

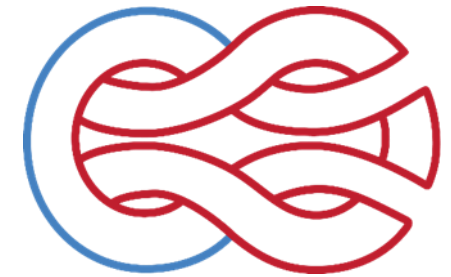


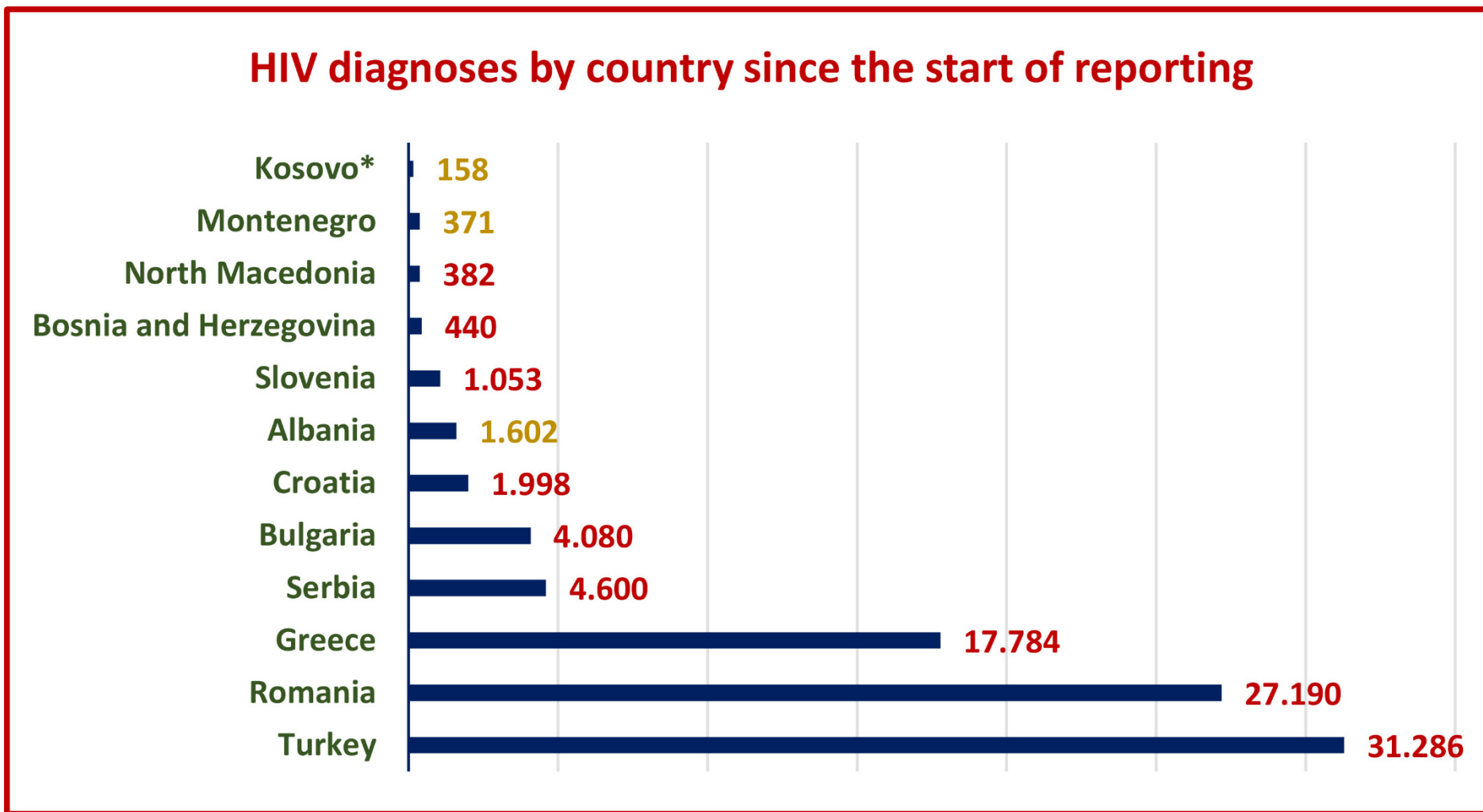
Harm reduction and drug policy: evidence and innovation

Milutin Milošević
Drug Policy Network South East Europe

Drug Policy Network South East Europe

- Formally created in October 2015 by 10 organisations
- Currently 26 member organisations from 11 countries
 - 18 ordinary and 8 associate members
 - 4 community organisations
- Mostly harm reduction service providers, but also community organisations, preventive, therapeutic and programs of rehabilitation and re-socialisation
- EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs member

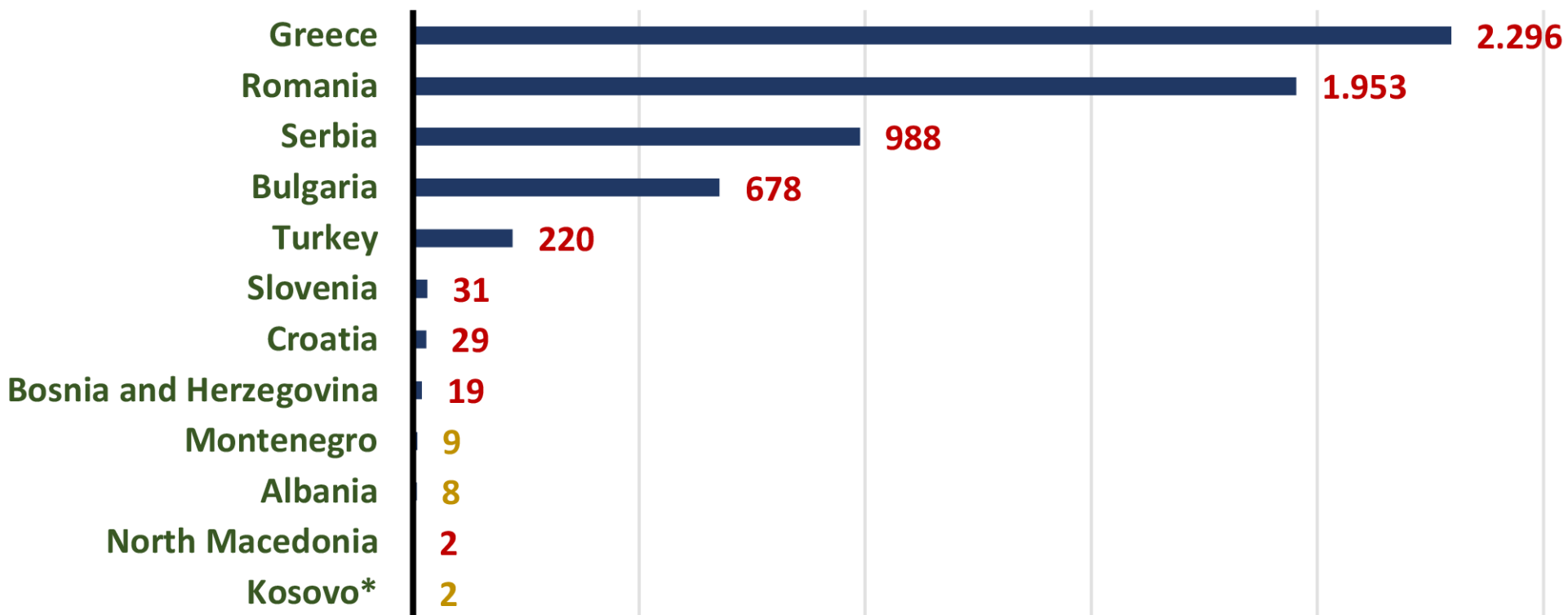




AIDS diagnoses rates per 100.000 population 2013 – 2022

	Per 100.000 population
Montenegro	1,67
Albania	1,62
Romania	1,58
Greece	1,06
Bulgaria	0,75
Serbia	0,69
Slovenia	0,43
Croatia	0,40
North Macedonia	0,38
Kosovo*	0,24
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0,23
Turkey	0,11

