



# Merck for Mothers in Europe

It all starts with a mother—she’s the beginning of a much bigger story. A healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth lead to a lifetime of benefits, both for her own health and prosperity as well as that of her children, family, community and nation—for generations to come. We call this the “Mom Effect.”

## About Merck for Mothers

Merck for Mothers is Merck’s global initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die while giving life. We provide support for transformational and sustainable solutions that strengthen health systems to deliver high-quality maternity care services that benefit women and their communities. Through 2020, Merck for Mothers has reached over 13 million women in over 48 global sites through programs promoting safe, high-quality, respectful care.

## Estimated Maternal Mortality in Europe<sup>1</sup>

- **10 maternal deaths** per 100,000 live births
- **Almost no reduction** in maternal mortality since 2000
- **1 in 6,500 chance** of a woman dying in pregnancy and childbirth
- **Challenges:**

Maternal deaths represent only a small fraction of the burden of maternal morbidity. For every woman who dies of pregnancy-related causes, 20–30 women experience acute or chronic morbidity, influencing health along the life-course<sup>2</sup>.

Women from ethnic minority groups in Europe tend to have higher prevalence of maternal death, severe maternal mortality, postpartum depression and worse health outcomes overall. Their babies also tend to have worse perinatal and neonatal morbidity and mortality outcomes including stillbirth, preterm birth and congenital anomalies<sup>3</sup>.

### Global Sites:

Bulgaria; Finland;  
Germany; Greece;  
Moldova; Romania;  
Russia; Ukraine;  
United Kingdom;  
West Balkan  
Region (Albania,  
Bosnia, Bulgaria,  
Kosovo, and North  
Macedonia)

## Programs and Collaborators in Europe

In 2012, we launched Merck for Mothers Global Grants — a corporate grant program that enables Merck offices around the world to support organizations that are improving maternal health. The Global Grants program is designed to be responsive to local women’s needs and extends our reach and impact to many more countries across the globe. Since we launched, the program has contributed over \$40 million, supporting over 60 projects across more than 40 global sites.

A selection of grants we have made in Europe includes:

**Alliance for Maternal Health Equality** | Merck for Mothers is a founding partner in the Alliance for Maternal Health Equality. The Alliance is a unique coalition of European stakeholders with an interest in helping all women in Europe have equal access to high-quality maternal health care. The Alliance aims to increase awareness and prompt discussion on this critical issue amongst policy makers and the public to help maternal health receive adequate focus in policy and legislative development.

**Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia** | The three-year “My Body, My Rights” program, implemented by the International Planned Parenthood Federation Networks in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia, focuses on underserved women and girls living in large Roma settlements in these four countries. The program works with political leaders, primary health care providers, Roma communities and young Roma people to improve maternal health outcomes and empower women to make their own health care decisions.

**Finland** | Väestöliitto is working with foster care organizations to promote sexual and reproductive health among young girls living within these institutions through educational events.

**Germany** | Ethno-Medical Center is implementing the MiMi-Initiative for Maternal Health to reduce barriers to maternal health care among female migrant workers. The project is raising awareness of services and improving health professionals’ cultural and linguistic competence.

**Greece** | Through the Mother & Child project, Doctors of the World’s Greek delegation is deploying mobile health units so that more refugee women and women in remote regions can receive the maternal health services they need; strengthening the capacity of health care professionals to serve these women and providing support so that antenatal and postnatal care is available to uninsured women.

**Romania** | World Vision’s “Mothers for Life. Life for Mothers” 30-month program is working to develop and implement an integrated model aimed at facilitating access to family planning and maternal health care services, training health care professionals and empowering local authorities to reduce the unmet need for family planning services in rural areas.

**Romania and Moldova** | Save the Children, together with Child Rights Information Center in Moldova, is developing and implementing an integrated model of maternal health care and family planning services, supporting pregnant teenagers and young mothers living in rural communities.

**Russia** | E.V.A. Association is improving sexual, reproductive and maternal health care among women at risk for, and living with HIV, by raising awareness on prevention and care and increasing health care provider skills to provide comprehensive care.



**Ukraine** | John Snow International is improving the quality of obstetric care through the development of standardized clinical guidelines to help providers improve the management of severe bleeding after childbirth.

**United Kingdom** | The British Pregnancy Advisory Service is leading a public awareness campaign in London, “As Soon as You’re Pregnant,” that encourages pregnant women to see a health care professional before the end of their first trimester. The campaign is helping women receive education on lifestyle factors such as diet, alcohol and smoking to promote healthy pregnancies and improve newborn health.

**West Balkan Region** | The International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network is supporting young people’s sexual, reproductive and maternal health needs during the COVID-19 pandemic by making sure that information and services are accessible and youth friendly, with special attention to those living in rural settings of the West Balkan Regions (Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Kosovo, and North Macedonia).



Additionally, we are supporting work with eight European NGOs in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland to advance maternal health in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. For example, **Concern Worldwide (Ireland)** is implementing community-based interventions to highlight the importance of seeking antenatal care for pregnant women in Malawi. **Maternity Worldwide (Denmark)** rolled out the Safe Delivery App, an mHealth tool, developed in collaboration with the University of Copenhagen and the University of Southern Denmark, to enhance antenatal care and emergency obstetric care in Ethiopia. **Medics without Vacation (Belgium)** conducted 12 medical training missions to build the capacity of local health workers and increase access to second line maternal health care services among hospitals in South Kivu (DRC).

1 [WHO's Trends in Maternal Mortality Report \(2017\)](#)

2 [Fact sheets on sustainable development goals: health targets -Maternal health 2017](#)

3 [Improving the health care of pregnant refugee and migrant women and newborn children 2018](#)

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