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Date: 13 February 2023

Mr Andrei Cazacu
Head
Foreign Assistance Department
Ministry of Health
Str. Vasile Alecsandri, 2
MD-2009 Chisinau
Republic of Moldova

Our reference: KNA/kha Your reference:
Notre référence: Votre référence:
Unser Zeichen: Ihr Zeichen:
См. наш номер: На Ваш номер:

Dear Mr Cazacu,

Based on a review of the performance of the National Influenza Centre (NIC) in the WHO European Region during the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 influenza seasons, I am pleased to inform you that the WHO-recognized NIC in the Republic of Moldova headed by Dr Constantin Spinu at the National Influenza Center meets the criteria and will continue to be recognized by WHO.

National Influenza Centres play a key role in influenza (sentinel) surveillance at the national level and contribute to regional and global surveillance through the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS). The data generated by the NICs are critical to understand the timing and spread of influenza epidemics and the contribution of the different viruses to morbidity and mortality. For the WHO European Region, the data are reported weekly in the *Flu News Europe* bulletin jointly produced by WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

According to the Terms of Reference (ToR), the laboratories composing the National Influenza Centres are requested to share representative seasonal influenza viruses (either positive samples or influenza virus isolates) by shipping them to a WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza (WHO CC). Characterization of these viruses from the whole GISRS network contribute to the biannual selection of viruses for seasonal influenza vaccines and to the monitoring of susceptibility to antiviral drugs.

In compliance with the Standard Material Transfer Agreement of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework, they are also requested to send emerging influenza viruses with pandemic potential as well as clinical specimens and/or viruses that cannot be readily identified with diagnostic reagents provided through the WHO GISRS to a WHO CC or H5 Reference Laboratory of their choice.

In addition, the laboratories composing the NIC should regularly assess their competencies by taking part in External Quality Assessment Programmes (EQAP), in particular the annual EQAP organised by WHO Global Influenza Programme with the Centre for Health Protection in Hong-Kong SAR, China.

The pandemic of SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that started in early 2020 has clearly affected the normal functioning of influenza surveillance systems and the work of the NICs across the countries of the WHO European Region during the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 influenza seasons. As public health emergency measures are being lifted and circulation of seasonal and zoonotic influenza viruses tends to increase,

the sentinel surveillance systems should be maintained and strengthened to become a foundation for the integrated surveillance of influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses with epidemic and pandemic potential.

We therefore encourage you, as the Ministry of Health, to continue providing full support to the NIC in your country to allow them to fulfil their missions as specified in the WHO NIC ToR as well as in leading national efforts towards integrated surveillance of influenza and other respiratory viruses of public health concern.

WHO, for its part, will continue to support the NIC in your country through provision of technical guidance, training and networking opportunities.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank you for the continued fruitful collaboration.

Sincerely yours,



Dr Gerald Rockenschaub
Regional Emergency Director

Copy for information to:

H.E. Ms Tatiana Molcean, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Avenue de France 23, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Mr Vasile Mircos, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Embassy of the Republic of Moldova, Gotlandstrasse 16, D-10439 Berlin, Germany

Mr Simon Springett, United Nations Resident Coordinator, UN Development Coordination Office, United Nations House, 131, 31 August str., MD-2012 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Dr Miljana Grbic, WHO Representative and Head of WHO Country Office, WHO Country Office, Republic of Moldova, Sfatul Tarii Str. 29, MD-2012 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Enclosure

Details of the NIC in your country, status of WHO-recognition and key reference documents

NIC should demonstrate each year that they comply with the WHO NIC terms of reference. Those NIC that did not meet the criteria will have one year for corrective action, which will be supported by WHO where possible.

Thank you for reviewing the NIC details below and to inform us of any changes.

1. NIC details

National Influenza Center
MD 2029, Str. Cosmescu 3
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
Fax: +37 322 729725

Status of WHO recognition for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 seasons:

- Maintained: NIC meets the criteria
 Provisionally maintained: NIC failed to meet all the criteria

2. Key reference documents:

1. How to become a WHO-recognized National Influenza Centre: Guidance on the process for influenza laboratories in the WHO European Region [web site]. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, (<http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/publications/2010/how-to-become-a-who-recognized-national-influenza-centre-guidance-on-the-process-for-influenza-laboratories-in-the-who-european-region>)
2. Terms of Reference for National Influenza Centres [web site]. Geneva, World Health Organization, (http://www.who.int/influenza/gisn_laboratory/national_influenza_centres/terms_of_reference_for_national_influenza_centres.pdf).
3. Pandemic influenza preparedness framework for the sharing of influenza viruses and access to vaccines and other benefits. Geneva, World Health Organization; 2011, (<http://www.who.int/influenza/pip/en/>)
4. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control/WHO Regional Office for Europe, Flu News Europe, Joint ECDC–WHO/Europe weekly influenza update, (<http://flunewseurope.org/>)