

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5068/07

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to the Commission

Subject: Tuberculosis in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Tuberculosis (TB) represents a major public health challenge to the EU, its neighbouring countries and Central Asian states. In 2005, 445 000 new TB cases and 66 000 deaths were reported in the WHO European Region. Since 1990, TB has more than doubled in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, tripled in Uzbekistan and increased five-fold in Tajikistan. Eastern Europe and Central Asia have the world's highest prevalence rates of multi-drug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) and extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB) which do not respond to first line treatment.

In light of the possible implications of TB for European public health and security, it is highly regrettable that the EU Strategy on Central Asia presented by the Council in June does not address public health issues at all. Also the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) has failed so far in addressing the emerging threat of infectious diseases such as TB.

Apart from increased surveillance coordinated by the ECDC, how does the European Commission intend to assist Member States and neighbouring countries in tackling the growing TB threat in Eastern Europe and Central Asia?