

A photograph of the ECDC building, a modern multi-story structure with a light-colored facade and large windows. Several flags are flying from poles in front of the building, including the European Union flag and the ECDC flag. The image is partially obscured by a green diagonal graphic element.

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Preparedness, surveillance and scientific recommendations

Thomas Hofmann – Head of Section Emergency Preparedness and Response
IANPHI Europe 2025 Annual Meeting
Oslo, 8 October 2025

ECDC's new mandate and new legislation

Selected areas:

- Preparing for outbreak response
- Support to Incident Management Systems and PHEOCs
- Emergency preparedness
- International cooperations

Preparedness for outbreak response

The Early Warning and Response System (EWRS)



EWRS is a **rapid alert system** at Union level for Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health (SCBTH). *Article 2, 18 to 20 of Regulation (EU) 2022/2371*

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered an update of the SCBTH regulation (EU) 2022/2371, redefining the role of EWRS:

- Strengthen preparedness and response planning
- Enhance data security
- Adopt an 'all-threats' approach
- Support national crisis management capacities

Examples of planned new functionalities

- Support all-hazard communities (chemical, environmental, radio-nuclear and unknown)
- Develop an emergency coordination module to support decision-making and information exchange during public health crises, incl. PHSM
- Joint risk assessments

EpiPulse vs EWRS

Main stakeholders: Public health institutes, ECDC



EpiPulse

Case-based data

Notify: Individual cases or isolates

Event-based data

Notify: Outbreaks, clusters

Biological - infectious

Aim: Risk Assessment

Identification, assessment & communication of the risk

Main stakeholders: Ministries of health,
Health Security Committee,
European Commission - SANTE B2



EWRS

Early Warning and Response System

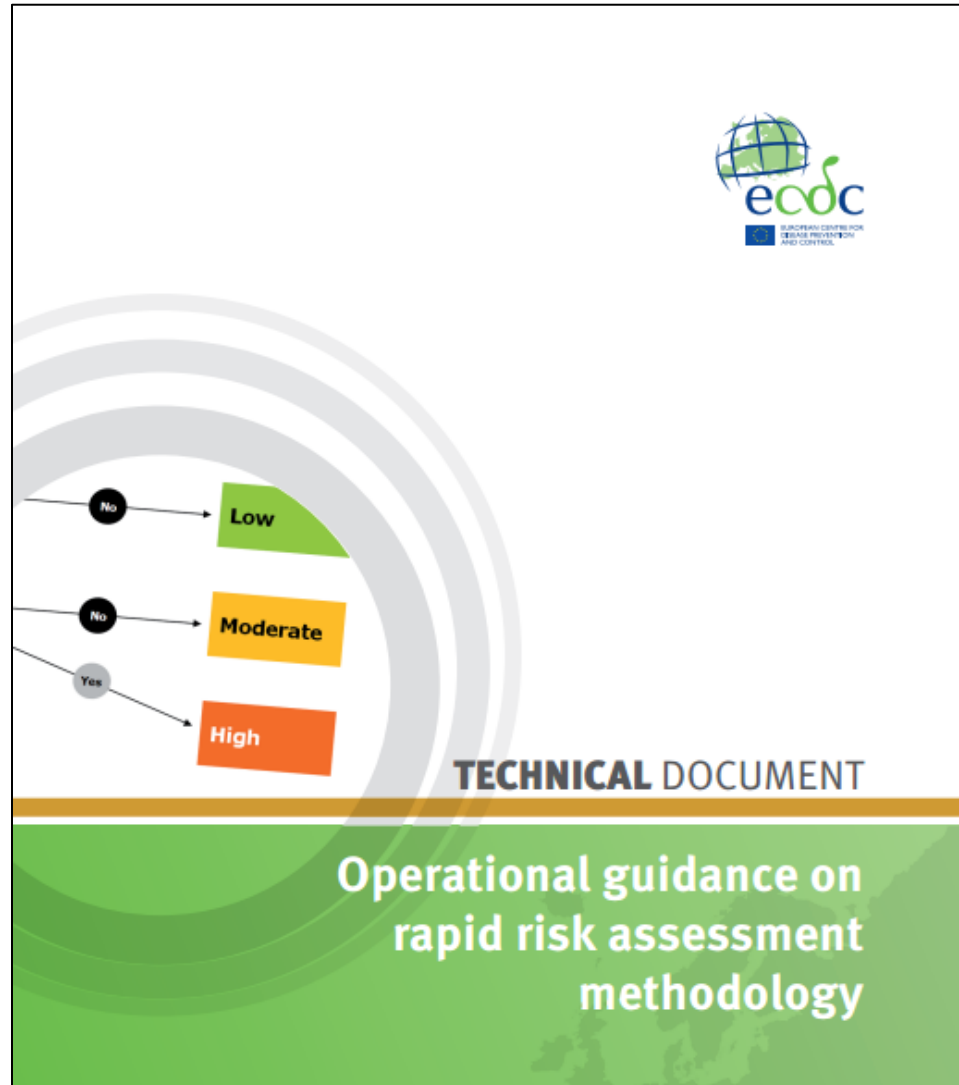
Notify: Outbreaks, clusters and
data for
contact tracing

