

# VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES AND IMMUNIZATION: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

## STATEMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 5 (I): VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES AND IMMUNIZATION: REALIZING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE EUROPEAN VACCINE ACTION PLAN 2015-2020

According to the Regional Office for Europe of the WHO, vaccine-preventable diseases like measles have hit a record high in the region. More than 41,000 people have been infected in the first six months of 2018, leading to 37 deaths due to measles.

With any vaccine-preventable disease, one case is one too many.

We may assign the responsibility for this surge on the drop in the number of people being vaccinated. Some countries voted to abolish the law that makes vaccination mandatory for children before they start school. People refusing vaccination, those who are sceptical or hesitant, and those who are late or selective vaccinators, are part of the population served in primary health care.

The increase in vaccine-preventable diseases across the European Region needs action in all directions, including programmes that are developed bottom up. The NGOs supporting this statement would like to call for joint action to achieve:

- a) renewed and enhanced **focus on immunisation in primary health care**;
- b) implement necessary **changes in laws** for the support of vaccination programmes;
- c) **access to resources of evidence** for those working in vaccination programmes;
- d) increase in vaccination **coverage** and elimination of immunity gaps, including those of **migrants and refugees** for whom their inclusion in free-of-charge programmes must be guaranteed.

Finally, we would like to reaffirm our commitment that **primary health care professionals**, including family doctors and allied primary health practitioners, will:

- a) continue working with determination to tackle misconceptions and counter misinformation regarding vaccination;
- b) strive to provide evidence-based knowledge to the general public and improve its health literacy;
- c) foster public's trust in health institutions, authorities and immunization programmes.

## NGOs SUPPORTING THIS STATEMENT

- **COTEC:** The European organization for all Occupational Therapists through their National Associations, with the purpose of ensuring an adequate number of high quality occupational therapy practitioners and services in Europe. COTEC is a regional group of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT), representing more than 180.000 Occupational therapists across 30 European countries.
- **EFPC:** European Forum for Primary Care represents around 100 institutional members in the WHO European region active at policy making, academic and practice level in the Primary Care domain.
- **MMI:** Medicus Mundi International – Network Health for All is a network of organizations working in the field of international health cooperation and global health.
- **Studiorum** is a research think-tank working on health and wellbeing policies in South-eastern Europe, and partner to the South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN).
- **WFOT:** The World Federation of Occupational Therapists is the official representative of occupational therapy internationally, representing 550,000 occupational therapists worldwide. WFOT through its member associations and regional groups promotes and establishes high quality occupational therapy services and education programmes.
- **WONCA Europe:** The European regional network of the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) represents more than 120,000 family doctors through their Member Organisations across Europe.