

European Union SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action publishes interim guidance on maritime transport and Zika virus disease

VA Mouchtouri^{1,2}, C Hadjichristodoulou^{1,2}

1. European Union SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action, University Of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece

2. Department of Hygiene and Epidemiology, University of Thessaly, Larissa, Greece

Correspondence: Varvara A. Mouchtouri (mouchtourib@med.uth.gr)

Citation style for this article:

Mouchtouri VA, Hadjichristodoulou C. European Union SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action publishes interim guidance on maritime transport and Zika virus disease. *Euro Surveill.* 2016;21(16):pii=30207. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2016.21.16.30207>

Article submitted on 19 April 2016 / published on 21 April 2016

The European Union (EU) SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action has published an 'Interim guidance on maritime transport and Zika virus disease' [1]. The aim of the interim guidance is to provide clarifications useful for public health authorities and policymakers, for travellers (crew members and passengers) and the shipping industry, considering the current epidemiological situation.

The interim guidance includes an analysis of the role of maritime transport in Zika virus disease spread and the hypothetical ways for the introduction of Zika virus to EU Member States (MS) through the maritime transport:

- the introduction of human cases of Zika virus disease (crew or passengers, symptomatic or asymptomatic) through ship travel is considered very low since most travellers in the affected countries return to EU MS through air travel;
- the possibility of Zika virus-infected adult mosquitoes transported with ships to transmit Zika virus disease in EU MS in the European continent is considered very low.

The document details options for health measures on imported goods, ships and ports and their effectiveness considering legal issues in regards to International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005 [2] and relevant European legislation and their effectiveness:

- disinsection of all sea freight and ships from affected countries is not recommended;
- specific health measures on certain types of imported cargoes that have been associated with the importation of invasive mosquito species including used tyres and ornamental plants requiring water during transportation are recommended.

The guidance also provides recommendations for routine measures that should be implemented on a regular basis at the points of entry-ports according to the IHR 2005 and on ships to prevent transnational vector-borne diseases and vector dispersal.

This document can be used by the competent authorities and policymakers in the decision making and in development of contingency plans according to the IHR [2] in conjunction with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) [3] and the World Health Organization (WHO) [4] recommendations.

The EU SHIPSAN ACT is a European Joint Action funded by the European Commission under the Health Programme (2008–2013) [5]. It deals with the impact on maritime transport of health threats due to biological, chemical and radiological agents, including communicable diseases and supports the implementation of IHR 2005.

References

1. European Union Joint Action SHIPSAN ACT. Interim guidance on maritime transport and Zika virus disease. Larissa: European Union SHIPSAN ACT Joint Action. [Accessed 15 Apr 2016]. Available from: <http://www.shipsan.eu/Home/Zikavirus.aspx>
2. World Health Organization (WHO). International Health Regulations (2005). Second edition. Reprinted 2008. Geneva: WHO; 2008. Available from: www.who.int/ihr/9789241596664/en/index.html
3. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Zika virus infection. Stockholm: ECDC. [Accessed 15 Apr 2016]. Available from: http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/zika_virus_infection/Pages/index.aspx
4. World Health Organization (WHO). WHO statement on the 2nd meeting of IHR Emergency Committee on Zika virus and observed increase in neurological disorders and neonatal malformations: WHO; 2016.
5. European Union Joint Action SHIPSAN ACT. 'The impact on maritime transport of health threats due to biological, chemical and radiological agents, including communicable diseases'. [Accessed 15 Apr 2016]. Available from: www.shipsan.eu

License and copyright

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) Licence. You may share and adapt the material, but must give appropriate credit to the source, provide a link to the licence, and indicate if changes were made.

This article is copyright of the authors, 2016.