



ECDC's perspective: Translating evidence into public health action

Andrea Würz, ECDC – Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit
Meeting on Global Challenges in Vaccine Acceptance, 24-26 Sept. 2018

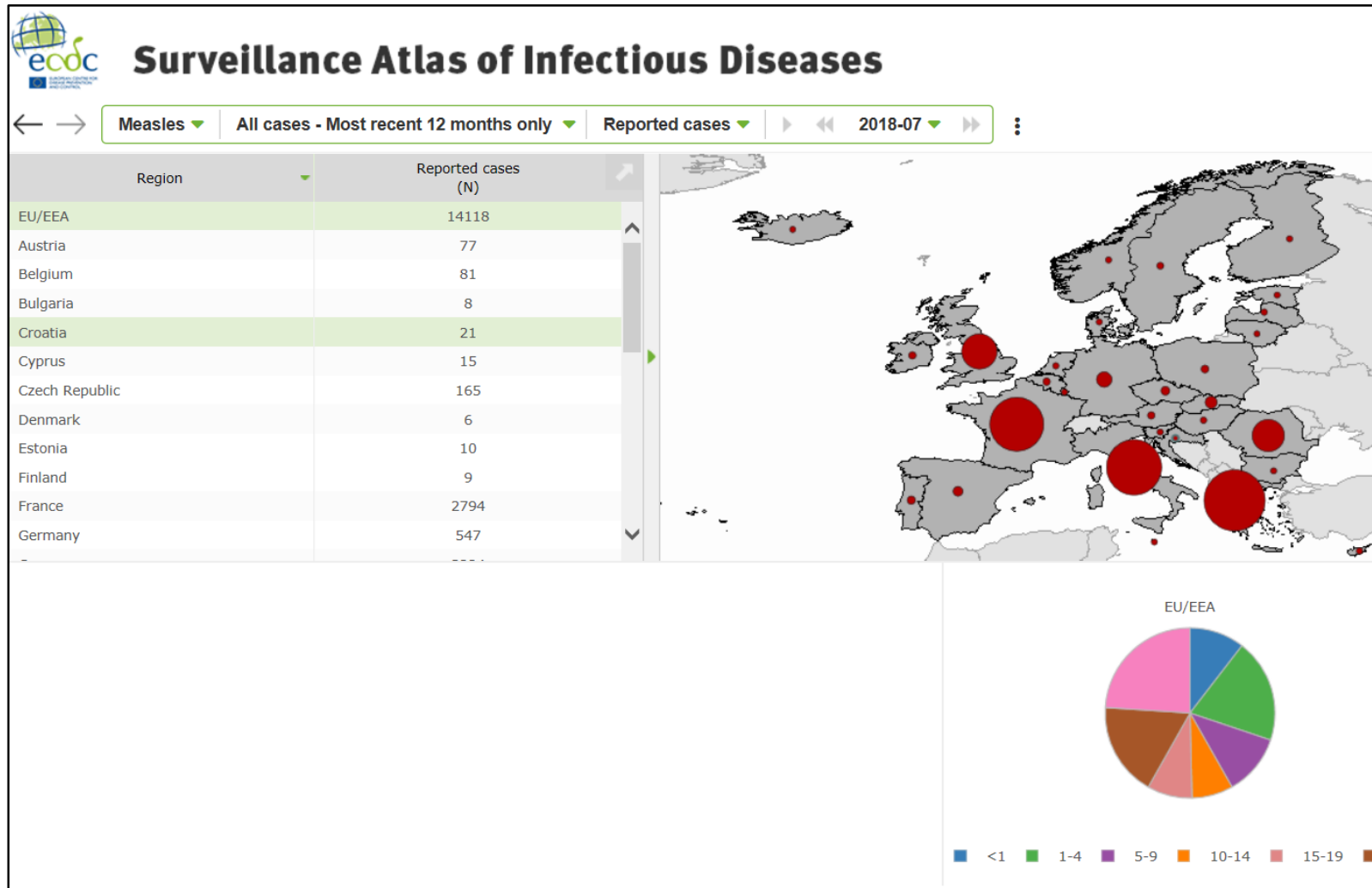
Key facts about ECDC



- **EU scientific and technical agency**
- Established 2005 in Stockholm
- Covers EU 28 & 3 EEA countries
- Mission: '**Identify, assess and communicate** current and emerging threats to human health posed by **infectious diseases**'
- ECDC's **Vaccine-preventable Diseases (VPD) Programme:** Scientific advice on VPD and vaccines, surveillance, risk assessments, communication activities to promote immunisation