HIV diagnoses in people infected through injecting drug use, by country since the start of reporting



HIV diagnoses, cumulative total and in people infected through injecting drug use, by country since the start of reporting

	Total number	Injecting drug use	%
Serbia	4.600	988	21,5%
Bulgaria	4.080	678	16,6%
Greece	17.784	2.296	12,9%
Romania	27.190	1.953	7,2%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	440	19	4,3%
Slovenia	1.053	31	2,9%
Montenegro	371	9	2,4%
Croatia	1.998	29	1,5%
Kosovo*	158	2	1,3%
Turkey	31.286	220	0,7%
North Macedonia	382	2	0,5%
Albania	1.602	8	0,5%
	90.944	6.235	

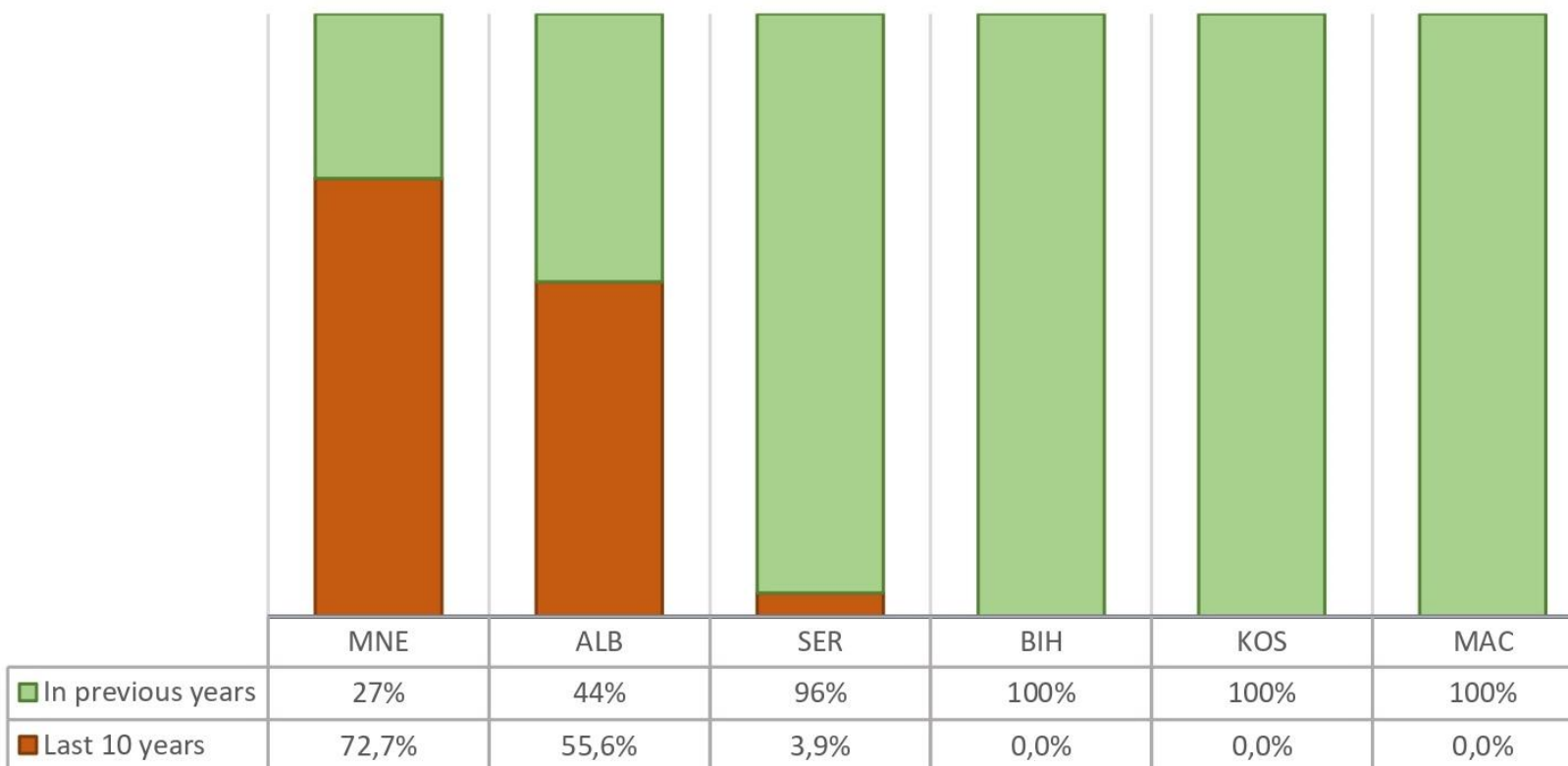
HIV diagnoses since the start of reporting and last 10 years

	From year	Total number	2013-2022	%
North Macedonia	1987	382	339	88,7%
Turkey	1985	31.286	25.836	82,6%
Albania	1993	1.602	1.020	63,7%
Montenegro	1993	371	225	60,6%
Bulgaria	1986	4.080	2.450	60,0%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1986	440	245	55,7%
Croatia	1985	1.998	969	48,5%
Kosovo*	1999	158	71	44,9%
Slovenia	1985	1.053	438	41,6%
Greece	1984	17.784	6.920	38,9%
Serbia	1984	4.600	1.728	37,6%
Romania	1987	27.190	7.908	29,1%
		90.944	48.014	

