



**World Health
Organization**

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR **Europe**

**International lead poisoning prevention
week of action
in the WHO European Region**

20–26 October 2013

Report

Abstract

World Health Organization in cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme organized International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week of Actions on 20-26 October 2013. Governmental and non-governmental organizations in several WHO European Region Member States participated in the Week. This report was prepared to share information about national activities and events that took place during the Week based on information submitted to WHO.

Keywords

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Introduction

In 2009, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and WHO established the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint with the aim of catalyzing efforts to prevent the exposure of children to lead paint and to minimize occupational exposure to it. One of these efforts took place on 20–26 October 2013 in the form of the international lead poisoning prevention week of action. In the WHO European Region, events were organized in Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Serbia. Campaign activities in Albania, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova were supported by WHO through financial contributions from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Natural Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety.

Events and activities

The main activities organized in the countries included national workshops and round-table discussions on priorities and future action, as well as exhibitions, television broadcasts, the distribution of banners and posters, and the publication of relevant articles in the press. Slogans used in the national posters (adapted from the WHO poster on the event), such as “lead in children”, “no lead in enamel paints”, “children drawing without the risk of lead exposure” and “colouring pencils with and without lead: what is the difference?”, demonstrated some of the many aspects of lead paint that were addressed. The following information about national activities during the campaign is based on reports submitted to WHO.

Albania

In Albania, during a national multistakeholder workshop held by the Institute of Public Health, Tirana, on 25



© Ministry of Health Social Welfare of the Republic of Srpska.
Poster for the international lead poisoning prevention week of action in the Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina

October, leading specialists in chemical safety provided basic information on lead contamination and its health effects, as well as information about current UNEP/WHO initiatives in this area. This was followed by discussions on the problems caused by lead contamination in Albania, especially in highly contaminated regions. A representative of the municipality of Berat, an area affected by lead pollution, spoke about the situation and described the measures being taken to deal with it.

A representative of the nongovernmental organization, Eden Center, gave an account of the



© Institute of Public Health, Tirana, Albania.

National multistakeholder workshop on the health effects of lead contamination, Tirana, Albania, 25 October 2014.

**Java Ndërkombëtare e Veprimit
për Parandalimin e Helmimeve nga Plumbi
20-26 Tetor, 2013
Të eliminohet Plumbi në Bojra**

JO
Plumbit të fëmijët
për një jetë më të shëndetshme

Plumbi është helm. Ai ka pasoja serioze për shëndetin.

- ✓ Nuk ka nivel të sigurt të ekspozimit ndaj plumbit;
- ✓ Plumbi është veçanërisht i dëmshëm për fëmijët dhe gratë shtatzëna, pasi dëmton trurin dhe sistemin nervor në zhvillim të fëmijëve;
- ✓ Plumbi hyn në organizëm kryesisht përmes gojës dhe frymëmarrjes së grimcave të vogla.

Ju dhe fëmijët tuaj mund të jeni të ekspozuar ndaj plumbit

- ✓ Në shumë vende plumbi është gjetur në bojrat që përdoren në shtëpi;
- ✓ Bojrat me plumb përdoren gjithashtu tek lodrat e fëmijëve, sheshet e lojrave dhe produkte të tjera për fëmijë;
- ✓ Plumbi nga bojrat përfundon në pluhurat e shtëpisë.

Mbroni familjen tuaj

- ✓ Lani duart e fëmijëve për të larguar pluhurin e padukshëm të plumbit;
- ✓ Pastroji rregullisht shtëpinë për të larguar pluhurin dhe papastëritë që mund të përmbajnë grimca plumbi;
- ✓ Kërko bojra pa plumb. Alternativat ekzistojnë.

http://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/pb_campaign/en/index.html

© Institute of Public Health, Tirana, Albania.

Poster for the international lead poisoning prevention week of action in Albania.

efforts being made by civil society to reduce the health and environmental risks from exposure to lead. The workshop produced a list of actions needed to deal with lead contamination in the country, for example, to develop the infrastructure, carry out an assessment of the health status in polluted areas, increase the capacity for data collection and strengthen health-promoting activities. A press conference convened during the workshop was transmitted during a television programme devoted to the international lead poisoning prevention week of action.

Georgia

In Georgia, the campaign was coordinated by the L. Sakvarelidze National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, Tbilisi. Activities took place each day from 22 through 26

October 2013, including national workshops and round-table discussions; information about the campaign was shared through television broadcasts, press articles, and the Internet.

Key decision-makers from ministries, governmental institutions and nongovernmental organizations met on 22 October 2013 to discuss ways of eliminating lead from paint and, thus, the harm to human health caused by lead poisoning.

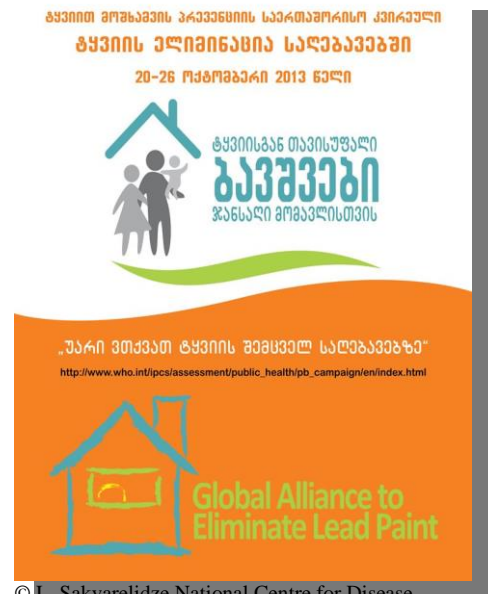
A national workshop entitled, “Say no to lead paint” was held in the office of German Association of Public Universities, Tbilisi, on 23 October 2013.

