



Zero Hunger Side Event

Progress on food security and nutrition stagnates in Europe and Central Asia

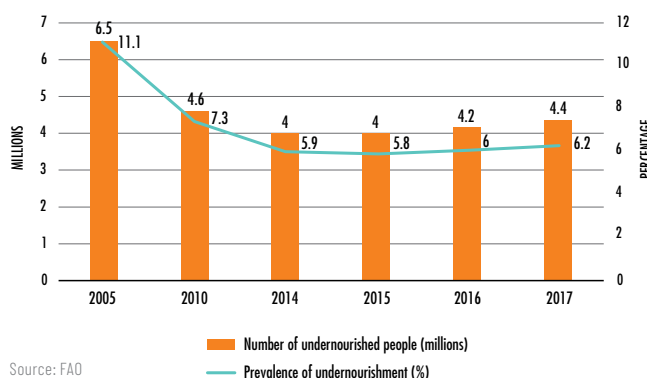
Overall: Triple Burden of Malnutrition in Europe and Central Asia

Malnutrition in one or more of its three main forms - undernutrition, overweight and obesity, and micronutrient deficiencies - is present to varying degrees in all countries of the region in Europe and Central Asia. Often all three forms coexist, creating what is called the "triple burden of malnutrition".

1. Undernourishment: achievement and challenges

- When it comes to the prevalence of undernourishment, countries in Europe and Central Asia have made important progress in the past two decades.
- Between **2005 and 2017**, the number of hungry people was **reduced by half**.
- **The decreasing trend of the prevalence of undernourishment (PoU) appears to be stagnating in recent years, in particular in Central Asia.**
- The progress made in Central Asia was significant: the prevalence of undernourishment decreased from **11 percent** in 2004-2006 to **6 percent** in 2015-2017.
- The number of undernourished people in Central Asia **increased from 4 million** in 2015 to **4.4 million** in 2017.

Food insecurity in Central Asia, 2005-2017



Source: FAO

Severe food insecurity (based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale)

- More than 14 million adults, and some 4.7 million children in Europe and Central Asia still suffer from severe food insecurity.

Changes in country level obesity rate (%) for selected countries in the ECA region

Country	2005	2016	Country	2005	2016
Albania	15.6 %	22.3 %	Tajikistan	7.8 %	12.6 %
Armenia	15.7 %	20.9 %	Turkey	23.1 %	32.3 %
Belarus	21.7 %	26.6 %	Ukraine	21.7 %	26.1 %
Georgia	16.4 %	23.3 %	EU-28	20.2 %	25.4 %
Kyrgyzstan	10.1 %	15.4 %	World	9.6 %	12.8 %

Source: WHO/UNICEF

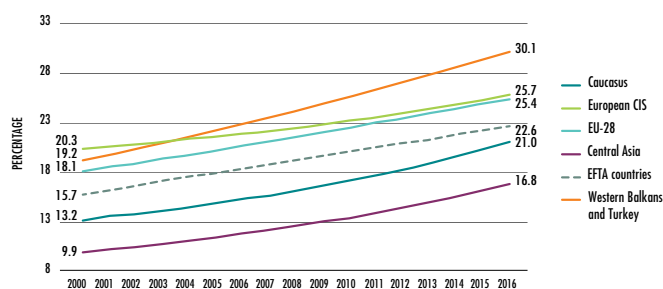
2. Micronutrient deficiencies

Millions still suffer from micronutrient deficiencies – in particular anaemia, which occurs at significant levels in many countries, including in high-income countries. Anaemia in women of childbearing age is on the rise, constituting an important public health problem.

3. Obesity

There have been continuous increases in overweight among children and in the prevalence of obesity among adults across the ECA region since 2000. Some 200 million people, corresponding to one-fourth of adults are currently obese.

Prevalence of adult obesity in ECA by subregion, % of population



Source: WHO/UNICEF



- Many countries have moved from dealing predominantly with under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, to coping also with an increase in overnutrition and non-communicable diseases associated with the transition in diets, with increased intakes of fat, sugar, meat, dairy, and processed foods, often accompanied by a more sedentary lifestyles and affected by the cost of nutritious food.
- The growing levels of overweight and obesity in the region are cause for serious concern, particularly with regard to the risks of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and associated social and economic costs.



Areas of work to address the food insecurity and malnutrition in the Europe and Central Asia region

Policies

The region includes high-, middle- and low-income countries, and poverty and income inequality are highly related to the regional food insecurity and malnutrition. In order to “leave no one behind”, policies and institutional systems have been designed and adopted to support agriculture, social security, healthcare and education. Below are some sample policies:

- Support for the development of the National Food Security and Nutrition Programme in Kyrgyzstan (2015-2017 and 2019-2023);
- Support for the development of the National Food Security Programme and National Food Safety Strategy in Tajikistan;
- Support for the alignment of national policies on food and agriculture with SDG targets; and
- Publication of the annual “The State of Food Security and Nutrition in Europe and Central Asia” to strengthen evidence-base for policy development.

Partnerships

Various types of partnerships have been established to strengthen measures related to food security and nutrition. The most recent ones are:

- Regional Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems for Healthy Diets (2017);
- Regional Nutrition Capacity Development and Partnership Platform in Central Asia and Caucasus (2018);
- Symposium on Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition Governance for Healthy Diets in Central Asia and Caucasus (2019);
- Economic Cooperation Organization Food Security Coordination Centre (ECO-RCCFS) (since 2012); and
- The Istanbul Development Dialogues (since 2015).

Major Working Programmes in the Region

Developing programmatic work to facilitate remittance flows for agriculture and rural development

Evidence and research generated in the region indicate that a large proportion of remittances is spent on food, housing and education, while a smaller share is spent on agriculture and rural development. While policies that encourage the investment of remittances in agriculture and rural development are limited in the ECA region, programmes in Republic of Moldova and Tajikistan provide examples of promising practices.

School food programmes (SFP)

School feeding programmes are good examples of how child nutrition has been supported in ECA countries. Such programmes are being implemented in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with support from the FAO, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

Strengthening food systems for nutrition-sensitive social protection

The Cash+ approach is being implemented in Armenia, while the Productive Social Contract/Cash+ model is being tested in Kyrgyzstan. These models link the countries’ national social protection programmes in support of households with children through small-scale, nutrition-sensitive agricultural innovations, training and extension services, as well as nutrition education.

For more information: www.fao.org/europe