Importance of collaboration and communication on epidemiological issues: success stories

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Content of the presentation

- **International perspective: EU external policies**

- **EU Financing instruments: success stories**
  - Health Programmes: BorderNet, EpiSouth
  - Instrument for Stability: MediPIET
  - Humanitarian aid and Civil Protection Mechanism: MIC
  - Research Programmes: ARMed

- **Communication**
International perspective: health in EU external policies

- EU Enlargement Policy: Candidates and Potential Candidates
- European Neighbourhood Policy Countries: South and East
- Regional initiatives (Union for the Mediterranean, South East European Health Network)
- Role in development of international health treaties (IHR, FCTC)
- EU bilateral agreements with third countries incorporating public health chapters
Health Programme 2007-2013
- overall budget: 321 mio €

Health for Growth Programme 2014-2020

Principles
- Financial tool at service of wider EU health policy (446 mio €)
- Promote synergies with other EU programmes (e.g. research and innovation, structural funds, programme for social change)
- Complements national health activities
- Cooperation with international organisations (WHO, OECD, IOM)
- Emphasise cost-effectiveness

Objective IV
- Common approaches and demonstrating their value for better preparedness and coordination in health emergencies in order to protect citizens from cross-border health threats

Participation of third countries
## Health Security Projects financed under the Health Programmes

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2003-2008</th>
<th>2008-2013</th>
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2005: establishment of ECDC
Cooperation to combat HIV/AIDS in Europe

**HIV/AIDS epidemic: still a public health concern**
- HIV epidemic stable in most of Western Europe, regional rise in Eastern Europe and Balkans
- >50 000 people diagnosed annually in EU and its neighbours
- >2 million people living with HIV/AIDS
- Most at risk groups mainly affected (IDU, MSM, SW, migrants)
- Women are growingly affected

**EU policy**
- **Communication** on combating HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries (2009): prevention, risk groups, priority regions, research and data: 60 actions
- **Implementation: HIV/AIDS Think Tank** (EU MS, neighbouring countries, International Organisations) and Civil Society Forum (40 groups, geographical and topical balance)
Success story: Bordernetwork

Highly active prevention: scale up HIV/AIDS/STI prevention, diagnostic and therapy across sectors and borders in CEE and SEE, *EC funding 1.243.475,00€*

**Prevention**
- SO1: Interdisciplinary networks;
- SO2: Bridge research to practice;
- SO5: Participatory approaches to community based prevention in migrants/ethnic groups;
- SO6: Quality Assurance in youth prevention

**Diagnostic**
- SO3: Early Diagnostic: Improve Access and uptake of HIV/STIs diagnostic services for most at risk groups;

**Treatment**
- SO4: Referral and treatment systems: Enhance intrenal links in referral systems and treatment of HIV Co-infections;
Interdisciplinarity and cross-border efforts by and for communities in Central, Eastern and SE Europe

**Participatory development and transfer**
Improve coordination of practices for better quality assurance in prevention measures and forge better links between diagnostic and treatment system

**Advocacy**
for human rights, equity and social inclusions of most affected social groups and communities

**Linking regions**
Boost regional networks in public health sector and mobilise civil society resources in order to increase the impact of local response

**Producing evidence**
Enhance links between epidemiological and behavioural research and sound interventions
EpiSouth (2006-2010): success story

Aim: creating a framework of collaboration on epidemiological issues in order to improve communicable diseases surveillance, communication and training across the countries in the area of Mediterranean and Balkans

Achievements:

- Networking
- Training in field epidemiology
- Cross-border epidemic intelligence
- Pilot assessment of vaccine-preventable diseases and migrant populations
- Assessment of cross-border emerging zoonoses
- Communication, cooperation & cohesion
Enlargement from an EU project ...
... to a Mediterranean project
in line with EU’s external Enlargement and Neighbourhood policy objectives and the Union for the Mediterranean initiative
EpiSouth Plus (2011-2013)

**Aim:** increase the health security in the Mediterranean area by enhancing preparedness to and detection of health threats, at national and regional level, building on the knowledge base of the previous project phase

**Objectives**

- Promotion of common procedures in interoperable Generic Preparedness and Risk management for the countries involved
- Enhance Mediterranean Early Warning Systems (EWS) allowing alerts and Epidemic intelligence information sharing among EpiSouth countries and developing interoperability with other European Early Warning platforms
- Production of a strategic document, with guidelines, based on assessments and surveys, to facilitate IHR implementation
- Establishment of a Mediterranean Regional Laboratories network

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CBRN Centres of Excellence structure

