IN EUROPE

Increases in mumps cases in the UK
In South Wales, a huge increase in mumps notifications has been reported, generally among teenagers: around 320 cases have been notified in the last 3 months in the Cardiff and South Wales Valleys areas. In Leicestershire, an outbreak of mumps has also been reported, mostly in 11-14 year-olds who have had only one dose of the MMR vaccine. Source: Promed (http://www.promedmail.org).

IN THE REST OF THE WORLD

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) worldwide: update
Up to June 2, a cumulative total of 8384 probable cases, including 770 deaths, have been reported in 28 countries. The number of new probable cases in China is decreasing. The WHO is cautiously optimistic that outbreaks in mainland China are being brought under control in provinces with good surveillance systems and effective infection control in hospitals. In Toronto (Canada), two new clusters were discovered. In total Toronto reported 58 new probable cases during the last two weeks. As a consequence Toronto has been put back on the list of areas with recent local transmission. However, no travel advice has been issued regarding Toronto.

On May 23, the WHO removed Hong Kong and Guangdong from the list of areas with travel recommendations. Singapore has been removed from the list of affected areas.

The SARS virus has been traced in civet cats and a raccoon dog from a market in Southern China, Shenzen. Antibodies against the virus were also found in a Chinese ferret badger from the same market. The study detected a coronavirus closely related genetically to the human SARS virus. The animal version has an extra stretch of 29 nucleotide bases. 66 out of 508 animal handlers tested at markets in Guangdong had antibodies against the SARS virus. Uncertainties remain over the exact source of the virus. Sources: WHO (http://www.who.int) and Promed (http://www.promedmail.org).