



State of harm reduction in CEECA: support to people in crises

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(EHRA)

HIV among people who inject drugs

15 out of 29 countries have concentrated HIV epidemic*

* The prevalence of infection exceeds 5%

Barriers to accessing HIV treatment

Drug user registry



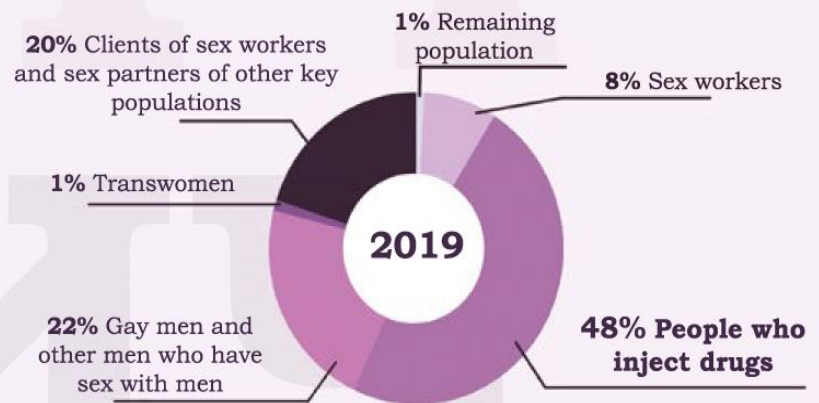
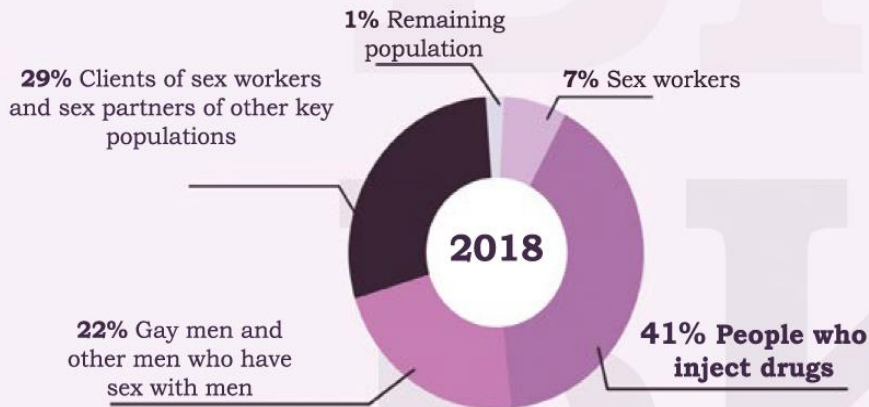
Criminalisation

Centralisation of services (no option to receive treatment locally)



Stigmatization of people who use drugs

Distribution of new HIV infections by populations (aged 15 - 49 years) in EECA region**



** EECA - Eastern Europe, Central Asia (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan)
UNAIDS data 2020/2022

Tuberculosis among people who use drugs

There is no data about incidence and prevalence of tuberculosis among people who use drugs.

Risk factors for people who use drugs:



High HIV prevalence



Criminalization



Imprisonment

Tuberculosis services both in prison and in freedom not adapted to needs people who use drugs

Limited access for testing services and treatment

Treatment interruption

People who use drugs enter healthcare system at late stages of the disease

Multidrug resistant tuberculosis

Needle and syringe program

Barriers to access services:

Lack of psycho-social support



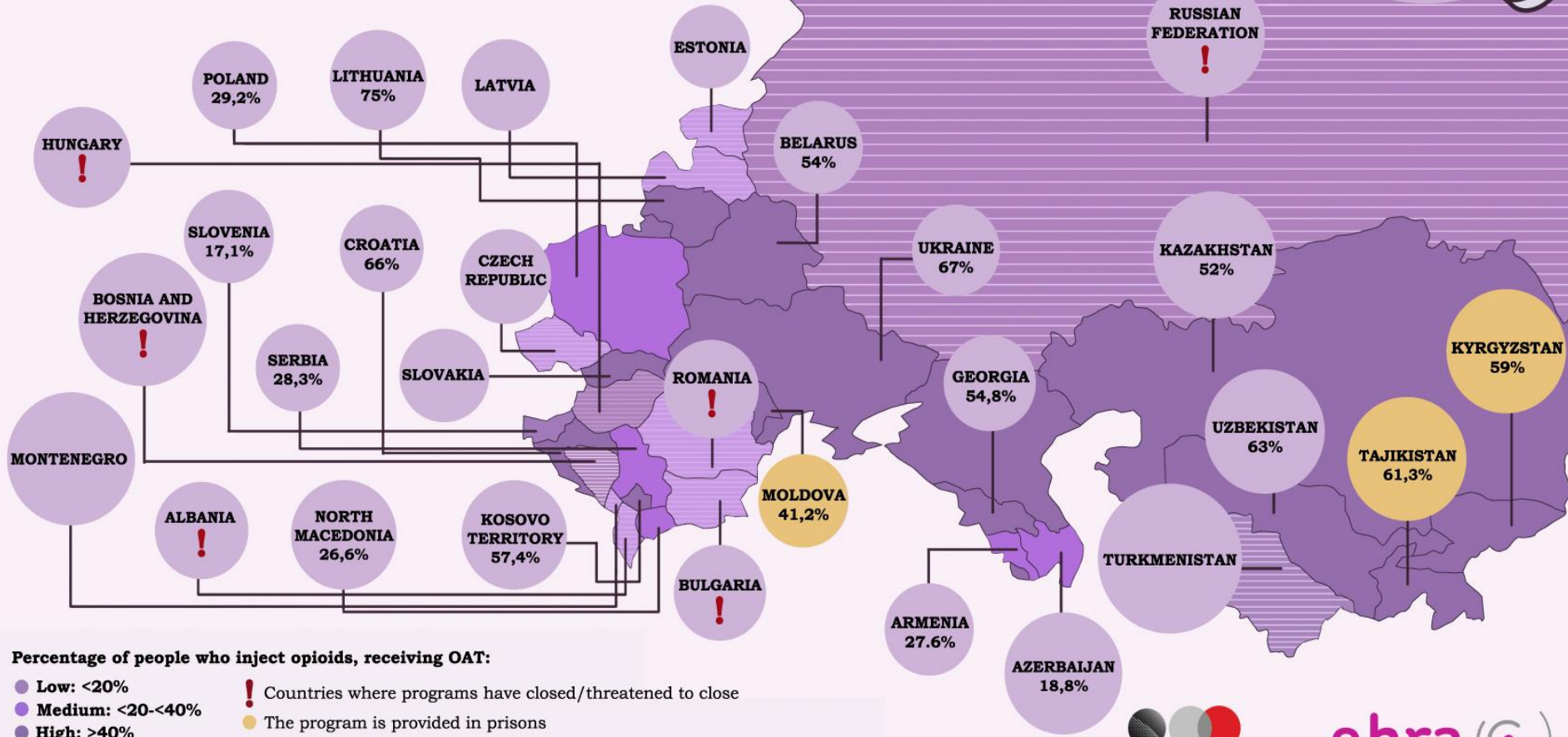
Limited access



Failure to meet customer needs



Poor quality of services



Percentage of people who inject opioids, receiving OAT:

- Low: <20%
- Medium: <20-40%
- High: >40%
- The accounting system does not allow assessment of program coverage
- ! Countries where programs have closed/threatened to close
- The program is provided in prisons

Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT) Programmes

Barriers to access services:

Inaccessibility



No take-home OAT



Simultaneous use of several psychoactive substances



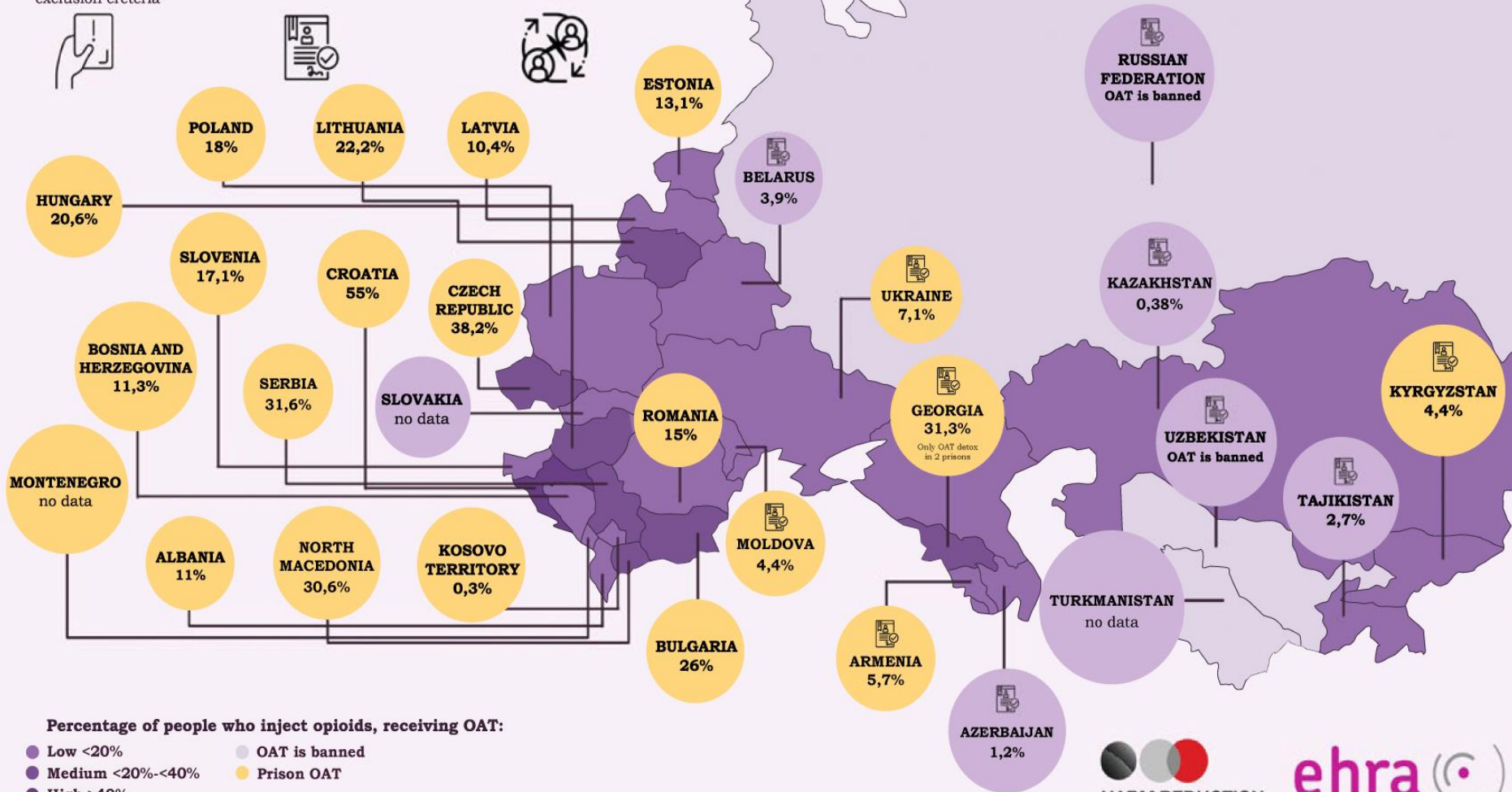
Difficult to comply with inclusion/exclusion criteria"