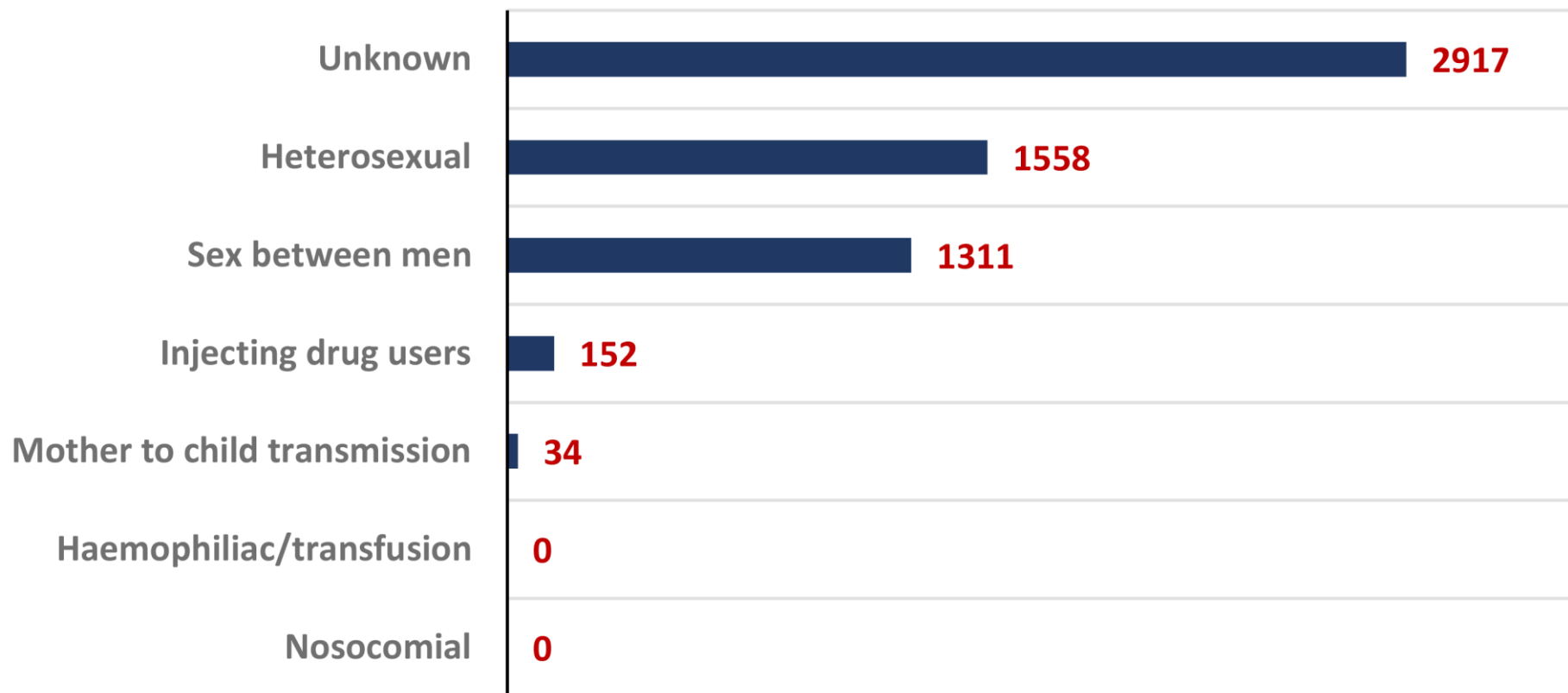
HIV diagnoses, cumulative total and in people infected through injecting drug use, by country since the start of reporting and in last 10 years

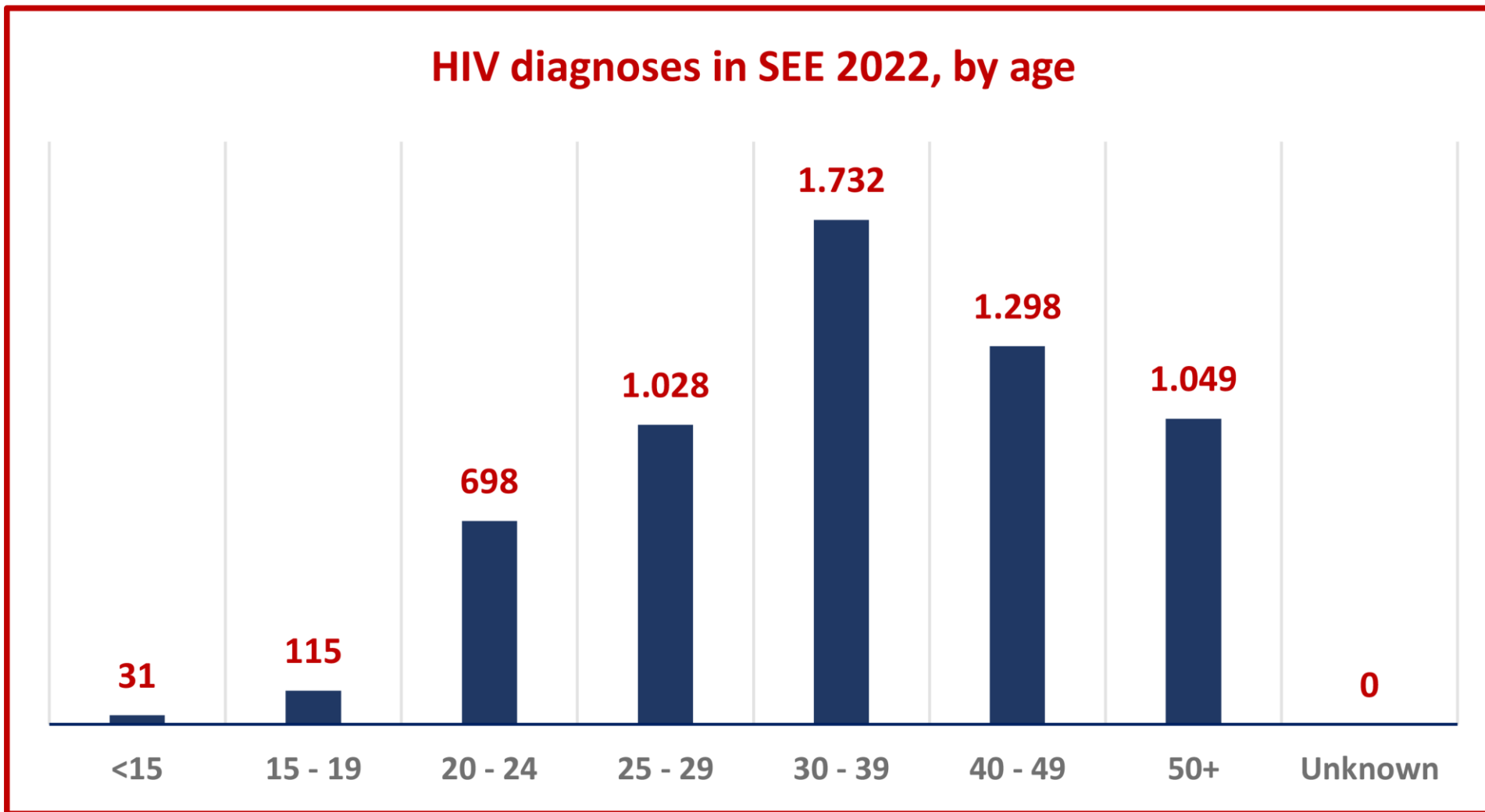
	Total number	Injecting drug use	%	% 2013-22
Serbia	4.600	988	21,5%	2,1%
Bulgaria	4.080	678	16,6%	12,2%
Greece	17.784	2.296	12,9%	16,5%
Romania	27.190	1.953	7,2%	16,7%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	440	19	4,3%	0,0%
Slovenia	1.053	31	2,9%	3,0%
Montenegro	371	9	2,4%	1,3%
Croatia	1.998	29	1,5%	1,0%
Kosovo*	158	2	1,3%	0,0%
Turkey	31.286	220	0,7%	0,5%
North Macedonia	382	2	0,5%	0,0%
Albania	1.602	8	0,5%	0,4%
	90.944	6.235		

HIV diagnoses in people who acquired HIV through injecting drug use - percentage of new cases in the last 10 years



