*TAIEX*

*Health Programme.*

*HEALTH PROTECTION*

* Legislative alignment and enforcement of the EU health acquis.

In the framework of implementing the reform for the improvement of the quality and performance of consulting services for mother and children in primary health care, a set of guidelines for antenatal/postnatal care for mother and children, nutrition for children and pregnant woman, child growth and development have been drafted with the support of UNICEF. In this context the following sub-legal act were approved:

* Order of the Minister of Health No. 374, dated 12.06.2013 “For the approval of guidelines of clinical practice for primary health care for antenatal care and postnatal care for the staff of primary health care service”;
* Order of the Minister of Health No. 469, dated 03.09.2013 “For the approval of guidelines of clinical practice for primary health care for growth and development monitoring of children 0-6 years old”;
* Order of the Minister of Health No. 470, dated 03.09.2013 “For the approval of indicators for monitoring performance of consulting centres for woman and consulting centres for children for primary health care”.

***COMMUNICABLE DISEASES***

In the field of infectious diseases, from Ministry of Health are undertaken several measures as below listed:

* Order of the Minister of Health No. 88, dated 22.02.2013 for “Establishment of National Verification Committee for Measles and Rubella Elimination” naming the group of experts and their duties related to the documentation of the verification process of measles and congenital rubella elimination in Albania, which will report for the WHO EURO, too.
* Order of the Minister of Health No. 48, dated 10.02.2014 about “Establishment of Working Group for Preparation of National HIV/AIDS Control Strategy” which specifies the composition, organization and the functions of the group during the preparation of the new strategy to control HIV/AIDS during 2015 -2020 together with the action plan and the respective budget.

Based on the Order of the Minister of Health No. 591, dated 22.11.2012 “On establishing the National Secretariat for Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)”, during 2013 three consecutive meetings of Secretariat on coordinating the preparation of the Manual of National Guidelines on AEFI Management, took place. The guidelines are expected to be approved by an Order of Minister of Health within March 2014. In the meeting of February 2014, the Immunization Committee approved changes of immunization schedule and to introduce two shots of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) (the vaccine against pólio through injection) replacing the use of oral pólio vaccine (OPV) (the oral live vaccine against pólio). Vaccination with IPV will start after March 2014.The vaccine cold chain continued the improvement by ensuring 296 standard cold chain equipment during 2013.

Within the framework of HIV/AIDS European Testing week on 22 – 29 December 2013, Albania became for the first time part of this activity and 404 students were voluntarily tested in Tirana, Korça, Vlora and Shkodra.

***TOBACCO***

AS regards legislative developments, in the field of tobacco control, during March 2013 - March 2014, the following activities were carried out:

* Legislative changes to the existing law, No. 49/2013, dated 02.14.2013 “On Amendments and Additions to the Law No. 9636, dated 06.11.2006 “On protection of health from tobacco products”, aiming prevention of smoking in indoor public environments and the placement of figures and photographs in health warnings.
* Training of health personnel in schools of Tirana, focusing on young people and their relationship with smoking. The training curriculum is part of the curriculum prepared by health promotion specialists of IPH, under the support of the MoH and WHO. Trainings have started in November 2013 and will continue till the end of 2014. Until now there are trained 40 school doctors, covering as well health promotion specialists from other districts.
* Organization of the World Day “No Tobacco“, where meetings and conversations with students of public health on tobacco control policies, took place.
* According the methodology recommended by WHO, the sector of tobacco control in IPH, has given assistance for smoking cessation on more than 40 persons, and on 25 persons for alcohol consuming.
* Through media and meetings with members of the economy committee it was lobbied for increasing the tobacco excise.

