

Rapid Assessment on Access to PrEP in EU/EEA Countries



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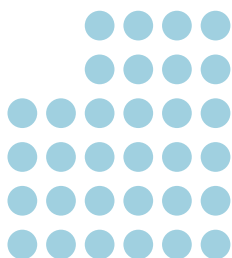
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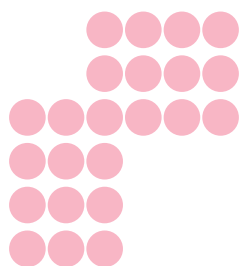
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Sexual Health Centre, Ireland
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BACKGROUND

Although there has been a continuous decline in the annual number of new HIV diagnoses in the European Union (EU) and European Economic Area (EEA), the burden of new HIV infections in the region continues to disproportionality affect certain countries and key populations.¹ Key populations, especially in the countries with the higher HIV rates in the region, frequently experience stigma and discrimination in general population and in healthcare settings, which undermine the access to health services. Only a few high-income countries are close to reaching their national HIV targets. To achieve the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) 95-95-95 targets, as well as the 2030 HIV targets within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is crucial for EU/EEA countries to prioritize HIV prevention. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)² as a part of combination prevention is a highly effective, scientifically-based HIV prevention tool.³

The first PrEP for the prevention of HIV was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in July 2012, followed by an EU-wide authorisation by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), with a substantial delay in 2016. Despite a more than six-year license in the European Union, PrEP has not reached its full potential as part of combination prevention, owing to a number of factors related to accessibility, affordability, and acceptability.

The efforts to expand the use of PrEP face challenges worldwide. As such, the UNAIDS target of 3 million people having access to PrEP by 2020 globally, was not⁴ met. In Europe, there were 68 089 oral PrEP initiations in 2020.⁵ According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), "Greater access to PrEP and progress in PrEP implementation is needed to reach the SDG of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. To achieve this progress, it would be helpful for countries to gain a better understanding of the barriers within their country to implementing PrEP programmes."

1 Key populations in the context of PrEP often include gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM), transgender people, sex workers, and their partners.

2 Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a HIV medication that when used consistently, reduces the risk of HIV infection during sex by over 90%. WHO PrEP guidelines recommends daily use of PrEP for people at substantial risk of acquiring HIV.(WHO)

3 ECDC, Monitoring HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis programmes in the EU/EEA
<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/monitoring-hiv-pre-exposure-prophylaxis-programmes-eueea>

4 UNAIDS, World AIDS Day Report, 2020, https://aidstargets2025.unaids.org/assets/images/prevaling-against-pandemics_en.pdf

5 AVAC, cross-ref.

<https://www.aidsmap.com/news/feb-2021/nearly-million-have-started-taking-prep-worldwide-only-third-unaid-2020-target>

6 ECDC Evidence Brief, Pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention in Europe and Central Asia,
https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/DD_PrEP_brief_May%202022-revised-final.pdf

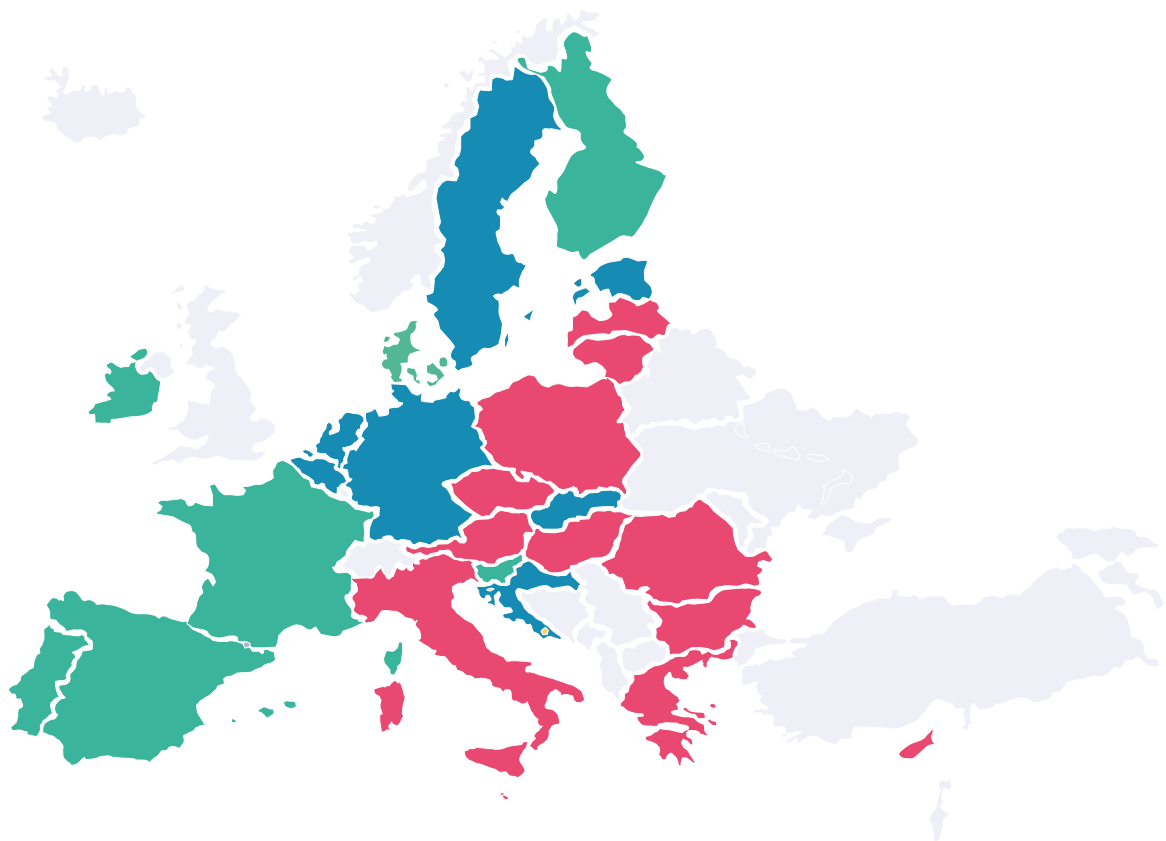
Within our core thematic areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), affordability of medicines and diagnostics, and addressing legal and policy barriers to accessing HIV prevention, treatment and care services, AIDS Action Europe (AAE) conducted a rapid assessment on the availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability of PrEP in EU/EEA countries.

From August to October 2022, AAE invited its member organisations and partners based in one of the EU Member States to submit their responses on various aspects of availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability (AAAA) of PrEP in their national context.

This current report is based on the information provided in the survey and reflects the practical knowledge on the issue of community-based and -led service organisations that work with key populations. It includes besides the main findings of the assessment, country profiles, as well as recommendations for the European Union and its Member States for urgent steps to be taken to ensure universal, free and low-threshold access to PrEP.

The report classifies countries into three groups based on the level of reimbursement of PrEP under their public healthcare systems:

- I. Countries that have no reimbursement scheme for PrEP
- II. Countries that fully reimburse PrEP
- III. Countries that partially reimburse PrEP (co-payments).



MAIN FINDINGS

Countries that have no reimbursement scheme for PrEP

- People who live in countries that have no reimbursement scheme for PrEP have to pay for it out of pocket. In most of these countries, the generic PrEP costs around 60€ for a box of 30 pills when purchased in pharmacies. Only Hungary reported a higher price of 130€ for generic PrEP. The originator Truvada® costs 350€ in Hungary and 677€ in Italy.
- Countries that do not reimburse tend to have unofficial access to PrEP through online pharmacies. Commonly, the medication purchased online is manufactured in India or Thailand and costs around 30€ plus delivery fees. Almost all countries in this category, except the Czech Republic and Italy, reported the purchase of PrEP online as the most common practice.
- There are various challenges for people who purchase PrEP online. For example, in Romania, postal services often refuse PrEP deliveries as they consider the online purchase of ART medications illegal.
- Several countries (Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia) reported the practice of buying PrEP abroad. Additionally, Malta reported the practice of sharing PrEP within communities.
- Some countries (Austria, Italy) offer a certain level of access to free PrEP through medical studies or pilot projects (Latvia, Romania). However, this access is neither sustainable nor widespread.
- Because of the high or higher prices of PrEP in local pharmacies, people often order it online, thus remaining outside of the relevant healthcare continuum. This results in a missed opportunity in HIV and STI testing, PrEP monitoring, renal function and bone checks.