Drug user register



Lack of psycho-social support



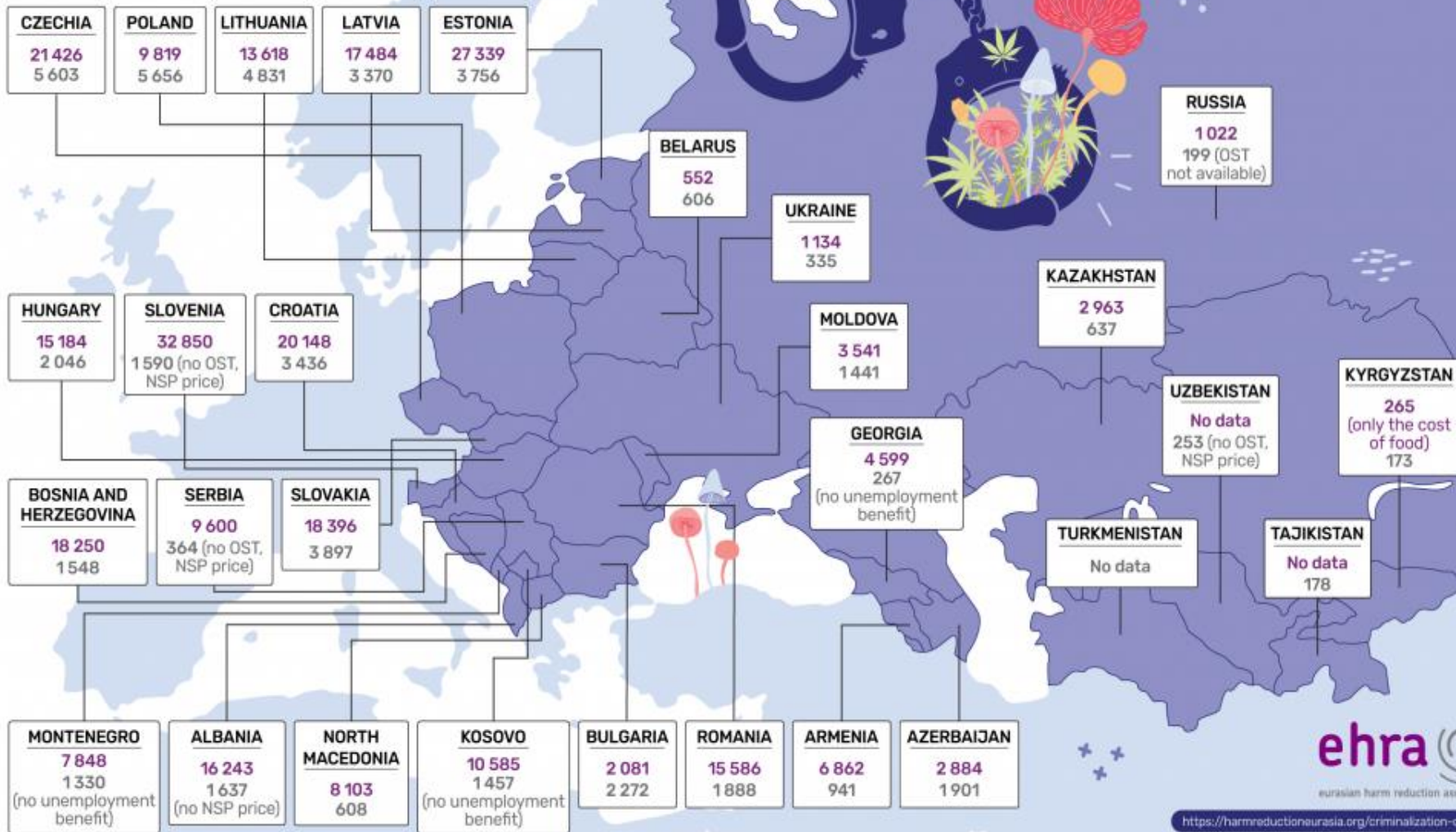
Percentage of people who inject opioids, receiving OAT:

- Low <20%
- Medium <20%-<40%
- High >40%
- OAT is banned
- Prison OAT

CRIMINALIZATION COSTS MAP

in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA)

In prison (in €/per prisoner/per year)
In freedom (in €/per client/per year)
 it includes NSP and OST price,
 and unemployment benefit



War of Russia against Ukraine – is genocide

EHRA statement on the war and advocacy statements

<https://harmreductioneurasia.org/support-ukraine/statement-recommendations-documents>

SUPPORT

COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS IN UKRAINE

DONATE TO:
EURAZIJOS ŽALOS MAŽINIMO ASOCIACIJA
LT92 7180 3000 0770 0220
AB ŠIAULIŲ BANKAS
BIC: CBSBLT26

CONTACT US
INFO@HARMREDUCTIONEURASIA.ORG

WWW.HARMREDUCTIONEURASIA.ORG

Surviving war and growing authoritarianism:

How to ensure the sustainability of civil society and community-led responses by people affected by HIV & TB and key populations

A communique from the Regional Consultation, During and after the war: rethinking the role of regional community networks of PLHIV and key groups and other civil society organizations. Vilnius, June 29 – July 1, 2022

<https://eecaplatform.org/en/gf-consultation-for-2023-25/>



1100 medical institutions are damaged (but 113 already rebuild, 264 are coming)

11 mln people ran from their home and become internally displaced people

7,9 mln refugees in Europe



In Ukraine harm reduction works!