HIV diagnoses in 2022, by transmission mode

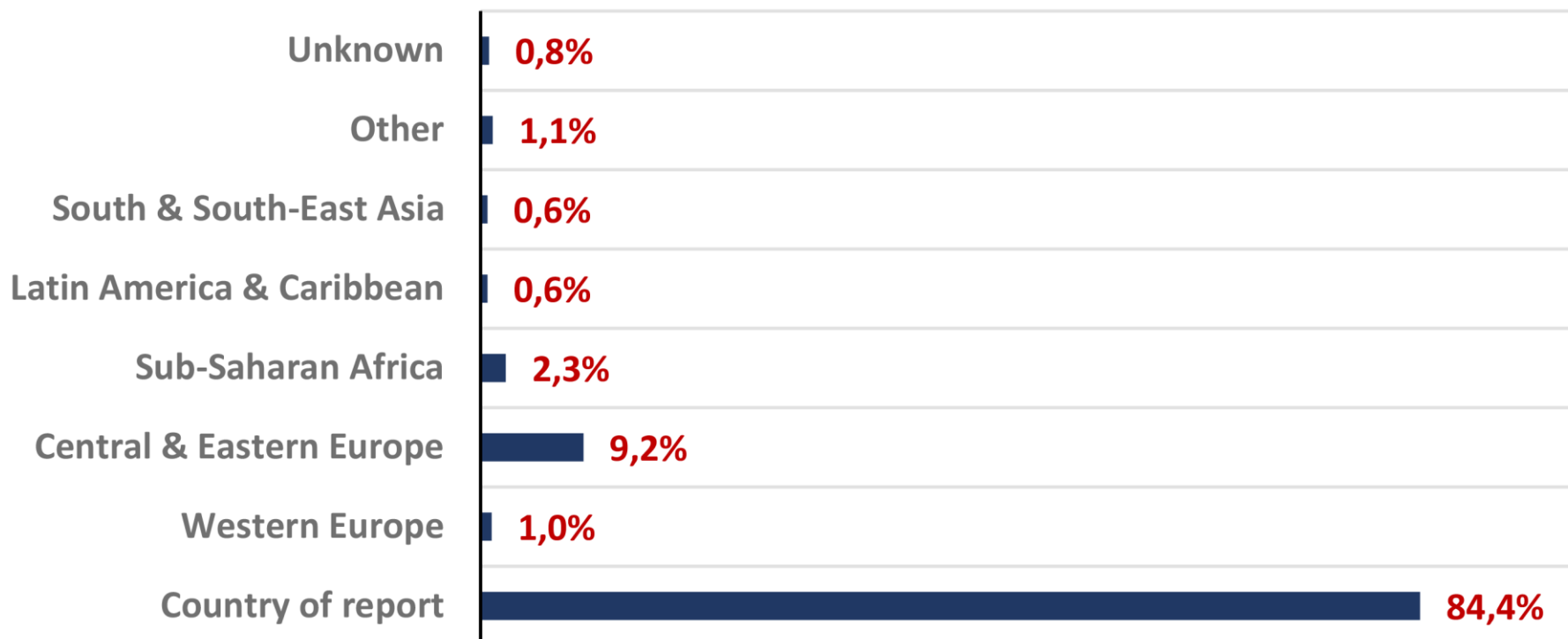


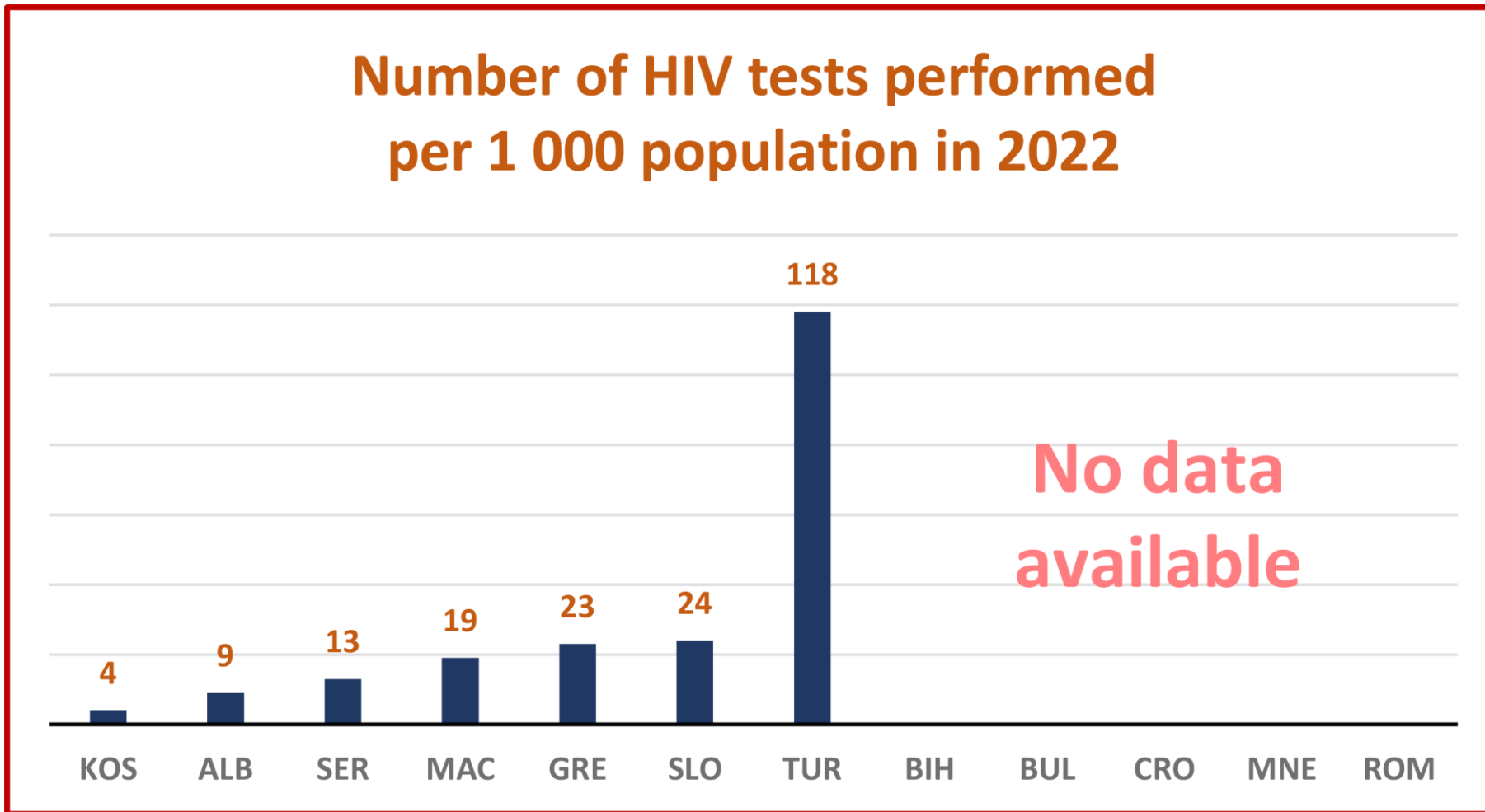


HIV diagnoses in 2022, by sex

	Male	Female	Ratio (%)
Turkey	3.181	643	83 – 17
Romania	533	137	80 – 20
Greece	450	115	80 – 20
Bulgaria	215	113	66 – 34
Serbia	171	14	92 – 8
Croatia	90	23	80 – 20
Albania	71	27	72 – 28
Bosnia and Herzegovina	50	4	93 – 7
North Macedonia	37	4	90 – 10
Slovenia	37	5	88 – 12
Montenegro	28	3	90 – 10
Kosovo*	20	1	95 – 5
	4.883	1.089	82 - 18

