

MEASLES

IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION

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KEY FIGURES

89 994	2019 reported cases (January – June)
84 462	2018 reported cases
25 863	2017 reported cases
5273	2016 reported cases
37	2019 reported deaths (January – June)
74	2018 reported deaths
42	2017 reported deaths
13	2016 reported deaths

49 of 53	Countries affected (in 2018 and 2019 to date)
91%	Regional immunization coverage (2nd dose measles-containing vaccine) (2018)

SOURCES

WHO EpiData, No. 7/2019 (data for 2018 & 2019)

WHO EpiData, No. 1/2019 (data for 2017)

WHO EpiData, No. 1/2018 (data for 2016)

WHO/UNICEF immunization coverage estimates

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

A dramatic resurgence of measles continues to threaten the health of susceptible individuals in the European Region. As measles typically peaks in the spring, the number of reported cases declined in June. However, approximately 90 000 children and adults in the Region were infected with measles in the first half of 2019. This is double the number of cases reported for the same period in 2018 (44 175) and exceeds the total for 2018 (84 462).

For the 18-month period of 1 January 2018 to 30 June 2019, 49 of the 53 countries of the Region together reported over 174 000 measles cases and over 100 measles-related deaths.

On 6 May 2019, WHO activated a Grade 2 emergency response to measles circulation in the European Region. This allows WHO to mobilize the needed human and financial resources to support the affected countries.

Based on the continued need for an enhanced tailored response to the spread of measles, on 5 August 2019 the emergency activation was extended for another 3-month period when it will be reassessed.

(Data as of 30 July 2019)

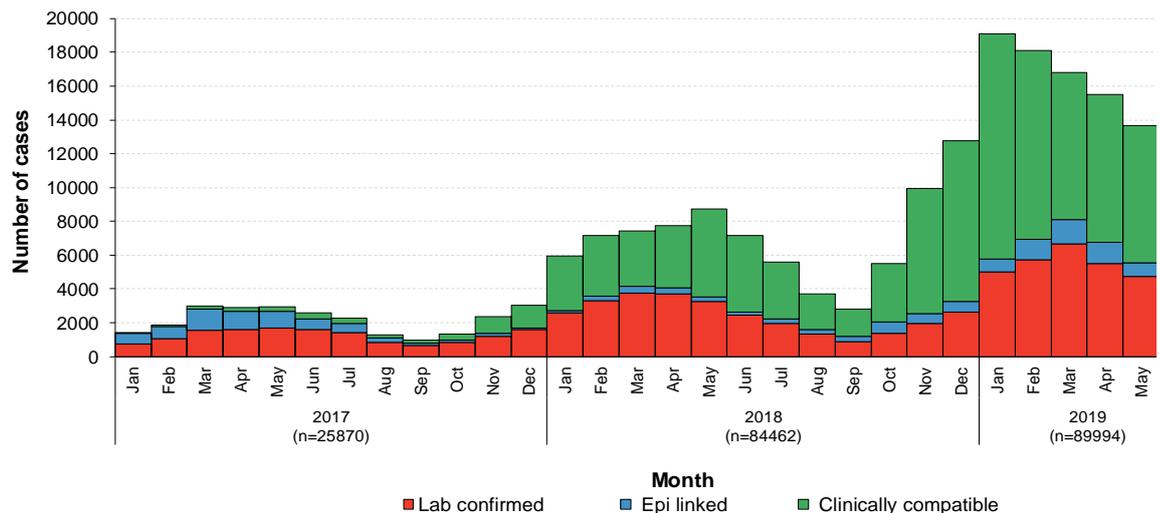


Figure 1. Reported measles cases in the WHO European Region, January 2017–June 2019. Source: Monthly aggregated case-based data reported by Member States to WHO/Europe, directly or via ECDC/TESSy, data as of 30 July 2019.

Risk assessment and emergency grading

The assessment of the measles situation in the Region considered number of cases, pockets of vulnerability within countries and the need for accelerated action to stop circulation and prevent future outbreaks.

Grading the measles emergency triggered the activation of WHO’s Incident Management System (IMS), which provides a standardized yet flexible approach to managing WHO’s response to the emergency. (See also Situation report #1.)

Since the Grade 2 response activation, WHO has reviewed the situation in all 53 Member States and grouped them based on the needs to contain the ongoing measles outbreak and their health system characteristics. A strategic response plan (SRP) for the entire Region is being prepared and WHO is supporting health authorities in Israel, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine in preparing/activating plans for outbreak response and identifying and addressing any underlying health system challenges that may have contributed to the measles outbreaks.

In the coming period focus countries will be expanded to include Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, based on the large number of cases in these countries in 2019.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan reported over 9000 cases in the first half of 2019. Despite the seasonality of measles, which is generally reflected in diminished circulation in the summer months, Kazakhstan continues to see a high number of cases, with an additional 950 cases reported for June 2019.

Since 2000, the reported administrative immunization coverage for Kazakhstan has been consistently above 95% at national level for both the first and second doses of measles-containing vaccine. The current large outbreak is therefore a reflection of pockets of vulnerable children and adults at subnational level in the country.

The country is planning to conduct a supplementary immunization activity (SIA) in September 2019, targeting the age group of 20-29 years. Over 2 million doses of measles/rubella (MR) vaccine will be administered in polyclinics.

As a temporary measure Kazakhstan has also introduced a dose of measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccination at 9 months of age. The national routine immunization calendar includes MMR vaccination at 12 months and 6 years of age.

Kyrgyzstan

The measles outbreak in Kyrgyzstan has affected nearly 3000 people since July 2018. The number of cases is declining, with the lowest monthly total since August 2018 reported in June 2019 (38).

Approximately 50% of the measles cases in this outbreak have been among children under 1 year of age. As a precaution, Kyrgyzstan is considering temporary introduction of a dose of measles vaccination at 9 months of age.

Activities to identify and address underlying health system challenges are currently being developed by the Ministry of Health and partners to prevent future outbreaks. A working group has been established to review existing measles/rubella-related regulatory documents and to develop a measles action plan, which will include SIAs. In May 2019, WHO also organized an operational review of the response to the measles outbreak under International Health Regulations 2005 monitoring and evaluation framework (IHR MEF).

Regional resources:

- [Situation report #1: Measles in the European Region, July 2019](#)
- [WHO–UNICEF immunization coverage estimates, per country](#)
- [WHO European Region immunization profile](#)
- [WHO EpiData – monthly measles surveillance data reported to WHO by Member States](#)
- Progress toward measles elimination – European Region, 2009–2018. Zimmerman LA, Muscat M, Singh S, Ben Mamou M, Jankovic D, Datta S et al. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep. 2019;68(17):396–401. doi:10.15585/mmwr.mm6817a4.

Country-specific resources:

- [Global measles and rubella surveillance data – Country slides](#)
- [Measles and rubella elimination country profile – Israel \(2019\)](#)
- [Measles and rubella elimination country profile – Kazakhstan \(2019\)](#)
- [Measles and rubella elimination country profile – Kyrgyzstan \(2019\)](#)
- [Measles and rubella elimination country profile – Romania \(2019\)](#)
- [Measles and rubella elimination country profile – Serbia \(2019\)](#)
- [Measles and rubella elimination country profile – Ukraine \(2019\)](#)

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