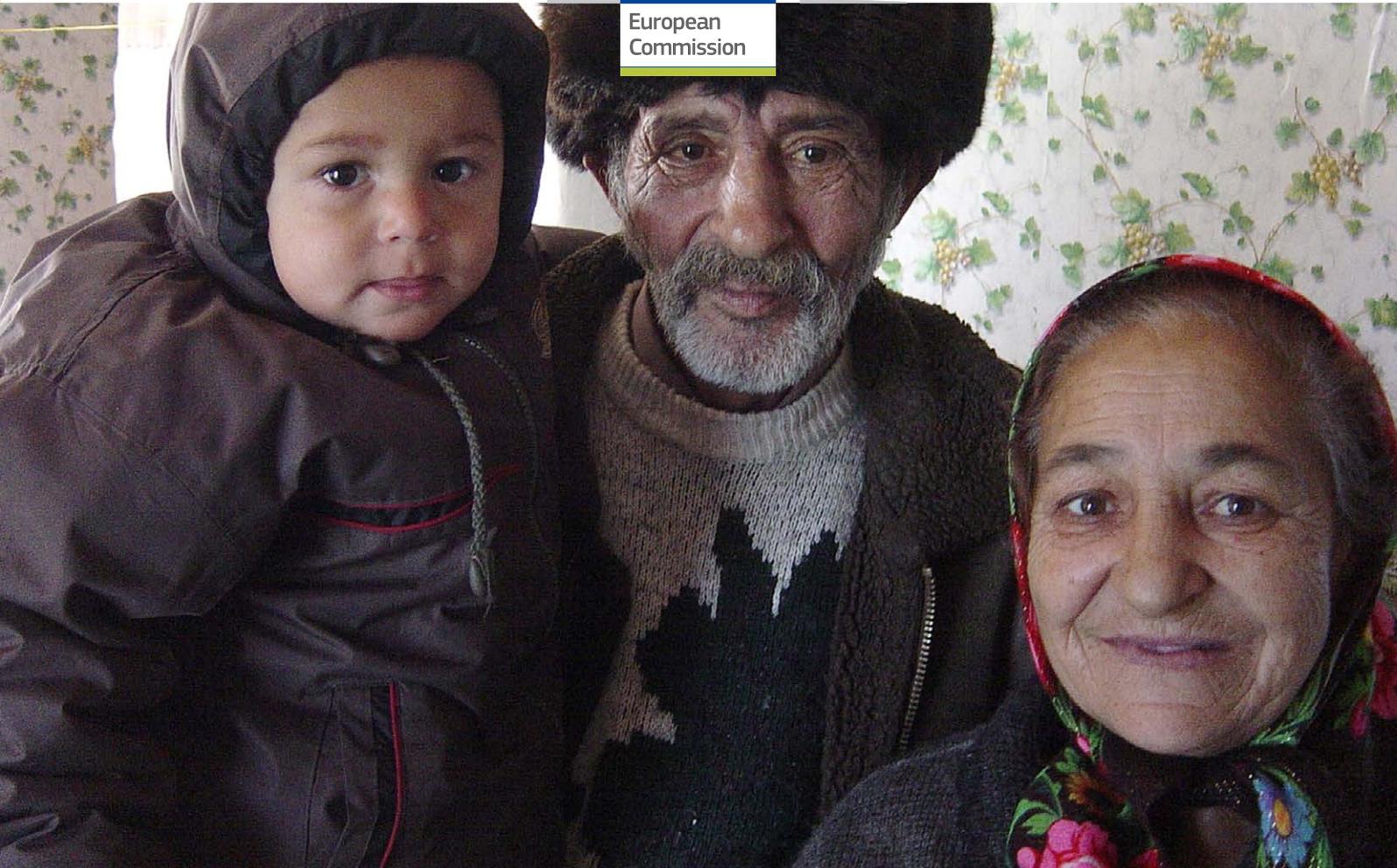




European
Commission



Action on **health**
inequalities
in the European Union

*The EU Health Programme's contribution
to fostering solidarity in health and reducing
health inequalities in the European Union
2003–13*

Consumers,
Health and Food
Executive Agency

The Network for the Control of Public Health Threats and other bio-security risks in the Mediterranean Region and Balkans:

EpiSouth Plus project and EPISOUTH Project

The EpiSouth Plus project aims to increase public health security in the Mediterranean region by improving responsiveness to public health threats at national and regional levels. It builds on the work of the original EpiSouth project by addressing public health gaps and needs at regional level to increase cooperation and capacity building.

What is the current situation?

While Europe is open to the increased circulation of goods and people, there is a downside to consider in the realm of public health security: an increased risk posed by global bio-security threats.

In addition, southern European and Mediterranean countries have common sea borders, experience significant migration movements and share common health concerns. It therefore makes sense to harmonise public health preparedness and responsiveness in the region as a way of handling global and trans-regional threats which could have an impact on public health.

What has the project achieved?

EpiSouth sought to improve collaboration in the field of epidemiological surveillance and response. Activities included preparing for cross-border emerging zoonotic infections, setting up an experts' network and promotion of capacity building. Key goals for EpiSouth Plus include creating a Mediterranean Network Lab Directory and improving risk management and early warning procedures.

The two projects have succeeded in establishing and maintaining a network of cooperation across the region. A weekly bulletin reporting on health issues and potential health threats was produced. A secure platform allows Mediterranean countries to share public health alerts – it is hosted at the ECDC/EpiS environment to ensure sustainability.

In addition, a Mediterranean Regional Laboratories Network has been set up and a number of experts have participated in training in areas such as early warning, field epidemiology and laboratory diagnosis for West Nile and Dengue.

The benefits of working jointly at EU level

The EpiSouth Network includes institutes of public health and/or ministries of health from 27 countries – ten EU Member States and 17 non-EU neighbours. The project has consolidated cooperation between national authorities and increased cooperation and trust. In the early phase, EpiSouth activities provided concrete recommendations for improving the access of underserved populations to immunisations, particularly migrant and Roma populations.

EpiSouth Plus builds on this collaborative framework to help national authorities implement the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005 – a legally binding commitment for all EpiSouth partners.

Facts and figures

Website

- www.episouthnetwork.org

Phase I

Budget

- Total – €2 308 722
- EC Contribution – €1 719 032

Duration

- 01.10.2006 – 30.09.2007

Phase II

Budget

- Total – €1 680 000
- EC Contribution – €900 000

Duration

- 15.10.2010 – 14.01.2014

Main beneficiary contact details

- Silvia Declich, Istituto superiore di sanità, Italy
Tel: +39 0649904266
Email: silvia.declich@iss.it

Number of associated partners

- 14