Origin of those diagnosed with HIV in South East Europe in 2022

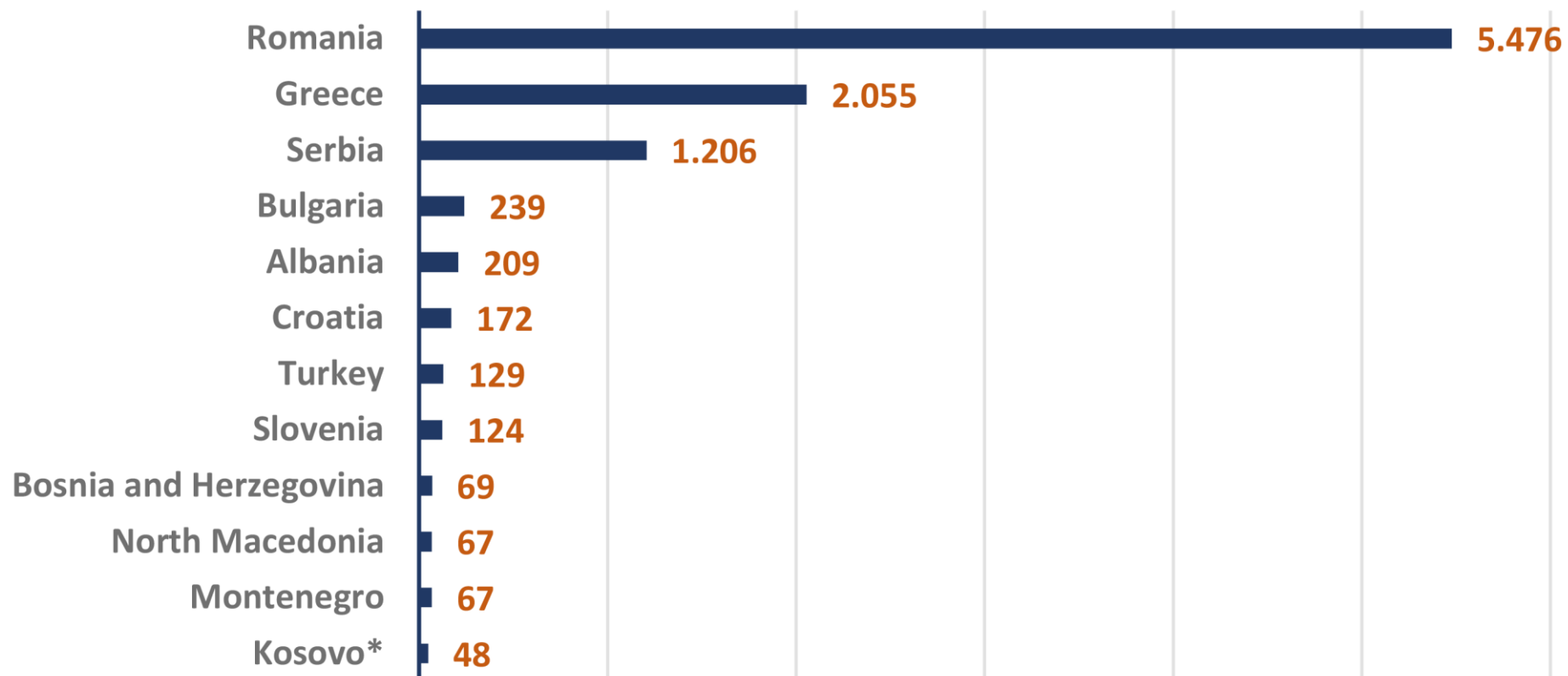




HIV diagnoses since the start of reporting and AIDS diagnoses in the last 10 years

	HIV diagnoses	AIDS diagnoses	%
Kosovo*	158	96	60,8%
Montenegro	371	190	51,2%
Serbia	4.600	2.270	49,3%
Albania	1.602	759	47,4%
North Macedonia	382	170	44,5%
Romania	27.190	11.431	42,0%
Bosnia Herzegovina	440	178	40,5%
Slovenia	1.053	297	28,2%
Greece	17.784	4.378	24,6%
Croatia	1.998	453	22,7%
Bulgaria	4.080	924	22,6%
Turkey	31.286	2.007	6,4%
	90.944	23.153	

AIDS-related deaths since the start of reporting



AIDS-related deaths since the start of reporting and last 10 years

	From year	Total number	2013-2022	%
Bulgaria	1986	239	110	46,0%
Albania	1993	209	96	45,9%
Turkey	1985	129	55	42,6%
Montenegro	1993	67	28	41,8%
Romania	1987	5.476	1.901	34,7%
Slovenia	1985	124	30	24,2%
Croatia	1985	172	40	23,3%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1986	69	14	20,3%
Greece	1984	2.055	416	20,2%
Kosovo*	1999	48	8	16,7%
Serbia	1984	1.206	174	14,4%
North Macedonia	1987	67	6	9,0%
		9861	2878	

AIDS-related deaths since the start of reporting comparing to HIV and AIDS diagnosed

	From year	Deaths	HIV diagnosed	%	AIDS diagnosed	%
Albania	1993	209	1.602	13,0%	759	27,5%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1986	69	440	15,7%	178	38,8%
Bulgaria	1986	239	4.080	5,9%	924	25,9%
Croatia	1985	172	1.998	8,6%	453	38,0%
Greece	1984	2.055	17.784	11,6%	4.378	46,9%
Kosovo*	1999	48	158	30,4%	96	50,0%
Montenegro	1993	67	371	18,1%	190	35,3%
North Macedonia	1987	67	382	17,5%	170	39,4%
Romania	1987	5.476	27.190	20,1%	11.431	47,9%
Serbia	1984	1.206	4.600	26,2%	2.270	53,1%
Slovenia	1985	124	1.053	11,8%	297	41,8%
Turkey	1985	129	31.286	0,4%	2.007	6,4%
		9.861	90.944		23.153	



<https://dpnsee.org/2024/11/27/webinar-on-data/>



Harm reduction

- Refers to policies, programmes and practices that aim to minimise the negative health, social and legal impacts associated with drug use, drug policies and drug laws
- Grounded in justice and human rights. It focuses on positive change and on working with people without judgement, coercion, discrimination, or requiring that people stop using drugs as a precondition of support.