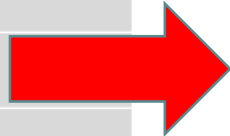
A challenging context – Measles outbreaks continue in the EU/EEA



Between 1 August 2017 and 31 July 2018, 30 EU/EEA Member States reported 14 118 cases of measles and 37 fatalities.

A challenging area - From epidemiology to social sciences

< Immunisation and vaccines
Vaccine-preventable diseases
Preventive measures for infectious diseases
Childhood immunisation
Vaccine hesitancy
Vaccine safety
Vaccine efficacy / effectiveness
Vaccination coverage
EU vaccination schedules
Immunisation Information Systems
European Immunisation Week
Communication
Infographics and videos



Scientific scepticism

Questioning the value of vaccination

Modern communication platforms as amplifiers



The behavioural and social science aspects make this area **a particular challenge for public health**, as our main focus is on epidemiological data, VPD outbreaks, disease surveillance, scientific evidence on vaccines and vaccination.

ECDC's approach

ECDC' approach to address the communication challenges



Complex public health challenge that **requires a multi-disciplinary and multi-faceted approach**

1 – Provide information and data

2 – Exchange knowledge / Stakeholder engagement / Partnerships

3 – Enhance understanding of vaccine hesitancy and determinants (general and for specific vaccines)

- Global problem that **varies between and within countries**
- Context specific, varying across time, place and vaccines

4 - Support strengthening communication skills (especially among healthcare workers) and **develop guides and tools**

1) Information and data – VPD situation in the EU

Updates on ECDC website, news items, social media, responding to media queries

Monthly measles and rubella monitoring reports

ECDC publishes a monthly surveillance report on measles and rubella data submitted by the 30 EU/EEA countries.

[See the latest surveillance data](#)

- Monthly measles and rubella monitoring reports
- European measles outbreaks
- Measles affects all age groups
- Vaccine Schedule

ECDC - VPD @ECDC_VPD · Feb 10

#measles is a serious disease which can result in death - efforts still needed to increase and sustain vaccination coverage - See 2017 data from @ECDC_EU bit.ly/2GYpbxz #VaccinesWork

Measles deaths, January 2017-December 2017

- 0
- 1
- 5
- 10

Legend: No data, EU/EEA Members, Other countries

Measles epidemic warning: Cases of the deadly infection tripled last year across Europe

- More than 14,400 cases of the infection occurred across 30 countries in 2017
- This is compared to just 4,600 incidences of the fatal infection in 2016
- Poor vaccination rates are thought to have driven epidemics across Europe
- As of last month, there were 122 confirmed cases across five regions in England
- To prevent an outbreak, 95% of the population should be immunised

By ALEXANDRA THOMPSON HEALTH REPORTER FOR MAILONLINE
PUBLISHED: 10:53 GMT, 13 February 2018 | UPDATED: 15:41 GMT, 13 February 2018

334 shares

The number of measles cases in Europe tripled last year, new figures reveal.

More than 14,400 cases of the infection occurred across 30 countries last year, compared with just 4,600 incidences in 2016, according to an update published by The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) last month.

ECDC - VPD @ECDC_VPD · Apr 27

Get inspired – advice on addressing #vaccine-hesitant #patients bit.ly/2KifU5b

#VaccinesWork #immunizeEurope #EIW2018

Determinants of vaccine hesitancy by category and number of times recorded

[ECDC, 'Rapid literature review' on 'motivating hesitant population groups in Europe to vaccinate', Stockholm: ECDC; 2015.]