***MENTAL HEALTH***

In the mental health field, based on the new Law No. 44/2012 “On mental health”, the following sub-legal acts were approved:

* DCM No.456, dated 22.05.2013 on “Composition and Method of Operation of National Mental Health Committee”.
* Order of the Minister of Health, No.268, dated 23.04.2013 on “Adoption of the Regulation of Mental Health Services, Clinical File for Specialized Inpatient Mental Health Services and for Community Mental Health Centers”;
* Order of the Minister of Health No. 586, dated 30.11.2013, for the approval of “Standards of Physical Restraint in Specialized Mental Health Inpatient Services”. This document responds to the implementation of the Mental Health Law and to the gap identified by the international monitoring organizations in the field of Clear Procedures (CPT). . This document includes the general principles while implementing physical restraint, and till to the procedure that should be followed by the multidisciplinary staff, at the same time keeping records in a separate register for this purpose.
* Order of the Minister of Health, No. 693, dated 24.12.2013, on the “Roles, responsibilities and core competencies of mental health professionals”. This document, apart from sharing tasks between multi-disciplinary team members, aims to standardize the service offered by similar institutions or services, as well as enable monitoring the quality and efficiency of these services.

With the support of TAIEX, the Ministry of Health has organized:

* A two-day workshop on 11-12 June 2013, with the theme “Organization and Functioning of Mental Health Institution”'. In this workshop, held at Hotel DORO CITY, Tirana, were invited 5 TAIEX experts to share their experiences regarding the organization and functioning of mental health institutions, while the registered Albanian participants were at around 20, representing various institutions, both public and nonpublic, operating in the field of mental health.
* A TAIEX Expert Mission on the assessment of the establishment of a Medical Institute for Treatment of Mentally Ill Detainees from 13 – 17 January 2014. The aim of the meeting was a long-term assessment for the establishment of the specialized Medical Institute for the Treatment of Mentally-ill Detainees to support the Ministry of Health in the preparation of the feasibility study and advise during design preparation.

During 2013, is prepared the bylaws package of the new mental health law, supported by Soros/OSFA. Discussions and presentations on the drafts with relevant stakeholders part of mental health public service, have taken place. In December 2013, this process was completed with the publication in Albanian language of a set of approved by-laws (around 200 copies) and some copies are distributed to all mental health services and relevant health institutions.

***DRUGS***

The below mentioned acts have been approved during the reporting period:

* Order of Minister of Health No. 337, dated 20.05.2013 “On some addenda and changes in the Regulation on Good Manufacturing Practice of medicinal products for human use in the Republic of Albania”, in harmonization with the Commission Directive 2003/94/EC of 8 October 2003, laying down the principles and guidelines of good manufacturing practice in respect of medicinal products for human use and investigational medicinal products for human use;
* Order of Minister of Health No. 553/1, dated 04.11.2013 “On establishment of the working group on preparing of legal changes in the pharmaceutical field”;
* Mutual Guideline of Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance No. 585/1, dated 05.12.2013 “On some changes in the Guideline No. 2, dated 15.01.2013 “On the production, codification, stamping, distributing procedures and monitoring of drugs stamps of control”, as amended;
* Decision of Council of Ministers No. 24, dated 22.01.2014 “On laying down rules on the issue of the Minister of Health Authorization on import of unregistered drugs”;
* Decision of Council of Ministers No. 53, dated 05.02.2014 “On defining the manufacturing and trading margins of drugs”.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in August 2013, between the Institute of Public Health and all drug centres in Albania providing care/treatment (National centre of addictology, health services in Penitentiary, Action Plus, Emanuel community, Stop Aids, etc) for sharing information on drug related health services. Based on the memorandum of understanding and with the support of WHO and EMCDDA a project for the computerization of the information regarding drug treatment was finalized. This project is expected to be implemented within 2014.

The first Drugs National Report is published in English by the Institute of Public Health in July 2013. The second Drugs National Report is in the final stages and it is expected to be concluded within March 2014.

A detailed project study for Size Estimation of Problematic Drug Users in Albania, is finalized by the Institute of Public Health, financed by UNODC (around 10 000 USD). This report will give for the first time estimation on drug use in Albanian population and is expected to be published within November 2014.

