

Efficient tools for an EU-wide coordinated response to any public health emergency

To address quickly and effectively a public health emergency that is likely to affect several EU countries, authorities must work together. The European Commission has developed a number of tools to ensure a coordinated response across Member States.

SURVEILLANCE AND DETECTION OF SIGNALS

- **MediSys** is an online tool which collects articles, classifies them and detects breaking news.

EARLY WARNING AND RAPID ALERT

Systems are in place to exchange information, to receive and send alerts, and to trigger and coordinate responses:

- **EWRS** for communicable diseases
- **RAS-BICHAT** for events related to the deliberate release of chemical, biological and radio-nuclear agents
- **RAS-CHEM** for incidents including chemical events (expected autumn 2008)

SITUATION AWARENESS

- **HEDIS** provides Member States with an overview of the situation on identified health threats and includes various tools, such as communication tools (including a forum and a messaging service) and tools enabling the evaluation of real or hypothetical situations (such as mathematical models).

INTERNAL COORDINATION

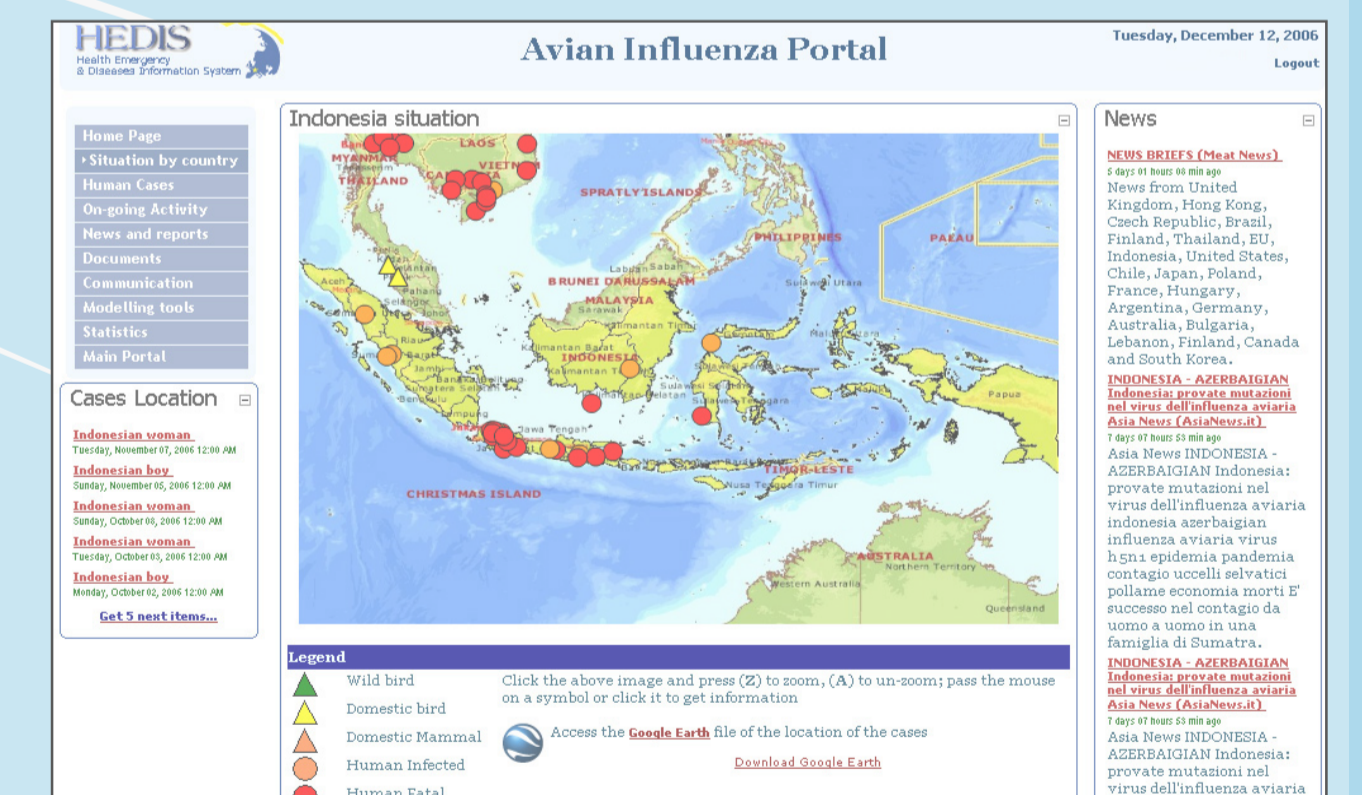
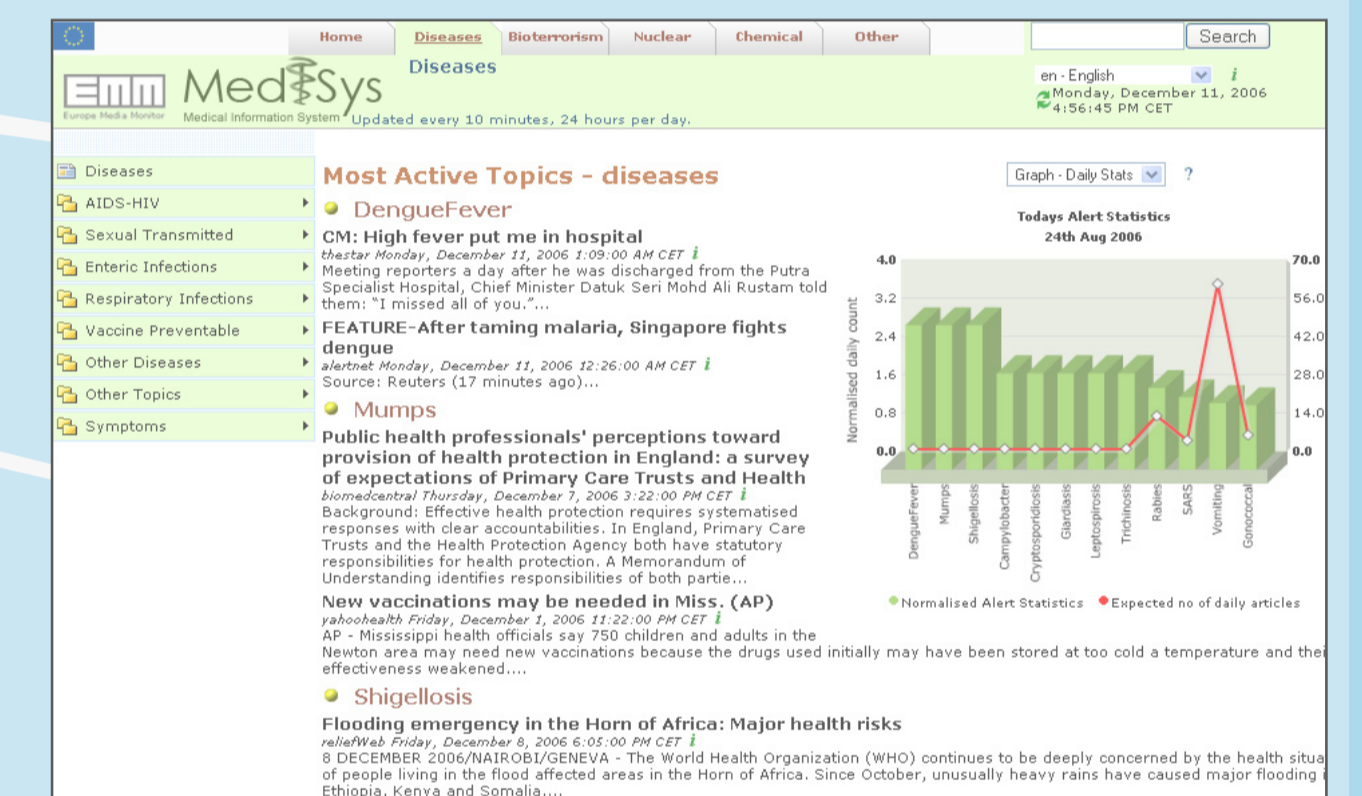
- The Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General (SANCO) has set up a **crisis intranet**. This is designed to provide updated information to its own senior management in order to facilitate decision-making during emergencies.
- SANCO's entire emergency management structure is linked to the European Commission's crisis network, called **ARGUS**, whose main function is enabling coordination between different services.

VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

- **MATRIX** is an online tool which allows Member States to assess their vulnerability against specific biological and chemical agents based on replies to predefined questions, and facilitates their evaluation of level of risk.

COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

- The **Health Emergency Operations Facility** is equipped with communication tools including an audio-conferencing system (up to 100 participants), a video conference (up to 32 contact points), and satellite phones.



MATRIX		Classification of events	
Description of agent and its properties			
Has a biological/chemical agent that can cause human disease been identified?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Is the event caused by a disease/agent on its high threat (or CDC A or B) list?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Does the disease or agent have a potential for human-human transmission?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Is the event caused by an identifiable agent or by an agent with markedly changed characteristics?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Localisation of agent			
Has the agent been found in a food product or any other goods that has been exported to other countries?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Are there indications that the agent is aerosolised and has been spread over a large area?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Is it likely that the disease or agent is present outside a defined area?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Perception of threat			
How has the relation of the event to an intentional release of biological agent been classified?	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible	<input type="radio"/> Confirmed
Are there factors that should alert us to the potential for renewed releases?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Has or could the event attract a high degree of international media attention?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Evaluation of resources and countermeasures			
Are additional external resources needed for an optimal management of the event?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Are containment procedures likely to be inadequate?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Effect on the population			
Have humans been exposed in a way that makes disease possible?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Are persons still being exposed to the agent?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Has the number of cases increased by more than 50% since full countermeasures were initiated?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Could or has the disease spread internationally?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Did the event take place in a densely populated area?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Possible
Calculate!			

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Health EU Portal – the official public health portal of the European Union <http://health.europa.eu>
- DG SANCO pages about health security and preparedness http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/com/preparedness/preparedness_en.htm
- Projects funded by the EU to enhance the capability of responding rapidly and in a coordinated fashion to health threats http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_threats/com/projects_threats_en.htm
- MediSys – public version <http://medusa.jrc.it/>
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) <http://www.ecdc.eu.int/>