Category	Determinant	Number of times recorded	
Vaccine and vaccination specific issues	Inconsistent advice	2	
	Vaccine novelty	2	
	Lack of recommendation	4	
	Financial cost	6	
	Access	7	
	No medical need	9	
	Responsibility	2	
	Humans too weak to fight vaccines	3	
	Individual and group influences	Previous negative experiences	4
		Fear of injection	4
Diseases are beneficial		4	
Alternative prevention methods		5	
Against vaccination in general		6	
Vaccination not a priority		6	
Social norms		6	
Healthy bodies		9	
Mistrust in health institutions		9	
Vaccines not effective		10	
Contextual influences	Low risk/severity of disease	10	
	Lack of information	12	
	Vaccine safety	31	
	Violation of human rights	3	
	Negative exposure to media	3	
Religious fatalism	5		
Conspiracy theories	7		

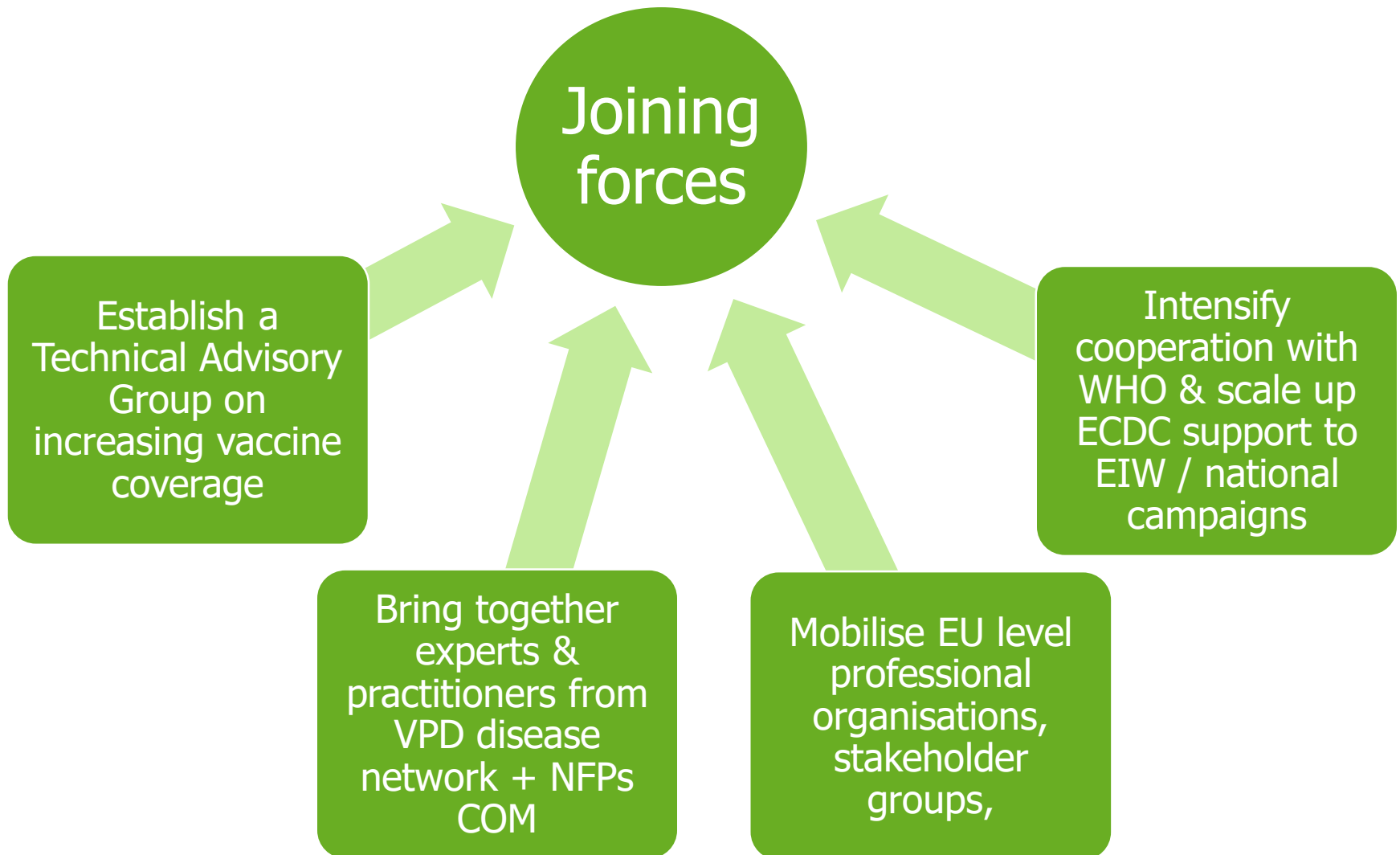
ECDC, WHO/Europe - VPI, EU_Health and 2 others

