

FAST FACTS

Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery



EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

Key Statistics

Overview

The region of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) consists of 34 countries and more than 400 million people. (It does not include the countries of Western Europe.)

Poverty

There are broad variations in economic growth of countries in the region. While poverty across the region has declined and areas such as Central Asia have experienced sharp economic growth, disparities still exist. For instance, an estimated 42.8 percent of the population of Tajikistan lives on less than \$2.15 per day, as does 25.3 percent of Georgia and 21.4 percent of Kyrgyzstan. High rates of unemployment persist, hovering around 9 to 10 percent for the region.

Gender Equality

While women in the region have access to healthcare, education, employment and political representation, sexual and domestic violence against women remains a serious problem. For example, an estimated 60,000 women were raped in the Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina war. The legacy of violence continues to be felt in areas such as the Western Balkans—where an estimated one out of every four women in a relationship has experienced physical or sexual violence.

Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

While the region has moved toward democracy during the past two decades, it has also experienced a number of violent conflicts and political and social transitions, some of which have exacerbated already existing sources of tension including: political instability in a number of nations; ethnic tensions; large numbers of refugees; returnees and internally displaced populations; disputed territories and separatist movements in Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabagh, South Ossetia and Transnistria.

Small Arms Reduction

There are an estimated 875 million small arms and light weapons in circulation—a sizable portion of which are in Eastern Europe and the CIS. Cross-border trafficking of humans (as well as small arms and drugs) and weak justice systems have contributed to pervasive organized crime and high rates of violent crime in countries throughout the region.

Mine Action

Violent conflicts and territorial disputes have left a number of countries in the region contaminated by landmines and other unexploded remnants of war. An estimated 321 square kilometers of land is contaminated in Armenia; 164 square kilometers in Azerbaijan; 1,820 square kilometers in Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as large tracts in Albania, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Serbia and Tajikistan. These mines pose a threat not only to the security and lives of citizens, but also to the livelihoods of people in rural areas who are dependent on subsistence agriculture.



A mine-affected field in Croatia

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Natural Disasters and Climate Change

Many parts of the region are susceptible to floods and landslides, as well as major earthquakes; Central Asia, the Caucasus and parts of the Southern Balkans are especially vulnerable. Environmental degradation and unsustainable development policies in Central Asia, as well as poorly maintained atomic and industrial facilities and high levels of urbanization increase the risk of natural disasters. Extremely hot summer seasons have resulted in forest fires in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and droughts that negatively affected agricultural production in Moldova.

Call to Action

Reducing domestic violence, crime and unemployment is crucial to maintaining peace and ensuring future human development in the region. Women should play an integral role in these efforts.

Recognizing past human rights abuses, ending impunity and providing justice are essential for reconciliation in the region.

Reducing the trade and proliferation of small arms is critical to both social and political peace throughout the region.

The elimination of landmines is essential not only to ensure the safety of the population, but also to ensure livelihoods, access to education and healthcare, and future development.

Rapid urbanization, failing infrastructures and the effects of climate change must be addressed to reduce death, injury and economic loss as the result of natural disasters.



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A Kosovar refugee in the northern border town of Kukes, Albania

UNDP in Action

In Europe and the CIS, UNDP:

- **Helps governments limit the circulation of small arms** in Belarus, Montenegro and Tajikistan and **build safer communities** in FYROM, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.
- **Contributes to conflict prevention** by providing mediation skills to communities in Moldova, Serbia and Transnistria; supporting livelihoods and promoting peacebuilding in Georgia; supporting peace and stability in the Crimea by participatory governance and dialogue in Ukraine; analyzing challenges to peace in Kyrgyzstan; taking action for cooperation and trust in Cyprus; and supporting crisis management legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Strengthens the government's ability to **assess, reduce and respond to disasters** in Armenia and Tajikistan; supports crisis management centers in FYROM and drought management and long-term recovery in Moldova; facilitates establishment of national capacity for coordination and management of disaster risk reduction activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and local-level disaster reduction efforts in Kyrgyzstan; and helps implement the regional disaster risk reduction programme for southeastern Europe.
- **Promotes women's security and rule of law** by establishing and supporting effective transitional justice mechanisms and addressing women's security and access to justice in Kosovo, and strengthening justice and security institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- **Supports national efforts to remove mines and unexploded remnants of war** in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Tajikistan.
- **Assists in the reintegration** of former combatants in Kosovo.

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