Essential for impact: health interventions

Prevention of HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs

- Harm reduction (needle and syringe programmes, opioid agonist maintenance therapy and naloxone for overdose management)
- Condoms and lubricant
- PrEP for HIV
- PEP for HIV and STIs
- Prevention of vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and HBV
- HBV vaccination
- Addressing chemsex

Diagnosis

- HIV testing services
- STI testing
- HBV and HCV testing

Treatment

- HIV treatment
- Screening, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of HIV-associated tuberculosis (TB)
- STI treatment
- HBV and HCV treatment



Essential for impact: enabling interventions

- Removing punitive laws, policies and practices
- Reducing stigma and discrimination
- Community empowerment
- Addressing violence

Essential for broader health: health interventions

- Conception and pregnancy care
- Contraception
- Anal health
- Mental health
- Prevention, assessment and treatment of cervical cancer
- Safe abortion
- Screening and treatment for hazardous and harmful alcohol and other substance use
- Tuberculosis prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment



Harm reduction goals

- Keeping people alive
- Reduce the harms of drug laws and policy
- Offer alternatives



Harm reduction principles

- Evidence based
- Respecting the rights of people who use drugs
- Social justice
- Meaningful involvement of people who use drugs
- Fighting stigma
- Cost effective

SERVICES AND PRACTICES

Harm reduction encompasses a range of health and social services and practices that apply to drugs, including but not limited to:

INFORMATION ON SAFER DRUG USE

DRUG CONSUMPTION ROOMS

(also called overdose prevention centres or supervised consumption sites)

NEEDLE & SYRINGE PROGRAMMES

OVERDOSE PREVENTION & REVERSAL

OPIOID AGONIST THERAPY

such as methadone and buprenorphine

HOUSING

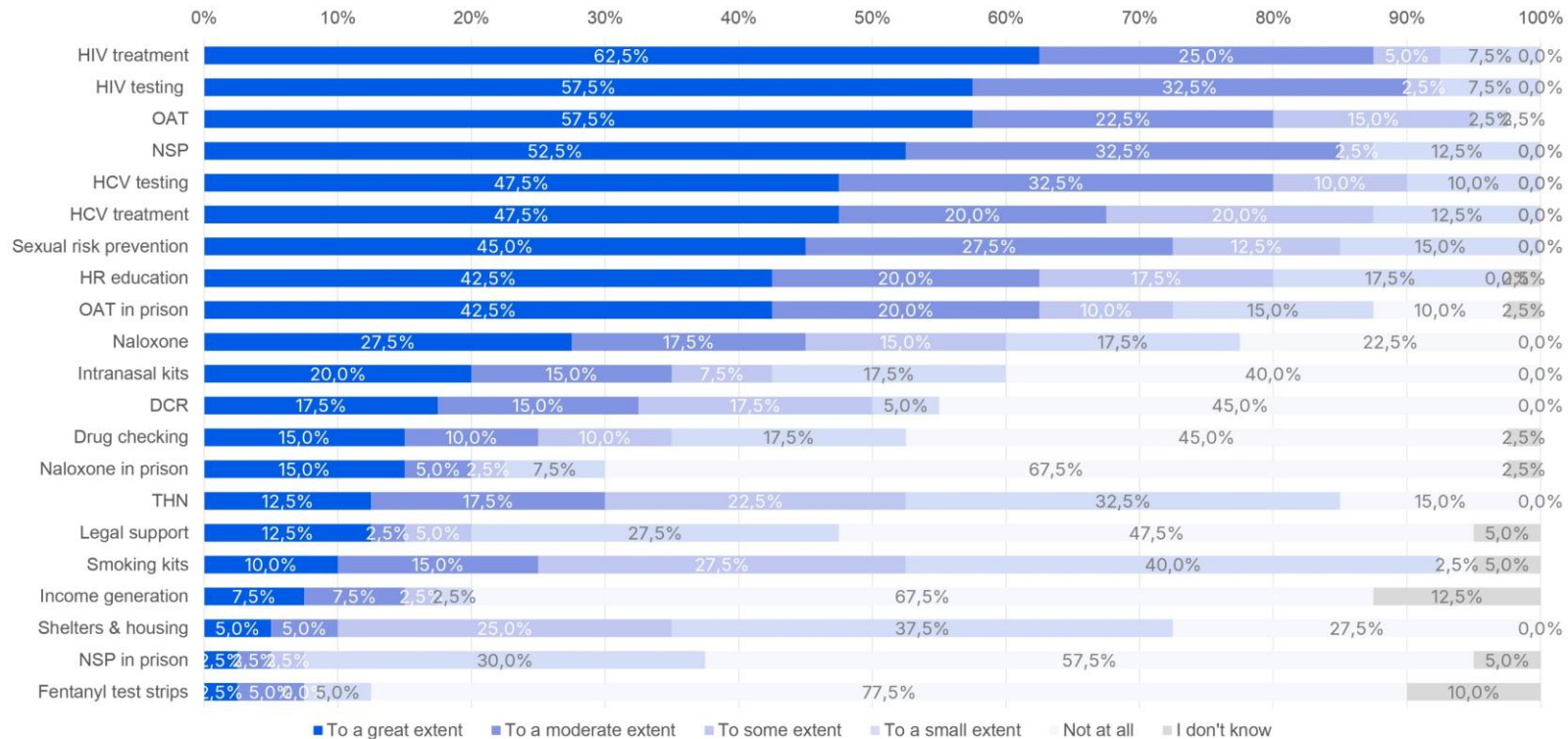
DRUG CHECKING

LEGAL/PARALEGAL SERVICES

Correlation

Civil Society Monitoring of Harm Reduction in Europe

Availability of harm reduction services in European cities



Harm reduction services in European cities

- HIV treatment
- HIV testing
- OAT
- NSPHCV testing
- HCV treatment
- Sexual risk prevention
- HR education
- OAT in prison
- Naloxone
- Intranasal kits
- Drug Consumption Rooms
- Drug checking
- Naloxone in prison
- Take Home Naloxone
- Legal support
- Smoking kits
- Income generation
- Shelters & housing
- NSP in prison
- Fentanyl test strips

Service delivery to different groups of PWUD

- Injecting opiates
- Injecting stimulants/NPS
- Smoking opiates
- Experiencing homelessness
- Sex workers
- Smoking stimulants/NPS
- Aging
- Using intranasally
- Women
- Party settings
- Prison settings
- Migrants with legal rights
- Youth (<18)
- Practicing chemsex
- LGBTQTI
- Migrants w/o legal rights

Some more initiatives

- Child-centred harm reduction
- Online harm reduction services

Country/ territory with reported injecting drug use	People who inject drugs	HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs (%)	Hepatitis C (anti- HCV) prevalence among people who inject drugs (%)	Hepatitis B (anti- HBsAg) prevalen- ce among people who inject drugs (%)	Harm reduction response				
					Needle and syringe programme (NSP)	Opioid agonist therapy (OAT)**	Peer distribution of naloxone	Drug consumption rooms (DCRs)	Safer smoking equipment
Albania	8,700	0.1	56.0	18.0	✓ 2	✓ M, B	✗	✗	✗
Bosnia Herzegovina	12,500	1.1	30.8	2.5	✗	✓ M	✗	✗	✗
Bulgaria	10,000	12.8	78.3	5.9	✓ 2	✓ M, MO	✗	✗	✓
Croatia	6,344	0.3	30.7	3.1	✓ 8	✓ M, B, MO	✗	✗	✗
Greece	3,287	7.3	53.7- 69.6	2.1	✓ 18	✓ B, M	✗	✓ 1	✓
Kosovo*	4,600	0.0	23.8	5.0	✓	✓ M, B	✗	✗	✗
Montenegro	2,300	0.5	62.8	1.4	✓ 2	✓ M, B	✗	✗	✗
North Macedonia	6,500	0.0	65.4	5.6	✓ 16	✓ M, B	✗	✗	✗
Romania	10,000	19.4	72.7	3.2	✓ 2	✓ M, B	✗	✗	✗
Serbia	20,500	1.5	61.4	10.5	✓ 1	✓ M, B	✗	✗	✗
Slovenia	4,900	0.0	25.0	4.2	✓ 12	✓ M, B	✓	✗ (✓)	✓
Turkey	nd	0.8	37.5	3.9	✗	✓ B, M	✗	✗	nd