All hazards SCBTH

Aim: Risk Management

Implementation of the control measures

Rapid Risk Assessment (RRA) methodology



RRAs: an ECDC flagship output

- Rapid assessment of public health threats
- Often at an early phase of a crisis
- Combination of **probability** of a negative event to happen and its **impact** on society or specific population groups
- Currently under revision to:
 - Take into account lessons-learnt from recent events and the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Implement Art. 20 SCBTH (Public health risk assessment) to facilitate **joint risk assessments with other EU agencies**

Other preparedness work for outbreak response



- Protocols for outbreak investigation
- Support contact tracing (guidance and tools)
- In-action and after-action reviews and simulation exercises



EU Health Task Force

- ECDC new mandate establishes the EU Health Task Force to provide effective **operational response and crisis preparedness support** to **EU/EEA Member States** (MS) and wider **global health security**
- **ECDC coordinates** the EUHTF with support and collaboration of the European Commission, EU/EEA MSs, EU partners and WHO-GOARN
- **Pools of experts** from: i) **ECDC**; ii) **ECDC Fellowship**; iii) **External experts**
- **Flexible body**, mobilised for **remote support** as well as **rapid in-country field deployment**
- Hosting **GOARN European Regional Partner meeting in Stockholm on 3-4 December 2025**

After-Action review of the public health response of Slovenia to the COVID-19 pandemic

GOARN

Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network

End of mission report
Mpox epidemic response, DRC
| Leonidas Alexakis | 2024

RAPID RISK ASSESSMENT

Health risks associated with the floods following the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant dam in Ukraine

