



**TB Europe Coalition**

Civil society driving the TB response

# TB EUROPE COALITION ANNUAL REPORT

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## 2023



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## Executive summary

In 2023, TB Europe Coalition continued to expand its activities and strengthen its leadership in advocacy in the field of TB response in the region. Despite the humanitarian crisis scaling in the region and the ongoing full-scale war in Ukraine where TBEC Secretariat is based, not only did the Coalition successfully completed all the tasks set for the year but gained the reputation of a reliable partner in many global initiatives.

The TBEC team in collaboration with its partners, conducted comprehensive advocacy and educational efforts in preparation for the UN High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on TB. As a result, the importance of preparation for UN HLM on TB and participation of country leadership in the event was highlighted at the country level. During the Multi-Stakeholder Hearings of UN General Assembly before UN HLM on TB in May 2023, TBEC Executive Director was the only representative of the EECA region who was granted an opportunity to make a strong statement on behalf of civil society organizations and communities about the importance of addressing the needs of civil society in the text of the Political Declaration. In addition, consolidated efforts of the partners resulted in significant work to revise the text of the Political Declaration on TB; 4 representatives of CSOs/communities were included in country delegations.

During the year, TBEC continuously strengthened cooperation with global and national partners, in particular, by signing memoranda of cooperation with the international network of members of parliaments committed to the fight against TB, the Global TB Caucus, and the Center for Public Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine – the relevant public authority in TB response.

2023 was also remarkable for establishment of "TB Europe Coalition" Charitable Foundation in Ukraine. The main goal of creating a country organization was to strengthen Ukraine's response to TB and other socially dangerous diseases which progress as a result of almost 2 years of full-scale war and the related deep social and economic crisis.

To further strengthen the voice of the civil society of our region and to mainstream the theme of fighting addressing TB and other socially dangerous diseases, TBEC joined the WHO Civil Society Commission. The first meeting of the Commission members with the WHO General Director was held in December 2023.

Overall, in 2023 TBEC Secretariat implemented seven different grant programs; five of these grants were carried over from 2022. TBEC remains one of the regional leaders in providing technical assistance under the Global Fund strategic initiatives, including civil society engagement in elections to Country Coordination Mechanisms. We continued working on civil society engagement in implementation and operationalization of Multisectoral Accountability Framework to accelerate progress to end TB (MAF-TB). We continued strengthening TBEC strategic presence in the countries of the region through cooperation with national and regional organizations. We have focused greater attention to the issues of ensuring accessibility of drugs and reducing their cost. Traditionally, we systemically built capacity of civil society organizations and communities affected by TB through training activities and issuing relevant publications.

We are grateful to the coalition members for active engagement in TB response, supporting advocacy initiatives of the civil society and communities at the country, regional and global levels. All

achievements of 2023 resulted from our joint efforts! We will continue overcoming barriers and consolidating our efforts making the voice of the civil society and communities in the WHO European region stronger to ensure protection of the right of people affected by TB and to call upon country leaders to firmly implement their commitments on TB elimination.

## Communities, rights and gender Strategic initiative (CRG SI) funded by the Global Fund

### ***Pilot data collection for four WHO Europe indicators reflecting the systemic approach to the way communities and civil society organizations influence programs, according to the new WHO Action Plan on Tuberculosis in the European Region for 2023-2030***

The TBEC team, in collaboration with representatives from the WHO Regional Office for Europe and in coordination with NTP representatives from pilot countries, as well as civil society organizations (CSOs) and affected communities, has developed a Data Collection Algorithm for four indicators that were not previously collected. This document, available in [Russian](#) and [English](#), aims to enhance the mobilization of affected communities and civil society organizations in implementing a systematic mechanism for data collection.

TBEC successfully conducted a pilot data collection for these four indicators in three countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region: Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. The pilot data collection adhered to the Data Collection Algorithm previously developed in a collaborative effort with the WHO Regional Office for Europe and approved by the National Tuberculosis Programs (NTPs) of the pilot countries. In late October 2023, a final meeting was convened to present and discuss the pilot results. During this meeting, country representatives shared their experiences, achievements, challenges encountered during the data collection process, potential solutions, and recommendations. As part of the implementation of the Kyrgyzstan State Order Program in healthcare, a new section titled "Collaboration with CSO/NGO" was integrated into the Electronic TB Register (ETBR) structure. Thus, during the event Kyrgyzstan representatives shared their experience in expanding the functions of ETBR following a successful pilot data collection. As part of the implementation of the Kyrgyzstan State Order Program in healthcare, a new section titled "Collaboration with CSO/NGO" was integrated into the ETBR structure.

