

**Issue 2/2024**

# **WHO Public Health Report**

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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## STATEMENT – "I WISH FOR...": THE HOPES OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV STRENGTHEN OUR COMMITMENT TO #ENDAIDS

Statement by Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe



*“My professional involvement with HIV goes back 30 years, to 1994, when I joined MSF-Belgium working on TB and HIV in Somalia. The world was a very different place; an HIV diagnosis was practically a death sentence, getting tested was a lengthy ordeal and treatment options were scarce.*

*Much of the progress we could only dream about back then has become reality, such as highly effective treatment that reduces the HIV virus in the blood to a point where it is undetectable and cannot be transmitted to others. We have multiple means of prevention and rapid testing. From a medical point of view, HIV has simply become a chronic disease. People with HIV can live long, healthy lives. But a significant block remains. HIV stigma and discrimination are still taking a toll, preventing people from getting tested and treated.*

*When it comes to optimal health outcomes, I am a firm believer that people and communities must be in the driving seat alongside health authorities and providers – this is a key principle that cuts across the European Programme of Work, guiding everything WHO/Europe does, including our efforts to #EndAIDS. In the spirit of this, we reached out to a number of people living with HIV in the WHO European Region and asked them to make a wish for 2024, which we have shared widely via WHO/Europe social media accounts.*

*These wishes – representing a range of countries and cultures - combine into a powerful expression of hope, for access to treatment for everyone, for freedom from the fear of rejection and humiliation, for everyone to be respected and supported.*

*Stigma and discrimination have no place in healthcare. Isolation and exclusion do not stop epidemics – engagement and trust do. In this day and age, no-one in the WHO European Region’s 53 Member States should be developing AIDS, let alone dying of it.*

*In addition to thanking the people who lent their voices to this campaign, I would like to express my commitment, alongside my colleagues at WHO/Europe, to striving for the best state of health, and freedom from stigma, for everyone living with HIV and continuing to pursue the ultimate goal of ending AIDS.”*

## RAPID MEASLES OUTBREAK RESPONSE CRITICAL TO PROTECT MILLIONS OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN

2023 saw a sharp increase in measles cases in the European Region, putting millions at risk



Updated data from 2023 are driving home the urgency of a swift and concerted response to measles outbreaks in the WHO European Region, underpinned by the need to protect everyone who remains vulnerable to the disease.

Last year, more than 58 000 people in 41 of the 53 Member States in the Region were infected with measles, resulting in thousands of hospitalizations and 10 measles-related deaths.

The latest numbers from 2023 represent a rapid increase compared to the previous three years, and a risk for anyone in the Region who is not protected. Sustained efforts are clearly needed to prevent measles cases from continuing to rise in 2024.

The high proportion (nearly half) of cases among children below 5 years of age reflects, once again, the enormous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health systems, including routine immunization services. This has resulted in a significant accumulation of susceptible children who have missed their routine vaccinations against measles and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

*“Health systems in the WHO European Region have some catching up to do to rapidly reach the 1.2 million children who missed their measles vaccine between 2020 and 2022 while continuing with routine immunization,”* noted Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe.

While 33 Member States have eliminated measles as of 2022, this achievement remains fragile. To retain this status, a country must ensure that transmission of the virus following any importation is stopped within 12 months from the first reported case.

Having adopted the European Immunization Agenda 2030, all countries in the Region need to:

- ✓ achieve and sustain over 95% coverage in every community with both doses of measles-containing vaccine, including by offering catch-up vaccination to those who have missed either of the vaccine doses;
- ✓ ensure high-quality surveillance to quickly detect and isolate any possible cases; and
- ✓ ensure rapid outbreak response in all communities.

[What you need to know about measles](#)

More on this: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/22-02-2024-rapid-measles-outbreak-response-critical-to-protect-millions-of-vulnerable-children>

## WHO/EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO BOLSTER COOPERATION



A long-standing partnership on issues as varied as climate change, digital health, antimicrobial resistance and the health and care workforce, all firmly based on mutual goals of improved public health in Europe, is about to become even stronger.