12 June 2023

EU HEALTH TASK FORCE

Supporting emergency preparedness and response in the EU and globally

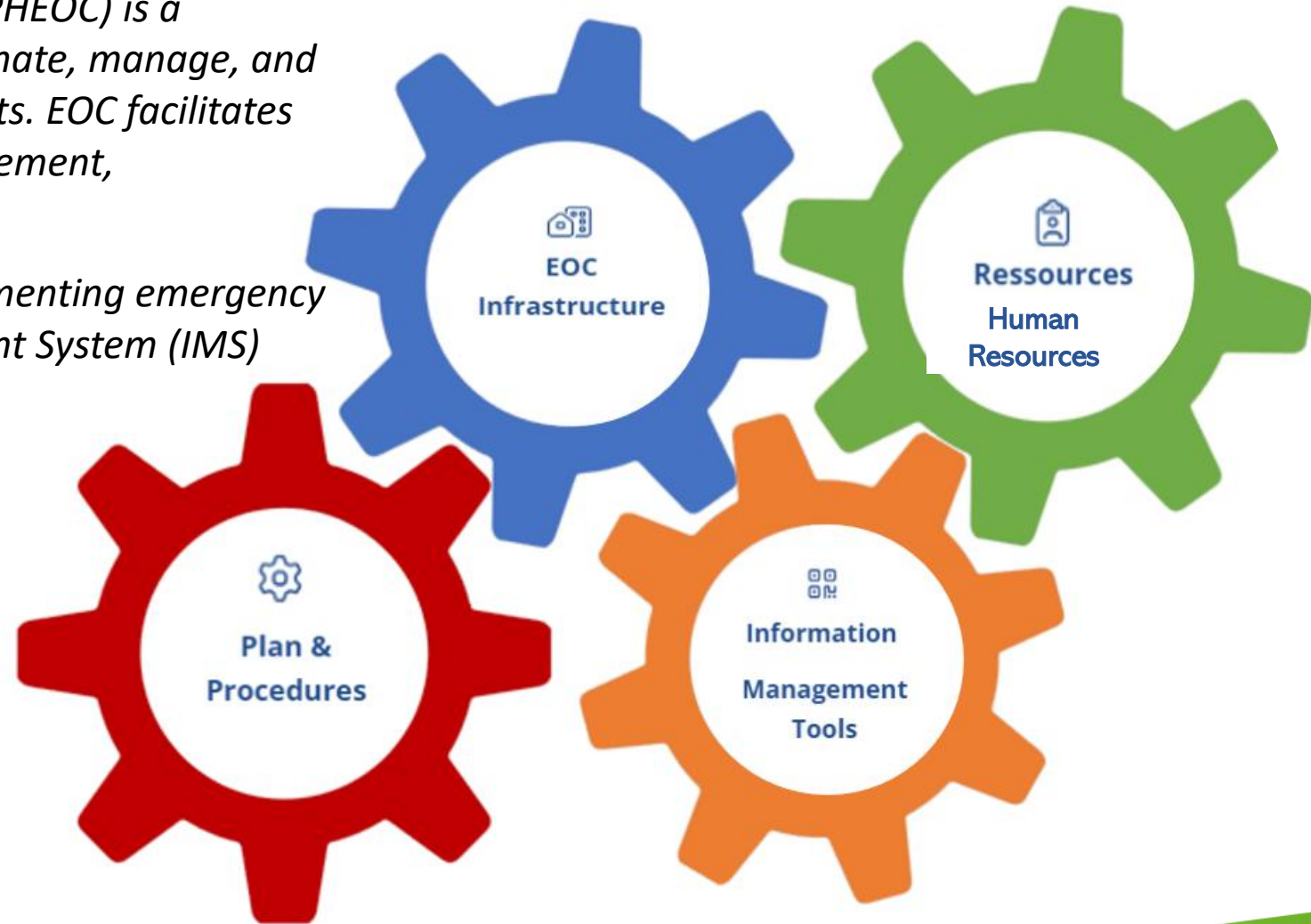


Support to Incident Management Systems and Public Health Emergency Operation Centres

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

A Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) is a centralised command and control tool to coordinate, manage, and support public health emergency response efforts. EOC facilitates decision-making, coordination, resource management, information dissemination during emergency.

EOC as a key function in maintaining and implementing emergency plans and activation of the Incident Management System (IMS)



EOC-NET European Regional Forum

Since the beginning of 2014, the **European EOC-NET** has been actively supporting EU Member States in identifying the need to establish their **Public Health EOCs**. We are conducting regular webinars, facilitated experience sharing and we already have identified national focal point in **28 EU/EEA countries**



World Health Organization

ecdc
EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

EOC-NET European Regional Forum

The network for Public Health Emergency Operations Centre in Europe

EOC-NET European Regional Forum
Conference, 10-11 November 2024

EOC-NET European Regional Forum
Conference, 10-11 November 2024



EOC - NET European Regional Forum

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Public Health Emergency Operations Centre Network (EOC-NET) European Regional Forum

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WHO Global EOC-NET

Across the European Region, millions face health emergencies annually, with over 100 public health events each year, posing significant threats to public health and economies. Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOC) operate throughout the emergency management cycle, serving as hubs for coordination, collaboration, and information sharing to prepare for and manage public health threats effectively.

