



Generic Public Health Preparedness in Europe



Directorate-General for
Health & Consumers



Executive
Agency for
Health and
Consumers

Further information on the projects can be found on the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers database at:

EAHC website <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/projects/database.html>,
on the DGSANCO Health Portal EU <http://health.europa.eu> and on
SANCO Web Site <http://ec.europa.eu/health/>

The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) implements the EU Health Programme, the Consumer Programme and the Better Training for Safer Food initiative.

© Photos: www.istockphoto.com, www.fotolia.com, www.reuters.com

ISBN 978-92-79-19651-5

doi:10.2772/59355

Catalogue N° ND-30-11-031-EN-C

© European Union, 2011

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Table of contents

Introduction	5
---------------------	----------

Generic preparedness planning projects

1. The prevention and the control of existing or emerging communicable diseases	6
--	----------

ENP4LAB	6
---------	---

EQADeBa	8
---------	---

2. The preparedness for health emergencies	10
---	-----------

SIDARTHa	10
----------	----

REACT	12
-------	----

SHIPSAN	14
---------	----

3. The response capacity against CBRN attacks	16
--	-----------

EPISOUTH PLUS	16
---------------	----

ASHT II	18
---------	----

ORCHIDS	20
---------	----

MASH	22
------	----

List of Generic Preparedness Planning Actions	24
--	-----------



EPISOUTH PLUS

The EpiSouth Network and the EpiSouth-Plus Project

Effective vaccines exist for only a few public health threats. In the absence of the capacity for mass vaccinations, surveillance is the best (and frequently the only) tool that public health officials may use to contain the spread of infectious diseases.

"In order to respond quickly and effectively, we need to be able to anticipate what threats we will need to deal with and define the tools, instruments and approaches that can help to face these expected, but also unexpected, public health threats which may also come from outside the EU" says Maria Grazia Dente of the Italian National Institute of Health in Rome, coordinator of the EpiSouth-Plus Project, a new challenge for the EpiSouth Network, founded in 2006.

Infectious agents do not recognise geographical or political boundaries. Whether carried by migratory populations, cargo trade or wildlife, health threats will always be capable of crossing into and out of the EU. "If we only monitor within the EU, we will only know about these threats once they occur within EU borders" says Dente. "We need a global, interoperable early detection system for the benefit of European and Neighbouring countries so we can respond more effectively to public health threats."

A Common Ecosystem

Joining together countries from across the entire Mediterranean region, the EpiSouth Network is forging links and allowing the exchange of information between countries both within and outside the EU, including Albania, Algeria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Palestine, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. As of June 2010, the EpiSouth network includes 27 countries. The majority of these nations are in fact not EU Member States; "their collaboration and support is crucial", says Dente, "to ensure and enhance, for example, the surveillance of diseases that could spread to the EU."

Between 2006 and 2010 more than 100 epidemiologists and public health officials joined EpiSouth, creating a Network of public health institutions throughout the Mediterranean, implementing training in field and applied epidemiology and establishing a new cross-border web-based epidemic intelligence platform to share relevant public health information. In so doing, EpiSouth has established an unprecedented

framework for collaboration on epidemiological issues to improve surveillance, communication and training throughout the Mediterranean and South East Europe.

As part of the work done from 2006–2010, EpiSouth developed a strategic plan for the epidemiological monitoring of a select list of zoonoses (infections that can be transmitted to humans via animals and insects): Brucellosis, Leishmaniasis, Campylobacteriosis, Rabies and West Nile Virus. These are problematic throughout the Mediterranean and therefore all countries in the Region must cooperate in order to monitor, predict and respond to these health threats. West Nile virus, for example, is largely spread by migratory birds that travel between continents, oceans and the different areas of the Mediterranean Basin (including the EU). Through the EpiSouth secured platform, it was and is possible for the EpiSouth partners to share information on these health threats. "Last year, with the AH1N1 flu pandemic, EpiSouth contributed" says Dente "to share information with countries outside the EU and this helped to better describe the epidemic situation."

