



Coordenação Nacional para a
Infecção VIH/sida




MIGRATION AND HIV/AIDS

**National Coordination for HIV/AIDS infection
Health Ministry
Portugal**

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Communicable diseases, and HIV/AIDS in particular, are one of the most important health issues confronted by migrants as a group.




“There has been a tendency to discuss the HIV/AIDS epidemic in high and low-income countries as if they were worlds apart. This tendency is well founded in differences in incidence, prevalence, modes of transmission, and access to treatment and care.

However, current patterns of migration have brought these worlds closer together.”

Lazarus J et al. Scand J Pub Health, 2006



In the EU, it was estimated that more than half of the diagnosed HIV infections occurred in individuals that migrated from high prevalence regions.

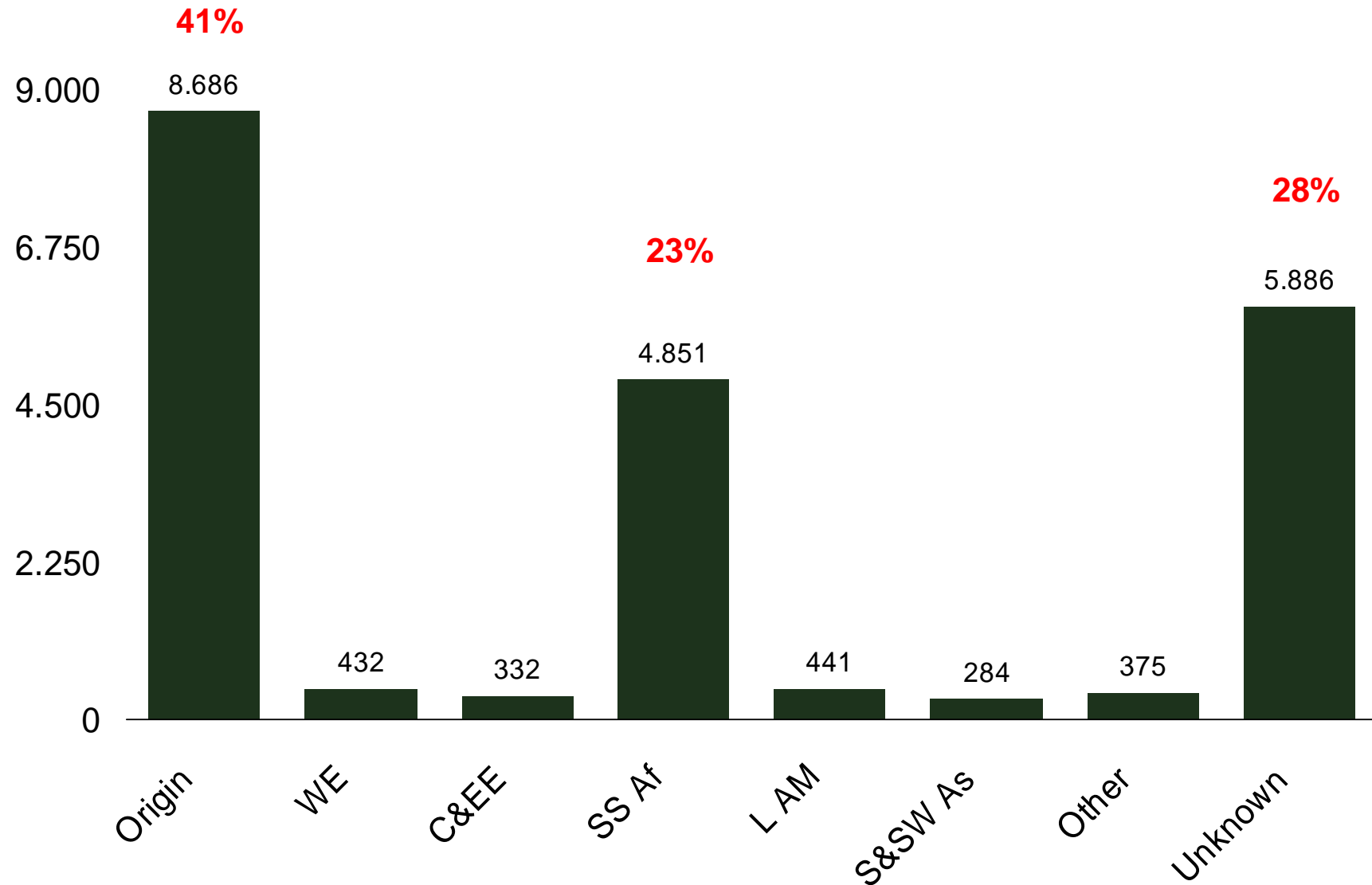



“Data from several countries suggest that the majority of [persons originating from countries with generalised epidemic] became infected in their country of origin

(ECDC)

HIV cases in EU (19) according to country of origin or nationality (2005)

EuroHIV End year report 2005, No.73





Opportunities for personal fulfilment, career achievement and better health are strong incentives for human mobility and migration.

Fear and discrimination in host countries reduce migrants' opportunities and originate specific vulnerabilities.

Exclusion and obstacles on access to health services leads to additional vulnerability.



Stigma

Elements of labelling, stereotyping, separation, status loss and discrimination occur together in a power situation that allows them

Complex web of affective, institutional and social forces that produce distress and other consequences detrimental to the person's well-being



AIDS stigmatization is a major impediment to:


Voluntary counselling and testing

Timely diagnosis of HIV infection


Serostatus disclosure

Utilization of medical care

Treatment adherence



Policy and advocacy consensus and commitments have been successfully achieved and assumed through the EC HIV/AIDS Task Force, Think Tank, the Inter-service group on HIV/AIDS and the Civil Society Forum.



The HIV and AIDS challenges demand for a common Europe-wide political and technical effort. Several initiatives have been developed under the EC Action Plan on combating HIV/AIDS within the European Union and in the neighbouring countries 2006-2009.



AIDS & MOBILITY



