



# Strengthening national pandemic influenza and other epidemic preparedness in Europe

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# The project agreement

- **Project title:** Strengthening national pandemic influenza and other epidemic preparedness in Europe
  - **Project agreement between:** WHO Regional Office for Europe & the European Commission, DG SANCO
  - **Project period:** June 2006-December 2008
  - **Budget:** €689 177,37
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# Background

- Pandemic influenza and infectious disease outbreaks in general are a threat to health of European citizens
  - At project start: Focus was mainly on the highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 virus strain
  - There was a need to assess the status of Members States' pandemic preparedness
    - To identify gaps & the need for international support
    - To raise awareness about pandemic influenza
  - A need to improve influenza surveillance in the region
  - At the end of the project, the world faced the first pandemic since 1968, i.e., the pandemic (H1N1) 2009
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# Aim and objectives

- Aim of the project
    - To reinforce pandemic influenza preparedness at all administrative levels in European countries, through assistance and networking in key areas such as planning, surveillance, infection control, outbreak response and risk communication
  - Specific objectives
    - *To assess and monitor the pandemic preparedness of Member States (MS)*
    - *To strengthen surveillance capability in MS*
    - *To strengthen risk communication capability in MS*
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# Methodology

- To achieve the defined objectives, the following approaches were used
    - Expert meetings
    - Workshops
    - MS consultations
    - MS review of material
    - Meetings with partner organizations
    - Piloting of material in selected MS
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# Collaboration

- Throughout the project, close collaboration has been ongoing with European and other international partners
    - The European Commission
    - The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
    - The US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
    - Experts in MS
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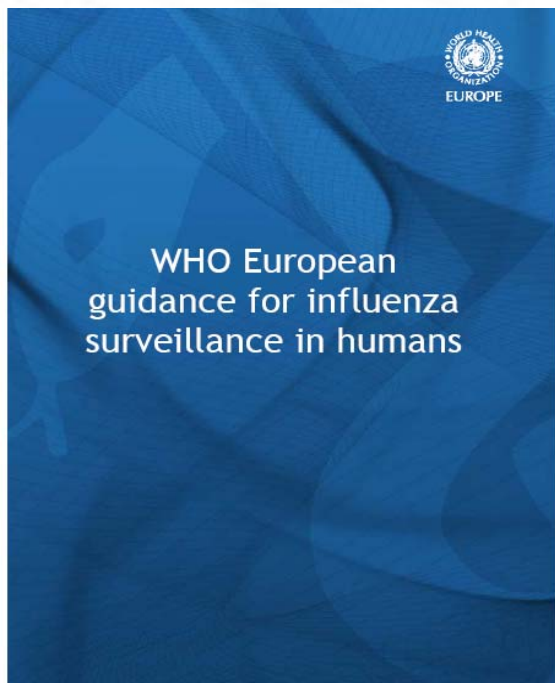
# Results (1)

- Assessment and monitoring of national pandemic preparedness
    - Joint WHO/EC/ECDC regional meetings on pandemic preparedness (Uppsala and Luxembourg)
    - European indicators for assessment of pandemic preparedness (not implemented yet due to pandemic)
    - Assessment visits to MS in EU and South Eastern European countries <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E92613.pdf> and <http://www.bag.admin.ch/influenza>
    - Collaboration with ECDC, EU (HSC) and other partners strengthened e.g. through regular liaison meetings (WHO/ECDC) and participation in HSC meetings
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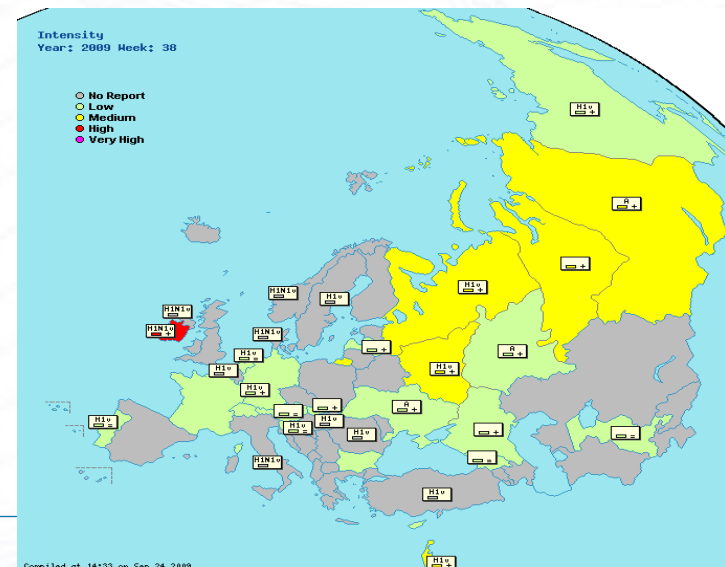
# Results (2)

## ■ *Strengthening influenza surveillance*

- WHO European guidance for influenza surveillance in humans  
<http://www.euro.who.int/document/e92738.pdf>
- Trainings and workshops on influenza surveillance
- EuroFlu influenza surveillance platform for all 53 WHO/Europe MS



[www.euroflu.org](http://www.euroflu.org)



# Results (3)

- *Strengthening risk communication*
    - *Development of training modules and curriculum on risk communication related to pandemic influenza*
    - *Training modules were piloted and material was finalized through Training of Trainers in 6 selected countries*
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# Relevance: this is being tested during the response to pandemic (H1N1) 2009

- This project contributed to strengthening pandemic preparedness in Europe as the three key areas of the project are essential to a country's ability to respond to a pandemic:
    1. Assessment of pandemic preparedness has had a positive impact on MS' ability to respond to the current pandemic, e.g.:
      - Gaps identified & opportunity to improve pandemic plans
      - Coordination mechanism strengthened (key people knew each other)
      - Early detection and investigation and case management
    2. Support in strengthening flu surveillance has had a positive impact on MS' ability to respond
      - When pandemic started MS had existing surveillance systems they could build on
      - Existing platform tailored to influenza and able to capture the complexities of the data
      - Europe can make an important contribution to global surveillance.
    3. Risk communication related to avian influenza has trained health authorities in communication principles applicable to the current pandemic
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# Future work

- Revision and improvement of pandemic plans according to the current situation and scientific knowledge is essential
    - WHO/Europe will support MS in this process and will link it to a detailed evaluation of the response in selected countries
    - The use of the pandemic assessment indicators in this work will be considered
  - Surveillance platform now tailored to the pandemic: support will focus on assisting MS with collection and provision of data on severe and fatal cases
  - Risk communication work will continue in collaboration with UNICEF
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Thank you for your attention

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