- The coverage for sexual health services is primarily determined by the type of healthcare system, however, PrEP related services often remain excluded from public insurance coverage because public health authorities do not regard them as a part of HIV combination prevention. Even countries that offer PrEP-related and sexual health service delivery through their public health system do not necessarily have adequate capacity or meet the needs of the communities. For example, in Poland, despite the formal availability of free PrEP services at HIV and infectious disease clinics, in practice, doctors do not accept new PrEP patients. This drives patients to either refer to fee-based private clinics or to avoid testing and health monitoring. Furthermore, the GBMSM community often experiences stigma and discrimination within the public health care system.
- There are additional barriers and hidden costs in accessing PrEP medication and related services:
 - In some countries, the individuals' expenditures are not only limited to PrEP medication, but they extend to the costs of doctors' visits for prescription (Austria), and/or testing (Hungary, Cyprus). Particularly, Hungary formally has a universal health care system. Yet, for a number of reasons if people who take PrEP voluntarily want to get a PrEP prescription or STIs check they usually refer to the private health system, and pay for health services fully out of pocket.
 - In Lithuania, for instance, in order to visit an infectious disease specialist who can prescribe PrEP free of charge, a person must first see a general practitioner and receive a referral to a specialised doctor. People have to pay 20€ to get a direct appointment with an infectious disease specialist.
 - On the other side, there are countries like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malta and Italy that do not cover the cost of PrEP but offer free and regular HIV/STI checks and monitoring.
 - Good practice in Bulgaria, an example of community-based PrEP service delivery: the Sofia-Checkpoint provides daily HIV/STI testing and weekly consultation times about PrEP with an infectious disease specialist. The Sofia-Checkpoint issues more than 95% of all PrEP prescriptions in the country.
 - The Czech Republic is one of the few countries, in which people do not commonly order PrEP online. The prices for PrEP in local pharmacies are comparable with the online pharmacies. Moreover, access to STI/ HIV testing, PrEP monitoring and doctor's visits are free of charge.

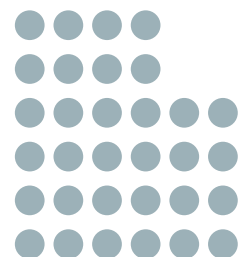
Countries that fully reimburse PrEP

- The prices for generic PrEP vary from 60€ to 271€ per box of 30 pills in these countries, yet, many of them pay the high price of more than 140€. In this category people included in the public healthcare system do not have to pay for PrEP medication out of pocket, but its high pricing might affect the decision of public health authorities on health expenditures in future.
- In comparison with countries that have no reimbursement scheme for PrEP, the countries in this category have national guidelines and indications that define eligibility criteria for access to PrEP. However, if these criteria are restrictive they might limit access to PrEP for those communities that might potentially benefit from it.
- In all these countries, PrEP-related services are generally provided exclusively by public health care providers. In some countries (Denmark, Finland, Portugal) these services are provided by infectious disease or sexual health departments and specialists, in others by general practitioners (Spain). In Ireland and Germany, these services can be offered by a larger scope of medical specialists. When PrEP service provision is limited to only one specialized healthcare level or medical qualification, it might create problems with capacities and long waiting times. Such issues were reported in Finland and Spain.
- The countries that cover the costs of PrEP within the public health care system, tend to legally restrict access to online purchases of PrEP (Ireland, Spain). In Finland, Ireland, Germany, and Spain one can access PrEP through a private healthcare system, which results in substantial individual costs. People that are not covered by public or private health insurance have great challenges in accessing PrEP.



Common findings for all countries

- Almost all countries reported the problem of limited accessibility to PrEP and PrEP-related services. Typically, there are only one or two infectious disease centre(s) and a pharmacy(s) in an entire country, which is located in the capital or the big cities.
- Most countries do not have community-based or led PrEP service delivery. Only Denmark and Portugal reported examples of collaboration between community-based organisations and public health providers in the delivery of PrEP-related services. However, these are one to two NGOs in the entire country.
- Another challenge is the knowledge, and attitudes of general practitioners on PrEP (Denmark, Spain) as well as difficulties in creating a judgement-free environment.
- The majority of the countries reported that PrEP services and information campaigns are focused on MSM (France, Germany, Portugal, Spain). As a result, the communities of foreign GBMSM, transgender people, women with migration backgrounds, heterosexual men and women are left behind.
- Lack of sufficient, targeted, large-scale information and awareness-raising campaigns is a common problem for this category. There are small-scale information activities run by local NGOs and community-based service providers, but they often lack adequate funding.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Main recommendations

In the countries that have no reimbursement scheme for PrEP:


- To include PrEP medications and PrEP-related services under the public health reimbursement scheme.

For all countries:

- To establish and promote low-threshold community-based and -led service delivery with the direct role of community-based organisations in PrEP services.

To improve the access to PrEP it is critical to:

- Review the pricing policy for PrEP and push the lowering of prices
- Review national health policies with a goal to include PrEP and PrEP-related sexual health services as HIV combination prevention
- Review national guidelines to make eligibility criteria for access to PrEP more inclusive
- Review and define the gaps in the current availability and accessibility of PrEP and PrEP-related sexual health services for the community groups
- Remove financial and structural barriers related to access to STI/HIV testing, PrEP monitoring and doctors' visits.
- Expand the list of medical practitioners that can prescribe PrEP
- Sensitise medical doctors on PrEP, as well as on non-judgemental service delivery

- 
- Make PrEP accessible for all who can benefit from it regardless of the insurance status
 - Promote collaborations between community-based organisations and hospitals in PrEP delivery throughout the country
 - Scale up information campaigns on PrEP through public and international support
 - Conduct the needs assessment and acceptability of PrEP within different community groups
 - Develop awareness-raising campaigns focused on foreign GBMSM, transgender people, women with migration background, heterosexual men and women
 - Support community-based organisations that can provide HIV/STI testing and consultation on PrEP, as well as PrEP prescriptions on the site