The sustainability of procurement of Methadone for another one year period (2014) was assured by negotiations with GFATM. The program of Methadone Replacement Therapy continues in 6 centres (Tirana, Vlora, Shkodra, Elbasan, Fieri, Korça) in Albania.

Following the approval of National Strategy on Drug Control 2012-2016, a workshop was organized on drug control in July 2013, with the aim of a better coordination of activities in the field. As a result a shortlist of coordination and intervention priorities was approved. ,. The workshop was organized by IPH, Centre of Addictology and ACPD with the support of UNODC.

***CANCER***

As regards standards improvements in the cancer field several acts were approved:

* Order of the Minister of Health No. 303, dated 06.05.2013 on the approval of “National Cancer Registry”. This order aims to plan responsibilities and structures for the registry. The main responsibility is given to the existing hospital registry near oncologic ward at the University Hospital (UH). Some role is given to the Institute of Public Health (IPH) as well.
* Order of the Minister of Health No. 528, dated 09.10.2013 on “Free services for cancer patients”. The order aims to ease the access to upper levels of health care (including diagnoses and treatment) for all patients suspected to have cancer. It is expected to improve the utilization of early detection services for breast, cervical cancer etc.

During the period September 2013 - January 2014 more than 200 GPs were trained on cancer control and clinical breast examination (CBE) in 9 accredited 2 day courses (IPH, UH). More than 100 Nurses were trained as well in 4 courses. Around 50 Health educators were trained in the same topics in 2 courses.

A large program on systematic ‘health check ups’ is in final stages of drafting at MOH and early detection activities for breast cancer and cervical cancer are also included in this program. It is planned to be launched at primary health care services within October 2014.

***BLOOD TRANSFUSION AND TRANSPLANTS***

During the reporting period the implementation of BESSY Project (Blood Ethical good for Social capital and Safety) has continued. This project is funded by the IPA Adriatic Cross-border Cooperation Program”. The period of implementation is March 2011-February 2014. Until now the following outputs have been achieved:

* Software for management of voluntary blood donors;
* Development of European common promotional campaigns aiming at increasing the number of ethical blood donors and raising the awareness on blood safety issues among potential donors and current donors;
* Recommendation book for policymaker in management of blood donors;
* Ethical chart for voluntary blood donors;
* Memorandum of Understanding between network partner**s.**

Another project that was implemented in this field is the project for the prevention of infection transmission through safer blood and components, which was funded by Italian Albanian debt for development. The objectives of the projects are:

* Sufficient blood through more voluntary non-remunerated donations;
* Safer blood through improvement of testing;
* Correct use of transfusion in the clinical side.

***e-HEALTH***

For the creation of e-health, the Ministry of Health is negotiating with the World Bank for a comprehensive credit where the e-health component is an integral part of the negotiation package. The negotiation for Austrian loan did not continue, as a result the project idea between AME International GmbH and the Ministry of Health to establish the National Health Electronic Record (EHR) is not implemented.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with some of its institutions of dependency has started creating some projects in the field of informatization of the health system.

* The e-prescription project: is initiated by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Social Insurance Fund. E-prescription system will enable more efficient management of medical drugs. Through this project, the hard copy recipes will be eliminated and the prescriptions can be accessed online from the parties involved in this process:
* doctors
* patients
* pharmacists
* The Track & Trace project is initiated by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the National Centre of Drug Control. This project aims to:
* Ensure reliable supply of medical drugs to patients
* Prevent forgery, fraud, smuggling and illegal sale of medical drugs
* Setting up the system with barcode for tracking medication
* Support for the rational use of medical drugs and getting data to monitor

medication market

* Hospital Management System is initiated by the Ministry of Health and currently operates only in Mother Teresa University Hospital as a pilot idea started a few months ago. This project aims to:
* Manage the patient services
* The registration of the diagnoses and treatments of the patients
* Registration of the medical drugs used by the clinics
* Registration of costs of the hospital institutions
* The construction of spending indicators to check the performance.
* Inventory of biomedical equipment. Currently at the National Centre of Biomedical Engineering operates a system that manages data equipment in 10 hospitals. The aim is to include all health units, hospitals or centres, with data on the equipment they dispose and their working status.
* Health Facility Inventory List is initiated by the Ministry of Health. This project aims to have complex information for any health centre or hospital, the building, laboratories, equipment and personnel working near them.