The agenda was packed when European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Ms Stella Kyriakides, the European Commission's Director-General for Health and Food Safety Ms Sandra Gallina, and WHO Regional Director for Europe Dr Hans

Henri P. Kluge met, along with their respective teams, on 1 February 2024 in Brussels, Belgium. Together they reflected on further strengthening their strategic collaboration in light of current key issues in public health.

### Increasingly aligned goals

The meeting saw agreements on closer partnership in priority areas of shared interest, including security against health emergencies and threats; accessible, resilient and innovative health systems; a comprehensive response to noncommunicable diseases with a particular focus on cancer; and cooperation with non-European Union (EU) countries in the WHO European Region, including Member States seeking EU accession, which WHO can assist with aligning national legislation and advancing health reforms.

*“In our current complex geopolitical environment, it is even more important to count on a robust multilateral health governance. WHO/Europe is an important strategic partner for the European Commission and, together, we are tackling issues of regional and global concern to improve citizens’ lives,”* said Commissioner Kyriakides.

### Growing financial cooperation due to mutual interests

The collaboration between WHO/Europe and the EU is more than just political and technical; it has also translated into growing financial cooperation, with the EU and its Member States top contributors to WHO/Europe.

*“The European Commission is our main partner,”* explained Dr Kluge. *“More important than financial support are the shared values that drive our collaboration. This strategic dialogue is a great opportunity to take stock of our joint work on all these fronts, to discuss the key outcomes of our partnership, but also to agree on areas and directions where we need to accelerate or scale up our cooperation.”*

More on this: <https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/06-02-2024-who-europe-and-the-european-commission-to-bolster-cooperation>

## AIR POLLUTION: DEAL WITH COUNCIL TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY



The new European Union directive aims to reduce air pollution in the EU to achieve a clean and healthy environment for citizens as well as zero air pollution by 2050.

On 20 February 2024, negotiators from the Parliament and Council reached a provisional political agreement on new measures to ensure air quality in the EU is not harmful to human health, natural ecosystems and biodiversity with the aim to eliminate air pollution by 2050.

### Stricter air quality standards and targets

The new rules set stricter 2030 limits and target values, compared to current rules, for several pollutants including particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub>), NO<sub>2</sub> (nitrogen dioxide) and SO<sub>2</sub> (sulphur dioxide). For the two pollutants with the highest documented impact on human health, PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub>, the annual limit values are to be more than halved from 25 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 10 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and from 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> to 20 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, respectively. There will also be more air quality sampling points in cities. The air quality standards shall be reviewed by 31 December 2030 and at least every five year thereafter and more often if clear from new scientific findings, such as revised [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Air Quality Guidelines](#).

It will be possible for member states to request that the 2030 deadline to attain the air quality limit values be postponed by up to ten years, if specific conditions are met, including when the necessary reductions can only be achieved by replacing a considerable part of the existing domestic heating systems causing the pollution exceedances.

More on this: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20240219IPR17816/air-pollution-deal-with-council-to-improve-air-quality>

## NEW SERIES HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE POSTNATAL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL WOMEN AND NEWBORNS



The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations' Special Programme on Human Reproduction (HRP) have launched a new series on maternal and newborn care for a positive postnatal care experience in [BMJ Global Health](#) with six articles presenting evidence on the importance of understanding women's, parents' and health workers' perspectives and a rights-based approach to strengthen quality postnatal care, for every woman and newborn, everywhere.

The series of papers supports the [WHO recommendations on maternal and newborn care for a positive postnatal care experience](#). This includes provision of essential care that all women and newborns need following pregnancy including how to identify anything requiring additional care, and how to connect those in need of services. Follow-up care includes postnatal check-ups six weeks following delivery that promote a healthy lifestyle with good nutrition, detecting and preventing diseases, and ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health including postpartum family planning are key to quality postnatal care.

The first paper in the series, [Stakeholder's perspectives of postnatal discharge: a qualitative evidence synthesis](#), highlights the critical opportunity when a patient is discharged to ensure that women, parents, and newborns receive support for the transition from the health facility to care in the home following birth. Women and midwives expressed frustration at the lack of time and resources available for ensuring adequate quality of care prior to discharge. The physical, emotional and social needs of women and families must be considered during this process, as recommended in the latest WHO postnatal care recommendations.