Mobilize local resources in the region, complimented where necessary by EU MS or International
Mediterranean Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (MediPIET)

- Political support for capacity building in the Region
- Proposal for training in field epidemiology by ECDC
- Technical Consultation Conference organised by the European Commission with support of ECDC in April 2012
- Aim to prepare the ground for developing a regional training programme for intervention epidemiology
- Focus on EU Enlargement and southern Neighbourhood Policy countries
MediPIET: Conference Conclusions

- Need for a trained workforce in each country and regionally
- Currently different levels of training capacities in place
- All countries expressed the need for a long term training programme
- Initiative needs to be flexible to complement national initiatives
- Initiative of Commission and scientific support of ECDC valued
- Project proposal to develop the start-up phase of MediPIET was submitted for funding under the Instrument for Stability; negotiation process to start
- Follow up and future support needed

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MediPIET: Concept

- **Creation of a regional network of field epidemiologists sharing experiences and best practices and easily mobilised in case of cross-border outbreaks and other health threats**

- **Sharing of knowledge and experiences between the EU and partners, gained in more than 15 years of training field epidemiologists in the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (EPIET)**

**Building blocks:**
- Establishing national training sites
- Training courses (theory and skills)
- Field work under supervision
- Supporting resources
EU humanitarian aid and Civil Protection Mechanism (MIC)

- Facilitate provision and coordination of MS assistance on voluntary basis to EU or third countries

  - **Response:** facilitating and supporting EU assistance and solidarity in major disasters and acute health emergencies (incl. transport)
  - **Preparedness:** training, exercises, exchange of experts, modules

- **Budget 2007-2013:** 189 Mio €
Pre-alert was issued in the following emergencies: OPT/GAZA – armed conflict (19.01), UK – snowfall (06.02), SPAIN – forest fires (22.07);
Monitoring status was issued for FRANCE – storm (23.01) and BULGARIA – earthquake (05.08);
Other Mechanism activations (requests for assistance not followed due to situation improvements):
FIJI - floods (16.01), TOGO floods (23.07), GUINEA - neutralization of toxic chemicals (03.08), ALBANIA – forest fires (13.08) and (11.09), GEORGIA – earthquake (10.09), 5 experts selected, mission cancelled as request was withdrawn.
Antimicrobial resistance

Global public health concern

- Increased morbidity & mortality: 25,000 deaths annually in EU
- Impact on healthcare facilities: 4 mio patients acquiring HAI annually in EU
- Significant societal financial burden: 1,5 billion € health care costs and productivity losses
- Limited information on AMR in SEE / SE Mediterranean

EU policy

- Communication: Action plan against the rising threats from antimicrobial resistance (Nov 2011)
  - Develop and/or strengthen multilateral and bilateral commitments for prevention and control of AMR in all sectors
  - Reinforce and coordinate research efforts towards development of new antibiotics, mapping of drug resistance, etc
Antimicrobial Resistance surveillance & control in countries of the Mediterranean region (ARMed): success story

Study protocol
- period: January 2003 – December 2005
- isolates studied: (S. pneumoniae; S. aureus, E. coli)
- EARSS methodology followed

Region-wide achievements:
- Trans-regional collation of epidemiological data:
  - antimicrobial resistance in key pathogens
  - hospital antibiotic consumption indications
  - infrastructure for infection prevention and control and practices

Identification of possible relevant drivers within 9 southern and eastern Mediterranean countries

Participating hospitals

Findings

- Significant resistance levels in all 3 pathogens
- Use of wide spectrum antibiotics correlated to resistance proportions in MRSA and 3GCREC
- Role of excessive bed occupancy and lack of isolation capacity
- Good hand hygiene practices hampered by infrastructural and socio-cultural issues
- Addressing the problem requires a multi-faceted approach focusing on:
  - Surveillance & feedback
  - Improved antibiotic stewardship
  - Infection prevention & control initiatives

Communication: importance of regional cooperation

Communication needs in cross-border event
- Strengthen coordination towards coherent messages and consistent communication strategies: role of Health Security Communicator network
- Linked to WHO IHR Communicators Network

Communication tools
- Detection of events communicated in through news media: Medisys
- EPIS EpiSouth: communication platform on epidemiological issues
- Role of ECDC

Alerting systems
- Role of IHR and WHO
- Role of EWRS

Risk management
- EU Health Security Committee: mandate strengthened under the new proposal, including risk and crisis communication
- Role in liaison and communication with third countries and international organisations (WHO) in major cross-border events
Thank you for your attention

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Cross border health threats in the EU and its neighbouring countries