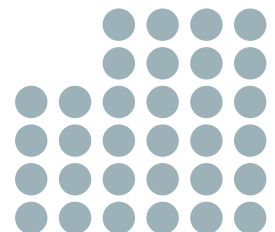


TABLE 1. COUNTRIES THAT HAVE NO REIMBURSEMENT SCHEME FOR PrEP

| Country | National Guideline | Official access and price ⁷ | Unofficial access: online & price ⁸ | PrEP related services: overview & costs | National Priorities |
|----------------|--------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Austria | ✓ | 2 pharmacies 59€ | Common practice | Every 3 months doctor's visits to get a prescription, which costs 30€ to 130€. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the public funding that covers the costs of PrEP • Information and awareness raising and needs-assessment |
| Bulgaria | ✗ | 55€ - 60€ | Exists | The Checkpoint – Sofia offers STI/HIV checks for free. PrEP consultations with an infectious disease specialist. ≥ 95% all PrEP prescriptions are from Checkpoint – Sofia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the high PrEP price • Tackle HIV/STIs stigma in the medical community • Improve management & achieve adequate PrEP practice & others |
| Cyprus | ✗ | Not available | €30 | PrEP is not officially available. Fees for PrEP monitoring. CBVCT Cy Checkpoint provides support on the use of PrEP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOH should enable official access to PrEP to all, and collaborate with CBOs to provide officially accessible PrEP. |
| Czech Republic | ✓ | 25€ - 40€ prescription needed | Not common | PrEP services at 8 HIV centres & 1 community PrEP Point in Prague. The national health insurance covers the costs of testing and monitoring. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to PrEP • PrEP should be prescribed by derma-venereologists & GPs • PrEP should be fully covered by the public health insurance. |
| Greece | ✗ | PrEP is not available | 40€ - 50€ | PrEP is not available in the public healthcare system. Out of pocket payment for doctors' visits for PrEP monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PrEP should be accessible to all through public hospitals and free of charge. |
| Hungary | ✗ | 130€ generics 350€ Truvada | Online, abroad or buyer's clubs. 30€ | Some people get STI tests through private health system - out of pocket payments. Many take PrEP without tests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure easier access to PrEP • Have public support on improving access to PrEP • Make PrEP affordable or free. |
| Italy | ✓ | 60€ generics 677€ Truvada | Not common | Only infectious disease specialists can provide PrEP-related services: follow-up visits, HIV/STI testing. Free/ Fee-based: depends on the region. 3 CBOs that provide PrEP programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PrEP reimbursement, and other related medical checks • Informative campaigns • Accessibility of PrEP throughout the whole country |
| Latvia | ✓ | 92.39€ generics | Common practice 25€ - 60€ | Only infectious disease specialists can provide PrEP-related services in Riga. STI rapid tests are free at focal points. PrEP monitoring, kidney function check are fee-based. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish national guidelines on PrEP • Secure public financing after the PrEP pilot coverage ends |
| Lithuania | ✗ | 40€ - 50€ | Common practice | 1) Direct visit of an infectious disease specialist - 20€. 2) See a GP, get a referral to an infectious disease specialist. This option is free of charge but takes more time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PrEP should be available everywhere |
| Malta | NA | Online & shared 57€ | 20€ - 30€ | Testing, monitoring, PrEP prescription, are free of charge Long waiting time for an appointment for a PrEP monitoring. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase affordability • Promote and scale up the information campaigns • Promote and scale up access to sexual health services, etc. |
| Poland | ✓ | 30€ | Common practice | PrEP- and STI checks formally are free of charge. But people often visit private clinics which costs 50 to 80€ for a visit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimburse the costs of PrEP medication • Include GPs in the provision of PrEP • HIV doctors should be paid by patient/visits |
| Romania | ✗ | PrEP is not available | 10 - 30\$ Prescription required | There is no PrEP distributed in Romania through public or private institutions. There is a small pilot project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state should make regulations on access to PrEP • PrEP should be made available and accessible for all MSM |

7 Per box of 30 pills

8 The price does not include shipping costs

TABLE 2. COUNTRIES THAT FULLY REIMBURSE PrEP

| Country | Official Price | National guidelines & eligibility | PrEP related services: overview & costs | Who can prescribe PrEP | National Priorities |
|----------|--|---|--|---|--|
| Denmark | Glenmark® 271€ Mylan® 209€ Stada® 208€. Truvada 1104€ | 1. HIV -; 2. MSM/ transwoman -man who has sex with men, & fulfils at least 1 of the criteria: -unprotected anal sex with at least 2 male partners within the last 12 weeks; syphilis within last 24 weeks; chlamydia or gonorrhoea within last 24 weeks 3. 15 years ≥. 4. Normal kidney function 5. Acceptable liver & bone marrow function. 6. Can follow treatment guidelines | 9 infectious disease centres (IDC). 1 CBO & IDC cooperation model in Copenhagen. The infectious disease specialist comes 2 a month and prescribes PrEP. The joint team does blood tests. | GPs Infectious disease specialists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish more CBOs collaborations Scale up awareness-raising campaigns Increase the knowledge of GPs on PrEP Address concerns of transgender people about being on PrEP and transitioning. |
| Finland | 49 - 195€ | HIV- MSM, +18 years of age, no signs of acute HIV infection, CrCl (Cockcroft-Gault) >60 ml/min. And at least one of the following: unprotected sex in last 6 months with > 1 man with unknown HIV status or HIV+ with a detectable viral load, STI in the last 6 months, PEP in the last 6 months, chemsex ." | 1-year waiting period to for PrEP from a public health provider. Sooner from a private one, but then health check-ups and PrEP out of pocket. 1 CBO issue referrals to doctors from public health care. | Specialized public& private health providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the accessibility of PrEP |
| France | Biogaran® 155€ Truvada 296€ | PrEP indicators apply to key populations such as MSM, trans people, sex workers, and people at high sexual risk for HIV. | A person must register at SH centre & undergo health checks, then get an assigned doctor & regular medical exams. | Sexual health centres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach other groups like young MSM, foreign MSM, and women with an African background. |
| Germany | 0 - 60€ | The German-Austrian PrEP guidelines (die Deutsch- Österreichischen PrEP-Leitlinien) & S2k-Leitlinie HIV-Präexpositionsprophylaxe (PrEP) The German-Austrian PrEP guidelines recommend PrEP for people aged 16 and over with an increased ("substantial") risk of HIV | PrEP is accessible to people with public health insurance. PrEP can be partially reimbursed through private health insurance. Some use online delivery, telegram groups | HIV & infectious disease specialists GPs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness on PrEP and target LGBTI+ people. Make PrEP accessible to people that are not covered by public health insurance. |
| Ireland | 60€ - 70€ -private | Substantial risk of contracting HIV through sex. To get PrEP for free through NHS a person needs to test negative for HIV, attend a check-up at least once every 3 months and meet at least 1 of the defined criteria for free PrEP (more in the country profile) | PrEP is dispensed through community pharmacies. A drug payment scheme/medical card is needed for free PrEP. PrEP is free through clinics if meeting eligibility criteria. Privately, a GP's visit -70€+ PrEP 70€ | Public sexual health services GPs private providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of waiting lists. All people applying for PrEP need to register for the Drugs Payment Scheme. The removal of this requirement would speed up the process for applicants |
| Portugal | 8,5€ per box | https://normas.dgs.min-saude.pt/2017/11/28/p-rofilaxia-de-pre-exposicao-da-infecao-por-vih-n-o-adulto/ | PrEP s exclusively supplied by NHS. It requires outpatient follow-up in a hospital with an Infectious Diseases department. PrEP can only be supplied by hospital pharmacies. | Infectious diseases departments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection from HIV to risk all groups PrEP services are mostly available in large cities that have hospitals with infectious diseases departments. |
| Slovenia | 103,82€ | Same eligibility criteria as in Finland | PrEP became available through public healthcare early in 2022. Before online access | | |
| Spain | NA | The majority of people who have access to PrEP are MSM. To be eligible for PrEP, they must meet more than 3 of the required criteria. | PrEP is only available through public or private national healthcare systems. Many GPs lack the knowledge about PrEP, CBOs are not authorized to provide PrEP. | GPs Private clinics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure full and easy access to PrEP Shorten the waiting time to access PrEP Engage CBOs in PrEP services (more in country profile) |

TABLE 3. COUNTRIES THAT PARTIALLY REIMBURSE OR MIXED MODELS

| Country | Co-payment | PrEP related services: Overview | Who can prescribe PrEP | National Priorities |
|-----------------|---|--|---|---|
| Belgium | 12€ Without health insurance 156€ | In order to be eligible for PrEP, one has to fulfil the following indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV negative status • over 18 years old • be a person who has condomless sexual relation to be in a key population with a higher risk of HIV acquisition | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the accessibility of PrEP for all people that need it, including undocumented migrants, heterosexual men and women. • Provide other systems of delivery, such as CBO testing services |
| Estonia | 16,6€ | The concentration of services at the medical level. Unofficial access to PrEP is common | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities not involved. |
| Croatia | 10€ | PrEP can be obtained with a prescription from an HIV specialist at 1 hospital in Zagreb. A referral from a GP is required, which many PrEP users see as an obstacle. Barriers in access: Limited capacity, and stigma and discrimination faced by PrEP users at public health institutions | HIV specialists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the availability of PrEP in other cities • Scale up PrEP access • Remove a requirement for a GP's referral • Ensure the complete coverage of PrEP despite the insurance scheme. |
| Slovakia | 0€ with VŠZP insurance With other insurances 250€ | PrEP can be obtained in pharmacies with a doctor's prescription; or in pharmacies in the Czech Republic. Mostly, these are the doctors from 5 AIDS centres. With "VŠZP" insurance PrEP is fully covered. Other do not. Public health insurance typically covers all necessary examinations. | Only infectious disease doctors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability of PrEP • Incorporate PrEP as an HIV combination prevention |
| Sweden | System 1. appr. 19€ per month (PrEP medication) System 2. for free | 2 systems of reimbursement: 1. PrEP services at the GPs. 1) Max. of 110€ per year for health care services; 2) Max. of 230€ per year for PrEP medicines; a total of a max. € 360 per year. 2. PrEP programme. PrEP is free of charge. The enrolment requires a qualification procedure. Based mostly in Stockholm | GPs Sexual health & prevention specialist | |
| The Netherlands | 7,50€ under the pilot 30€ with a GP prescription with health insurance | 2 models. 1. a pilot program that subsidizes PrEP from 2019 to 2024. it is limited to 8500 participants, which is insufficient. The co-payment for PrEP is 7,50€ for 30 tablets. 2. GPs can provide PrEP services and prescribe PrEP. The lowest price for PrEP is 30€. The cost of STI testing is covered by health insurance deductibles. GPs do not always have capacity for PrEP services. | Model 1. Only sexual health clinics Model 2. GPs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and increase access to PrEP • Expand the pilot program, and prolong • One of the challenges is low political commitment |