This series follows the publication of a [Lancet Global Health and eClinicalMedicine Series](#) on maternal health during the perinatal period and beyond, which calls for a holistic approach to maternal and newborn health, with the evidence that pregnancy and childbirth are not a single health event that occur in isolation. Instead, maternal health is interlinked to a person's environment and their experiences before, during and after pregnancy.

More on this: <https://www.who.int/news/item/22-02-2024-new-series-highlights-importance-positive-postnatal-experience-all-women-newborns>

## WHO RELEASES NEW GUIDANCE ON MONITORING THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH EQUITY

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released an operational framework for monitoring social determinants of health equity and actions addressing them. This critical new guidance aims to support countries in evidence-based policymaking to improve health equity, towards the goal of enabling everyone, everywhere, to attain the highest possible standard of health and well-being.

The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, and people's access to power, money and resources – also called the social determinants of health – affect their health and well-being. These same factors drive health inequity within and across countries. Recent and ongoing crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and conflict across the world, further exacerbate inequities and highlight the urgent need for governments to rebuild societies in ways that benefit everyone.

Nearly two decades ago, WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health set out an agenda to support countries in addressing social determinants of health. Despite high-level commitments by many governments, progress in implementing the Commission's recommendations remains insufficient.

The recently launched operational framework reviews previous research and work on the topic; offers a menu of indicators; indicates a step-by-step process for technical monitoring; and describes how to use data to inform policy for health equity at national and subnational levels. Along with the forthcoming world report on social determinants of health equity, the operational framework spearheads renewed efforts to address the social determinants of health.

[Operational framework for monitoring social determinants of health equity](#)

More on this: <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-02-2024-who-releases-new-guidance-on-monitoring-the-social-determinants-of-health-equity>



## WHO PUBLISHES THE WHO MEDICALLY IMPORTANT ANTIMICROBIALS LIST FOR HUMAN MEDICINE



The responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials needs to be improved in all sectors – human, animal, plant/crop, and environment – to preserve their public health benefits. In particular, antimicrobials that are important for human medicine need to be preserved by reducing their use in the non-human sectors. The WHO list of medically important antimicrobials for human medicine (WHO MIA List) is a risk management tool that can be used to support decision-making to minimize the impact of antimicrobial use in non-human sectors on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in humans. The WHO MIA List is created to guide international, national, and subnational (local, state, provincial) antimicrobial stewardship efforts. It complements the WHO AWaRe (Access, Watch, Reserve) framework and antibiotic book which provide guidance on appropriate use of essential antibiotics within the human health sector.

The list categorizes antimicrobial classes based on their importance for human medicine and according to the AMR risk and potential human health implications of their use in non-human sectors: critically important, highly important, and important to human medicine. The publication is intended to serve as a reference tool to support decision-making by national regulators and policymakers in ministries of health and agriculture, authorities responsible for regulating, monitoring, and assuring the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials, and professional prescribers in different sectors.

AMR remains one of the top global public health threats facing humanity and was associated with the death of close to 5 million people globally in 2019. AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites change over time and no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness, and death. As a result, antimicrobial medicines become ineffective and infections persist in the body, increasing the risk of transmission to others.

[The WHO MIA List](#)

More on this at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/08-02-2024-who-medically-important-antimicrobial-list-2024>

## WHO REPORTS OUTLINE RESPONSES TO CYBER-ATTACKS ON HEALTH CARE AND THE RISE OF DISINFORMATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

While digital tools have brought new opportunities to enhance health and well-being, they have also created new health security risks, such as cyber-attacks on health care and disinformation. To provide a clearer understanding of these risks and to reduce their likelihood and severity, WHO produced two reports, in collaboration with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Office of Counter-terrorism (UNOCT), the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC), the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), and the CyberPeace Institute.

Published on 26 January 2024, the two reports identify ways to strengthen health security through operational solutions.

The first report, [Examining the threat of cyber-attack on health care during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) highlights the far-reaching real-life impacts of cyber-attacks on health care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, health information technology (IT) infrastructure was increasingly targeted by cyber-attacks, at times hindering hospitals from delivering timely care when it was needed most. To restore IT systems and retrieve stolen data, health care facilities paid substantial ransoms. These attacks prompted law enforcement agencies to issue warnings about the threat of cyber-attacks to the health sector.

