

## EUROPE AND THE CIS

### BETTER GOVERNANCE REAPS THE BENEFITS OF FREEDOM

Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is the newest region in which UNDP works, but in just over a decade, programme funds have quadrupled here, a sign of the confidence of our partners in the quality of UNDP's work. From our longer history in other areas of the world, we know that sustainable, effective development comes from helping people find development strategies that make sense within their societies. In Europe and the CIS, we have taken up a development challenge faced in varying degrees by all the region's countries: governance, especially in terms of building stronger democracies, ensuring that economic priorities meet human needs, and encouraging better management of environmental resources. Achieving the MDGs will require the region to advance on all of these.

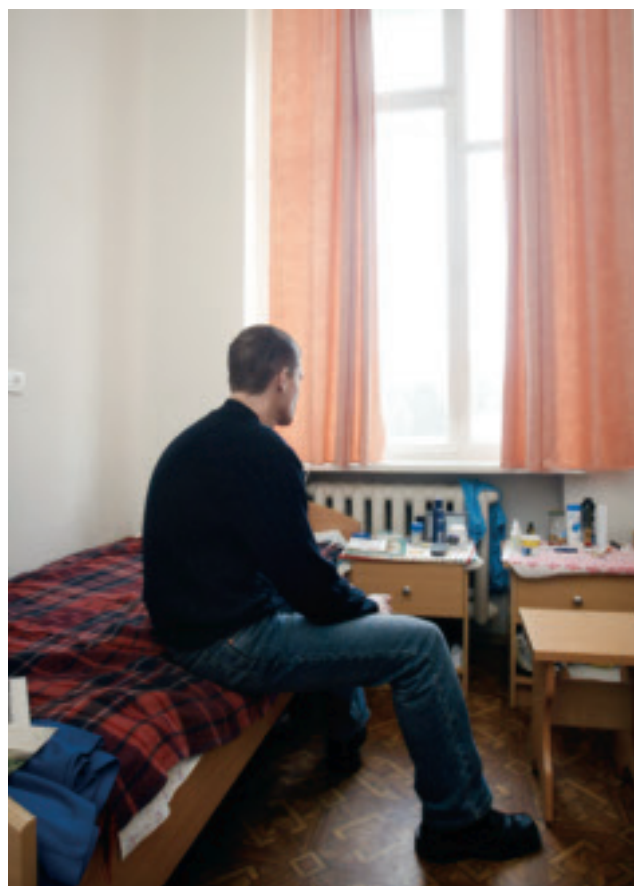
For some countries, the difficult transition from autocratic governments with centrally planned economies has been successfully achieved—UNDP has assisted 10 nations in their accession to the European Union. For many of the region's 21 other states, however, particularly those carved from the former Soviet Union, the last decade has been a bleaker time, marred by conflict and high poverty levels that have persisted despite recent robust economic growth. Deeply embedded habits of mistrust and isolation have hindered cooperation within and between countries. Health problems have worsened, and HIV/AIDS is now spreading at one of the fastest rates in the world.

#### A FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

Both in countries where transition is succeeding and in those still struggling to master it, UNDP draws on its reputation for neutrality and honesty to help countries grasp new opportunities, while alleviating some of the disruptions. This process starts with democratic governance, the framework for these new societies, and the largest concentration of UNDP's support to the region. We are helping countries build healthy and participatory governments by reforming their public sectors, developing more accountable parliaments, and protecting human rights. In 2003, after Georgia's peaceful revolution prompted fresh elections, we trained over 10,000 election staff and created a media centre to provide fair and objective election information. The Republic of Moldova consulted us on measures to combat corruption, and we backed civil society

groups in Turkey as they advocated for transparent local governance. Regionally, two widely discussed human development reports were published. *Avoiding the Dependency Trap* highlights the plight of the Roma minority, while *Reversing the Epidemic*, the first region-wide profile of HIV/AIDS, comprehensively analyzes the reasons for rapid transmission and proposes specific policy responses.

In many countries, UNDP has taken up the sensitive task of encouraging wider political space for discussing poverty, a formerly taboo subject. We have helped establish poverty reduction strategies, often based on analysis related to the MDGs, and proactively engaged the private sector. In 2003, our support for business centres in Bulgaria generated employment for 10,000 people, for example. Spreading the principles of cor-



Ukraine has one of the region's fastest growing rates of HIV/AIDS infection. To help counter it, UNDP has conducted a leadership development programme, which has resulted in a multi-media public awareness campaign and the first home-based care project. One of 400,000 infected Ukrainians, Oleg is receiving life-prolonging medication.



## UNDP PRACTICES AT WORK

**Regional:** Backed law enforcement cooperation to combat human trafficking.

**Armenia:** Helped set up participatory poverty monitoring systems. (1)

**Azerbaijan:** Promoted use of oil revenues for human development. (2)

**Croatia:** Developed credit programmes to help return displaced communities. (3)

**Kazakhstan:** Strengthened mechanisms to protect human rights. (4)

**Kyrgyzstan:** Supported implementation of a national HIV/AIDS strategy. (5)

**Russian Federation:** Assisted bio-

diversity protection in Kamchatka Peninsula. (6)

**Serbia and Montenegro:** Bolstered public employment in multi-ethnic border regions. (7)

**Uzbekistan:** Advocated ICT for governmental, non-governmental and academic institutions. (8)

porate social responsibility bore fruit in the Polish town of Plock, where the local oil industry now contributes to the delivery of social services. Foreign direct investment promotion initiatives included a major regional summit in Romania, a New York forum for potential investors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and advice provided to the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia on its foreign investment promotion strategy.

On the environment, UNDP works with many development partners in cleaning up the major environmental disasters that still plague the region, including through offering expertise on environmental management. After civil war and poor maintenance destroyed half of Tajikistan's water systems, a series of UNDP projects have rehabilitated drinking water and irrigation services for 2.5 million people, and set up local water users' associations to maintain them.

Efforts to rebuild communities shattered by the Chernobyl disaster continue in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as UNDP strives to promote local self-reliance and break the cycle of dependence on humanitarian aid.

One of the most innovative programmes in the region links wealthier countries with neighbours still requiring external assistance. Many of these former aid recipients are now "emerging donors." In 2003, we worked with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia to establish trust funds for development challenges within the region.

As a whole, Europe and the CIS have taken an enormous leap forward in just over a decade. As the turmoil of transition subsides, UNDP is committed to promoting self-reliance and applying the lessons learned to conquer the issues that remain.

## DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND POVERTY: CENTRES SPEARHEAD POLICY RESEARCH

Within UNDP's practice areas, the Oslo Governance Centre and the Brasilia-based International Poverty Centre (IPC) have been set up to conduct leading research to support programmes and policy advisory services, globally and within countries.

The Oslo Governance Centre helps UNDP country offices to assist in implementing the democratic reforms necessary to achieve the MDGs, with a special emphasis on access to jus-

tice, human rights, civil society, access to information, and governance and conflict prevention. In 2003, the centre convened ministers of G-8 countries to discuss steps for advancing a global partnership for development, in line with the eighth MDG. Other activities included a comprehensive review of governance indicators, and the organization of the Oslo Fellowships in Democratic Governance.

The IPC's overall objective is to encourage South-South cooperation and foster the capacity of developing countries to design and implement poverty reduction strategies. With ties to Brazil's principal economic policy institute, the centre opened in early 2004. It will concentrate on training high-level analysts and decision makers, supports South-South research on alternative anti-poverty strategies, and monitors poverty and inequality.