

Narrative Report: **European Immunization Week 2014**



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**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

European Immunization Week entered its ninth year in 2014, once again with 53 participating Member States. Member States show their commitment to EIW in varying ways, some by launching EIW branded awareness campaigns and some by actually vaccinating children.

This year EIW took a life course approach and each day had an allocated theme: Tuesday 22 Infancy, Wednesday 23 Teenage years, Thursday 24 Adulthood and Friday 25 Older people.

Highlights of activities

EIW and the introduction of new vaccines

Vaccination schedules evolve constantly and WHO supports Member States in introducing new vaccines. EIW has been successfully used to prepare the public health and health care community to the introduction of new vaccines and promote them to the public.

2014 saw the introduction of rotavirus vaccination in Estonia and also in Georgia.

In Estonia, EIW was used as an opportunity to communicate about the new vaccine. There was intense communication activity with leaflets, training for vaccinators and training for health care workers and media activity (TV, Radio, Press). Also an expert from Finland visited Estonia and shared the Finnish experience of introducing rotavirus vaccine.

New vaccines were also introduced in Lithuania, Slovak Republic and Uzbekistan.

EIW was very useful, especially as an instrument to prepare for the introduction of rotavirus vaccine and also to share information about immunization in general.

Dr Irina Filippova
EIW focal point for Estonia

WHO/Europe Activities

As well as providing technical support to a number of Member States, various products were released by WHO/Europe including Immunization Highlights, a short film on vaccine preventable disease in teenagers and young adults and a measles infographic.

The EIW team continued to promote the campaign website as a forum this year and also made increased use of Twitter and Facebook. A wide variety of bloggers posted on all four working days of the week and also in the weeks before and after EIW.

The team tweeted in all four official languages and a tweet or retweet was sent out on average once every three minutes of each working day. The most popular item was the measles infographic.

Various materials were released on each day along with supportive statements from our patron Princess Mary of Denmark and of course from our WHO Regional Director, Zsuzsanna Jakab.

MEASLES

in the WHO European Region



I would like to extend my warmest encouragement to all those across the Region who immunize, advocate, and generally contribute to achieving immunity for all. Despite set backs, each year your hard work brings us a little closer to a healthy Europe.

**Crown Princess Mary of Denmark,
Patron of the WHO Regional Office for Europe.**



Happy Birthday EPI! An old adage says, 'Life begins at 40' and the Expanded Programme of Immunization, 40 years young, is as relevant as ever in the European Region and worldwide.

**Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director,
WHO Regional Office for Europe.**



A short film was made on vaccine preventable disease in teenagers and young adults.

Using EIW to gain political support

In Belgium EIW 2014 was used to put the importance of vaccination into focus and to highlight certain topics such as strengthening vaccination coverage for the second dose of MMR vaccine that is given at age 10 in Belgium. The EIW life course theme fitted well with the national action plan for 'lifetime immunization'.

Under the auspices of the Committee for Health and Social Affairs of the Czech Senate a seminar was held and a press conference organized.

Getting together

Meetings of health care workers on immunization topics took place in Albania, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Poland. Norway organized the Nordic Vaccine Meeting, examining the need for a lifelong vaccination programme. Lectures were organized in Greece and Georgia offered a one day national immunization conference.

Public health officials met to discuss immunization topics in Czech Republic and there were workshops for journalists in Poland and Bosnia and Herzegovina. A musical event was held in Skopje's Central Park in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Colleagues in Hungary organized an immunization training course looking back at the largest epidemics of the past 50 years.

EIW has been very important to us. It made it possible to get more funding, not just for buying vaccine, but for communication, advocacy and information.

Dr Geert Top Immunization Manager Flanders, Belgium.



Getting the message out

There were EIW branded public awareness and media campaigns in Belarus, Belgium, Estonia, Poland, Portugal, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia. A press conference was held with UNICEF in Ukraine to promote the need for a polio immunization campaign. The Agency for Consumer Protection in Kazakhstan organized awareness events and Switzerland conducted an eye-catching campaign based on the message that people shouldn't risk missing out on things they want to do because they have measles. People born between 1963 and 1997 were encouraged to get an MMR vaccination.

New publications were launched, such as a booklet that was produced for parents in Poland and the online vaccination wheel created in the Slovak Republic.

Versioning projects were completed for the smartphone application for immunization reminders, creating national versions for Hungary, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Latvia and Estonia.

Romania created an online teaser advert and subsequently a film clip to promote immunization. In all, colleagues' in Romania developed more than 300 activities across the country reaching in excess of 10,000 people from the target groups.



Publicity for vaccination in Kyrgyzstan



The Smart phone application launch in Latvia.

Vaccinations

There were free vaccination campaigns in – Austria, Azerbaijan, France, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

Looking to the future

As part of a three day Immunization Programme Managers Meeting held in Antalya, Turkey 18-20 March 2014 a session devoted to European Immunization Week (EIW) was held on Wednesday 19th March. The group contained representatives from a broad variety of countries in the Region.

In lively discussions, the group expressed great enthusiasm for EIW as a time for outreach and advocacy, for leveraging political support and building vaccine confidence. It's also a time to rally health care workers and foster a spirit of cooperation nationally and internationally.

Ideas for the future included taking a life course approach, providing documents and materials early to allow time for translation and seizing the opportunity of the tenth birthday of EIW in 2015.

EIW 20 – 25 April 2015

Keep in touch

We are keen to hear about your immunization activities and future plans. Have you evaluated the results of any of your initiatives? Are you planning something innovative? It's always a pleasure to highlight good practice, so keep in touch

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10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

European
Immunization
Week

Prevent Protect Immunize

Information about EIW and resources are available at:

<http://eiw.euro.who.int/>

or <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/disease-prevention/vaccines-and-immunization>

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