People who inject drugs



Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2020-22	2024	2022-24	2020-24
Albania	5,657	7,000	23,74%	8,700	24,29%	53,79%
Bosnia Herzegovina	12,500	10,500	-16,00%	12,500	19,05%	0,00%
Bulgaria	18,500	17,000	-8,11%	10,000	-41,18%	-45,95%
Croatia	6,300	6,000	-4,76%	6,344	5,73%	0,70%
Greece	3,339	3,000	-10,15%	3,287	9,57%	-1,56%
Kosovo*	5,819	4,600	-20,95%	4,600	0,00	-20,95%
Montenegro	1,300	2,300	76,92%	2,300	0,00	76,92%
North Macedonia	6,756	6,500	-3,79%	6,500	0,00	-3,79%
Romania	81,500	17,024	-79,11%	10,000	-41,26%	-87,73%
Serbia	20,500	28,500	39,02%	20,500	-28,07%	0,00%
Slovenia	4,900	5,500	12,24%	4,900	-10,91%	0,00%
Turkey	12,733	nd	-	nd	-	-
Total SEE	161,354					

HIV prevalence among people who inject drugs

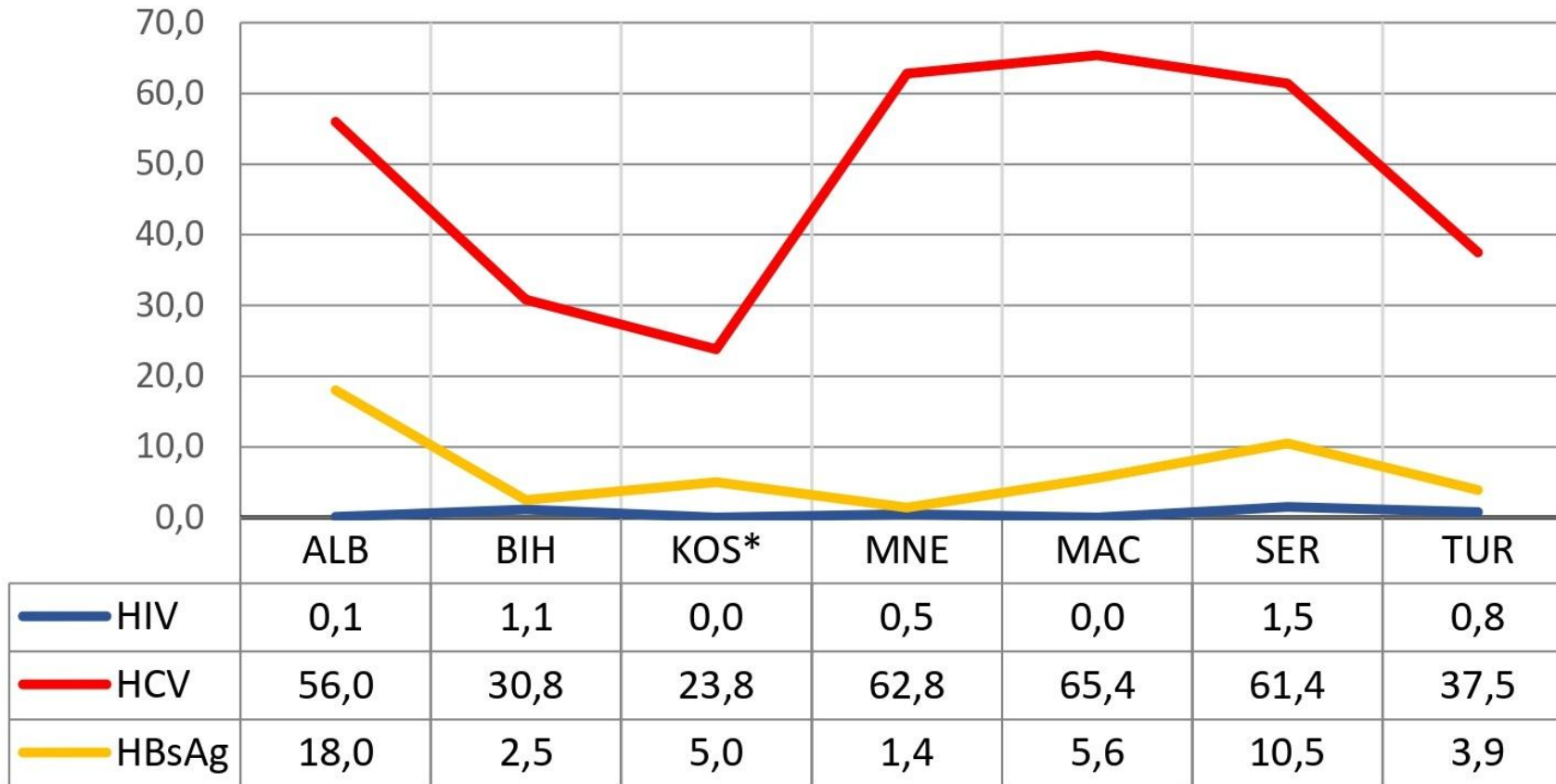


Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2020-22	2024	2022-24	2020-24
Albania	0.5	0.5	0,00%	0.1	-80%	-80%
Bosnia Herzegovina	0.0	0.1	-↑	1.1	1000%	-↑
Bulgaria	6	4.4	-26,67%	12.8	191%	113%
Croatia	0.5	0.4	-20,00%	0.3	-25%	-40%
Greece	4.1	3.2	-21,95%	7.3	128%	78%
Kosovo*	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	-	-
Montenegro	0.5	0.1	-80,00%	0.5	400%	0%
North Macedonia	0.0	0.0	-	0.0	-	-
Romania	15.9	19.4	22,01%	19.4	0%	22%
Serbia	0.0	0.0	-	1.5	-↑	-↑
Slovenia	0.0	0.3	-↑	0.0	-↓	0%
Turkey	0.5	0.1	-80,00%	0.8	700%	60%

Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2020-22	2024	2022-24	2020-24
Albania	28.8	34	18%	56.0	65%	94%
Bosnia Herzegovina	30.8	39.5	28%	30.8	-22%	0%
Bulgaria	76.8	67.8	-12%	78.3	15%	2%
Croatia	38.2	36.7	-4%	30.7	-16%	-20%
Greece	60.5	66.8	10%	53.7- 69.6	-8%	2%
Kosovo*	23.8	23.8	0%	23.8	0%	0%
Montenegro	53.0	44.2	-17%	62.8	42%	18%
North Macedonia	72	65.4	-9%	65.4	0%	-9%
Romania	83.8	72.7	-13%	72.7	0%	-13%
Serbia	25.9	46.2	78%	61.4	33%	137%
Slovenia	42.6	28.6	-33%	25.0	-13%	-41%
Turkey	49.2	53.5	9%	37.5	-30%	-24%

Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2020-22	2024	2022-24	2020-24
Albania	11.5	20.2	76%	18.0	-11%	57%
Bosnia Herzegovina	0.2 - 3.1	0.2	-88%	2.5	1150%	56%
Bulgaria	5.0	6.0	20%	5.9	-2%	18%
Croatia	0.9	1.0	11%	3.1	210%	244%
Greece	2.2	2.5	14%	2.1	-16%	-5%
Kosovo*	4.1	0.1	-98%	5.0	4900%	22%
Montenegro	1.4	0.0	-	1.4	-↑	0%
North Macedonia	5.6	nd	-	5.6	-	0%
Romania	5.2	3.2	-38%	3.2	0%	-38%
Serbia	3.6	10.5	192%	10.5	0%	192%
Slovenia	4.6	3.4	-26%	4.2	24%	-9%
Turkey	3.5	4.4	26%	3.9	-11%	11%