The second report, [Understanding disinformation in the context of public health emergencies: the case of COVID-19](#), reflects on different approaches to counter disinformation. Disinformation, unlike misinformation, is created with malicious intent to sow discord, disharmony, and mistrust in targets such as government agencies, scientific experts, public health agencies, private sector, and law enforcement. In other words, disinformation is a weaponization of information.

Understanding infectious disease disinformation history and its intersection with public health over time is crucial to formulate effective solutions to counter disinformation. The reports justify the critical need to build multisectoral alliances that can harness the benefits of new technologies for improved health and well-being while facing constantly emerging threats.

More on this at: <https://www.who.int/news/item/06-02-2024-who-reports-outline-responses-to-cyber-attacks-on-health-care-and-the-rise-of-disinformation-in-public-health-emergencies>

## WHO EMERGENCIES

### Health emergencies list

The health emergencies list details the disease outbreaks, disasters and humanitarian crises where WHO plays an essential role in supporting countries to respond to and recover from emergencies with public health consequences.

[Conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory](#)

[Armenia refugee response](#)

[Climate crisis: extreme weather](#)

[Türkiye and Syria earthquakes](#)

[Monkeypox](#)

[Ukraine emergency](#)

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

[Syrian crisis: WHO's response in and from Turkey](#)

[Ukraine's humanitarian crisis 2014-2022](#)

[Measles emergency in the European region](#)

[Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus \(MERS-CoV\) and the risk to Europe](#)

## WHO CAMPAIGNS

### **World Hearing Day 2024;** 3 March 2024

World Hearing Day 2024 will focus on overcoming the challenges posed by societal misperceptions and stigmatizing mindsets through awareness-raising and information-sharing, targeted at the public and health care providers.

[#worldhearingday](#)

### **World Tuberculosis Day 2024;** 24 March 2024

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day continues with the theme “Yes! We can end TB”. TB is still one of the world’s deadliest diseases and recent years have seen a worrying increase in drug-resistant TB.

World TB Day is an opportunity to renew commitment, inspire and take action to end TB. Following the United Nations High-level Meeting on TB in September 2023, WHO/Europe is encouraging:

- investment
- the uptake of the latest WHO recommendations
- adoption of innovations
- involvement of civil society organizations

More information: <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-tb-day/2024>

## WHO PUBLICATIONS

### Examining the threat of cyber-attacks on health care during the COVID-19 pandemic

The aim of this report is to present the evolving threat of cyber-attacks, in particular ransomware, describe the associated risks of ransomware attacks on health-care delivery, and offer ways for assessing the risk of cyber-attacks on health systems as part of preparedness and resilience in anticipation of such deliberate events (DEs).

The report can be found at: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/375831/WER9904-25-37.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

### Understanding disinformation in the context of public health emergencies: the case of COVID-19

This analysis demonstrates that disinformation is a deliberate digital event that can have physical, or “real-world” consequences during a public health crisis and suggests considerations to support the resilience of Member States and the global community.

The report can be found at: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/375832/WER9904-38-48.pdf>

### Operational framework for monitoring social determinants of health equity



Social determinants of health – broadly defined as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, and people’s access to power, money and resources – have a powerful influence on health inequities. In 2021, the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA74.16 on addressing social determinants of health, which encouraged Member States to integrate social determinants of health into public policies and programmes and adopt multisectoral approaches. This *Operational framework for monitoring social determinants of health equity* provides countries with critical guidance on monitoring the social determinants of health and actions addressing them, and using data for policy action across sectors to improve health equity. The publication is meant as a resource for national governments and their partners.

Full report at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240088320>

### European Contraception Policy Atlas 2024

The Atlas scores 47 countries in access to contraception in terms of online information, funding and counselling. In 2024, the best-performing countries are Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, France and Belgium, followed by Ireland and Slovenia. In these countries, there has been major progress in terms of contraception policies. European countries that are at the bottom of the list include Poland, Hungary and Armenia.