Countries That Have No Reimbursement Scheme For PrEP



AUSTRIA

Affordability

PrEP from Mylan® costs 59€ in pharmacies. Every three months, there are additional costs for a medical appointment for the prescription, which must be paid for out of pocket. The fee for a visit varies from 30 to 130€.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP is available only in two pharmacies in Austria. However, PrEP is accessible via online pharmacies. Additionally, there is a certain level of access to PrEP through a study by the Medical University of Vienna.

There is a national guideline on PrEP available at

https://www.aidsgesellschaft.at/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Leitlinien-zur-PrEP_Stand-2018.pdf

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Information campaign on PrEP is commonly organized by the Aidshilfen Österreichs in community spots. The Aidshilfen Österreichs developed and published information flyers on PrEP, available at

https://aids.at/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ahw-folder-PreP-99x210-RZ_web.pdf.

The needs assessment is a very relevant issue, especially in vulnerable groups, considering the high price of PrEP.

National Priorities

- To get the public funding that covers the costs of PrEP
- Information and awareness raising
- To conduct the needs-assessment.

BULGARIA

Affordability

The current cost of TDF/FTC Mylan® is between 55 and 60€. The cost is entirely borne by the clients, with no reimbursement from the Health Government.

Availability & Accessibility

TDF/FTC Mylan® is the only approved PrEP medication available, which is also used in the ART of HIV patients at the University Hospitals centres. It is offered only in one of the big private pharmacy chains in the country (Subra®).

For now, PrEP remains a regular HIV prevention only in a few big cities, in the capital Sofia, the city of Varna and Plovdiv. The Checkpoint – Sofia is reported to be the only viable and accessible medical health centre in Bulgaria. The Checkpoint – Sofia is providing daily HIV/STI testing and weekly online and onsite consultations about PrEP with an infectious disease specialist. According to the local pharmacies' reports, more than 95% of all PrEP prescriptions are from Checkpoint - Sofia.

In Bulgaria, there are no guidelines or even simple recommendations about PrEP. The Expert Advisory Board on Infectious Diseases is planning to include the topic in the national guideline for 2023. Currently, a few known infectious disease doctors are interested in prescribing PrEP.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

The information campaigns are provided by NGOs and mainly by Checkpoint – Sofia. Checkpoint - Sofia publishes information posts and articles on their website, Facebook and Instagram weekly in order to reach more people and raise awareness. The HIV/STI stigma persists among the community of medical specialists, which negatively affects HIV prevention efforts.

National Priorities

- To address the high PrEP price
- To tackle the stigma surrounding HIV and STIs in the medical community
- To improve the overall management and achieve the adequate PrEP practice
- To improve the accessibility of PrEP throughout the country
- To develop and implement a guideline or recommendations for HIV prevention
- To increase funding of community-based organisations.

CYPRUS

Affordability

PrEP costs about €30 when ordered online, plus the shipping costs.

There are additional costs of tests for monitoring.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP is not officially available in Cyprus, but it is unofficially available through online pharmacies.

AIDS Solidarity Movement has been advocating for the introduction of PrEP to the Ministry of Health. Since 2019, they were reassured that PrEP would be implemented in the country. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has been used by the authorities as a justification for the delay.

Community-Based Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centre (CBVCT) Cy Checkpoint provides support and overall guidance on the use of PrEP.⁹

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

AIDS Solidarity Movement was reported to be the only organization actively advocating for official access to PrEP through awareness campaigns for people who want to use PrEP or already using it. They disseminate flyers with information about PrEP and provide guidance and consultations to people who decide to start using PrEP.¹⁰

The Cy Checkpoint has been continuously collecting information on PrEP knowledge and readiness to initiate the use since 2017. This data shows that significant community awareness has been achieved over the years.

National Priorities

- The Ministry of Health should prioritise and enable official access to PrEP to all people who need and want it,
- and collaborate with community-based and led organisations to provide a non-judgmental environment for the implementation of officially accessible PrEP.

⁹ For example, when people who bought what they were told was PrEP from the north side of Cyprus (areas not controlled by the Republic of Cyprus), Cy Checkpoint informed them that the pills were not suitable for PrEP.

¹⁰ <http://asmcyprus.org/download/PrEP-gr.pdf>

CZECH REPUBLIC

Affordability

The national health insurance covers the costs of testing and monitoring but not of PrEP, which costs between 25 and 40€ in pharmacies.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP can be obtained with a doctor's prescription in a pharmacy. PrEP services are available at eight HIV centres across the country and one community PrEP Point in Prague led by an NGO "Czech AIDS Help".

There is a National PrEP guideline, which was prepared by the Infectious Diseases Society in 2018 and it is based on the WHO guidelines (available here <https://www.infekce.cz/Legislativa/DP-HIV-2-PrEP-0921p.pdf>).

Information Accessibility Acceptability

Czech AIDS Help undertakes a PrEP information campaign among MSM. The Prague City Hall is expected to run a similar campaign in 2023 as part of its Fast Track City action plan.

The information on the needs and acceptance of PrEP is limited to the data from the European Men-Who-Have-Sex-With-Men Internet Survey (EMIS) from 2017 and a national survey conducted among MSM.

National Priorities

- Improve access to PrEP
- PrEP should be prescribed by derma-venereologists and general practitioners (GP) in every county
- PrEP should be fully covered by the public health insurance.

GREECE

Affordability

PrEP costs around 40 to 50€, if ordered online plus shipping fees.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP is not available in the public healthcare system in Greece: neither in public hospitals nor in local pharmacies.

It is common to either order PrEP online or bring it from abroad. People tend to get their PrEP monitoring privately, which means they have to pay for doctors' visits. Notably, PrEP monitoring is not available in public hospitals.

Governmental authorities, specifically the Ministry of Health, recently took the decision to make PrEP available in Greece. However, the requirements and conditions under which PrEP will be provided, as well as to whom, have yet to be determined.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Community-led LGBTQI+ organisations provide information on PrEP.

National Priorities

- PrEP should be accessible to all through public hospitals and free of charge.

HUNGARY

Affordability

The prices for PrEP in pharmacies vary from 130€ for generics to 350€ for Truvada. If ordered online unofficially, the price is around 30€.

Availability & Accessibility

People who take PrEP voluntarily usually access the necessary laboratory and STI tests through the private health system. PrEP is usually obtained from abroad or through buyer's clubs. For this reason, many people take PrEP without having laboratory tests.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

There is no official public campaign about PrEP. Háttér Society regularly campaigns for PrEP to be made free of charge in Hungary; holds information sessions for potential users through workshops and organises expert discussions on PrEP.

According to a representative survey conducted in 2017, the proportion of people with information about PrEP among MSM was around 43%. According to the same survey, 54 % of respondents indicated that they would be willing to use it if it were free or affordable (EMIS 2017); more recent data are not currently available.

National Priorities

- To ensure easier access to PrEP
- To have public support on improving access to PrEP
- To make PrEP affordable or free.

ITALY

Affordability

In pharmacies throughout Italy, generic PrEP typically costs 60€ for 30 pills and Truvada 677€. Although buying PrEP online might be cheaper, it is not a common practice.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP is a non-reimbursable drug that can be purchased in pharmacies with a non-repeatable prescription from an infectious disease doctor. In the public health care system, only infectious disease specialists are authorized to provide PrEP-related services. They commonly provide periodic follow-up visits, as well as HIV and STI testing. However, not all Italian hospitals are equipped to provide PrEP services. Very few people seek PrEP from private healthcare providers.