MEASLES OUTBREAK

INCREASE IN CASES HAS AUTHORITIES FEARING COUNTRY-WIDE EPIDEMIC

Increasingly addressing theme of vaccine acceptance

2) Exchange knowledge / Stakeholder engagement / Partnerships



Technical Advisory Group on increasing vaccination coverage



- Contributes to inform our work on vaccine communication
- Discusses common challenges (communication and vaccines experts, professional associations, WHO, NGOs, academia)
- **Key action areas** identified:

Pooling knowledge and best practices in responding to vaccine crisis

Work with allies, advocates, multipliers

Communicate about vaccine safety and what is done to address AEFI

More knowledge on social media use and monitoring

Track issues to pre-empt crisis

Other examples of activities



Exchange knowledge: Conferences, workshops (e.g. European Health Forum Gastein 2017 – Workshop on hesitancy; European Public Health Conference 2017 – Workshop on storytelling)



Stakeholder engagement: Outreach to professional associations, NGOs, to better understand stakeholder's perspective on vaccines and encourage engagement



Partnerships: Support to WHO-Europe in EIW and support to national campaigns. Technical partner in the 3-year EU Joint Action on Vaccination

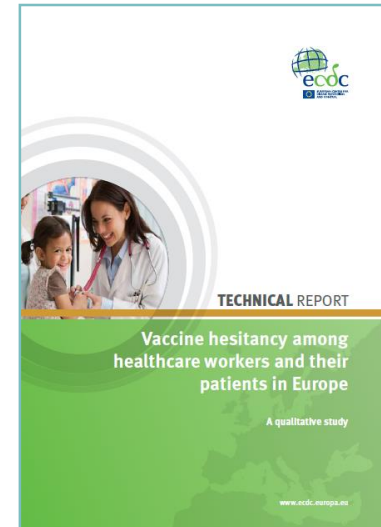


3) Enhancing understanding on vaccine hesitancy – Gathering evidence



Rapid literature review on vaccine hesitancy

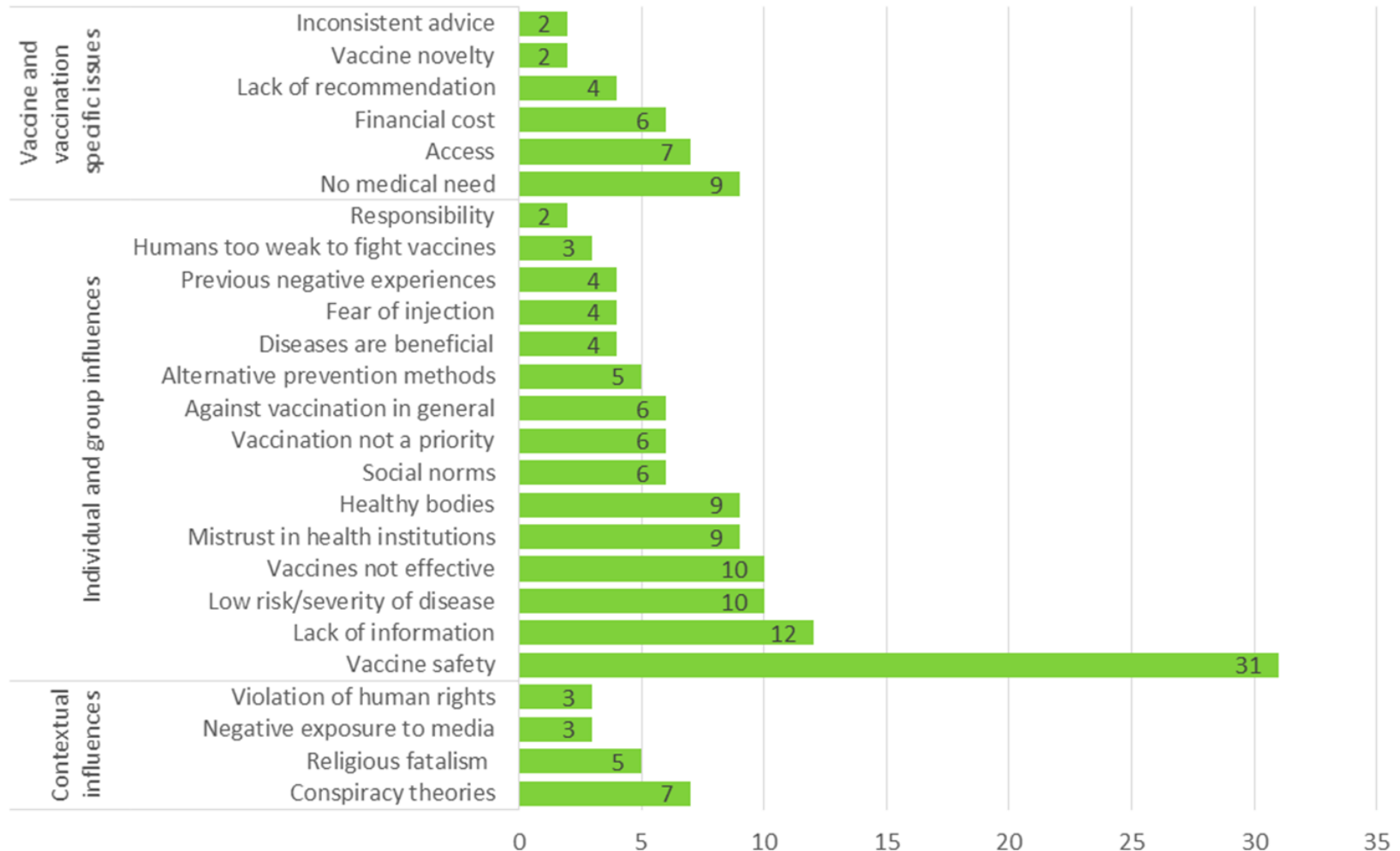
- Compiles knowledge and research on the topic (definitions, scope of the issue, main factors)



