



January 18<sup>th</sup> 2016

## Press Release

### Key results from EAP survey “Child Health Inequalities among Migrant Children in the European Region”: Answers from 500 paediatricians in 17 countries

#### About the survey

Initiated by “Advocacy for Children”, one of EAP Working Groups, the survey has been disseminated last September through the entire EAP Research in Ambulatory Settings Network (EAPRASnet), an active network of 2000 registered paediatricians from Europe and Mediterranean.

Given the high migratory flow in some countries, many paediatricians among EAP’s members have gained experience dealing with health problems of migrant children. Around 500 of them, mostly working in Primary Care, participated, showing their high concern by this critical issue.

#### Key results

Results highlight the health problems and needs of the migrant children in the European region as well as the barriers migrant families encounter to obtain care of their children, that can generate health inequalities

#### SPECIFIC HEALTH PROBLEMS AND NEEDS

➤ 50% of the paediatricians experience:

Migrant children have more frequent **health problems**, particularly chronic and communicable diseases, neurodevelopmental and mental health problems and accidental injuries.

➤ 65% experience:

Migrant children have **specific health needs** particularly catch-up immunizations, nutritional and accident prevention advice, oral health, socio-emotional development and attachment needs and require screening for visual and hearing defects and screening for poverty associated illnesses

➤ 85 % experience:

**Vaccination coverage** is lower in migrant children on arrival, but improves a year after arrival.

## BARRIERS TO ACCESS CHILD HEALTH SERVICES

### ➤ 30% of the paediatricians experience:

Migrant families and children find **barriers to access child health services** produced by cultural and linguistic barriers, bureaucracy, family economic status, undocumented status. Nationality and religion. Barriers are present in mental health care, care for chronic disease and disability and Primary Care.

Paediatricians report **significant difficulties in communicating with migrant families** due to language barriers; interpreters and cultural mediators are not readily available in 2/3 of the practices.

## DEFICIT OF SPECIFIC CHILDCARE POLICIES, TRAINING & GUIDELINES

### ➤ Only 40 % :

Acknowledge **specific childcare/welfare policies** for migrant children and families in their countries

### ➤ 65% :

Notice that **updated guidelines for care of migrant children and families** are lacking in their countries;

### ➤ 80% :

**Have not received training on migrant health care problems, needs and peculiarities.**

## Critical issues on EAP agenda in Brussels on January 29<sup>th</sup>

The full team of delegates, observers and members of the European Academy of Paediatrics will meet in Brussels on November 29<sup>th</sup>. During the meeting EAP actions will be discussed to be able to provide solid advice and expertise to EU decision-makers and other EU policy makers on the critical issues of child health in the migrants

### **Among concrete points to be addressed in the agenda :**

**Vaccination** : Provision of vaccines should be carried out in line with national vaccination programs with a systematic, sustainable and non-stigmatizing approach to improve coverage towards harmonization of vaccination schedules in **Europe**. . The many countries, such as those on the frontline of large-scale migration, that have been incorporating vaccination of refugees and migrants regardless of country of origin into their routine vaccination programs should be supported in these efforts by the EU, WHO, ECDC etc

**Unaccompanied minors and “vanishing children”**: EU should prevent a huge population of children risking the deprivation of their childhood with all the psychological

implications this may inflict on these children providing not only health care but also education and protection from being exploited by unscrupulous human traffickers.

## **About EAP – European Academy of Paediatrics**

The European Academy of Paediatrics is the Paediatric section of the European Union Medical Specialists and represents the official political voice for both families, children and paediatricians throughout Europe.

EAP members from 32 European Economic Area countries are represented by delegates from their national paediatric societies and professional organisations. In addition, associate European members and observers, delegates representing National Paediatric Societies and European subspecialty Paediatric Societies are part of the EAP, as well as over 400 international individual members.

**“Advocacy for Children”** is an EAP Working Group (WG), whose aim is to advocate for Children’s Rights, influencing policies and actions of governments, international institutions and the private sector, building alliances and lobbying regional decision-makers, in order to achieve positive changes in children’s lives

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- Survey questionnaire “Child health inequalities among migrants in the EU”
- Publication Lancet Nov 14<sup>th</sup>
- Corporate presentation release – Oct 19<sup>th</sup>
- EAP investigates on child health inequalities – Nov. 16th