TB laboratories in the Russian Federation and explore the possibility of including one of them in the WHO supranational TB reference laboratory network. [Photographs of the laboratories visited.](#)

[Primary care doctors in Belarus receive training on Practical Approach to Lung Health \(PAL\)](#)

A WHO representative conducted two field trainings on PAL in Ostrovets district (Grodno region) on 10–11 July and 24–25 July 2012. Field training of primary care doctors is part of the piloting phase for implementation of the PAL strategy in Belarus.

COUNTRY IN FOCUS: ROMANIA

[Romania launches MDR-TB action plan during high-level visit of the WHO Regional Director and former Commissioner Dali](#)

On 2 October 2012, Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe, and John Dalli, then European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, participated in the launch of a four-year action plan for Romania, which uses a health-system perspective to prevent the emergence of drug-resistant TB and aims to provide early diagnosis and treatment of all types of TB, including MDR-TB.

[Tuberculosis country work summary: Romania](#)

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

[European experts address cross-border TB control and care](#)

An open access article on cross-border TB control is now available in the European Respiratory Journal. It is the output of a task force of experts established under the Wolfheze movement that conducted an extensive literature review and considered the inputs provided by national TB programme managers in the WHO European Region.

[Global tuberculosis report: TB care and control saves 20 million lives](#)

The recently launched WHO *Global tuberculosis report 2012*, highlights successes in saving lives throughout the world but also warns that the global fight against TB remains of critical importance.

[Report on WHO/Europe's work in 2010–2011](#)

In a report on her first two years as WHO Regional Director for Europe, Zsuzsanna Jakab describes the work of WHO/Europe with Member States. The report includes a review of ongoing challenges and progress in the management of TB in the Region.

[Report on external review of Belarus' National TB Programme](#)

At the invitation of the Ministry of Health of Belarus, a team of national and international experts conducted a review of the country's National TB Programme (NTP) on 10–21 October 2011. The main objectives of the review were:

- to assess the TB epidemiological situation in Belarus in light of TB-related targets of the Millennium Development Goals;
- to evaluate implementation of the Stop TB Strategy and linkages with the health system;
- to develop specific recommendations for improving TB control and combating drug-resistant TB.

The review report is now available in both English and Russian.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The first meeting of the Regional Interagency Coordinating Committee on Tuberculosis Control (RICC-TB) Copenhagen, Denmark, 6 December 2012

The RICC-TB will be established as an interactive platform to facilitate monitoring of implementation of the Consolidated Action Plan to Prevent and Combat M/XDR-TB in the WHO European Region 2011-2015 and improve coordination, advocacy and resource mobilization for TB prevention, control and care. The Committee comprising key partners and civil society organizations will meet annually. National and international agencies involved in TB control and interested to join the committee may contact WHO Regional Office for Europe via tuberculosis@euro.who.int

RECENT EVENTS

[WHO and Republic of Moldova host regional workshop on national strategic planning for tuberculosis control](#)

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 8–11 October 2012

This workshop brought together national tuberculosis programme managers and other relevant professionals involved in national strategic plan development in 15 high-priority countries in the WHO European Region.

QUICK FACT

In the WHO European Region alone, TB makes 42 people ill and kills 7 every hour.

Source: [What we've achieved together: report of the Regional Director on the work of WHO in the European Region in 2010-2011](#). WHO/Europe, 2012.

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