Joint Live Statement for the 71\textsuperscript{st} Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe: European Immunization Agenda 2030: building better health for tomorrow

Distinguished colleagues, vaccines are one of the most effective public health interventions that prevent at least 2-3 million deaths from more than 20 life-threatening diseases every year.\textsuperscript{1} Immunization contributes to 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).\textsuperscript{2} As stated in the Immunization Agenda 2030, immunization is a vital component of global health security and ensures a world where people of all ages, especially vulnerable and at-risk populations such as older people, those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, and high-risk mothers and infants, fully benefit from vaccines to improve health and well-being, and prevent and control fatal infections.

With the disruptions caused to global healthcare systems by the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant decrease in routine immunization coverage in 2020\textsuperscript{iii} was noted in countries in this region. The introduction of new vaccines has also revealed vaccine hesitancy. From the perspective of the allergy patient, much hesitancy is linked to vaccine safety, especially with the risk of adverse reactions whether short or long term.

A life-course approach towards immunization must be seen through three key priorities: prevention and education, access, and equity. The European Vaccine Action Plan 2015-2020 (EVAP) provides a comprehensive and coherent framework to achieve goals and objectives.\textsuperscript{iv} While significant progress has been made, the Region is not on track to eliminate measles, and periodic outbreaks continue to occur. This is just one example, why protecting progress made in immunisation must be at the forefront of all governmental and civil society actions. Pan-European attention is required to ensure the region’s achievement of the WHO Cervical Cancer Elimination goal, including the targets for HPV vaccination.

The EVAP goals while falling short due to unprecedented circumstances demonstrate a commitment to population health through galvanized action on vaccination throughout life. Sustained success calls for strong partnerships with communities and civil society organizations (CSOs) for global advancement.

The undersigned call upon Member States in the Europe region to examine status and plan future immunization through:

Recommendations:

1. Prioritizing immunization as part of a people-centred public health plan through primary healthcare (PHC) as a central component of universal health coverage (UHC), as marked by the 2018 Astana Declaration.\textsuperscript{v}
2. Expanding current tailored vaccination strategies to address immunization gaps through identification of susceptible populations, removing barriers, and implementation of evidence-based interventions.
3. Improving uptake of new vaccines and reducing vaccine hesitancy and other barriers underpinned by the social determinants of health through the development and delivery of effective evidence-based public health messages as a policy lever.
4. Building on models developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, track, and report on country-by-country progress on vaccine uptake.
5. Integrating immunization with other services such as antenatal care, school-based vaccinations, and long-term care services to improve access.
6. Setting country-sensitive targets that are responsive to the local environment and priorities to provide realistic goals that reduce inequities towards achieving global targets.
This statement has been endorsed by the following Non-State Actors:

International Federation on Ageing (IFA)

International Confederation of Midwives (ICM)

International Diabetes Federation European Chapter (IDF Europe)

European Cancer Organisation

European Forum for Primary Care (EFPC)

European Federation of Allergy and Airways Diseases Patients’ Associations (EFA)

---


