

Measles in the European Union and a reminder for EU citizens attending mass gatherings

Mass gathering events such as concerts, sporting events, religious gatherings etc. represent unique situations in which the spread of infectious diseases can be facilitated due to the large number of people, from many different countries, congregating in space and time. Over the coming summer months several mass gatherings will take place throughout the European Union. One example is the World Youth Day, which takes place from 16 to 21 August in Madrid, Spain. It is anticipated that this event will bring together over 350,000 persons, mainly teenagers and young adults, from around the world.

ECDC monitors the European and Global situation regarding Communicable Diseases to be able to identify at an early stage any events that pose a risk to the public health of European Union citizens. Measles is of particular interest in the context of mass gatherings. During 2011 and up to 15 June, more than 12,000 cases of measles have been identified by ECDC in the EU and EEA/EFTA countries through epidemic intelligence activities. The data has been acquired from publicly available information from the World Health Organization (WHO), EUVAC.Net, reports of public health institutes of Member States, ProMed articles and the media. The majority of measles cases so far have been reported from France (7321), Spain (1812) and Germany (1037). However, several other EU and EEA/EFTA countries report higher number of cases compared to the same period last year: Switzerland (554), United Kingdom (345), Belgium (382), Romania (254), Italy (170), Denmark (79), Norway (26) and Sweden (17). The vast majority of case reports continue to be in un-vaccinated individuals. Cases amongst healthcare workers have also been reported.

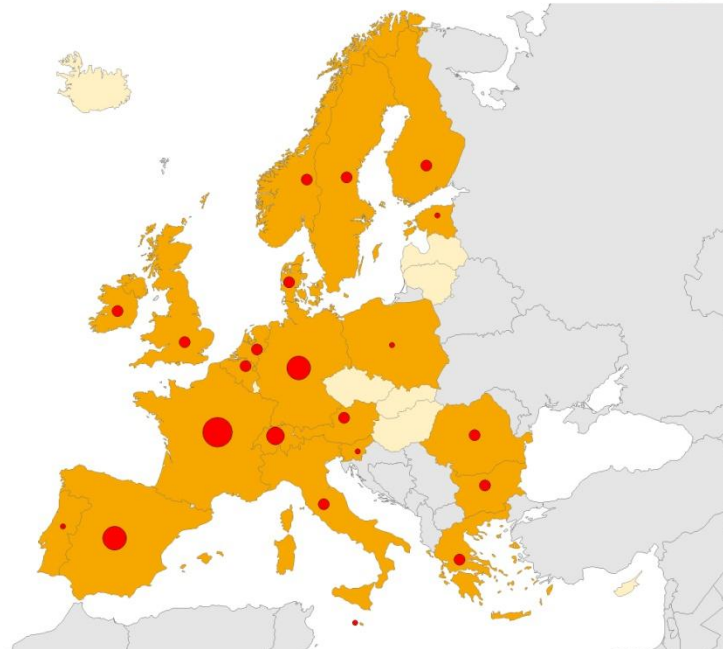
Figure: Number of measles cases reported in EU and EEA/EFTA countries between January and 15 June, 2011.

Number of measles cases in EU and EEA/EFTA countries January to 15 June 2011



Cases

- 1 - 10
- 11 - 500
- 501 - 1 000
- 1 001 - 5 000
- > 5 000
- 0 cases reported



ECDC, 2011/ ESRI / EUVAC.NET and national sources

Mass gathering events represent a risk for the spread of communicable diseases. The importance of pre-travel health advice in case of mass gathering events is well-known: persons travelling to these events can be exposed to infectious diseases such as measles and carry the acquired infections back

to their home countries where they infect other people. On the other hand, visitors can bring infections from their home country when attending the events, and as such, expose fellow visitors and nationals. In this context, ECDC continues to stress the importance for European citizens to be vaccinated against measles if they have not already been vaccinated or have not previously had measles. The vaccine should be administered according to their national authority recommendations.

See related links:

- More information about measles is available on the ECDC health topics web-section at: <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Pages/Measles.aspx>
- More information on the surveillance of vaccine preventable diseases in the European Union is available on the website for EUVAC.NET: www.euvac.net
- More information about vaccines and immunisation from the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe website: <http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/disease->
- Information from selected Member States' websites regarding measles is available from here:
 - Bulgaria: <http://www.ncipd.org/index.php>
 - Denmark: <http://www.ssi.dk/Aktuelt/Temasider/Maeslingetema.aspx>
 - Estonia: <http://www.terviseamet.ee/info/uudised/u/artikkel/leetrid-levivad-taas-euroopas-ja-eestis.html>
 - Finland: http://www.thl.fi/fi_FI/web/fi/etusivu
 - Germany: <http://www3.rki.de/SurvStat/>
 - Ireland: <http://www.hpsc.ie/hpsc/NotifiableDiseases/WeeklyIDReports/File,1425,en.pdf>
 - Spain: http://www.isciii.es/htdocs/centros/epidemiologia/boletin_red/IS-110613-WEB.pdf
 - Sweden: <http://www.smittskyddsinstitutet.se/in-english/statistics/measles/?y=2011#statistics-nav>