TBEC also developed a Data Collection Guide specifically tailored for CSOs and communities affected by TB in the [Russian](#) and [English](#) languages. This Guide presents the data collection process in a simple form, providing a detailed explanation of each stage and visualizing the entire process. Drawing on the results of pilot data collection in 2021 and 2022 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine, the guide offers practical recommendations and advice on operationalizing the algorithm.

### ***Adaptation and adoption at the national level (Ukraine) of the Standardized package of supportive community-based services to improve TB prevention and treatment outcomes and the costing methodology through meaningful engagement of the community affected by TB, in the policy-making process***

In April 2023, a specialized regulation governing the provision of medical and psychosocial support services to Tuberculosis (TB) and Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) patients was meticulously developed, officially endorsed, and enacted (the Ministry of Health Order #692 as of April 13, 2023), based on the Standardized package of community-based support services.

### ***Strategic planning of TBpeopleUkraine***

With financial support of CRG-SI, the charitable organization "TBpeopleUkraine" held a strategic planning meeting. The purpose of this gathering was to consolidate and analyze the organization's

strategy for 2021 – 2023 and to formulate a new development strategy for the largest TB patient community in Ukraine for the forthcoming three years.

### ***Traditional participation in the UNION World Conference on Lung Health***

The TB Europe Coalition continued its tradition of active participation in the annual the UNION world Conference on Lung Health, held this year from November 15 to 18 in Paris, France. During the event, the Board members and staff of the TBEC Secretariat presented the latest developments and shared best practices related to advocacy for key issues in TB response.

Notably, the TBEC Executive Director, serving as a conference speaker, addressed various aspects of the Multisectoral Accountability Framework to accelerate progress to end tuberculosis and shared TBEC experience of MAF-TB launch and implementation in the countries of the region. In addition to this, TBEC organized a dedicated session focused on empowering communities and CSOs in TB response through the provision of technical assistance and systematic data collection.

## **Technical support under Global Fund Strategic Initiatives "Community, rights and gender" and "CCM Evolution"**

### ***CSO and TB community engagement in the Country Coordination Mechanism elections***

In 2023, the technical support for the active engagement of civil society in the elections for the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) was completed in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In Tajikistan, extensive preparations for the CCM election included the facilitation of community operational meetings. Through these efforts, 10 key groups (KG) were consolidated into 6 communities. This enabled the inclusion of representatives of the youth, male migrants, and male prison inmates in the communities, ensuring their participation in the CCM, its composition changing by 50%.

In Uzbekistan, the preparation for CCM elections brought about a new provision in the CCM protocol, stipulating the election of a CCM member from the civil sector for a two-year term, allowing for a one-time re-election. Additionally, there was a provision for potentially expanding the representation of the civil sector in the CCM which could be achieved through the election of two new CCM members from key group communities.

### ***The role of community-led monitoring in the process of improving healthcare programs***

In the context of developing community-led monitoring (CLM) for the CCM, the focus of technical assistance in Ukraine and Moldova was on enhancing technical and advocacy skills among the KG, PLWH, civil society organizations, and CCM members from communities. The obtained skills will empower them to effectively use the CLM data for improving the quality of programs and accessibility of services.

### ***Meaningful engagement of SCOs and affected communities in the process of preparing country applications for the new GF funding cycle***

In 2023, the majority of countries applied for new funding from the Global Fund. A central theme in this funding cycle was the active engagement of communities in the preparation and design of interventions to address the priority needs of the respective communities. The technical support facilitated by TBEC,

enabled the affected communities in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Ukraine to engage in participatory discussions about their needs for the upcoming three years and articulate these needs, ensuring their inclusion in the Global Fund country funding applications.

## STOP TB Partnership

### ***MAF-TB National Roadmap development in Kazakhstan***

In collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the TBEC team successfully finalized the draft of the MAF-TB Roadmap for Kazakhstan. This document has been forwarded to the country for further discussion and recommendations. Furthermore, the TBEC team has presented a draft for the implementation of MAF-TB in Kazakhstan. This proposal is aligned with the new WHO Operational Guidance on adaptation and implementation of WHO's Multisectoral Accountability Framework to end TB. As of the end of 2023, the draft of the plan is undergoing a review at the country level.