All the data collected will be placed in a data centre at the Ministry of Health.

* Improving quality and access to healthcare services for all - Reform of the primary healthcare system and sustainability
* Progress in addressing health inequalities, in particular access of vulnerable groups to primary health care and access to health care in rural areas;
* Progress on implementation of the operational conclusions and the Plan of Measures from the Roma and Egyptians Seminar.
* Institutional and administrative capacity building; new investments in the sector.

During the period March 2013-February 2014, in 6 districts (Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra, Lezhë, Kukës, Tropoja,) were conducted trainings for the health staff in primary health care services and maternities, related to pregnancy care, breastfeeding and nutrition. At the same period were also trained 600 family doctors and nurses midwifes. In the above mentioned districts, have also continued trainings of the health care staff for the treatment and prevention of gender-based violence and violence against children. All trainings have been provided by the national centre for continuous education. In all the districts, has been appointed responsible staff within the public health directorates, as part of the local authorities team in communes and municipalities, for the treatment of issues related to family violence and child protection.

According to the Order of the Minister of Health No. 528, dated 09.10.2013 “For the exclusion from payments for health services offered to patients with malignant diseases and pregnant woman”, all pregnant woman receive free of charge health care in public institutions.

Public health Directorates in collaboration with some non profit organization and Roma organisations have provided health care services in districts like Tirana, Berat, Kucove, Pogradec, Lezhë, Shkodër, Fier, Elbasan, Korçë, Gjirokastër for Roma population. The services offered by the primary health care staff include training on HIV/AIDS prevention through peer educators, promotion and counselling, as well as voluntary testing for HIV/AIDS, condom distribution and trainings of health staff working in areas were Roma population live. 120 health workers from these centres in the above mentioned districts were trained during 2013.

The Ministry of Health supported by UNICEF, has continued with the implementation of the project *"Health home visits for the promotion of growth and development in Roma children of Tirana and Durrësi district"*. On 12 June 2013, the Ministry in collaboration with the Centre for Health and Community Wellbeing (QSHMK) and supported by UNICEF, prepared a manual and check lists of control for use during home visits. During the second half of 2013, 94 visits at home were conducted in Durres and 24 in Tirana. 120 children 0-6 years old have been visited and 72 mothers were contacted. In October 2013 the Ministry of Health provided access to health care for the Roma community housed in Shishtufinë area in Tirana.

* Medicinal products - Progress in legislative alignment and enforcement.

In the field of *medicinal products for human use (drugs)*, the following acts have been adopted:

* Decision of Council of Ministers No 24 of 22.1.2014 “On laying down rules on the issue of the Minister of Health Authorization on import of unregistered drugs”;
* Decision of Council of Ministers No 53 of 5.2.2014 “On defining the manufacturing and trading margins of drugs”;
* Joint Guideline of Minister of Health and Minister of Finance No 585/1 of 5.12.2013 ”On some amendments to Guideline No 2 of 15.1.2013 “On the production, codification, stamping, distributing procedures and monitoring of drugs stamps of control”, as amended;
* Order of Minister of Health No 337 of 20.05.2013 “On some addenda and amendments to the Regulation on Good Manufacturing Practice of medicinal products for human use in the Republic of Albania”, approximating the Commission Directive 2003/94/EC of 8 October 2003 laying down the principles and guidelines of good manufacturing practice in respect of medicinal products for human use and investigational medicinal products for human use;
* Order of Minister of Health No 553/1 of 4.11.2013 “On establishment of the working group on preparing of legal changes in the pharmaceutical field”.
* Current assistance provided to Albania by the EU and other national or international institutions, as well as its implementation.