WHO established the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre Network (EOC-NET) in 2012, to identify and promote best practices for Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs/PHEOCs). EOC-NET supports Member States in enhancing their PHEOC capacities, in line with the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005). In 2023, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and WHO/Europe started their collaboration to strengthen the EOC-NET engagement and activities at the European level.

see less

Goals

The European EOC-NET Regional Forum was established in November 2024 by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), in coordination with the WHO Health Emergencies Programme. The Network is a key regional platform for collaboration, communication, and the exchange of information for ultimately improving the quality and efficiency of public health emergency management. It encourages the sharing of experiences and best practices. Moreover, the Network seeks to build and sustain national capacity to manage public health emergencies at all levels of the health system. The Network will act as a platform for enhancing partnerships and the synergy of national, regional and global efforts to support countries in the WHO European Region.

> Rules

> Administrators & Members

Pinned Resources

EOCNET Europe concept note
English.pdf

EOCNET Europe concept note
Russian.pdf

Community Collections

EOC - NET European Regional Forum Secretariat

View in Hive Drive

ECDC Public Health Emergency (PHE) on mpox

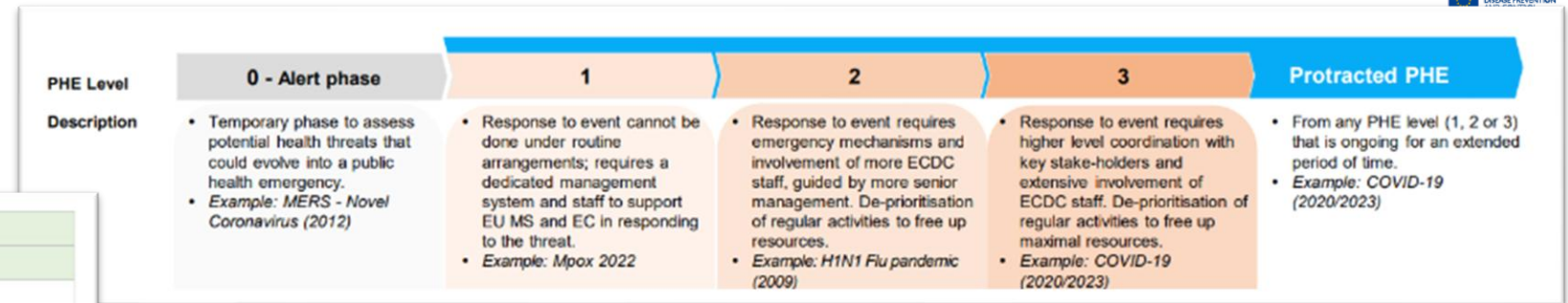


Table 2: Overview of roles for critical functions, by level

Critical function	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
PHE Strategic team		Director (chairperson) HoU PHF HoU DPR Chief Scientist HoU RMS* HoU DTS* Strategic analysis lead PHE Manager HoS Communication HoS European & International Cooperation *As required Additional functions as decided by the Director	
Strategic analysis lead		Chief Scientist	
Evaluator		Staff member	
Business continuity coordinator		Staff member RMS	
Work plan coordinator		Staff member DIR	
Human Resources coordinator		Staff member HR Section	
PHE manager	1 PHE manager from pool	Deputy HoU PHF or Deputy HoU DPR	HoU PHF or HoU DPR
Associate PHE manager		PHE manager(s) from pool	
Operations support group lead	Staff member EPRS	Manager member RMS	RMS HoU
Technical group lead		Principal expert from DPR or PHF	
Communication group lead		Staff member Comm	

Mpox PHE objectives:

- **Provide advice and recommendations** as well as timely information to MS, the EC and the public
- **Support MS to rapidly detect mpox clade I cases** and reduce opportunities for secondary transmission **in the EU/EEA**
- **Working with partners to support the response** in affected countries **in Africa**

ECDC rapid scientific advice

Advice and recommendations for public health authorities to navigate the mpox (clade I) emergency:

