



# **Vaccination Programmes targeting newly arrived migrants in the Mediterranean Basin and Black Sea**

## **Greece**

**Workshop “Vaccine Preventable Diseases in the Mediterranean Basin and Black Sea: immunization strategies and coverage in the general population and the newly arrived migrants - the ProVacMed network”**

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## Greece: Overview

- Total arrivals in Greece (in 2015): **856,723**
- Total arrivals in Greece (in 2016): **157,119**
- Average daily arrivals during May 2016: **47**
- Implemented transfers up to 22<sup>nd</sup> of May: **973**
- Approx. **57.000** refugees/migrants in Greece
- **49% Syria, 25% Afghanistan**, 15% Iraq, 4% Pakistan
- **38% children**, 21% women, 40% men
- Approx. **50 refugee/migrant reception centres** across the country

Source: UNHCR

## Immunization strategies targeting newly arrived refugees/migrants

- Before border closure between FYROM and Greece in early March 2016 there was no vaccination plan due to large numbers and “people on the move” status
- After border closure: Prospect of medium/long-term stay in Greece
- Vaccination of children in refugee/migrant reception centres with basic vaccines is now an important priority

## Vaccination coverage and risk assessment

- Vaccination coverage in the countries of origin of refugees/migrants is low (in 2014 **43%** of infants in Syria received **DTP3**, **52% Polio3** - source WHO-UNICEF)
- ECDC: risk of **measles, diphtheria** and **polio**
- Systematic risk assessment of VPD according to WHO guidelines: **measles, diphtheria, polio, *haemophilus influenzae* type b infection** and **pneumococcal infection**
- Recommendations issued by the **National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC)** in Greece regarding priority vaccination for refugees, asylum-seekers and immigrants

## Plan of vaccination campaign (VC)

- Vaccination with **priority vaccines** of **children aged 0 to <15 years**
- Flexible organisation of VC at the reception centre level
- Planned and carried out by the Organisations (National Health System, NGOs) which are medically active in each reception centre; coordination of the MoH and respective Regional Health Authority
- International and national guidelines concerning mass vaccination

## Priority vaccines

- **Measles-mumps-rubella vaccine (MMR)** for children aged 12 months to <15 years (2 doses)
- **Bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccine (BCG)** for children 0 to <4 months of age.
- **Hexavalent vaccine (DTaP-IPV-Hib-HepB)** for children aged 2 months to <7 years (3 doses)
- **Tetavalent adult type vaccine (Tdap-IPV)** for children and adolescents aged 7 to <15 years (3 doses)
- **Pneumococccal conjugate vaccine (PCV)** for children aged 2 months to <2 years (2 to <12 months: 3 doses; 12 to <24 months: 2 doses)

## Plan of vaccination campaign

- For most reception centres the VC will start with **MMR** (which is currently available)
- WHO vaccination card
- Previous information of the population in the reception centres through cultural mediators
- Following the mass VC, all children will complete their immunisation according to national immunisation programme as part of routine primary health care

## MSF vaccination campaign at Idomeni camp (near the Greece-FYROM border)

- Doctors Without Borders (MSF) vaccinated **more than 3,000 refugee children** who were at the **Idomeni camp**, (11-14/05/2016)
- From 6 months to 16 years old
- Children were vaccinated against ten diseases: **Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Haemophilus influenza, Hepatitis B, Polio and Pneumococcus.**
- The initiative was organized in support of and with coordination from the Greek authorities but MSF fully financed the programme.
- Major undertaking with great acceptance



## Challenges and lessons learned

- There is no previous experience in children mass vaccination in Greece
- Challenge of effective coordination and cooperation between NGO's and National Health System.
- Quick procurement of vaccines
- New administrative procedures
- Situation constantly changing