

UN health agency urges Europe to step up measles vaccination

February 25 2015

(AP)—The World Health Organization is urging Europe to step up measles vaccination efforts as countries report thousands of cases of the disease.

WHO's regional office said Wednesday that cases in Europe and Central Asia fell by half from 2013 to 2014 but its goal of eliminating [measles](#) there this year is threatened.

It said seven countries have reported more than 22,000 cases since the beginning of last year—led by Kyrgyzstan with nearly 7,500 and Bosnia with 5,340. Russia and Georgia had more than 3,200 each and Italy more than 1,600. Germany has seen more than 570 cases.

WHO regional director Zsuzsanna Jakab says the region has seen a 96-percent reduction in measles cases over the past two decades and must act "without further delay to close immunization gaps."

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Citation: UN health agency urges Europe to step up measles vaccination (2015, February 25) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-02-health-agency-urges-europe-measles.html>

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