Knowledge gaps

(ever changing picture)

- HIV epidemiologic profiles in migrants;
- why migrants, particularly undocumented migrants, consistently appear to be at increased risk of treatment failure.



Knowledge gaps should not prevent

- that migrants-specific prevention campaigns are designed;
- the provision of information services targeted to migrants.

And emphasise the need for partnership with migrants organizations



To address and reduce specific migrants' vulnerabilities, European countries must:

- engage in a thorough discussion of the different national strategies;
- agree on a platform from which national efforts against HIV/AIDS may proceed to reduce transmission.



Recognize that:

- migrants are usually in a better shape than their peers and that advantage should not be jeopardized;
- stigma and discrimination in the host societies must be counteracted by a solidarity and humanitarian approach based on human rights.




Recognize that:

- intensively proactive health promotion efforts are essential;
- special attention must be given to remove financial, social, and cultural barriers to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support.




Major commitments for the efficiency of any European approach are:


- evaluation policies;
- monitoring of
 - structures
 - processes
 - results.




European countries have been relatively unprepared to deal with the migration phenomena and few have developed policies needed to make immigration a socially meaningful process in the broader context of human rights promotion and protection



To develop appropriate preventive and health care services and informed and sustained public health policies evidence based data addressing the migration phenomena, particularly concerning HIV/AIDS epidemic in Europe, needs to be generate .



To ensure a consistent and sustainable EU response at the national level, keeping the agreed political framework and translating the guiding principles into action, EU member states need to agree on regular technical mechanisms.



As in other areas of EU interest, meetings of the National AIDS Programmes managers or coordinators, to be held in the context of each EU Presidency, may be a technical mechanism to be established.



“Translating principles into action”

**National AIDS Coordinators of WHO Europe Region and
Neighbouring Countries Meeting**

**Lisbon, 12 -13 October 2007
Centro Cultural de Belém**

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