

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

EPISOUTH PLUS

The first Steering Team Meeting of the EpiSouth Plus Project Work Package 7 was held in Rome on 20-21 July 2011.

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 (www.episouthnetwork.org).

Work Package 7 (WP7), co-led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Italian National Institute of Health (ISS), aims to improve capacities required by the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005), identified among those considered as priorities in the EpiSouth region. Given its focus, this work package is also complementary to the other technical Work Packages of the Project (WP4 – Mediterranean regional laboratory network, WP5 – Generic preparedness plan and risk management procedures and WP6 – Early warning system and cross-border epidemic intelligence) as the general aim is to reinforce surveillance and response to health threats.

The first Steering Team Meeting of WP7 took place in Rome on 20-21 July and was attended by 18 people. Participants included the WP7 Steering Team and representatives of all the Work Packages of the project. During this meeting, data for the EpiSouth region concerning IHR implementation collected by WHO were presented and participants from nine countries provided their views on the national priorities for the acquisition of IHR core capacities.

The main outputs of the meeting were the identification of a priority area on which WP7 should focus (coordination of surveillance and response between Points of Entry and National systems) and the development of a framework for collaboration between WP7 and other WPs in the context of IHR 2005 implementation.

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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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The content of this press release are the sole responsibility of the Italian National Institute of Health and can in no way taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

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