



ÖGHMP

Österreichische Gesellschaft
für Hygiene, Mikrobiologie
und Präventivmedizin

*sektion für hygiene und
medizinische mikrobiologie*



**MEDIZINISCHE
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INNSBRUCK

Meeting of National Verification Committees for Measles and Rubella in German-speaking Countries

12- 13 January 2017, Innsbruck, Austria

Scope and Purpose

Background

The Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVC) was established by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in 2012 as an independent expert body with the mission of evaluating the documentation submitted by National Verification Committees for Measles and Rubella Elimination (NVC) to verify the elimination of measles and rubella in the Region. The Regional Office's Vaccine-preventable Diseases and Immunization Programme (VPI) serves as the secretariat to the RVC. The RVC meets annually to determine the status of measles and rubella elimination in the WHO European Region based on annual status update reports submitted by the NVCs. In this context, the RVC advises NVCs on the process for collecting and analyzing data for verification in the country.

Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland not only share a common language but also have similar practices in surveillance and immunization data collection and reporting as well as public attitudes towards vaccination. This applies also to neighbouring Liechtenstein and South Tyrol in Italy. Indeed, with the exception of Luxembourg, German-speaking countries also face challenges in eliminating these diseases.

Aim of the meeting

The main objectives of this meeting are to exchange experiences of the verification process between NVCs of German-speaking countries and discuss ways to:

1. adequately document the evidence needed to verify interruption of endemic transmission of these diseases and
2. to explore possibilities of close collaboration between the NVCs.

The meeting participants will also discuss challenges and share good practices in addressing vaccine hesitancy through communication and advocacy.

This meeting is a collaborative effort of the NVCs of German-speaking countries (Austria, Luxembourg, Germany and Switzerland). The Chair of the Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella will be participating at this meeting. The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe is co-financing the meeting which is gladly being hosted by the Division of Hygiene and Medical Microbiology of the Medical University of Innsbruck, Austria. The Austrian Society for Hygiene, Microbiology and Preventive Medicine (ÖGHMP) will also financially support the meeting.

Structure of the meeting

To achieve these objectives, the following country representatives will be invited:

- the chairperson and members of the NVCs of Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland,
- key person(s) who directly support the completion of the Annual Status Update reports,
- key persons working in these fields in Liechtenstein and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano (South Tyrol).

The first day will be structured as plenary sessions to inform about and discuss the regional verification process, the current epidemiological status and the organization and function of the National Committee for Measles and Rubella. NVCs' presentations may be based on a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) to allow in-depth discussion.

For the second day, additional key persons involved in public health aspects of measles and rubella elimination will be invited to participate at a workshop. Given the importance of communication and advocacy as a way to deal with vaccine hesitancy the workshop will include a group work session on this topic. The results from the group work will then be discussed in plenary.

An exhibition will be set up to serve as a basis for sharing communication material and ideas and suggested actions for European Immunization Week 2017, which will take place 23-29 April 2017. Participants are encouraged to bring their exhibits, such as communication material, posters and brochures along with their ideas to be shared during the exhibition.

Dr Günter Pfaff

Vorsitzender, Regionale
Verifizierungskommission für die Eliminierung
von Masern und Röteln

Dr Peter Kreidl

Senior Expert Public Health
Medizinische Universität Innsbruck