In Ukraine, harm reduction organizations support the community of people who use drugs and Ukrainian people who have fled the war or lost homes:

- by continuing their services - national harm reduction coverage remaining the same as in 2021
- by continuing state funding of harm reduction since May 2022
- creating temporary shelters on the bases of harm reduction



ALJAZEERA



Features | Russia-Ukraine war

The volunteers risking their lives to help drug users in Ukraine

For Alexey Kvitkovskiy and other harm reduction volunteers, their mission has become far more dangerous and difficult.



Alexey Kvitkovskiy is the founder of a Ukrainian harm reduction organisation. He holds up a vial of naloxone, a medication that can rapidly reverse opioid overdoses

[Alexey Nalox / Al Jazeera]

Harm reduction as shelters in Ukraine and in hosting countries

self-organized comprehensive harm reduction enabling **evacuation, accommodation of families, food, transport, basic medicine, basic psychological and mental health support.**

- Social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, GBV nurse;
- Houses and rent cost
- Generators, Fuel, accumulators, power banks, Mobil communication
- Essentials for sleeping and cooking, Food, Medicine, Hygiene, Clothes
- Rape kits,
- Naloxone, harm reduction materials, OST, ART



Responding to the crises via harm reduction

- **Emergency harm reduction**: access to medical aid, accommodation, social care, and employment
- **ART , HCV and TB treatment access** – community-based harm reduction connecting people and health care
- **Lowering the thresholds for receiving OAT and mental health care** In line with the European Council directive, most EU countries have eased the legal conditions for accessing free drug use services.
- Specialized **shelters**/support to key populations
- Need for **flexibility and fast actions** of funders to address needs of people who use drugs

Core challenges in harm reduction in CEECA region

- **Criminalisation** of drug use and possession and human rights violations;
- **Shrinking space** for community-based harm reduction and human rights protection;
- Domestic funding for **comprehensive and quality** harm reduction;
- Lack of community-led monitoring – to respond to the needs;
- Development of harm reduction for **new psychoactive substance users and youth**;
- Health system re-building to ensure **universal health coverage** for key groups;
- **Mental health** and **gender-based violence** comprehensive response as part of harm reduction.

Elephant in the room

- Eastern Europe is the only region where the HIV epidemic is still growing.
- 70% of new cases are in Russia, most of them among people who use drugs and LGBTIQ people.
- These are the groups most discriminated against, their rights are universally violated, and the distribution of any information or harm reduction services for them is banned in Russia.
- **Empire influence on policies in all EECA countries from Russia is huge – so we are facing shrinking space for civil society in the region and challenges with OAT and harm reduction services.**
- So the Ukrainian army is fighting not only for European values but also for the lives and rights of these people. A Ukrainian victory would mean the opportunity to finally save the lives of millions of people in the region.

Comprehensiveness of harm reduction

The complexities of harm reduction across the region are intensifying, with increasing criminalization of drug use and possession, increasing pressure on human rights NGOs, inadequate funding for harm reduction programmes both at large and in prison, and the need to develop harm reduction for stimulant users, especially young adolescents.

There needs to be a flexible response to the needs of people who use drugs:

- starting with overdose prevention,
- legal support,
- housing,
- nutrition,
- mental health care,
- childcare - and then moving on to OAT and needle exchange, HIV testing).

Communities to achieve 10-10-10

Community participation is about people's time, and practicing responses. To fight stigma and discrimination by the community we need to invest at least 15% or better 30% of the programme budget - on community services, community monitoring, legal and paralegal support, and community advocacy that will allow us to get data, protect people, punish rights violators - change the system.

Only if we are achieve 10-10-10 targets, we could achieve effective HIV

<https://harmreductioneurasia.org/news/setting-ambitious-targets-for-european-hiv-response-and-reducing-stigma--overview-of-seville-meetings>