- **Travellers**
- **Vaccination**
- **Diagnosis, isolation of cases, and infection prevention and control**
- **Contact tracing**
- **Substances of human origin (SoHO)**
- **Surveillance**

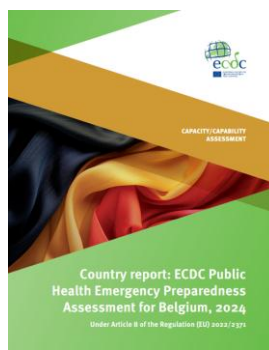
Emergency preparedness

EU Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health - Prevention, preparedness and response planning (SCBTH Articles 5, 6, 7 and 8)

- **A Union health crisis and pandemic plan** will be established by the European Commission and approved by the EU Health Security Committee (EU Health Crisis Management Body).
- This will be coupled with revisions of **Member States' prevention, preparedness and response plans**.
- **Member States self-assess** their prevention, preparedness and response planning every three years in synergy with the self-reporting obligations to WHO in the context of the IHR.
- In between, **ECDC will conduct assessment missions in Member States** every 3 years. ECDC will provide recommendations. Member States will have to develop action plans.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessment (Article 8 of the SCBTH Regulation)

*“Every three years, the ECDC shall assess the Member States’ state of implementation of their **national prevention, preparedness and response plans**”*



A. IHR-2005 capacities

Capacity 1.	IHR implementation and coordination
Capacity 2.	Financing
Capacity 3.	Laboratory
Capacity 4.	Surveillance
Capacity 5.	Human resources
Capacity 6.	Health emergency management
Capacity 7.	Health service provision
Capacity 8.	Risk communications and community engagement (RCCE)
Capacity 9.	Points of Entry (PoEs) and border health
Capacity 10.	Zoonotic diseases and threats of environmental origin, including those due to the climate
Capacity 11.	Chemical events

B. Additional capacities for EU/EEA MS reported as per article 7 of the regulation

Capacity 12.	Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and healthcare associated infections (HAIs)
Capacity 13.	Union level coordination and support functions
Capacity 14.	Research development and evaluations to inform and accelerate emergency preparedness
Capacity 15.	Recovery elements
Capacity 16.	Actions taken to improve gaps found in the implementation of prevention, preparedness and response plans

Phase 1 – desk review



Phase 2 – In-country visit



Phase 3 – ECDC assessment report



Phase 4 – MS action plan

Emergency preparedness and response training for workforce capacity building

- **On-the-job** training on preparedness and response for national stakeholders
- Targeting **mid-career** professionals in EU/EEA, West Balkans, and Türkiye