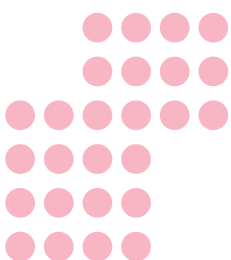
There are three community-based organizations that provide PrEP programs in Milano, Rome, and Bologna.

There is a certain level of access to PrEP through studies: a study ITAPrEP conducted in several Italian hospitals for the behavioural data collection on PrEP users; DISCOVER study for the enrolment of patients using Descovy as PrEP. PrEP is offered free of charge during the studies.

Notably, there are regional differences in the scale of availability and affordability of PrEP and STI-related services: some regions provide free STI screenings; some regions do not provide PrEP services.

The Italian PrEP guidelines written in 2018 are available here

https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pagineAree_5209_listaFile_itemName_0_file.pdf



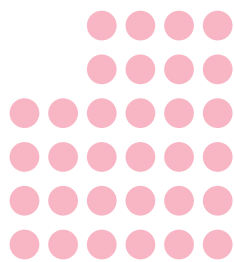
Information Accessibility & Acceptability

What is common to the entire country is that the information on PrEP is limited. While the LGBTI+ communities are aware of PrEP and wish for its public reimbursement. Other communities, however, such as sex workers, people using drugs and heterosexuals who do not use condoms remain largely unaware of the potential benefits of PrEP for them.

Community-based organisations provide information and referral to PrEP services as well as collect clients' needs. However, there are no public campaigns promoting PrEP.

National Priorities

- PrEP reimbursement, along with reimbursement of costs for periodic STIs and other related medical checks
- Informative campaigns promoted by the health authorities reach all the population and key groups
- Accessibility of PrEP throughout the whole country: Increase of PrEP services in public hospitals.



LATVIA

Affordability

The price of PrEP varies from 25 to 60€ when purchased online and 92.39€ for generics in local pharmacies.

Availability & Accessibility

Public and private healthcare providers, specifically licensed infectious diseases doctor can issue PrEP prescriptions, but the costs for PrEP still have to be heard by the individuals.

In order to get PrEP-related services, a person has to refer to the Latvian Infectology Center, see an HIV specialist for PrEP, and undergo an assessment for compliance and candidacy to receive PrEP. Doctors take decisions on PrEP eligibility on a case by case basis.

Basic STI checks through rapid tests can be accessed free of charge throughout the city at focal points. PrEP monitoring, as well kidney function check are not offered for free.

In order to access these services people have to travel to Riga.

People typically order PrEP online because of the lower costs.

From 2022 until 2025, access to PrEP is partially guaranteed through a pilot project run by a Riga-based NGO Mozaika. The Infectious Diseases Department at the Riga's Stradins Hospital (including a focal point doctor) is the project partner. The doctor conducts an interview and an assessment. Afterwards, PrEP pills can be picked up at the pharmacy free of charge, as the costs are covered by the project.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

There is no information campaign on PrEP in the country

National Priorities

- To establish national guidelines on PrEP
- To secure financing from the state after the PrEP pilot coverage ends.

LITHUANIA

Affordability

PrEP costs 40 to 50€ in pharmacies upon prescription.

Availability & Accessibility

There are two official ways to access PrEP-related services: 1) pay 20€ to directly visit an infectious disease specialist. This fee includes risk assessment, HIV /STIs testing, and liver and kidney monitoring. Following these tests, a specialist issues a prescription; 2) first, see a general practitioner who can refer you to an infectious disease specialist for other services. This option is free of charge but takes more time.

Tests for HIV, HCV, HBV, and syphilis are mostly provided free in hospitals and NGOs. PrEP monitoring is conducted free of charge every 3 to 6 months by infectious disease specialists. These services are mostly available in large cities. Although NGOs and CBOs cannot prescribe PrEP, but they consult their clients about it and the ways to obtain it.

There are no national guidelines or protocols regarding PrEP.

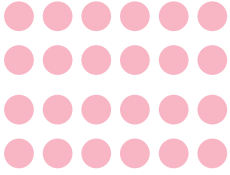
Frequently, people buy PrEP online, mostly from Thailand, or receive it from friends when they travel abroad.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

There is no information campaign on PrEP in the country.

National Priorities

- PrEP should be available everywhere.



MALTA

Affordability

PrEP can be purchased for 57€ in pharmacies or for 20 to 30€ online. Testing and monitoring, including PrEP prescription, are provided free of charge, but the costs of PrEP are not covered.

Availability & Accessibility

Both public and private healthcare providers can issue PrEP prescriptions. Online access to PrEP is allowed in Malta. Unofficially, PrEP is known to be shared among the communities.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Information and awareness-raising activities on PrEP are normally led by NGOs.

National Priorities

- To increase affordability: the official price of PrEP should drop to avoid online purchases or unofficial exchanges between users
- To promote and scale up the information campaigns
- To promote and scale up access to sexual health services, including STI testing
- Reduce waiting time for an appointment for a PrEP monitoring.

POLAND

Affordability

PrEP can be purchased for 30€ in pharmacies with a prescription or ordered online. PrEP- and sexual health services are formally available free of charge at HIV and infectious diseases clinics, and upon fee at private clinics. A doctor's appointment at a private clinic costs around 50 to 80€.

Availability & Accessibility

In practice, medical doctors are paid per hour rather than per patient visit, so there are no incentives for them to accept additional PrEP patients, which limits the actual availability of services. One clinic in Wroclaw offers free testing, visits, consultations and monitoring. Frequently, people will go to private clinics to access sexual health and PrEP services.

NGOs manage all Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) sites. They educate, advocate, and liaise on PrEP. Three of the twenty PrEP clinics are run directly by NGOs, while others are run by doctors. Although they are not community-based, but usually gay-led or gay-friendly.

There are Polish AIDS Scientific Society guidelines in place.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Awareness-raising activities are carried out by NGOs and the national AIDS Centre campaign. The information on PrEP is available at www.Preparedu.pl.

National Priorities

- To reimburse the costs of PrEP medication
- To include GPs in the provision of PrEP
- HIV and infectious diseases clinics' medical doctors should be paid by patient/visits.

ROMANIA

Affordability

PrEP costs between 10 to 30\$ if ordered online.

Availability & Accessibility

As of October 2022, there is no PrEP distributed in Romania through public or private institutions. People typically purchase PrEP from online pharmacies such as greencrosspharmacy.online or indogenmed.com, which have offices in India and Antigua and Barbuda, but medications can occasionally arrive from countries such as Swaziland.

Both online pharmacies require a prescription before validating a PrEP order. At the Post's Border Control, once they see the medication inside the package, they request an additional prescription from an infectious disease specialist. Recently, the Post Office refused some deliveries, claiming that it is illegal to transport antiretroviral, although there is no law supporting that claim.

ARAS association runs a pilot project with 50 participants in which they provide PrEP to people who engage in risky behaviour. Yet, a few months ago, the project was discontinued and will be restarted at the end of 2022 or early 2023. ARAS provided PrEP free of charge as part of a program in which they also monitored renal functions and other STIs through two public hospitals with which they collaborated (in Bucharest and Cluj). The PrEP medications were dispensed in the hospitals by a doctor. ARAS additionally provides information and counselling, as well as rapid testing for HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis B and C.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

There were no active PrEP campaigns in the country, even though the information about PrEP was disseminated by different parties, like LGBTQ+ NGOs and other sexual health NGOs.

National Priorities

- The state should make regulations on access to PrEP
- The state should provide PrEP for free in line with a certain protocol,
- PrEP should be made specifically available and accessible for all MSM who request it.



Countries That Fully Reimburse



DENMARK

Official Pricing¹¹

Prices for a box of 30 pills of generic FTC/TDF are as follows:

- Glenmark® 271€
- Mylan® 209€
- Stada® 208€.

A box of 30 pills of Truvada Gilead® costs 1104€.

Availability & Accessibility

These infectious disease departments are approved for the PrEP-treatment: Rigshospitalet, Herlev, Hvidovre, Hillerød, Roskilde, Odense, Aarhus University Hospital, Herning, Aalborg. The capacity offered by these institutions is reported to be sufficient and meet most of the needs of the community.