### ***Preparation of article upon results of baseline MAF-TB assessment with the use of Annex 2 in five EECA countries and its publication in a scientific journal***

Upon approval from the co-authors (more than 20 experts), the TBEC team prepared a scientific article based on the results of MAF-TB baseline assessment conducted with the use of Annex 2 in five EECA countries. As of the end of 2023, the article was submitted to the journal for peer review. This was the team's inaugural experience in contributing to scientific publications. The intention is to continue this practice, highlighting the results of our research and important initiatives in subsequent journal publications.

### ***Development of an online course on the Standardized package of community-based support services to improve TB prevention and treatment outcomes in EECA countries***

With technical support of WHO Office for Europe and the Center for Health Policies and Studies (PAS), TBEC developed an online course centered around the Standardized package of community-based support services. By the end of 2023, all the 13 course modules have been developed in English for further uploading to the Open WHO Platform. In 2023, the course materials have been thoroughly revised by WHO consultants.

Designed for service providers willing to engage in social contracting for the delivery of TB services in the EECA countries, the online course is planned for launch in the first quarter of 2024.

### ***Development of the Guide for civil society organizations and communities affected by tuberculosis "Communication to facilitate initiation and launch of multisectoral accountability framework to accelerate progress to end TB at the country level"***

The Guide for civil society organizations and communities affected by tuberculosis "Communication to facilitate initiation and launch of MAF-TB at the country level", developed by TBEC in the [Russian](#) and [English](#) languages, was broadly presented in May 2023 during TBEC webinar "The ABC for a TB Activist". During the webinar, representatives from CSOs and communities were introduced to the purpose of the publication, its content, and the practical applications it offers. With the use of this Guide, CSOs and TB communities will be able to plan and launch the work on MAF-TB initiation and participate in its implementation in their countries.

### ***Strengthening the voice of CSOs and communities: building advocacy capacity and helping to unlock it***

The TBEC team, in collaboration with partners, undertook a comprehensive advocacy and awareness-raising work in the region to prepare for the UN High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on TB. The TBEC Executive Director joined the Leadership Group of the Coordination Hub dedicated to preparing civil society and communities for the UN HLM on TB. Over a period of nearly nine months, these collective efforts emphasized the significance of preparation for the UN HLM on TB and the participation of country leadership in the event. The collaborative endeavors of partners led to substantial contributions in revising the text of the Political Declaration on TB. During the Multi-Stakeholder Hearings of the UN General Assembly before the UN HLM on TB in May 2023, the TBEC Executive Director, as the sole representative from the EECA region, delivered a powerful statement on behalf of civil society organizations and communities, emphasizing the importance of addressing the needs of civil society in the text of the Political Declaration. Through tireless efforts of CSOs and communities, the final text of the Political Declaration on TB now includes measurable and time-limited targets concerning TB prevention, diagnostics, treatment, and financing of new developments and TB response.

The advocacy and communication efforts at both regional and country levels resulted in the inclusion of four representatives of CSOs/communities in national delegations. Additionally, the project successfully secured the participation of three representatives from civil society organizations and communities affected by TB of the EECA countries, in the UN High-Level Meeting on TB.

## **Support in TB procurement and market shaping through expanding partnership, stakeholder engagement and coordination with the financial support of the STOP TB Partnership/UNOPS**

In 2023, the TBEC team provided technical support to the Global Drug Facility, an entity dedicated to ensuring universal and equitable access to TB treatments and diagnostics in both public and private sectors.

Moreover, TBEC actively participated in a global advocacy campaign urging Johnson & Johnson to cease enforcing secondary patents for the use of bedaquiline fumarate. This successful advocacy effort led to a twofold reduction in the prices of bedaquiline.

## **Enhancing the capacity and capability of European civil society to drive a person-centred TB response in Europe 2.0**

### ***Interaction with EU civil society and decision-makers, broad information exchange and facilitation of collaboration to support the civil society in advocacy activities***

For consecutive years, the EU operational grants have empowered TB Europe Coalition to build the capacity of civil society organizations and communities within the WHO European Region. These grants also support TBEC's ongoing advocacy efforts in the region.



