



## EUROPE

### Regional Committee for Europe Fifty-fifth session

Bucharest, Romania, 12–15 September 2005

---

EUR/RC55/R7  
14 September 2005  
54245  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

### Resolution

## Strengthening national immunization systems through measles and rubella elimination and prevention of congenital rubella infection in WHO's European Region

The Regional Committee,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the *Strategic directions for improving the health and development of children and adolescents* that identify immunization as a strategy to reduce mortality and morbidity in children under five and help address the problems of poverty in high-risk and vulnerable populations, recommendations from the United Nations General Assembly special session on children (2002), and World Health Assembly resolutions WHA56.20 on reducing global measles mortality, WHA56.21 on the strategy for child and adolescent health and development and WHA58.15 on the draft global immunization strategy;

Recognizing that immunization is one of the most cost-effective public health interventions available, and that immunization programmes have been an integral part of public health services and a key prevention component of primary health care in the European Region for decades;

Recognizing that the certification of the Region as poliomyelitis-free in 2002 was the result of concerted activities by all Member States to ensure that all children are protected through vaccination, and that high-quality surveillance for poliovirus must be maintained until global poliomyelitis eradication is declared;

Recognizing that the success of immunization programmes has led to disease control achievements but that these gains can only be maintained and further progress made if continued attention is paid and strong support given to immunization programmes, including through the introduction of new vaccines when supported by scientific evidence;

Mindful that there are high-risk and vulnerable populations within the European Region that still lack adequate immunization coverage because of limited access to primary health care services for geographical, cultural, ethnic or socioeconomic reasons, as well as unfounded mistrust of vaccinations;

Acknowledging the right of children to the highest attainable standard of health and equitable access to health care services, and the need to achieve and maintain high coverage with childhood vaccines to ensure protection of and minimize disease transmission among all children;

Noting that reducing measles mortality will facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal targets globally and that rubella is a recognized and preventable cause of serious birth defects;

Acknowledging that measles and rubella can be eliminated in the WHO European Region and that congenital rubella infections can be prevented by using combined measles and rubella vaccines in a routine two-dose vaccination schedule within childhood immunization programmes, by achieving and maintaining high coverage and by targeting susceptible populations, including women of childbearing age;

Having reviewed document EUR/RC55/6 on the European strategy for child and adolescent health and development and document EUR/RC55/7 on strengthening national immunization systems through measles and rubella elimination and prevention of congenital rubella infection in WHO's European Region;

1. URGES Member States:

- (a) to commit themselves and give high priority to achieving measles and rubella elimination and congenital rubella infection prevention targets by 2010;
- (b) to provide routine immunization programmes by achieving and maintaining high vaccination coverage with childhood vaccines and ensuring that all children, adolescents and women of childbearing age have equal access to safe and high-quality immunization services;

- (c) to ensure that surveillance, including the use of the required laboratory networks for measles, rubella, congenital rubella infection and poliomyelitis, is sufficient to achieve and sustain the elimination targets;
- (d) to support, where appropriate, the implementation of an immunization week within the Region for advocacy to promote immunization;
- (e) to foster the appropriate partnerships, including plans for intersectoral cooperation with governmental and intergovernmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations and other relevant partners, including the private sector and industry, to ensure the strengthening of routine immunization services and the achievement of the elimination targets;

2. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to support and advocate collaborative efforts with Member States, governmental and intergovernmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations and other relevant partners to commit resources to strengthen routine national immunization systems; to achieve the measles and rubella elimination and congenital rubella infection prevention targets; and to implement an immunization week within the Region;
- (b) to provide strategic direction and technical guidance, as outlined in the *Global immunization vision and strategy 2006–2015*, to Member States to support their progress towards strengthening routine national immunization systems, including analysis of reasons for insufficient vaccine coverage and the introduction of new vaccines and technologies, and achieving the elimination targets;
- (c) to work in partnership with other WHO regions to facilitate communication and common approaches, where appropriate, on achieving elimination targets;
- (d) to provide the Regional Committee with an update on progress at its fifty-eighth session in 2008.