

This weekly bulletin provides updates on threats monitored by ECDC.

I. Executive summary

EU Threats

Dengue - Portugal - Madeira outbreak

Opening date: 10 October 2012

Latest update: 8 November 2012

On 3 October 2012, the public health authorities of Portugal reported two cases of autochthonous dengue infection in patients residing in the Autonomous Region of Madeira. This signalled the onset of the first recorded outbreak of dengue in Madeira. The outbreak has not yet reached its peak and more cases are expected both in the resident population and in returning tourists. The presence of the *Aedes aegypti* vector in Madeira has been documented since 2005. It is as yet too early to predict if dengue will become endemic to Madeira.

→Update of the week

As of 4 November 2012, there are 1 148 reported cases of dengue fever of which 517 are laboratory confirmed. Nineteen cases of dengue were reported among returning European travellers from the island.

Malaria - Greece - 2012

Opening date: 31 May 2012

Latest update: 28 September 2012

Since June 2012, 16 autochthonous cases of malaria, caused by *Plasmodium vivax* infection, have been reported from Greece. Local control measures have been implemented in accordance with national guidelines.

→Update of the week

No new cases have been reported since the last CDTR.

West Nile virus - Multistate (Europe) - Monitoring season 2012

Opening date: 21 June 2012

Latest update: 26 October 2012

West Nile fever (WNF) is a mosquito-borne disease causing severe neurological symptoms in a small proportion of infected people. During the transmission season (between June and November), ECDC monitors the situation in EU Member States and in neighbouring countries in order to identify significant changes in the epidemiology of the disease. In 2011, 130 probable and confirmed cases of WNF were reported from EU Member States and 207 cases in neighbouring countries. The 2012 transmission season is ongoing, with 235 probable and confirmed cases reported in the EU, and 582 cases in neighbouring countries so far.

→Update of the week

During 1-8 November Italy reported three new WNF cases: one case in previously affected Pordenone; one case in each of the newly affected provinces of Udine and Matera. Tunisia reported, through **EpiSouth**, 10 new cases including three from the newly affected governorates of Bizerte (Bizerte and Menzel Bourguiba municipalities) and Sousse (Sousse municipality). These cases were included in the WNF maps published on the ECDC website on 5 November.

In addition, there are media reports of up to 20 cases of WNF in the Ukraine, mainly from Poltavs'ka and Donets'ka oblasts; 12 cases from Poltavs'ka oblast have been confirmed by official sources.

Measles - Multistate (EU) - Monitoring European outbreaks

Opening date: 9 February 2011

Latest update: 22 October 2012

Measles, a highly transmissible vaccine-preventable disease, is still endemic in many countries of Europe due to a decrease in the uptake of immunisation. More than 30 000 cases were reported in EU Member States in each of the last two years. However, the number of outbreaks and reported cases in Member States so far in 2012 are significantly lower than during 2010 and 2011. As of 31 August, 5 360 cases of measles were reported to The European Surveillance System in 2012. France, Italy, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom accounted for 92% of the reported cases.

→Update of the week

There were no outbreaks detected since the last update.

Rubella - Multistate (EU) - Monitoring European outbreaks

Opening date: 7 March 2012

Latest update: 19 September 2012

Rubella, caused by the rubella virus and commonly known as German measles, is usually a mild and self-limiting disease and infection which often passes unnoticed. The main reason for immunising against rubella is the high risk of congenital malformations associated with rubella infection during pregnancy. All EU Member States recommend vaccination against rubella with at least two doses of vaccine for both boys and girls. The vaccine is given at the same intervals as the measles vaccine as part of the MMR vaccine.

→Update of the week

No new outbreaks were detected in EU Member States during the past week.

Salmonella Stanley - Multistate(EU) - 2012 outbreak

Opening date: 19 July 2012

Latest update: 20 August 2012

On 9 July, Belgium reported an outbreak of *Salmonella enterica* serovar Stanley (*S. Stanley*) through the Epidemic Intelligence Information System for food and water borne diseases (EPIS/FWD). Subsequently, Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Greece, Hungary, Slovak Republic, Sweden, and the United Kingdom () reported cases of *S. Stanley* sharing the same PFGE pattern as the Belgian outbreak strain. The descriptive epidemiology indicates transmission from a persistent common source or multiple sources in the EU. Contamination early in the production chain of a widely distributed food item is a likely scenario. Food and veterinary investigations are ongoing in Member States and at EU level to identify the source of the outbreak.

→Update of the week

No new relevant updates were detected between 1 and 8 November.

Influenza - Multistate (Europe) - Monitoring 2012-2013 season

Opening date: 2 December 2011

Latest update: 24 May 2012

Following the 2009 pandemic, influenza transmission in Europe has returned to its seasonal epidemic pattern with peaks seen during winter months. ECDC monitors influenza activity in Europe during the winter seasons and publishes the results on its website in the Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview.

→Update of the week

During week 44/2012, all 26 reporting countries experienced low intensity of clinical influenza activity.

Malaria - Greece - 2012

Opening date: 31 May 2012

Latest update: 28 September 2012

Epidemiological summary

Since 22 June 2012, Greece has reported 16 cases of malaria so far this year due to *Plasmodium Vivax* infection in patients who did not have a history of travel to endemic areas. Eight of the autochthonous cases are residents in Laconia, four in Attica, two in Karditsa and one in Xanti and Viotia each. Fifty-nine cases are reported as imported in 2012. All these cases are *Plasmodium vivax* infections as well.

According to the Greek authorities, active screening of neighbours and seasonal immigrants is being carried out to detect malarial infection, and vector control measures are being implemented.