Prevalence among people who inject drugs (%)



Needle and syringe programme



Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2024
Albania	✓ 2	✓ 2	✓ 2
Bosnia Herzegovina	✓ 5	✓ 2	✗
Bulgaria	✗	✗	✓ 2
Croatia	✓ 144	✓ 137	✓ 8
Greece	✓ 12	✓ 16	✓ 18
Kosovo*	✓	✓	✓
Montenegro	✓ 13	✓ 2	✓ 2
North Macedonia	✓ 16	✓ 16	✓ 16
Romania	✓ 63	✓ 2	✓ 2
Serbia	✓ 2	✓ 2	✓ 1
Slovenia	✓ 12	✓ 139	✓ 12
Turkey	✗	✗	✗

Opioid agonist therapy



Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020*	2022*	2024**
Albania	✓ 6 (M, B)	✓ M, B	✓ M, B
Bosnia Herzegovina	✓ 12 (M, O)	✓ 12 M	✓ M
Bulgaria	✓ 30 (M,B,O)	✓ M, B, O	✓ M, MO
Croatia	✓ (M, B, O)	✓ M, B, O	✓ M, B, MO
Greece	✓ (B, M)	✓ B, M	✓ B, M
Kosovo*	✓ 4 (M)	✓ M	✓ M, B
Montenegro	✓ 5	✓ M, B	✓ M, B
North Macedonia	✓ 16 (M, B)	✓ M, B	✓ M, B
Romania	✓ (M)	✓ M, B	✓ M, B
Serbia	✓ 23 (M, B)	✓ M, B	✓ M, B
Slovenia	✓ 10 (M,B,O)	✓ M, B, O	✓ M, B
Turkey	✓ (B, M, O)	✓ B, M, O	✓ B, M

Peer distribution of naloxone



Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2024
Albania	x	x	x
Bosnia Herzegovina	x	x	x
Bulgaria	x	x	x
Croatia	x	x	x
Greece	x	x	x
Kosovo*	x	x	x
Montenegro	x	x	x
North Macedonia	x	x	x
Romania	x	x	x
Serbia	x	x	x
Slovenia	x	✓	✓
Turkey	x	x	x

Drug consumption rooms



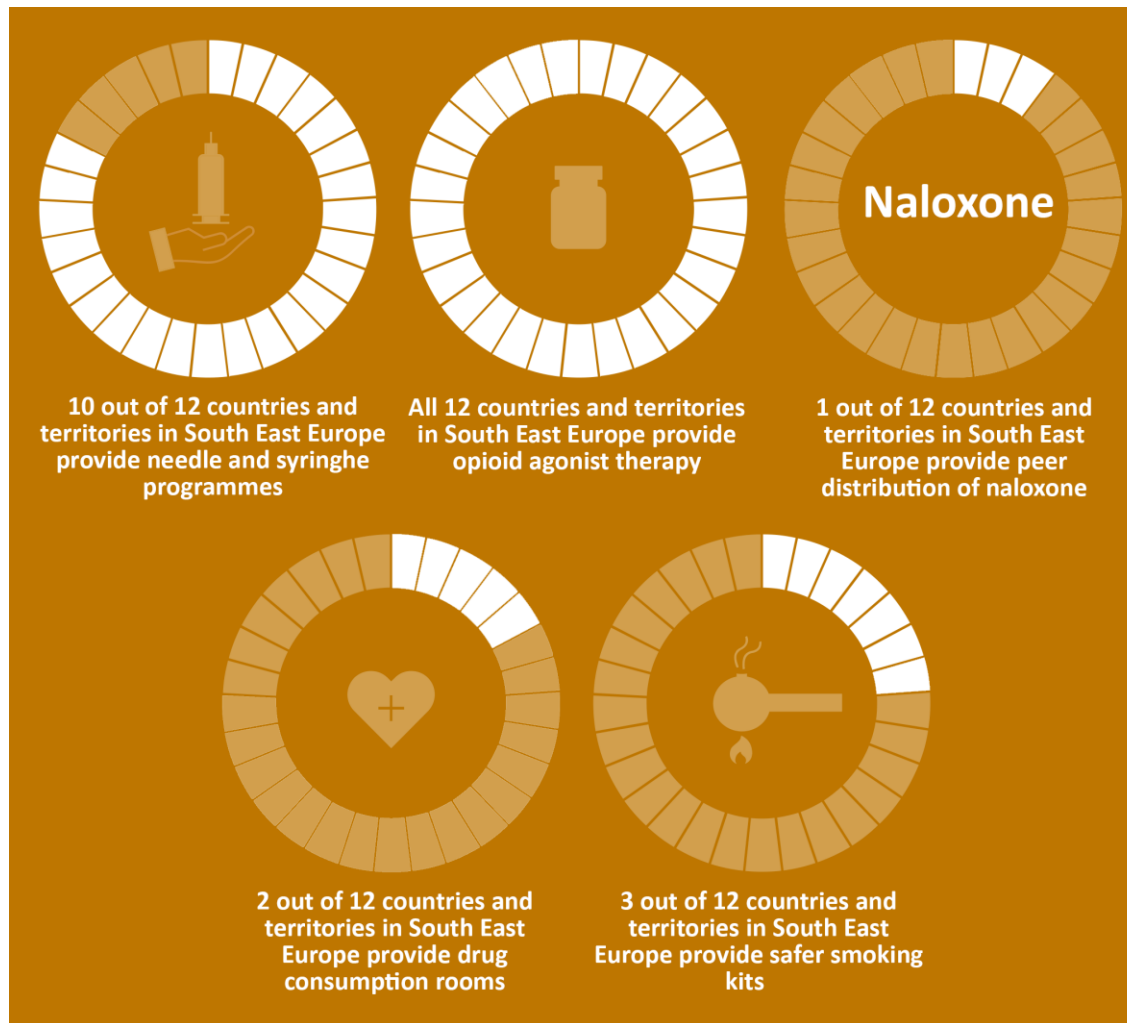
Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2024
Albania	x	x	x
Bosnia Herzegovina	x	x	x
Bulgaria	x	x	x
Croatia	x	x	x
Greece	x	✓	✓ ¹
Kosovo*	x	x	x
Montenegro	x	x	x
North Macedonia	x	x	x
Romania	x	x	x
Serbia	x	x	x
Slovenia	x	x	x (✓)
Turkey	x	x	x

Safer smoking equipment



Country/territory with reported injecting drug use	2020	2022	2024
Albania	-	✗	✗
Bosnia Herzegovina	-	✗	✗
Bulgaria	-	✗	✓
Croatia	-	✗	✗
Greece	-	nd	✓
Kosovo*	-	✗	✗
Montenegro	-	✗	✗
North Macedonia	-	✗	✗
Romania	-	✗	✗
Serbia	-	✗	✗
Slovenia	-	✓	✓
Turkey	-	nd	nd

Harm reduction services in SEE



Some recommendations

- Integrate essential harm reduction and health services into UHC package
- Evidence based services and policies
- Decriminalisation of drug use and possession for personal use
- Strong community involvement
- Balanced health and especially drugs strategies
 - EU accession

Thank you