There is access to PrEP through the Checkpoint in Copenhagen, which collaborates with the infectious disease department at Hvidovre Hospital. The infectious disease specialist comes twice a month to the Checkpoint and prescribes PrEP directly. The joint team of the Checkpoint as well as nurses from the infectious disease department do blood tests and hand out PrEP medication.

Commonly, other Checkpoints in Denmark (in the cities of Aalborg, Aarhus, Odense, Copenhagen, Frederiksberg) can issue a referral for PrEP to the infectious diseases departments. Yet only doctors in the infectious diseases department can decide whether the person in question should be offered PrEP.

There were no major challenges reported in access to PrEP for the community. Yet, one of the issues that were mentioned is that general practitioners do not have the necessary knowledge about PrEP and this can create a barrier in relation to referral. Another aspect is related to the concerns among transgender people about being on PrEP and transitioning.

¹¹ Note: For the countries that fully reimburse, this section reflects the official pricing for PrEP medications. These costs are normally covered by the state, social security or public health insurance.

National guidelines & indicators

The guideline for PrEP in Denmark (Danish Regions 2020), recommends that PrEP is given to people who meet all the following criteria:

1. The person is HIV negative
2. The person is an MSM or a transwoman or transman who has sex with men, and fulfils at least one of the criteria below:
 - The person has had unprotected anal intercourse with at least two male partners within the last 12 weeks (a steady partner with known HIV status does not count)
 - The person has had syphilis within the last 24 weeks
 - The person has had chlamydia or gonorrhoea within the last 24 weeks
3. The person is 15 years old or older.
4. The person has normal kidney function (eGFR- \geq 60 mL/min.)
5. The person has acceptable liver and bone marrow function
6. The person must be prepared to follow applicable guidelines in relation to the treatment.

The guideline recommends that the treatment with PrEP should be stopped if the patient is no longer in the high-risk group of becoming infected with HIV.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Some information campaigns on PrEP are available through the word of mouth in Checkpoint clinics and in infectious disease departments. However, there may be a group of people who do not have full access to the necessary information.

National Priorities

- To establish a collaboration with the AIDS Foundation's local Checkpoints via the infectious diseases departments in all regions (like the partnership that already exists between the AIDS Foundation's Checkpoint Copenhagen and Hvidovre Hospital). At the moment, there is a lack of funds to expand this model countrywide
- To enable Checkpoints to refer service users within the target group for PrEP treatment to the infectious disease departments
- Scale up awareness-raising campaigns and target more groups
- Strengthen the level of knowledge of GPs on PrEP
- To be able to address the concerns of transgender people about being on PrEP and transitioning.

FINLAND

Official Pricing

The official price for FTC/TDF ranges between 49 to 195€ for 30 pills. Stada® offers the lowest and Mylan® the highest price (as of April 2022). With a prescription from the public health care provider PrEP is available free of charge.

Availability & Accessibility

The most significant barrier to access is the one-year waiting period to obtain PrEP from a public health provider. It is possible to get a prescription from a private healthcare provider sooner. But in that case, the person must pay for the health check-ups and PrEP pills out of pocket.

At the community-based level, an NGO Hivpoint can issue referrals to doctors from public health care, who can then prescribe PrEP. Regarding unofficial access, people occasionally purchase PrEP from other countries. Earlier, it used to be ordered online.

National guidelines & indicators

In 2019, national guidelines were drafted. They include the following indications for PrEP access:

- "HIV-negative MSM,
- +18 years of age,
- no signs and symptoms of acute HIV infection,
- CrCl (Cockcroft-Gault) >60 ml/min

And at least one of the following criteria:

- unprotected sex in the last 6 months with > one man with unknown HIV status or HIV+ with a detectable viral load,
- STI in the last 6 months
- PEP in the last 6 months
- chemsex use."¹²

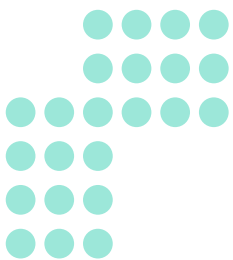
NGOs would like to update the PrEP guidelines as soon as possible. One suggestion, for example, is to make PrEP available at the primary healthcare level, as currently, it remains exclusively at specialized healthcare facilities.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

NGOs organise some information campaigns and awareness raising on PrEP on social media.

National Priorities

- To improve the accessibility of PrEP.



FRANCE

Official Pricing

Truvada Gilead® costs 296€. Generic versions of TDF/FTC Biogaran® costs 155€. PrEP pills cost 140€ for the social security and 0€ for the patient.

Availability & Accessibility

To obtain PrEP, a person must first register with a sexual health centre and then undergo health examinations. Following that, a person will be assigned a doctor and subjected to regular medical exams.

Despite some uncertainty, respondents indicated that there may be some access to PrEP through community-based organizations.

There is no reimbursement of PrEP through private health insurance
There is a certain level of access to PrEP through the ANRS-PREVENIR Study in Paris and its suburbs.

National guidelines & indicators

PrEP indicators apply to key populations such as MSM, trans people, sex workers, and people at high sexual risk for HIV.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

There are information campaigns on HIV/AIDS available to the public and in hospitals. Specific awareness-raising campaigns and needs assessments on PrEP are only run by NGOs.

National Priorities

- To reach other groups like young MSM, foreign MSM, and women with an African background.

IRELAND

Official Pricing

Generic HIV PrEP retails for between 60€ and 70€.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP is available in some public sexual health services and through some general practice and private providers. PrEP is dispensed through community pharmacies and a person will need a drug payment scheme (DPS) or medical card to access free PrEP through the HSE. Anyone with a PPSN (Personal Public Service Number) can apply for a DPS.

PrEP is available free of charge through clinics if meeting eligibility criteria. If accessing it privately, PrEP costs 60€ to 70€, plus the cost of the GP visit which costs around 70€.

From October 2019, PrEP is available through the HSE (Health Service Executive) free of charge to those who are considered to be at substantial risk of contracting HIV through sex. In order to get PrEP for free through the national health service a person needs to test negative for HIV, be able to attend a check-up at least once every 3 months and meet at least 1 of the following criteria for free PrEP:

1: You are having sex without condoms with HIV-positive partners who:

- are not on HIV treatment, or
- are on treatment but not virally suppressed (do not have an 'undetectable' viral load)

2: You are a man who has sex with men. This includes transgender MSM or a transgender woman who has sex with men, who meets any 1 of the following:

- had anal sex without condoms with more than 1 partner in the last 6 months
- had an STI in the last year
- used HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in the last year
- used recreational drugs for sex (also known as chemsex) in the last 6 months

3: You are a heterosexual man or woman who is considered by a specialist STI doctor, to be at a large risk of contracting HIV through sex.

It is possible to buy generic PrEP products over the internet. In Ireland, it is illegal for a person to source prescription medication without a prescription and it is illegal for medication to be supplied by mail order, including over the internet. The Health Products Regulation Authority (HPRA) provide information to the public on the risks of buying medicines online.

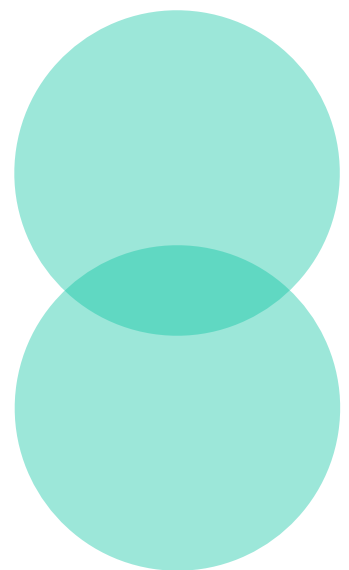
There is no access to PrEP through community-led or -based organisations or private health insurance.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Information is provided through www.sexualwellbeing.ie and through information booklets which are available at clinics and relevant NGOs.

National Priorities

- The main priority in relation to PrEP provision is the reduction of waiting lists.
- Currently, all people applying for PrEP need to register for the Drugs Payment Scheme. The removal of this requirement would speed up the process for applicants.