TBEC actively participates in global and European advocacy activities to strengthen the role of the civil society and communities in TB response by playing an active role in various forums, task forces, and activities conducted by the Global Fund, Stop TB Partnership, and WHO Europe.

Leading up to World TB Day, TBEC engaged in a European Parliament Round Table to discuss TB issues within the context of the humanitarian crisis caused by the full-scale war in Ukraine. Additionally, in collaboration with the EU Civil Society Forum, TBEC co-developed a joint statement titled "HIV, Tuberculosis, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmitted Infections", which was presented during the annual conference of the EU Health Policy Platform. As a member of the EU Lung Health Group, TBEC actively supported the "Keep Breathing" campaign, which aims to elevate the priority of lung health issues in the European Union.

TBEC has also applied significant efforts in addressing access to drugs in EU countries. Consultations with WHO representatives and civil sector activists were conducted, leading to a meeting with CSO representatives from EU countries. During this meeting, participants collectively decided to establish a task force dedicated to access to drugs in EU countries and consolidate their efforts to reduce the cost of the drugs. The first meeting of this task force is planned for the first quarter of 2024.

### ***Building CSO and communities' capacity and sustainable development of TBEC***

Under the project, TBEC placed a special emphasis on its sustainable development. This included the drafting of a Strategic Plan for 2024-2026 and the formulation of internal procedures essential for expanding fundraising capacities and introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system designed to track the progress of TBEC's activities.

TBEC continued its active work on capacity building of CSOs and TB communities, fostering their engagement in decision-making processes. As part of the "ABC for a TB Activist" educational initiative, TBEC conducted a series of webinars covering crucial topics in TB response. These webinars garnered participation from more than 300 individuals. In 2023, TBEC initiated a mentorship program focusing on the effective utilization of Chat GPT by civil society organizations and TB communities. Five pre-selected country representatives participated in the program. Furthermore, TBEC worked on the capacity building of its Secretariat members. Team members attended courses at the McGill Summer Institutes in Global Health, covering modern trends in healthcare such as "Up-to-date Diagnostics of TB," "Advocacy in Global Healthcare: From Evidence to Action," and "Tuberculosis Research Methods." These courses laid the foundation for new interventions within ongoing projects and those planned for the future.

### ***Raising awareness of CSOs and communities about the key events at the regional and global levels***

TBEC has consistently engaged in active awareness-raising efforts to inform coalition members and partners about issues related to TB response (including a monthly bulletin, social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube), and thematic mailings using Google and Mailchimp). TBEC has also actively participated in international communication campaigns, including those for World TB Day, European Testing Week, and the Global Fund Replenishment, among others.

At the end of the year, TBEC organized a meeting for coalition members, during which the achievements of 2023 and the plans for 2024 were presented. Additionally, in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the Coalition, TBEC created a cycle of videos to be released in early 2024.

## "Supporting community-based healthcare services to mothers and children in SPILNO childcare points and centers for internally displaced persons" project supported by UNICEF Ukraine

Until April 2023, TBEC continued its efforts in a project initiated in 2022 aimed at assisting individuals and healthcare facilities in Ukraine in responding to the ongoing crisis caused by the full-scale war.

Under the UNICEF project in 2023, TB Europe Coalition ensured delivery of essential healthcare services in 26 Spilno childcare points located across 20 cities in Ukraine. Over 50 healthcare professionals were involved in conducting screenings for infectious diseases through brief questionnaires and preventative examinations. They also provided basic family doctor consultations for children and their parents/caretakers, prescribed necessary medications, offered referrals to specialized care facilities, and provided medical information, including the issuance of vaccination certificates, online counseling, etc. Additionally, doctors at Spilno points organized engaging educational activities for both children and adults, focusing on health promotion topics such as personal hygiene, vaccination, healthy nutrition, prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, mental healthcare, paramedical assistance in emergency situations, etc.

Furthermore, within the framework of the UNICEF Ukraine Project, TBEC, alongside its partners, provided humanitarian assistance through the medical voucher program. The Coalition also ensured the procurement and urgent delivery of drugs and medical supplies to healthcare facilities.

These achievements in support of children and their families were made possible through the generous support of the European Union (EU), the Government of Japan, and UNICEF.



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