

Core Communications Package



European Immunization Week

21-27 April 2012



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Introduction

This communications package is designed to provide EIW focal points (and, by extension, all EIW stakeholders from participating Member States) with clear, consistent messages about this year's initiative, to ensure successful communications strategies for EIW 2012.

These messages and their supporting points can be used when developing EIW materials or when communicating with the media, health workers, decision-makers and the general public.

Participating countries should feel free to use only the messages that apply to their particular immunization priorities and/or challenges. They are also welcome to use alternative messages that are more relevant to their specific needs.

For questions or additional information:

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A young boy in Tajikistan receives oral polio vaccine during EIW 2011

Regional Goal of EIW

To increase vaccination coverage by drawing attention to and increasing awareness of the importance of immunization, with a special focus on vulnerable groups

EIW 2012 Key Objective

*Increase **demand** for immunization*

- At a time and in a Region where most people can access vaccines, the focus must now be on making sure the **demand** for vaccines remains high
- Complacency about vaccination leads to outbreaks, as evidenced by measles outbreaks that have spread across the Region
- European Immunization Week 2012 provides an opportunity to raise awareness about immunization, thereby **rebuilding the demand** for it
- By helping health workers, policy makers and parents understand that vaccines are lifesaving and necessary for the health and wellbeing of both the individual and the community, we can:
 - *prevent* future outbreaks and the spread of vaccine-preventable diseases
 - *protect* the people of the European Region from serious and sometimes fatal illness



EIW 2012 Key Messages

Front-line health workers are vital to national immunization programmes and have a tremendous impact on the success of these programmes

Controlling ongoing measles outbreaks and preventing further measles cases in the European Region must be a top priority

2012 marks the 10 year anniversary of the European Region receiving certification of polio-free status

Front-line health workers are vital to national immunization programmes and have a tremendous impact on the success of these programmes

- Health workers truly are the "front line", with direct access to the parents/caregivers who make immunization decisions
- Individuals cite health professionals as the most important source of information for health decisions (Betsch, *Eurosurveillance*, 2011)
- It is vital to **educate** health workers and ensure that they understand the importance of immunization and will be advocates for vaccination within their own communities
- It is essential to **support** health workers and provide them with the resources they need to be effective advocates for immunization (see Appendix I)
- Health workers can provide the strongest, most trusted endorsement and recommendation of timely and complete immunization

Target audience:

health workers, policy makers

Applications:

Information materials for health workers; training sessions/conferences with health workers; advocacy materials for policy makers; meetings/roundtables with policy makers



Controlling ongoing measles outbreaks and preventing further measles cases in the European Region must be a top priority

- The Region had more than 34,000 cases of measles reported in 42 countries in 2011, including 9 deaths and more than 7,000 hospitalizations
- Measles outbreaks can lead to serious disease and death, and they are extremely costly to control
 - The estimated direct costs of a 2002-2003 measles outbreak in Italy, which resulted in 20,000+ cases and 5,154 hospitalizations, were €17.6-22 million (Filia et al., *Health burden and economic impact of measles-related hospitalizations in Italy in 2002–2003*)
 - A 2002 study estimated that the average cost of a measles case (from the perspective of society) was US\$276 for the Netherlands and US\$307 for the UK (Carabin et al., *The average cost of measles cases and adverse events following vaccination in industrialised countries*)
 - A study showed one outbreak of only 14 measles cases in Arizona, USA, cost US\$800,000 in response and containment measures (Chen et al., *Health Care–Associated Measles Outbreak in the United States After an Importation: Challenges and Economic Impact*)
- Measles outbreaks pose a serious challenge to achieving the Region's 2015 measles elimination goal; WHO/Europe has outlined key strategies for elimination (see Appendix II)
- It is particularly important to focus on preventing and controlling the spread of measles during the **high transmission season** (February-May)

Target audience:

Parents/caregivers, health workers, policy makers, media, general public

Applications:

Information materials for parents, health workers; promotional materials; training sessions/conferences with health workers; advocacy materials for policy makers; meetings/roundtables with policy makers; press conferences/interviews with media

2012 marks the 10 year anniversary of the European Region receiving certification of polio-free status.

- The WHO European Region was declared polio-free 10 years ago (in 2002)
- Despite a large outbreak of imported poliovirus in 2010, the Region has retained its polio-free status (confirmed by the Regional Commission for the Certification of the Eradication of Polio in August 2011)
- This is an achievement to celebrate and illustrates how high immunization coverage can control the spread of disease
- However, the 2010 outbreak serves as a sobering reminder that ***the Region must remain vigilant*** until global polio eradication is achieved
- Polio continues to be a threat, particularly due to ongoing outbreaks in neighbouring or nearby countries, such as China and Pakistan
- It is vital to ensure that all children are fully immunized against polio

Target audience:

health workers, policy makers, media, general public

Applications:

Promotional materials; training sessions/conferences with health workers; advocacy materials for policy makers; meetings/roundtables with policy makers; press conferences/interviews with media



Communications Resources



Immunization Resource Centre

Download materials for health workers and the general public at:

www.euro.who.int/vaccine/resourcecentre



EIW Guidelines for PR and working

Available at WHO/Europe's [EIW site](http://www.euro.who.int/eiw)

7 Key Reasons to Immunize (fact sheet)

Available via WHO/Europe's [EIW site](http://www.euro.who.int/eiw)

EIW artwork (including logo, poster, flyer, etc.)

Available for download via WHO/Europe's [EIW site](http://www.euro.who.int/eiw)

Visit the EIW campaign site for ongoing updates about the 2012 initiative and to connect with focal points from other participating countries:

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



Appendix I

Health worker resources

Studies show that health workers are still considered the most trusted source of information about health decisions, including immunization. But it can often be complicated for health workers to effectively communicate with parents and other patients about vaccines. In order to facilitate this communication and help frontline health workers in their day-to-day role as sources of information about vaccines, WHO/Europe has created the following resources:

- 1) Talking to parents about vaccines for children* – This document provides health workers with suggestions and proven techniques to help foster constructive dialogue with parents about vaccinating their children.
- 2) Vaccine-preventable diseases: Signs, symptoms and complications* – Health workers can give this fact sheet to parents to help inform them about the risks associated with vaccine-preventable diseases.
- 3) Influenza : Signs, symptoms and complications; Recommendations for prevention* – This fact sheet, aimed at the general public, provides information about the symptoms and complications associated with influenza, as well as WHO recommendations for influenza vaccination.
- 4) If you choose not to vaccinate your child, understand the risks and responsibilities* – This document can be given to parents who are reluctant to vaccinate to help them understand the implications of such a decision.

Copies of these tools have been included in this package and can also be downloaded from the WHO/Europe Immunization Resource Centre: www.euro.who.int/vaccine/resourcecentre

WHO/Europe plans to add to this library of resources and create additional tools to help frontline health workers answer questions and provide reliable information about immunization.



Appendix II

Strategies for measles elimination

Key strategies for measles elimination:

- 1) achieve at least 95% immunization coverage with two doses of measles-containing vaccine in routine immunization, including at subnational levels
- 2) provide a new opportunity for un- or under-immunized people to be vaccinated, through either routine programmes or supplemental immunization activities
- 3) strengthen surveillance to detect, confirm and respond to every case
- 4) increase awareness and knowledge about immunization in health care workers and the general public, to increase demand