Representatives of nongovernmental organizations, paint manufacturers and the public, and independent experts, took part.

A round-table meeting held by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection in Tbilisi on 23 October 2013 examined ways of building more supportive and safer environments for children, banning the use of lead in paint production and the import of paint containing lead, and promoting the use of alternatives. Special attention was paid to the development of national legislation in this area.

Round-table meetings were also hosted by the G. Natadze Scientific-Research Institute of Sanitary, Hygiene and Medical Ecology and the N. Makhviladze Institute of Labour Medicine and Ecology, Tbilisi, on 24 and 25 October 2013, respectively.

The campaign was brought to a close on 26 October 2013 with a meeting held at the Kutaisi State University (in which the students participated) and a public lecture on saying no to lead paint.



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Poster for the international lead poisoning prevention week in Georgia.

The international lead poisoning prevention week of action in Georgia resulted in an agreed list of short-term action aimed at preventing the negative impact of lead, namely: to bring national legislation into harmony with that of the European Union relating to protocols of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, such as the Protocol on Heavy Metals, through joint action by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of



© L. Sakvarelidze National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Round-table discussions on the safety of products for child consumption. Tbilisi, Georgia. 23 October 2013.

Environmental Protection and Nature Resources; to revise the national legislation pertaining



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Discussions during the national workshop, "Say no to lead paint", Tbilisi, Georgia, 23 October 2013.

to the elimination of lead from paint and promote the use of safer alternatives; to monitor and control lead releases and document both imported and nationally produced paint and painted toys available on the consumer market; to define requirements for the import, production, use and labeling of lead-containing products

and develop relevant safety standards; to seek financial assistance in implementing a pilot project to assess the exposure of children to lead; and to organize an information campaign in 2014.

Republic of Moldova

In the Republic of Moldova, the campaign was arranged in accordance with the Order of the Ministry of Health on the organization of lead poisoning prevention week. The event was announced on the websites of the Ministry of Health and the National Public Health

Institution. Current scientific information on the impact of lead on health and the results of a recent analysis of situation in the country were included in the latest newsletter of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova to draw the attention of the scientific community and the Government to the problems caused by lead contamination. An article published in the national journal, Evenimentul Zilei, provided information on soil pollution in

the country, and on action proposed to minimize the impact of lead through contaminated soil.

A national multistakeholders workshop was organized in the Public Health Institute, Chisinau, on 24 October 2013, during which the main sources of lead exposure in the Republic of Moldova, the impact of lead pollution on the health of the population, and the results of recent scientific surveys were discussed and directions for future research identified.

A special session on the prevention of lead poisoning was held on 25 October 2013 within the framework of the Congress of Public Health Specialists of the Republic of Moldova, which took place in Chisinau during the international



© National Public Health Institute of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau.

Poster for the international lead poisoning

lead poisoning prevention week of action. The main outcome of the session was the decision to develop an intersectoral action plan with the main objective of eliminating lead compounds from products used in different economic domains.

On 24 October, a programme on lead contamination (“Stirile Zilei la ProTV de la ora 20.00 cu Angela Gonta”) was aired on national television.



© National Public Health Institute of the Republic of Moldova, Chisinau.

Interview for national television on the international lead poisoning prevention week of action.

Many interesting events were also organized by nongovernmental organizations in France, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia.

Kazakhstan

In Kazakhstan, for example, the Greenwomen association started its preparations for the campaign by releasing an information package already on 17 October 2013. The package included a press release on the event, interesting facts and frequently asked questions about lead, and information about measures required to reduce the risk of lead poisoning. The press



© Greenwomen.

During a lesson organized by Greenwomen in a school in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

release was also distributed separately to nongovernmental organizations and governmental departments.

To raise the awareness of the public about the campaign, the association issued information leaflets containing tips on how to prevent lead poisoning. It also organized presentations on the campaign at the Kazakh National Agrarian University and the Kazakh National Technical University.



© Greenwomen.

Distributing WHO posters in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

A second press release issued on 25 October 2013 included information on the results of research into the lead content in paint in Kazakhstan conducted by experts from the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, United States of America, in 2010–2011.

Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, the main point of discussion was the report, *Future without toxic chemicals. Lead in paints*, published by the nongovernmental organization, Independent Ecological Expertise. The report includes the results of a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan in 2012–2013 within the framework of the International POPs Elimination Network/UNEP project, and lists key issues to be explored as a first step towards the prohibition/limitation of lead in paint and other measures to prevent the negative impact of lead contamination on health, especially children's health.

Serbia

A lecture on the sources of lead in the environment was held at the Eco-school, Oš "Drinka Pavlovic", Belgrade, during the campaign organized by the nongovernmental organization, Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development, in partnership with the Association of Consumers of Serbia.



© Environmental Ambassadors for Sustainable Development.

Students of the eco-school, Oš "Drinka Pavlovic", Belgrade, Serbia, during a lecture on the sources of lead in the environment.

Međunarodna nedelja upozorenja
na opasnost trovanja olovom - 2013.

**Boje i bojice sa olovom:
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Poster for the international lead poisoning prevention week of action in Serbia.

Summary

An analysis of the outcomes of the international lead poisoning prevention week in the WHO European Region showed that the campaign had been multisectoral and multistakeholder in nature in all of the countries involved and that it had attracted a high level of interest and promoted wide discussion among interested groups at the government, public and scientific-

community levels. Other achievements included decisions made in the countries to take steps towards eliminating lead from the environment, for example, by revising national legislation and promoting scientific research in this area.