PORTUGAL

Official Pricing

PrEP costs approximately 8,5€ per box.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP in Portugal is exclusively supplied by the National Health System. It requires outpatient follow-up in a hospital with an Infectious Diseases department. The medication can only be supplied by hospital pharmacies.

Local protocols with Infectious Diseases Departments enable "delocalized" follow-up, meaning the medication, medical staff and diagnostic testing are still provided by a local hospital, but appointments take place on-site at local NGOs. According to the respondent, this is happening in two sites in two major cities, Porto (based on the protocols between Abraço and Centro Hospitalar Universitário do Porto and Centro Hospitalar de São João) and Lisbon (Hospital Garcia da Orta and an NGO).

There is no reimbursement through private health insurance, but there is access to PrEP online.

The National guideline is available here

<https://normas.dgs.min-saude.pt/2017/11/28/profilaxia-de-pre-exposicao-da-infecao-por-vih-no-adulto/>.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Most advocacy and information campaigns on PrEP and HIV prevention in Portugal are led by local NGOs. They may be supported in full or in part by the National Health System and national and international funds for risk reduction.

Information on PrEP at the moment is nearly limited to highly educated, young MSM. There is a strong lack of public awareness on PrEP.

National Priorities

- To provide protection from HIV to risk all groups gratuitously
- To address the problem that PrEP services are mostly available in large cities that have hospitals with infectious diseases departments.

SLOVENIA

Official Pricing

FTC/TDF Teva, Krka costs 103,82€.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP became available through public healthcare early in 2022.

The indications for the PrEP eligibility are:

- HIV-negative MSM,
- 18 years of age,
- no signs and symptoms of acute HIV infection,
- CrCl (Cockcroft-Gault) >60 ml/min

And at least one of the following:

- unprotected sex in the last 6 months with > one man with unknown HIV status or HIV+ with a detectable viral load,
- STI in the last 6 months,
- PEP in the last 6 months,
- chemsex use.

People used to buy PrEP online or bring it from abroad, but especially before PrEP became available free in Slovenia. The respondents do not have accurate information on the level of the current practice of unofficial access.

There is no reimbursement through private health insurance

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

National Priorities

SPAIN

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP is available to patients at no cost through the National Healthcare Service. However, full implementation of PrEP is still to be achieved. PrEP is only available through public or private national healthcare systems. Many people are not able to obtain PrEP because they are not covered by the national healthcare system, and it is illegal to purchase PrEP in Spain.

Most cities have started to provide PrEP but not every hospital. Accessibility in some regions is challenging or not fully guaranteed.

The official way to access PrEP is through a family doctor (GP). Yet, many of them either lack the knowledge about PrEP, do not believe in PrEP, or do not have the skills to make patients feel safe and free of judgment. Moreover, the waiting time for an appointment currently ranges from one to four months.

The majority of people who have access to PrEP are MSM. To be eligible for PrEP, they must meet more than three of the required criteria. PrEP access for heterosexual cisgender women in Spain is difficult despite the increase of new HIV cases within this population, which are reported to not use condoms.

There are gaps in the collection of PrEP in hospitals (few hospital PrEP providers report implementation data; treatment interruption data is poorly collected).

Community-based organizations with checkpoint services and professionals trained to inform about PrEP and to detect target populations inform people about PrEP, but they are not authorized to provide or sell PrEP.

Private insurance clinics sell PrEP medication to some people following national guidelines.

The national guidance is available https://www.sanidad.gob.es/ciudadanos/enfLesiones/enfTransmisibles/sida/PrEP/M anual_PrEP_FINAL.pdf. In that case, the prices may vary depending on insurance but this is a minor practice, and access through private health care system is not an easy option.

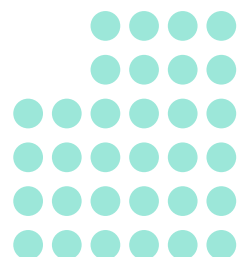
Unofficially, people buy PrEP online from foreign countries which typical costs 30 to 50€. In Spain, this is illegal because it is considered a medication that can only be obtained through hospital pharmacies and with a prescription. When people buy PrEP online, it does not always arrive because it does not pass customs.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

There are a few campaigns done by the health ministry and also multiple campaigns done from LGBTQ and HIV organizations.

National Priorities

- To ensure full implementation and easy access to PrEP
- To shorten the waiting time to access PrEP
- Better trained professionals in HIV prevention services or training for the doctors who are in the first line for accessing PrEP
- To allow selling PrEP in the country or facilitating access to PrEP for people who are not allowed into the national public or private healthcare system
- To officially engage community-based organizations and checkpoints in PrEP services, especially for providing PrEP
- Granting a safe and free-of-judgment environment for people in the healthcare system
- Bigger campaigns to reach everyone in target populations.



Countries That Partially Reimburse (Or Mixed Models)



BELGIUM

Affordability

For people with public health insurance, the co-payment for a box 30 pills of generic FTC/TDF is 12€, and for a box of 90 pills is 15€.

Without health insurance, the cost of PrEP for a box of 30 pills is 156€.

Availability & Accessibility

National guidelines & indicators

In order to be eligible for PrEP, one has to fulfil the following indicators:

- HIV negative status
- over 18 years old
- be a person who has condomless sexual relation

*to be in a key population with a higher risk of HIV acquisition which includes: MSM, Transgender, people from high HIV prevalence countries (sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Caribbean region) and their sexual partners, sex workers and their partners, Drug users with sharing equipment, HIV negative partners in a sero different relationships when the HIV + partner is not on treatment or has not achieved the undetectable status since 6-month minimum.

* with an individual risk of acquiring HIV:

- condomless sex (anal or vaginal) with 2 partners minimum in the last 6 months
- have many STI diagnoses during the last year
- use of one or more PEP
- have physical risk factor as genital ulceration, bleeding and others.
- use of a psychoactive substance in a sexual context.¹³

There is no access to PrEP through community-led or -based organisations.

There is some level of online sales, but it is lower than it was before 2017 when the PrEP reimbursement became effective in Belgium.

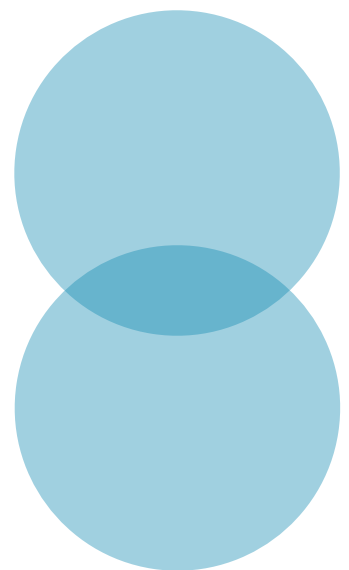
¹³ <https://myprep.be/>

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Community-based organizations organize PrEP awareness campaigns and conduct community needs assessments.

National Priorities

- To promote the accessibility of PrEP for all people that need it, including undocumented migrants, heterosexual men and women. Currently, the majority of PrEP users are MSM
- Provide other systems of delivery, such as community-based testing services.



ESTONIA

Affordability

There is a co-payment of 50€ per 3 months.

Availability & Accessibility

The concentration of services at the medical level

There is a national guide in place, which is available here

<https://www.ravijuhend.ee/patsiendivarav/juhendid/145/hiv-i-kokkupuute-eelne-prof-ulaktika-prep-pre-exposure-prophylaxis#a01c1f97>

There is unofficial access to PrEP

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

National Priorities

- Communities not involved.

CROATIA

Affordability

The basic national health insurance scheme does not include PrEP. However, the additional health insurance that costs 10€ per month fully covers the costs of PrEP.

Availability & Accessibility

PrEP can be obtained with a prescription from an HIV specialist at one hospital in Zagreb. However, in order to visit an HIV specialist, a referral from a primary care practitioner (GP) is required, which many PrEP users see as an obstacle. Other barriers include limited capacity, as one hospital cannot meet the needs of the entire country; and stigma and discrimination faced by PrEP users at public health institutions.

The PrEP services are primarily targeted at MSM, as defined by the epidemiological situation in Croatia, but other individuals can be considered on a case-by-case basis.