5 editions



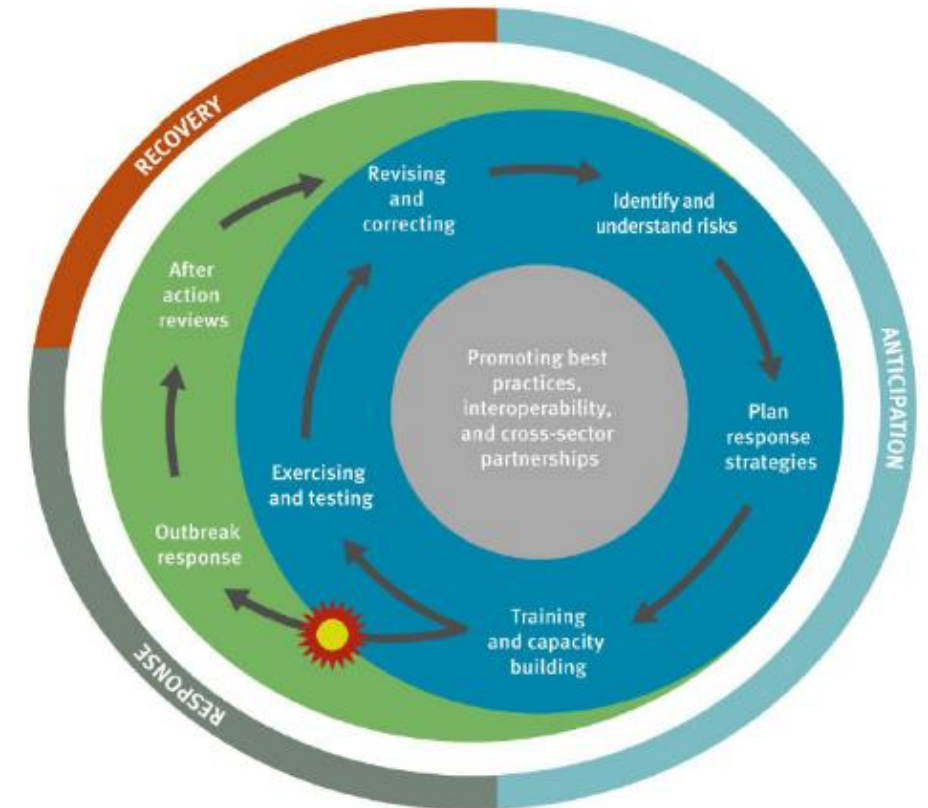
2025 2026 2027

each edition →

5 months

One-week face-to-face training
14 weeks remote online activities

ECDC Preparedness cycle



Source: ECDC

ECDC Fellowship Programme (EPIET & EUPHEM)



Following COVID-19, emergency preparedness and response will become integral part of the Fellowship Curriculum

- Competency based training – emergency preparedness and response now a part of the competency framework
- A week-long dedicated training module at ECDC
- An in-service training programme
 - Fellows encouraged to do a field project in emergency preparedness and response
 - EUHTF – fellows are an integral part
 - PHEPA missions
 - Invite fellows to sit in
 - Follow-up projects may be suitable for fellows

Other preparedness activities

- **Risk ranking**: identifying, prioritizing and understanding risks and vulnerabilities
- **Public health and social measures (PHSM)**: develop and appraise the evidence-base surrounding the effectiveness of infectious disease control and PHSM
- **Literature reviews**: rapid identification of available evidence and knowledge gaps on (emerging/evolving) public health threats
- **Guidance and tools**: climate change preparedness, SimExes and After-Action reviews
- **IANPHI** Pandemic Preparedness Response and Recovery Committee

International Collaborations

Africa CDC – ECDC Partnership



Funded by
the European Union

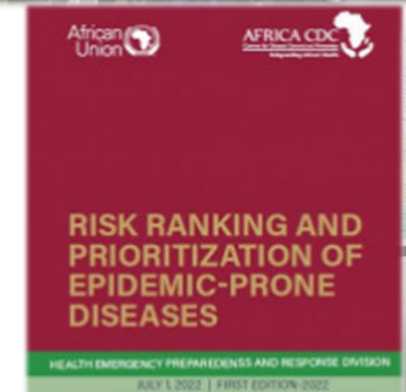
**Workforce
development**

**Preparedness
and response**

Surveillance

**Epidemic
intelligence**

Deployments



Health security strengthening in EU candidate and European Neighbourhood Policy countries



* The designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

**The designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

Health Resilience in the Eastern Partnership

Overall aim

To strengthen the health resilience of the EaP countries to major cross-border health threats.

Key objectives

- Assess and enhance public health emergency capacities of the EaP countries to respond effectively to major acute cross-border public health emergencies
- Develop interconnectedness among the EaP countries and increase contextualised knowledge and tools on health resilience and preparedness

Main outputs

- Regional simulation exercises
- Establishment of a regional community of practice for experts, stakeholders, and policy advisers who are part of the EaP's public health emergency systems
- Thematic webinars for the established community of practice
- Capacity-building workshops
- Elaboration and dissemination of an EaP public health preparedness compendium



**Funded by
the European Union**

EU Initiative on Health Security



Focus

The implementation is structured around three technical Work Packages to deliver the key results:

- Workforce-oriented capability-building;
- Epidemic intelligence, risk assessment, preparedness and response
- Integration into ECDC systems, knowledge-sharing, and networking.



Thank you

Preparedness and Response
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