

## **Hazardous or unusual imported infectious diseases**

For several decades now, no cases of rare and extremely dangerous communicable diseases have been reported in the country. The last case of smallpox was recorded in 1936, of plague and anthrax - in the year 1710 and 1974 respectively. However, due to emergence of diseases such as viral hemorrhagic fevers (Lassa, Ebola, Marburg, and other fevers) in certain places in the world and the recurrence of epidemic diseases, such as cholera, and an increased flow of travellers, the risk of occurrence of such diseases in the country has increased. 4 cases of imported dengue fever were registered in 2016 in Lithuania, over the period of 2010 – 2015 fourteen cases were reported.

Annually, about 125 million travellers from all over the world travel to malaria-endemic areas, over 10 thousand of whom get infected with malaria after returning home and about 1% die of tropical malaria<sup>1</sup>.

Several cases of imported malaria are reported annually in the country. The reason to this is irregular use or no use of chemoprophylaxis and insufficient protection against mosquitoes. Over the period of 2007-2016, 46 cases of imported malaria of which two ended in death were reported in the country. The majority of imported malaria cases in the last ten years recorded in 2013 and 2015 (8 cases each year).

Today Europe is facing an increasing risk of the spread of West Nile virus. The virus has acquired increased virulence (during the outbreak in Russia in 1999 48% of the infected died)<sup>2</sup>. There is no vaccine against it, hence the main focus should be targeted at mosquito control. In 2016, 225 human cases of West Nile fever have been reported in the EU: most cases were reported in Romania (93) and Italy (76)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. Chapter 7 Malaria. [www.who.int/ith/ITH2009chapter7.pdf](http://www.who.int/ith/ITH2009chapter7.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Norman G. Gratz, Vector- and Rodent-Borne Diseases in Europe and North America Distribution, Public Health Burden, and Control, 2006

<sup>3</sup> <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/west-nile-fever/surveillance-and-disease-data/historical>