Full document at: <https://www.epfweb.org/node/1042>

### Global status report on road safety 2023

The *Global status report on road safety 2023* shows that the number of annual road traffic deaths has fallen slightly to 1.19 million. The report shows that efforts to improve road safety are having an impact, and that significant reductions in road traffic deaths can be made if proven measures are applied. Despite this, the price paid for mobility remains too



high. Road traffic injuries remain the leading killer of children and young people aged 5-29 years. More than half of fatalities occur among pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, in particular those living in low and middle-income countries. Urgent action is needed if the global goal of at least halving road traffic deaths and injuries by the year 2030 is to be achieved.

Full report at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240086517>

## WHO UPCOMING EVENTS

### **WHO Webinar: WHO's Adoption of the SAGER guidelines;** 4 March 2024, 2:00 pm CET

Join us for an online event as WHO proudly announces the adoption of SAGER [Sex and Gender Equality in Research] guidelines. Be a part of this ground-breaking moment as we work towards healthier and more gender equal and equitable future.

Register here: [https://who.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_aATNbX09TWKQzrr4Kx1HnA#/registration](https://who.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aATNbX09TWKQzrr4Kx1HnA#/registration)

### **Global webinar series on post COVID-19 condition;** (28 February 2024, 4:00 pm CET/1 March 2024, 4:00 am CET)

The Clinical Management and Operations Unit of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme supports a webinar program on post-COVID-19 condition (also referred to as long COVID). The series aims to disseminate evidence-based clinical guidance and build the capacity of clinicians globally to identify, diagnose, and treat patients with long COVID. This initiative is run by the ECHO Institute, a WHO Collaborating Centre for Digital Learning in Health Emergencies, and is supported by a grant from the Schmidt Initiative for long COVID.

This global monthly ECHO webinar series offers presentations by subject matter experts, examples of emerging best practices and models of care, and a facilitated Q&A.

More information is available on: <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2024/02/28/default-calendar/strategies-for-long-covid-symptom-management>

[Register here](#)

### **European Immunization Week 2024;** 21-27 April 2024

The WHO European Region celebrates European Immunization Week (EIW) to promote awareness of the importance of immunization in preventing diseases and protecting life. This year's campaign aims to improve equitable vaccine uptake in the context of the European Immunization Agenda 2030 and address the repercussions of the decrease in vaccination rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

EIW will underscore the critical role of immunization in preventing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases arising from missed vaccinations. This year's EIW holds special significance as it coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI). Commemorating this milestone, the campaign will not only emphasize the urgent need to address vaccination coverage gaps but also serve as a platform to celebrate the remarkable achievements of the EPI over the past 5 decades.

Building upon recent and established partnerships, this year's activities will further leverage collaborative initiatives with young professionals and youth organizations dedicated to promoting immunizations.

More information is available on: <https://www.who.int/europe/news-room/events/item/2024/04/21/default-calendar/european-immunization-week-2024>

## WHO VIDEOS

### **Pandemic Accord Explained with Steven Solomon**

Steven Solomon, WHO's Principal Legal Officer, unpacks the pandemic accord. The accord, being developed by countries, can be a game-changer in pandemic prevention and preparedness. Steven also clarifies the misinformation around the accord.

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xs82LMIJ6hE>

More information on: [Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response accord](#)

Also, check out our official video channel on YouTube for the latest video news on our work from around the globe:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/who/playlists>.

## WHO PODCASTS

### **Outbreak Alert: Understanding the Measles Surge**

There is an alarming resurgence of measles. In the WHO European Region, a startling uptick has been observed, with now over 50,000 cases reported across 41 Member States during 2023. This is a staggering increase from the 941 cases recorded throughout 2022, marking a more than fiftyfold escalation. In a Region in which 33 countries are considered to have eliminated measles what are the reasons behind this surge in measles cases and what strategies are we exploring for curbing the spread of this virus. Joining us for discussion is Robb Butler, the Director of Communicable Diseases, Environment and Health at the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe.

Podcast available on: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1109867/14560988-outbreak-alert-understanding-the-measles-surge>

More information available on: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/measles>



## SOURCES

- <https://www.who.int/>
- <https://www.un.org/en/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/c/whoregionalofficeforeurope>
- <https://monkeypoxreport.ecdc.europa.eu/>
- <https://www.bmj.com/company/>

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