Qualitative study (interviews in 4 countries) - Hesitancy among HCWs and their patients

- Potential doubts and concerns
- How HCWs respond to patients' concerns

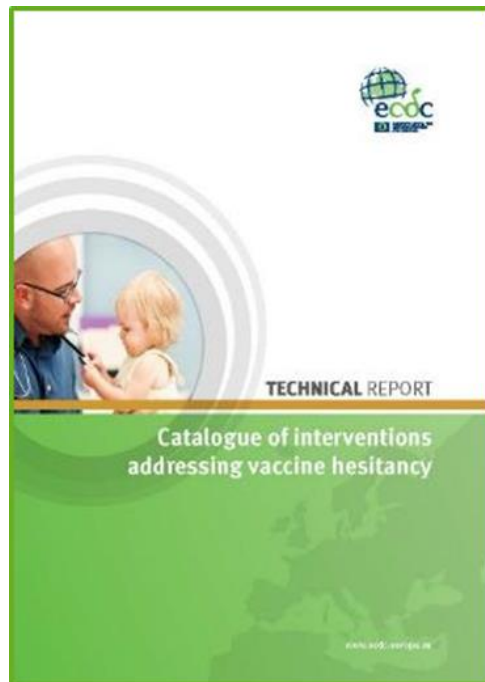
Determinants of vaccine hesitancy in Europe



4) Support strengthening communication skills – Guides and tools



+ additional sources of information and consultation with experts



- **Bank of ideas** – examples from practice
- **40 interventions:** Diagnostic tools and interventions focused on parents / HCW's / community-level interventions
- Link to **resources** and information on evaluation

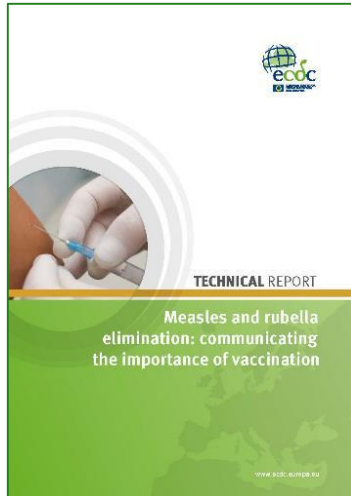
Support strengthening communication skills – Guides and tools



Guide and materials to strengthen healthcare workers' communication capacities to address parents/caregivers' information needs and concerns