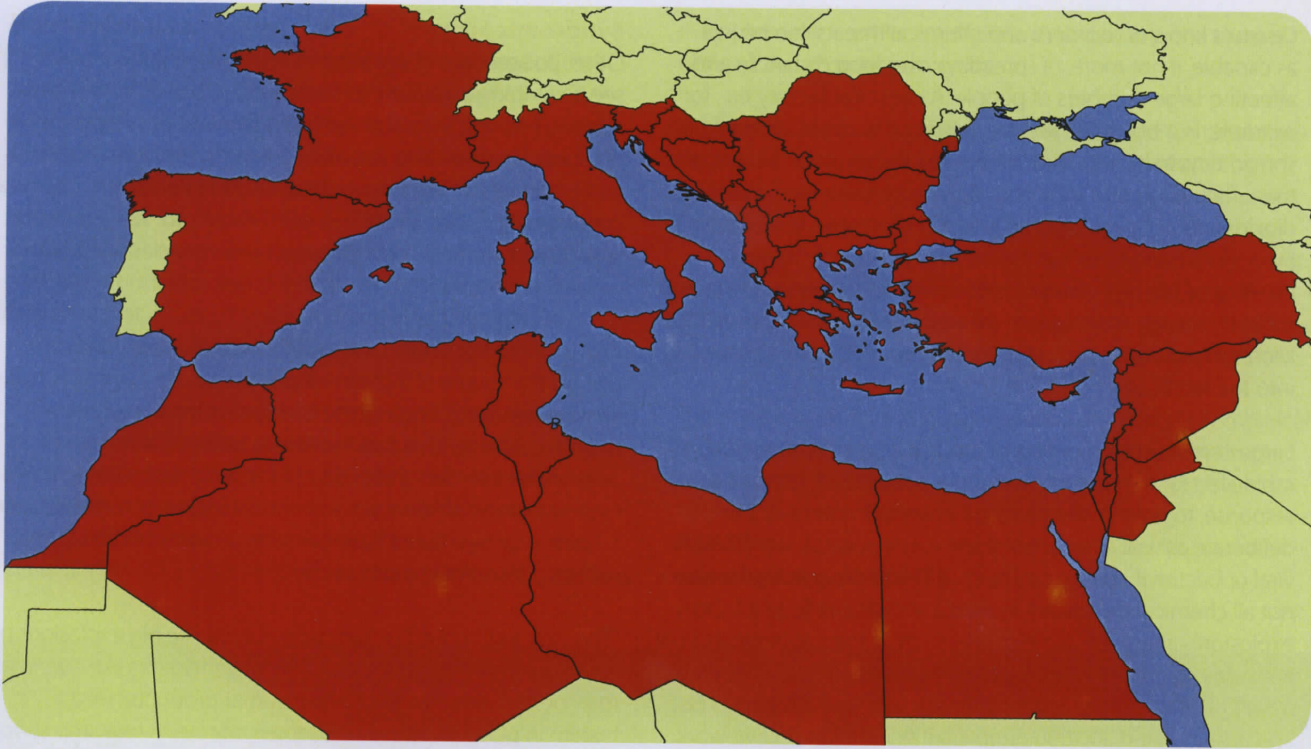
Mobile populations, including business travelers, tourists and immigrants, can also facilitate the spread of common public health problems. EpiSouth developed a strategic plan on vaccine preventable diseases and migrant populations, in which they assessed the status of these diseases in the Mediterranean and outlined specific policy recommendations to enhance the access of migrants to vaccination.

Filling Gaps and Building Bridges

The EpiSouth-Plus Project represents a new phase of the Network's activities. It started in October 2010 and will run for 30 months. DG SANCO/EAHC, EuropeAid and the national participating Institutions are the funders of this initiative, together with the contribution of the Italian Ministry of Health and ECDC.

Based on the work done since the beginning of the Network's activities in 2006, EpiSouth-Plus will fill the gaps and needs that were identified in the previous years.

In particular, the laboratories in the Mediterranean region will be better connected and coordinated to ensure the development of cross-border laboratory services, enhance complementarity among vertical and fragmented laboratory networks and help to overcome of national logistic and legislation constraints.



Coverage of EpiSouth plus project in the Mediterranean Region and Western Balkans

Common procedures in interoperable Generic Preparedness and Risk Management Plans will be promoted to reduce inter-country variability, enhance capacity building and cross-border concerted actions and facilitate the elaboration of national plans and communication strategies.

The sharing of alerts and epidemic intelligence information among EpiSouth countries will be enhanced through the development of interoperability with other Early Warning Platforms and especially the European Early Warning and Response System (EWRS), as forecasted by current EU legislation.

The requirements of the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR)-2005 will be considered in EpiSouth-Plus and their implementation at country level will be facilitated through a strategic document based on assessments and surveys on how national plans and legislations can interact and interfere with these requirements.

Strengthening Solidarity and Security

EpiSouth-Plus is unique among projects funded by the EU and other international initiatives in the field of health preparedness

in its focus on the Mediterranean region as a whole, including non-UE countries as well as all three WHO Regional Offices that cover the Mediterranean.

In addition to facilitating epidemiological communication and practical training, this regional approach strengthens solidarity and cohesion within the European Community and between EU and non-EU countries, especially for information sharing regarding cross-border public health threats and for the implementation of the IHR, which have among their challenges that of interacting with national procedures and legislations and that of facilitating a common international action in case of need.

Moreover, it reduces the disparities in the different approaches to early warning and preparedness by bringing together EU and non-EU countries in all the planned activities.

Ultimately, EpiSouth-Plus contributes to the stability of the region as well as to improving public health protection.

EpiSouth Plus
<http://www.episouth.org>