



Second Community Action in the field of Health (2008-2013)  
Consultation on Priorities for the Annual Work Plan 2009  
EVM proposal

**Proposal number 1**  
**Health Security I**  
**Health Information II**  
**Workshop/conference on the individual and social value of immunisation**

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*EVM members companies are major suppliers of vaccines worldwide, producing the majority of vaccine doses in Europe. EVM members are: Baxter, Crucell, GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, MedImmune, Novartis Vaccines, sanofi pasteur, sanofi pasteur MSD, Solvay Biologicals, and Wyeth Vaccines*

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## **Background:**

The recent re-emergence of infectious diseases in EU countries proves that infectious diseases remain a threat for public health (for instance measles outbreaks in 2007/2008 amounted to 4000 cases in Q1 according to the ECDC). The risk of the spread of existing or emerging infectious diseases is now present more than ever considering the free mobility within the European space, the globalisation of travel and also climate change.

National immunisation programmes play a crucial role in controlling infectious diseases and in protecting populations. The objective of immunisation programmes is to reach a population coverage allowing the protection of the whole population, through herd immunity. However, the public perception of vaccines greatly influences the willingness of the population to get vaccinated as well as the willingness to vaccinate of healthcare professionals, especially. In turn, this can be detrimental to the implementation and the success of immunisation programmes. Recent vaccine scares, such as the alleged association between MMR and autism, have contributed to lower immunisation coverage. This phenomenon constitutes a major threat for public health as populations are exposed to a higher risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases. Finally, in addition to weakening the implementation of existing national immunisation programmes, the misperception of vaccines hampers the introduction and the usage of new vaccines with major potential for public health.

## **CONCLUSION/Proposal:**

**For these reasons, increasing population's awareness on the value and safety of vaccines is essential to promote public health and improve EU citizen's health security. EVM would like to propose to DG Sanco to allocate some funding to a workshop/conference, which could take place during the European Immunisation Week, to address the myths and facts about vaccines and immunisation, the way they are perceived in the scientific and lay press, and how this could be properly addressed. This would be in line with two identified priorities: develop prevention (Health Security I) and dissemination and application of health information (Health Information II).**

**This would constitute a great opportunity to gather all relevant stakeholders (ECDC, European Commission, European Parliament etc.) to discuss how to improve the public perception of vaccines and consequently to achieve a better implementation of the national immunisation programmes.**