



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS SEIMO NARĖ
RADVILĖ MORKŪNAITĖ-MIKULĖNIENĖ**

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Donald TUSK
President of the European Council

Jean-Claude JUNCKER
President of the European Commission

2019-05-02
Vilnius

Dear President Tusk,
Dear President Juncker,

Allow me to address you regarding an alarming issue - dropping vaccination levels across Europe and subsequent measles outbreaks in several countries of the EU. Lithuania is no exception in this regard - vaccination levels for some years already do not reach the ones recommended by the World Health Organisation, hence this year we witness an outbreak - since the beginning of 2019 until May 2 the cases of measles have reached 555 in comparison to 30 throughout the year 2018. Some countries tackle the issue through introduction of mandatory vaccination, with rather good results, while majority of EU states rely on voluntary vaccination, i.e. public awareness of importance to get a timely vaccination.

However, what I have witnessed in my work and what WHO and recent polls have pointed out, the anti-vax campaign promoting different fake news and myths about vaccines has gained ground in social media, closed forums, public media, even among politicians, and has seriously damaged public support for immunization in many EU countries. Unfortunately, all legislative proposals on strengthening immunisation efforts have been blocked in the Seimas of Lithuania by the ruling majority due to ongoing Presidential and EU election campaign or simple lack of understanding of growing threat to public health and security - this is an example that a political cycle may also impede finding national solutions to the emerging problem. However, dangerous communicable diseases know no borders, and in addition to alarming situation in the EU there are registered outbreaks in countries like Ukraine and the USA. Therefore, simply relying on national measures is not enough, an urgent and concerted EU-wide action is needed.

While noting important recommendations adopted recently by the main EU institutions, I remain convinced, that since the immunology is a matter of public health and even of (national) security, in addition a robust EU action is needed. Therefore, let me address you with a call for:

1. creation of an EU-wide action plan to be implemented without delay, including a public information campaign across the EU member states coordinated by the Commission with allocated finances to that end;
2. active and continuous disinformation countering measures, including through "EU versus Disinformation" framework;

3. to find ways, based on experience and practice of Member States that demonstrated vaccination increase (such as France), to immediately bring the immunisation rates to the WTO levels through EU-wide measures/requirements, including mandatory vaccination.

I look forward to the information about the nearest upcoming initiatives on the EU-level response to the alarming decrease of vaccination in the EU Member States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Radvilė', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė
Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania