

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

EPISOUTH PLUS

The Meeting of the Heads of Laboratories was held in Ankara (Turkey) on 8-9 March 2012.

The EpiSouth Network includes 27 countries (9 EU and 17 non-EU, plus one EU candidate country). It is therefore the biggest inter-country collaborative effort of this kind in the region. Since October 2010, with the approval of a new project phase, the network focuses on increasing health security in the Mediterranean Area and South-East Europe by enhancing and strengthening preparedness to common health threats and bio-security risks at national and regional levels in the countries of the [EpiSouth Network](#).

[Work Package 4 \(WP4\)](#), co-led by the Institut Pasteur of France and the Refik Saydam National Public Health Agency of Turkey, aims to facilitate common threats detection through the establishment of a Regional Laboratories Network based on available resources in Mediterranean and South East Europe by mapping them, assessing their diagnostic and confirmation capacity, facilitating rapid access to laboratory facilities, and interacting with public health institutions and officials based at the national reference laboratories in the [countries involved in the Network](#).

Following the [experts meeting](#) held in Paris in January 2012, where, based on the results of a laboratory capacities assessment survey, the laboratories eligible to be part of the Mediterranean Regional Laboratory Network were identified, the [meeting with heads of laboratories](#) (17 out of the 21 selected laboratories) and representatives from other networks (QUANDHIP, ENP4, ENIVD, MECIDS) was held in Ankara on 8-9 March. The main outcomes of the meeting were the identification of possible interactions with other laboratory networks operating in the EpiSouth region, the presentation of the country-specific activities related to Dengue and West Nile, as well as the country-specific laboratory and epidemiological surveillance systems and laboratory strengths and needs, and the identification of the future training contents and trainees.

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The EpiSouth-Plus Project is led by the Italian National Institute of Health (ISS) and counseled by an Advisory Board composed by EC, ECDC, WHO and other international experts

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