

ECDC introduces European monthly measles monitoring

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Citation style for this article:

Kreidl P. ECDC introduces European monthly measles monitoring.

Euro Surveill. 2011;16(28):pii=19918. Available online: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19918>

Article published on 14 July 2011

On 13 July 2011, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) published the first issue of the *European monthly measles monitoring* [1]. The objective of this monthly online publication is to provide European Union (EU) Member States and European Economic Area (EEA) countries and other stakeholders with timely updates on the measles situation in Europe.

In 2010, the countries in the World Health Organization European Region committed to eliminate measles and rubella transmission by 2015 [2]. However, there are clear indications that the intensified circulation of measles virus in western Europe over the last few years will continue in 2011. ECDC's epidemic intelligence activities revealed six deaths and more than 21,000 measles cases in 23 of the 27 EU and four European Free Trade Association countries during the first six months of 2011. A high proportion of the infected were unvaccinated and the highest incidence was observed among children under one year of age who are too young to be vaccinated. The majority of cases result from transmission within and between EU Member States.

In response to the ongoing measles epidemic in the EU, ECDC will step up surveillance and establish a confidential communication platform for timely exchange related to vaccine preventable diseases, including outbreak reporting information between the Member States. In addition to this, the *European monthly measles monitoring* provides feedback to countries and decision makers with information compiled from multiple sources such as national websites, the EUVAC.NET database, the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS), validated media reports, and personal communication from national authorities. The interval for this report has been upgraded from quarterly to monthly in order to increase timeliness of the information provided.

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