Autochthonous transmission of malaria was reported from Greece in 2011 as well. Between 21 May and 9 December 2011, 63 cases of *P. vivax* infection were reported, of whom 33 were affecting Greek citizens without travel history to an endemic country. The main affected area was Evrotas, located in the district of Lakonia in Peloponnese, southern Greece. Cases were also reported from the municipalities of Attica, Evoia, Viotia and Larissa. In addition, 30 cases of *P. vivax* infection in migrant workers were reported from the area of Evrotas.

Web sources: [KEELPNO malaria page](#) | [ECDC Epidemiological update: Local case of malaria in Greece](#) | [Eurosurveillance autochthonous Plasmodium vivax malaria Greece 2011](#)

ECDC assessment

The Marathon and Evrotas areas are environments well suited for malaria transmission, combining humid zones and intensive agricultural activities. Climatic conditions are now considered favourable for local vector development. Frequent migration and travel patterns from endemic areas of the world provide opportunities for introduction of the parasite into the area. Also in 2011 autochthonous cases occurred in these locations.

Actions

ECDC has been requested to provide technical support to the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention and is in close communication with them to see where this can best be provided. Greece is currently implementing a "Strategic work programme for malaria control in Greece 2012-2015".

A joint ECDC-WHO mission is currently in Greece to assess the malaria and West Nile Fever situation in the country.

West Nile virus - Multistate (Europe) - Monitoring season 2012

Opening date: 21 June 2012

Latest update: 26 October 2012

Epidemiological summary

EU and neighbouring countries

As of 7 November, 235 probable and confirmed cases of WNF have been reported in the EU in 2012. In neighbouring countries 582 cases have been reported. Within the EU, Greece, Italy, Romania and Hungary are affected. This is the third consecutive year for these countries to be affected, however the geographic distribution in each country has expanded to affect new areas. Seventeen WNF associated deaths have been reported in the EU (16 in Greece, one in Romania). Outside of the EU, affected countries include Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, Algeria and Tunisia. This is the first year that human cases of WNF have been reported from Croatia, Serbia, and Kosovo. However WNV circulation in horses was demonstrated through serological studies in Serbia in 2009-2010, and in Croatia in 2010-2011. A detailed breakdown of affected countries and areas, and maps which also illustrate the recent historical distribution, is available on the [ECDC website](#).

Only one case within the EU is reported to have been acquired through blood products in 2012. This case occurred in Greece and involved an immuno-compromised patient, where both the blood donation and the transfusion occurred before the first case of WNF for 2012 was reported. In Italy, as per a 2012 national directive, nucleic acid amplification test (NAT) screening of blood

6/16

donations is implemented from 15 July to 30 November in areas which were affected in 2011. Notably, a infected donation was detected in Italy on 15 July, the first day of screening. Four other cases of asymptomatic WNF were detected by NAT screening of blood donations in Italy.

Rest of the World

United States

As of 6 November, 5 054 cases of WNF, including 228 deaths, have been reported to the [CDC](#). This year remains the worst affected season since 2003. Over a third of cases come from the state of Texas.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

Websources: [ECDC West Nile fever risk maps](#) | [ECDC Rapid Risk Assessment \(13 July\)](#) | [MedISys West Nile Disease](#) | [ECDC summary of the transmission season 2011](#) | [Official Journal of the EU - Notifiable Diseases](#) | [European Commission Case Definitions](#) | [EU Blood Directive](#) | [Italian Weekly update](#) | [KEELPNO weekly epidemiological report](#) | [Institut de Veille Sanitaire](#) | [EpiSouth](#)

ECDC assessment

The epidemiology of WNV in Europe is still evolving and is not yet fully understood. It is unclear if the increase in cases reported this year, the earlier season, and the geographic expansion, is due to a true epidemiological change, or a reflection of increased awareness amongst clinicians and the enhanced surveillance implemented in some areas.

West Nile fever in humans is a notifiable disease in the EU. The implementation of control measures by the national health authorities are considered important for ensuring blood safety when human cases of WNF. Taking into account the [EU WNV and blood safety preparedness plan](#) and the [EU blood directive](#), the main measures of prevention of transmission through blood products should be geographical donor deferral or the implementation of systematic NAT screening of blood donors or visitors from affected areas. ECDC provides a weekly updated overview of affected areas in order to support this activity.

Actions

On 13 July, ECDC updated its [rapid risk assessment](#) concerning the epidemiological situation of West Nile virus infection in the European Union. ECDC produces weekly [West Nile fever risk maps](#) to inform blood safety authorities regarding affected areas.

Measles - Multistate (EU) - Monitoring European outbreaks

Opening date: 9 February 2011

Latest update: 22 October 2012

Epidemiological summary

EU Member States

No new outbreaks detected in EU Member States since the last update.

Web sources: [ECDC measles and rubella monitoring](#) | [ECDC/Euronews documentary](#) | [WHO Epidemiological Brief](#) | [MedISys Measles page](#) | [EUVAC-net ECDC](#) | [ECDC measles factsheet](#)

ECDC assessment

Considerably fewer measles cases have been reported in 2012 than during the same period in 2011 primarily due to the dramatic decrease in the number of cases reported from France. There was no increase in the number of cases during the peak transmission season from February to June and there have been very few outbreaks detected by epidemic intelligence methods so far in 2012.

ECDC closely monitors measles transmission and outbreaks in the EU and neighbouring countries in Europe through enhanced surveillance and epidemic intelligence activities. The countries in the WHO European Region, which include all EU Member States, have committed to eliminate measles and rubella transmission by 2015. Elimination of measles requires consistent vaccination coverage above 95% with two doses of measles vaccine in all population groups, strong surveillance and effective outbreak control measures.

Rubella - Multistate (EU) - Monitoring European outbreaks