

23 April 2018, Brussels

## STATEMENT

### **23-29 April 2018: Vaccines are an individual right and shared responsibility**

Vaccines Europe welcomes the European region 14<sup>th</sup> European Immunisation Week (EIW) focused on “vaccines as an individual right and shared responsibility, to help close immunisation gaps”.

It is well acknowledged that childhood vaccination is one of the most important medical achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The WHO estimates that vaccination prevents 2-3 million deaths every year across the Globe, and has enormous positive impacts on healthcare systems. However, vaccine-preventable diseases that were almost eliminated are coming back today. Europe has experienced a 400% increase in measles cases in 2017 compared to 2016, and seasonal influenza cases are on the rise with the influenza vaccine coverage dropping across the EU.

Therefore, and despite being one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century, misconceptions about vaccines persist and vaccination is facing significant growing public concerns. The causes underlying vaccine hesitancy are multifactorial and context-specific and there is not a single solution to this challenge, although Health Care Professionals have proved to be an important determinant of their own vaccine uptake, their intention to recommend vaccines to people, and the vaccine uptake within at-risk populations. Involvement of all key stakeholders is necessary in addressing this challenge by putting in place the appropriate tools to enhance vaccine confidence in the European population.

With the ageing population, the public health impact of vaccine preventable diseases and their complications in adults are likely to grow. This is why it is important to raise awareness of the need for vaccination at every stage in life and work on easing access to vaccination in multiple settings, such as pharmacies. *“Vaccines are highly regulated products to prove to be safe and effective and it is our shared responsibility to use them to prevent diseases and contribute to closing the immunisation gaps”*, said Pascale Mauran, Vaccines Europe President.

For more information on the European Immunisation Week and its activities please visit the [WHO Europe website](#) and follow Vaccines Europe messages on [Twitter](#).