



**World Health
Organization**

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Technical briefing on immunization and migration

Cross-border coordination of immunization: towards a non-discriminatory, systematic and sustainable approach

Monday, 11 September 2017
12:30–14:30, Bartók

Background

1. The magnitude of refugee and migrant movements in recent years in the WHO European Region and the complexities associated with this ongoing migration phenomenon faced by Member States of the Region pose significant public health challenges that necessitate a coordinated response both within and beyond the geographical borders of a country. Frequent and continuous movements of such populations, which often include risky migratory routes and overcrowded living conditions for refugees and migrants along with possible gaps in vaccinations in some of the transit or destination countries, may increase risks of spreading vaccine-preventable diseases in the European Region.
2. The group at greatest risk for vaccine-preventable diseases is young children, who constitute 25% of the total migrant population in the European Region. Equitable access to and timely delivery of immunization programmes, which is considered to be a “best buy” in public health, would reduce the transmission and burden of vaccine-preventable diseases in vulnerable refugee and migrant populations as well as in that of resident country populations.
3. The European Vaccine Action Plan 2015–2020 adopted in resolution EUR/RC64/R5 in 2014 and the Strategy and Action Plan for Refugee and Migrant Health in the WHO European Region endorsed in resolution EUR/RC66/R6 in 2016 promote equitable access to vaccination for all vulnerable populations, including refugees and migrants, in every Member State. These key policies outline the need for effective surveillance of public health events, gender-sensitive and culturally-appropriate immunization services and information in all countries in the European Region with approaches tailored to the needs of refugees and migrants, international travellers and marginalized vulnerable communities. With the unprecedented influx and rate of such movements in the Region, the need for vaccination of migrants and refugees, for example, with measles, mumps and rubella and polio vaccines in particular without unnecessary delays has been underscored in the WHO-UNHCR-UNICEF joint technical guidance: general principles of vaccination of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in the WHO European Region, published in 2015.

Objectives

4. The objectives of this technical briefing are:
- to highlight the significance of equitable provision of immunization services for refugees and migrants within the context of preventing childhood morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases in the WHO European Region;
 - to comprehensively understand the factors influencing the subnational implementation of established regional policies and to utilize available immunization services for refugees and migrants;
 - to share the experiences of country representatives and others present in the audience on the provision of immunization services for refugees and migrants; and
 - to discuss the need and opportunity for wider political support, including the harmonization of approaches and the development of strategic public health interventions at the national and regional levels.

Expected outcome

5. The expected outcome of the briefing is to better understand the provision and implementation of immunization services for refugees and migrants within the context of preventing morbidity and mortality from vaccine-preventable diseases in the European Region. This briefing on immunization and migration, which also provides a platform for sharing the current work of WHO in this area, complements previous technical briefings on migration and health convened at the 64th and 65th sessions of the Regional Committee for Europe in 2014 and 2015, respectively. The ultimate aim of this series of technical briefings is to engage Member States in the provision of immunization services, particularly in those countries affected by recent large-scale influxes of refugees and migrants.

Provisional programme

Time	Topic/speaker
10 min	Welcome and briefing by the WHO Regional Office for Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robb Butler and Santino Severoni
5 min	Intervention by the European Commission (to be confirmed)
5 min	Intervention by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) (to be confirmed)
5 min per Member State	Presentations by Member States <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany, Greece, Italy, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey
30 min	Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What issues/gaps exist with regard to providing immunization services to migrants and refugees? • What factors influence the provision of service delivery at the subnational level and how can positive experiences be shared with other countries? • What support do Member States require from WHO in addressing the gaps identified in providing immunization services to migrants and refugees?
10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary and next steps by the facilitators