1.1. Workshop: Vaccinating Europe: challenges old and new

Organised by: EUPHA (IDC)
Chairs: Michael Edelstein, UK, Maria Ganczak, Poland
Contact: michael.edelstein@doctors.org.uk

Vaccines are among the most successful and effective public health interventions, saving two to three million lives each year globally. In 2017, 86% of children across the world have received their primary immunisations, the highest proportion ever achieved. Although vaccine coverage in the European region is generally high compared with other parts of the world, some new challenges have emerged. Highly mobile populations, difficulties in achieving or maintaining high vaccine coverage in routine vaccination programme, under immunised ethnic, religious or cultural minority groups, healthcare reorganisations, lack of funding and an increasingly visible and vocal anti-vaccination movement are all challenges to achieving herd immunity for vaccine-preventable diseases across Europe, resulting in outbreaks, disease and even death. This 90 minutes workshop, organised around 5 talks presenting perspectives from different parts of Europe followed by discussion, will explore some of these global, regional and local challenges, providing some insight into how they can be overcome in order to protect populations in Europe. The objectives of the workshop are to raise awareness of these emerging challenges across Europe and to provide suggestions about how to address them. The first presentation from the Vaccine confidence project (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) will set the global vaccine hesitancy landscape as the phenomenon is not limited to Europe. This will be followed by a presentation by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control about its role in addressing vaccine hesitancy in Europe. Then, Public Health England will present results of a longitudinal “attitudes to vaccine” survey they have been conducting for several decades, providing some very useful insights into factors associated with positive attitudes towards vaccination. The last two presentations will describe some of the consequences of the challenges described above: first in Romania where a large measles outbreak has affected thousands and killed young, previously health individuals; and second, in Denmark where a powerful anti-vaccination movement has brought the HPV vaccine programme to a virtual halt. Speakers from these respective countries will reflect on these experiences and share their approach to addressing the situation.

Key messages:
- Achieving and maintaining high vaccine coverage in Europe is a challenge with complex, inter-related causes. Attitudes towards vaccines is a major factor.
- Providing tailored information to patients using the right channels and training healthcare professionals to address questions about vaccines are crucial in addressing this challenge.