Guide that summarises study findings and provides information on ways to address hesitancy

Support strengthening communication skills – Guides and tools



- Provides **Q&A** on measles and rubella and **key messages** (diseases, risks, complications)
- Compiles **common myths** regarding measles vaccination and **evidence based counterarguments**
- Considerations in relation to **debunking myths**

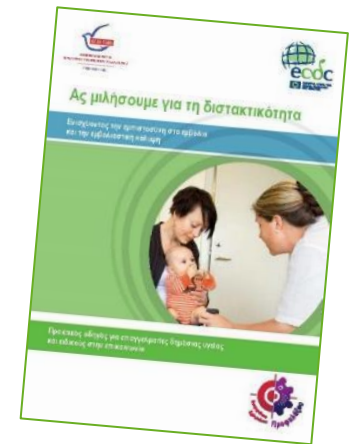
This guide and also information from the guide “**Let’s talk about protection**”, led to development of toolkit materials for country adaptation:



Country adaptation of ECDC guides – Pilot interventions



- BG, CZ, EE, HR, HU, RO (adapted first version of “Let’s talk about protection”) = Adaptation methodology developed
- Recent projects: Greece (2016), Austria (2017), Italy (2017)
- Key learnings: Importance of **cultural adaptation** and **addressing local information needs**; adaptation encourages **networking** and **involvement of stakeholders** in development and dissemination of materials



Next steps and reflections

Our role



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Joining forces, with a multi-disciplinary approach, to inform, raise awareness, share, support initiatives and contribute to capacity building

Actions as a component of broader initiatives

Keep high vaccination coverage rates

- Address the change in risk perception
- Raise confidence among health professionals
- Raise vaccine acceptance among the public
- Close immunity gaps in across ALL age groups

Guarantee equal access to vaccination

- Break economic barriers/overcome inequalities
- Reach the hard-to-reach
- Secure vaccine supply /mitigate risk of shortages
- Raise political awareness

Strengthen NIP monitoring and performance

- Strengthen surveillance and capacity for response
- Timely availability of scientific evidence on vaccines & vaccination strategies
- Vaccine effectiveness and vaccination impact monitoring
- Evidence-based, targeted, integrated communications

Vaccination calendars

- Move from a childhood to a life long calendar
- Not only about the 'new vaccines'; adults get childhood diseases
- Simplification and comparability of current immunisation schedule



Upcoming ECDC projects



Scoping the development of an European Vaccine Information Portal

- As outlined in the proposal for a EU Council Recommendation on Strengthened Cooperation against VPDs*
- Reliable, updated information on benefits and safety of vaccination

Scoping review: Insights from the literature on social media and vaccination

- Addresses issue of increasing evidence of anti-vaccination messages and misinformation spreading through social media, and importance of social media monitoring to pick up “signals” and information on concerns
- Overview on social media monitoring and social media interventions around increasing vaccination trust and acceptance

* Presents a framework for action for strengthened cooperation in the EU

Upcoming projects (cont.)



Publication of the systematic literature review - Determinants of HPV vaccine hesitancy

- Developed with the LSHTM
- Uncertainty identified as key, mainly on side effects and effectiveness, also perception of “new vaccine” = Issue of mistrust
- Looks at perceptions in different groups (e.g. HCW’s, school nurses, gynaecologists, parents, adolescents)

Initiate project on training curricula for public health and primary healthcare professionals on communication on vaccination

- Conceptualisation phase - Start with mapping existing courses - Focus on communication and social science aspects

Some reflections on challenges



How to ensure that we maintain and strengthen our position as a trusted source of scientific information?

- Being proactive, facilitating access to information and scientific expertise, coordination, transparency

How can we best prepare for a quickly evolving information/media landscape?

- Keep abreast of new developments and research, “listen”, adapt
- Recognising the importance of the topic and the need to allocate sufficient resources over time

How to ensure that the evidence being created is effectively applied?

- Sharing knowledge, work with multidisciplinary teams, partnerships and cross-dissemination

How can we “speak to the heart”?

- How to communicate differently? Value of storytelling.

Thank you for your attention!

Visit: <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/immunisation-vaccines/communication-on-immunisation>

Follow: @ECDC_VPD