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To the Ukrainian Government  
Ministry of Health,

Measles has become a major public health problem in many European countries with a tremendous rise in cases and deaths in the last two years, which is clearly primarily due to low vaccination coverage leaving much of the population susceptible to measles. In 2018 the number of reported measles cases rose (from 25.500 in 2017) to more than 80.000.

It is of particular concern that the vast majority (more than 50.000 cases including at least 16 deaths) occurred in Ukraine, where in recent years coverage with 2 vaccination doses has ranged markedly below the 95% level required for elimination of measles.

The European Academy of Paediatrics strongly encourages the Ukrainian Public Health Officials and physicians to take every possible measure to increase measles vaccination rates by following the WHO recommendation to **use every opportunity for vaccination**:

- Vaccination campaigns using also social media and involving well respected personalities, "celebrities"!
- Checking the vaccination record at every physician visit!
- Vaccination of parents by paediatricians, vaccination of partners by gynaecologists!

In addition, **mandatory vaccination** (including MMR) should be considered for health care workers, school teachers, day care staff and for access to kindergarden, school, university.

The following **statements** might be helpful in campaigning for measles vaccination:

- Measles is one of the most contagious infectious diseases. Vaccination against measles (apart from obligatory isolation procedures) is the only effective way to combat an outbreak of measles and to eventually eliminate the disease.
- About one in 1000 measles patients dies due to frequent complications like encephalitis. Measles causes a long-lasting immunosuppression with increased mortality from other infections for at least 2 years.
- Unlike measles, the measles **vaccine** does not lead to immunosuppression and to an increase in the number of viral and bacterial infections in the period after vaccination.
- Vaccination against measles has very few contraindications. Common colds are **no reason** to withhold vaccinations including measles. MMR vaccines are safe and have extensively and successfully been used worldwide for decades. There is widespread misinformation about the risks of measles and MMR vaccine.

The European Academy of Paediatrics expresses its strong support for childhood immunisation and recommended vaccination schedules. We do so in the interest of children and their parents. We are prepared to work with all of you (governmental officials, academicians, physicians, nurses and with any stakeholder interested in children's health) and share the extensive evidence demonstrating the effectiveness and safety of vaccines.

We are also at your disposal to develop and/or participate in campaigns for children, their parents but also for the paediatricians.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adamos Hadjipanayis', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Prof. Adamos Hadjipanayis  
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hans Jürgen Dornbusch', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Prof. Hans Jürgen Dornbusch  
Chairman, Vaccination working group