



PURPOSE: For information  
CONCERNING: Health Security  
AUTHOR: CPME Secretariat/SD

CPME NUMBER: CPME 2013/093

DATE: 1 August 2013

## **Report on CPME/ECDC Conference on “Prevention through Childhood Vaccination - Defining Doctors’ Roles in the Stakeholder Debate”**

**Brussels, 4 May 2012**

Following an initial meeting between CPME and ECDC in December 2011, it was decided to organise a joint conference on the issue of "Prevention through Childhood Vaccination - Defining Doctors’ Roles in the Stakeholder Debate" which took place in Brussels on 4 May 2012 with approximately 80 participants, including representatives from ECDC, National Medical Associations, the European Commission, WHO-Europe and the European Patients’ Forum.

The event intended to capture doctors’ experiences and recommendations with a view to identifying challenges in achieving a better up-take of childhood vaccinations across Europe.

The event was opened by the co-hosts CPME President Dr Konstanty Radziwill and ECDC Director Dr Marc Sprenger. Dr Radziwill illustrated CPME’s commitment to the prevention of communicable diseases and the importance of doctors in informing parents’ decisions on childhood vaccinations. Dr Sprenger underlined the need to capitalise on the high-level political commitment for the eradication of measles in Europe by 2015 and welcomed the opportunity to discuss innovative approaches to achieving this aim. Dr Alberto Tozzi, epidemiologist and paediatrician at the Bambino Gesù Hospital Rome and representative to EVAG, gave a keynote address setting out the situation in Europe today, which sees an increase of outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases. He pointed to the evidence-base, which is among the most extensive of all pharmaceuticals, for the effectiveness and safety of childhood vaccinations and illustrated the rationale behind the target of 85 % population coverage for vaccinations with the concept of ‘herd immunity’.

The following interactive discussion was focussed around two panel sessions.

The first panel addressed approaches and challenges to reaching the WHO Europe target of eliminate measles in Europe by 2015 and feature representatives of the European Commission, WHO, Médecins du Monde and ECDC. Given the rise of measles outbreaks in Europe, it was debated which barriers remained to be tackled to reach the 2015 target, especially with regard to ‘hard-to-reach’ populations in various national contexts. With input from the audience, mainly consisting of CPME members, examples were provided from their national setting, i.a. describing the challenges and activities undertaken to reach vulnerable groups, such as Roma populations, but also urban populations with high socio-economic status, whose lifestyle and fear of vaccinations’ potential side-effects deters up-take. Also, it was discussed how a lack of first-hand experiences of occurrences of

vaccine-preventable diseases may influence the perception of the severity of not vaccinating children among both parents and doctors.

A second panel then looked at ways to improve communication to parents. Representatives of doctors in free practice, patients' organisations, WHO and academia discussed new approaches to communication. Following an introductory video on patients affected by vaccine-preventable diseases, the panel discussed the importance of high quality information reaching parents, especially with regard to online information sources. The role of doctors in reaching out to patients and implementing structured vaccination plans was identified as a crucial element.

The interactive discussion with the audience developed a set of valuable recommendations, including:

- Doctors should make use of every contact and reach out opportunity to the relevant groups to communicate the importance of childhood vaccinations
- Childhood vaccinations as well as vaccine-preventable diseases should be given a greater emphasis in medical training
- High quality, evidence-based information should be easily accessible and understandable for parents, including the highest ranking in Google
- Good practices on communicating with 'hard to reach' populations should be exchanges between the Member States, including experience with working with vulnerable groups

CPME and ECDC agreed that it would be highly desirable to take policy action on this set of recommendations forward with a view to repositioning the issue on the agendas at national level. Joint action between CPME, ECDC and WHO shall be explored where appropriate.

European doctors' reaffirmed their strong support for childhood vaccinations as a crucial tool in preventing ill health and look forward to taking this message to patients.

CPME and ECDC tweeted live from the event with the hashtag #EuropeDoctorsMeet. Please find a compilation of all tweets [here](#).

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**UP-DATE ON CPME ACTIVITIES IN THIS POLICY AREA**

Building on the conference's recommendation, the CPME Board adopted 'CPME Policy on Childhood Immunisation' on 27 April 2013. Please find the policy [here](#).

The article 'Doctors underline value of vaccination' by CPME Secretary General Ms Birgit Beger was published on [www.vaccinestoday.eu](http://www.vaccinestoday.eu) on 24 June 2013. Please find the article [here](#).

# Prevention through Childhood Vaccination - Defining Doctors' Roles in the Stakeholder Debate

4 May 2012 – 9.30h to 12.30h

International Auditorium, Boulevard Roi Albert II 5, Brussels [\(venue information\)](#)

To register please contact [shena.vigneswaran@cpme.eu](mailto:shena.vigneswaran@cpme.eu) by 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2012

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- 09.00**                    **Registration and welcome coffee**
- 09.30- 09.45**            **Opening Address**  
Dr Konstanty Radziwill, *President, CPME* and  
Dr Marc Sprenger, *Director ECDC*
- 09.45-10.00**            **The issue of childhood vaccination in Europe**  
Dr Alberto Tozzi, *Bambino Gesù Hospital Rome*
- Panel debates with questions & answers session**
- 10.00-11.00**            **Session 1 - What needs to be done to eliminate measles in Europe by 2015?**
- Co-chairs:                Dr Konstanty Radziwill and Dr Marc Sprenger
- In the panel:            Dr Antoon Gijsens, *Policy Officer Unit Health Threats, DG Health and Consumers*  
Dr Pier Luigi Lopalco, *Head of Vaccine Preventable Diseases Programme, ECDC*  
Mr Robb Butler, *Communicable Diseases Unit, WHO Regional Office Europe*  
Dr Rémi Laporte, *Médecins du Monde (Mdm)*
- 11.00-11.30**            **Coffee break**
- 11.30-12.20**            **Session 2 - How can we better inform parents of the benefits of childhood vaccination? Example: MMR vaccination**
- Co-chairs:                Dr Katrín Fjeldsted, *CPME Rapporteur on Health Security* and  
Dr Pierluigi Lopalco, *Head of Vaccine Preventable Diseases Programme ECDC*
- In the panel:            Mr Robb Butler, *Communicable Diseases Unit, WHO Regional Office Europe*  
Dr Jörg Pruckner, *President, European Working Group of Practitioners and Specialists in Free Practice*  
Dr Alberto Tozzi, *Bambino Gesù Hospital Rome*  
Ms Laurène Souchet, *Policy Officer, European Patients Forum (EPF)*
- 12.20-12.30**            **Closing Address - Dr Marc Sprenger**