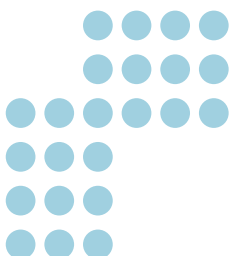
Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Awareness-raising activities include a small-scale information campaign with brochures and social media coverage. These activities are limited in scope, because of the hospital's capacity.

The needs assessment is represented through the information obtained from the EMIS.

National Priorities

- To increase the availability of PrEP in other cities outside of Zagreb
- To scale up PrEP access
- To remove a requirement for a GP's referral
- To ensure the complete coverage of PrEP despite the insurance scheme.



GERMANY

Affordability

The brands on the market are Truvada Gilead®, FTC/TDF Ratiopharm® are available within the price ranges from 0 to 60€. There is a co-payment 5 to 10€.

Availability & Accessibility

In Germany, a wide range of doctors provides PrEP-related services, including HIV specialists, infectious disease specialists and general practitioners. PrEP is accessible to people with public health insurance.

Depending on the provider, the PrEP can be partially reimbursed through private health insurance. The amount of co-payment can vary from 0 to 850€ per year. PrEP is not accessible through community-led or -based organisations.

There is unofficial access to PrEP through international online delivery, or informal channels such as telegram groups, and the dark net.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

Information campaigns on PrEP are mostly focused on MSM. A significant proportion of people in various communities do not know about PrEP, especially AFAB and LGBTQI+ people. There is no information tailored to specific communities outside of the MSM spectrum.

National Priorities

- To increase awareness on PrEP and target LGBTI+ people.
- To make PrEP accessible to people that are not covered by public health insurance.

SLOVAKIA

Affordability

250€ is the official and standard price for PrEP in pharmacies. With the “VšZP-Všeobecná zdravotná poisťovňa” insurance the price is fully covered. Without this particular insurance, the full price has to be paid out of pocket. PrEP is often obtained in pharmacies in the Czech Republic, where the price is 30€.

Availability & Accessibility

There are multiple ways to obtain medication: in pharmacies in Slovakia with a doctor’s prescription; to purchase PrEP in pharmacies in the Czech Republic. Earlier, when PrEP was not available in Slovakia people used to order it online. For people with public health insurance “VšZP” PrEP is fully covered. However, only one of three health insurance companies in Slovakia covers it. Public health insurance typically covers all necessary examinations.

Only infectious disease doctors can prescribe PrEP. Mostly, these are the doctors from AIDS centres. There are five such centres located regionally in Slovakia and two of them in Bratislava and Košice are known to prescribe PrEP.

The Slovak Association of Infections doctors (SSI) has developed the Standardized Procedures for prescribing treatment and checking patients on PrEP.

Information Accessibility & Acceptability

PrEP is not communicated as a prevention tool for the spread of HIV by the national authorities.

The community is reaching out to CBOs (Dom svetla Slovensko) on the issues related to PrEP availability and accessibility.

National Priorities

- Affordability of PrEP
- To incorporate PrEP as an HIV combination prevention on the national level.

SWEDEN

Affordability & Accessibility

There are two systems of access to PrEP in Sweden:

1. PrEP services at the general practitioner's office. This entails the following costs:

- 1) Maximum of 110€ per year for visiting health care services;
- 2) Maximum of 230€ per year for medicines;

and comprises a total of a maximum € 360 per year.

2. Enrolment in a PrEP programme. This model makes PrEP completely free of charge.

There is unofficial access through online pharmacies.

THE NETHERLANDS

Affordability & Accessibility

There are two models of access to PrEP:

1. There is a pilot program that subsidizes PrEP from 2019 to 2024. However, it is limited to 8500 participants, which is insufficient. Within this model, PrEP related services are offered only in sexual health clinics. The co-payment for PrEP under this model is 7,50€ for 30 tablets. The access varies between provinces. Once the 8500 pilot is completed, only a very small number of people can get access, and this usually happens via sexual health clinics.
2. General practitioners can provide PrEP services and prescribe PrEP. Under this model, the lowest price for PrEP is 30€. The cost of STI testing is covered by health insurance deductibles, which range between 385 and 800€. Yet, GPs do not always have capacity for PrEP services.

The lowest price for PrEP is about 30€ for a box of 30 pills.

The national guideline on PrEP is available here
<https://www.soaids.nl/nl/professionals/themas/prep>

There is access to PrEP through private healthcare providers.

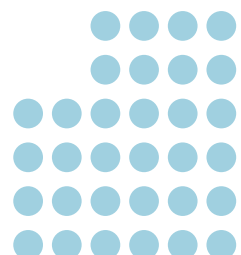
There is no community-based and no unofficial access to PrEP.

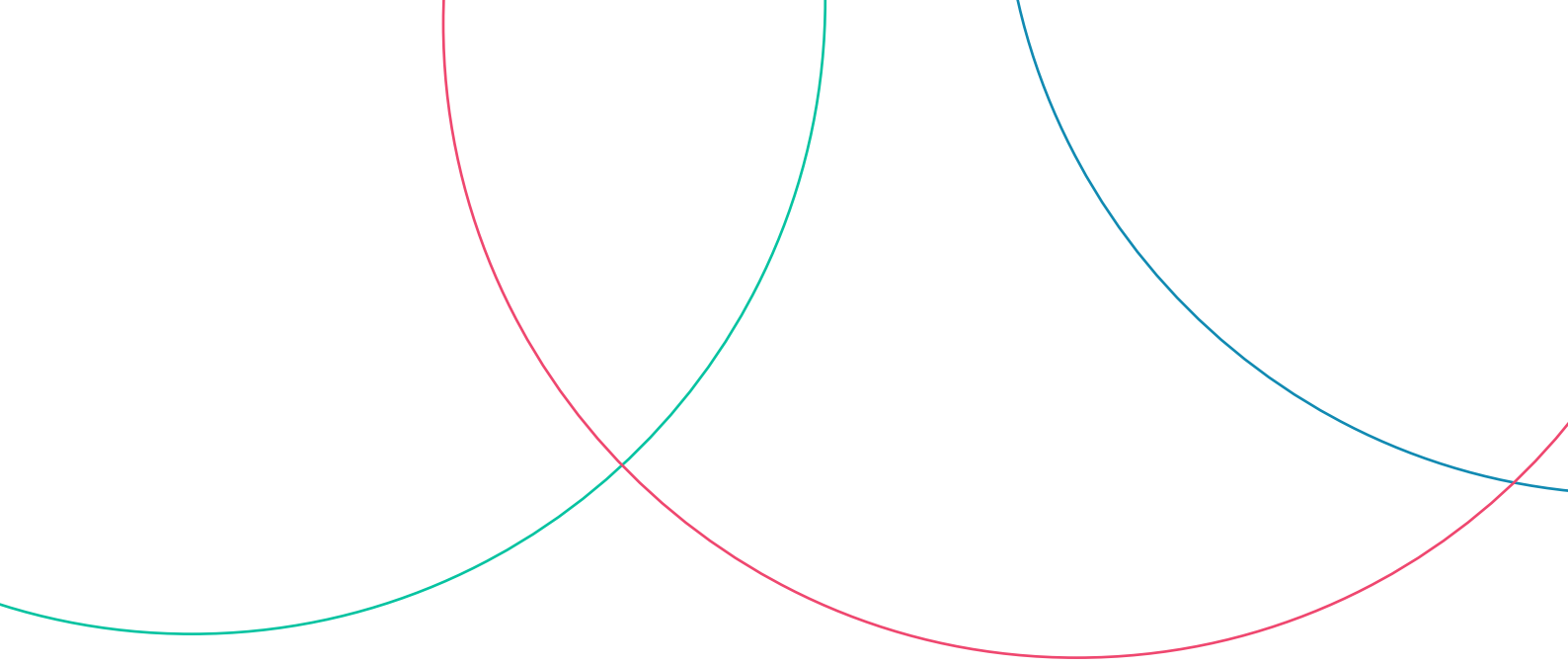
Information Accessibility & Acceptability

The information on PrEP is available at the local NGO webpage
<https://www.mantotman.nl/nl/snel-regelen/prep-tegen-hiv>

National Priorities

- To improve and increase access to PrEP
- Expand the pilot program, and prolong
- One of the challenges is low political commitment.





With questions and suggestions, please contact
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