Poliomyelitis outbreak in Tajikistan

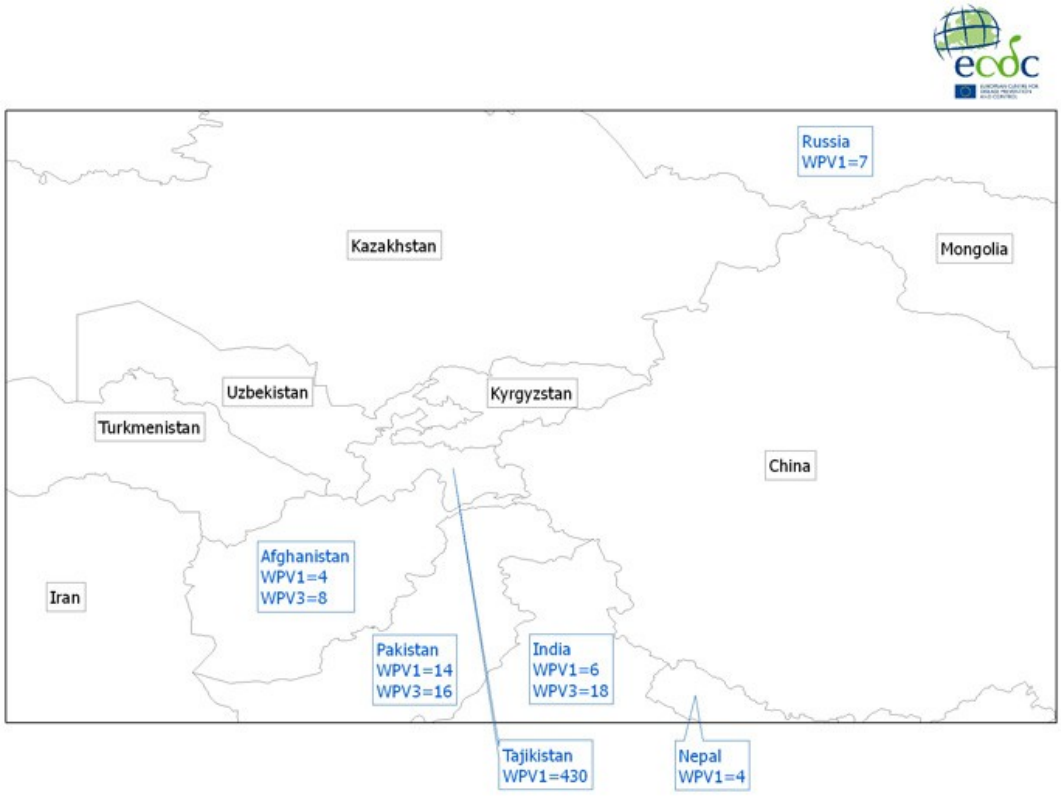
28 Jul 2010

Since April 2010, a poliomyelitis (polio) outbreak has affected Tajikistan with half of the administrative territories affected. As of July 23, the Tajikistan Ministry of Health has reported 430 cases of wild-polio virus type 1 (WPV1). Out of the countries neighbouring Tajikistan only the Russian Federation has reported confirmed cases of WPV1 in seven persons. Of these, four were imported into the Russian Federation and genetic sequences of the virus infecting these cases shows that it is linked to the outbreak in Tajikistan.

This outbreak in Tajikistan and the recent polio cases in the Russian Federation is the first time that polio has been re-introduced in the European Region of WHO since it was declared polio-free in 2002. ECDC considers that there is small risk of imported cases from affected countries in EU Member States, but considers the risk for spread in EU and EFTA countries limited to pockets of populations where the vaccination coverage levels are not sufficient. Also, ECDC would like to remind persons travelling to polio endemic countries that their vaccination schedule is updated according to specific recommendations of their respective home countries.

Polio is a viral infection that affects the central nervous system. It has been a major cause of death, paralysis and long-term neurological conditions in the past, but effective vaccination has now eliminated polio in many parts of the world. To learn more about poliomyelitis, please read the ECDC factsheet.

To read more about the situation in Tajikistan, please refer to the WHO European Region website.



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