

This weekly bulletin provides updates on threats monitored by ECDC.

## I. Executive summary

### EU Threats

---

#### Influenza - Multistate (Europe) - Monitoring 2013-2014 season

Opening date: 4 October 2013

Latest update: 20 December 2013

Following the 2009 pandemic, influenza transmission in Europe has returned to its seasonal epidemic pattern, with peak activity seen during winter months. ECDC monitors influenza activity in Europe during the winter seasons and publishes the results on its website in the Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview.

→ Update of the week

During the first week of 2014, of the 29 reporting countries, Spain reported medium and the other 28 countries low-intensity influenza activity.

### Non EU Threats

---

#### Chikungunya outbreak - The Caribbean, 2013

Opening date: 9 December 2013

Latest update: 9 January 2014

On 6 December 2013, France reported two laboratory-confirmed autochthonous cases of chikungunya in the French part of the Caribbean island of Saint Martin. Since then, local transmission has been confirmed in the Dutch part of Saint Martin, on Martinique, Saint Barthélemy and Guadeloupe. This is the first documented outbreak of chikungunya with autochthonous transmission in the Americas.

→ Update of the week

During the past week, a second case of chikungunya was confirmed in the Dutch part of St Martin (Sint Maarten) in Cay Hill. Number of reported cases have increased in the French Caribbean.

## Influenza A(H7N9) - China - Monitoring human cases

Opening date: 31 March 2013

Latest update: 9 January 2014

In March 2013, a novel avian influenza A(H7N9) virus was detected in patients in China. Since then, the outbreak has affected 14 Chinese provinces, causing 156 cases of human infection, including 49 deaths. Most cases have been unlinked and sporadic zoonotic transmission from poultry to humans is the most likely explanation for the outbreak. Sustained person-to-person transmission has not been documented.

Since October 2013, 21 sporadic cases have been reported from previously affected provinces or in patients who visited such provinces prior to illness.

→Update of the week

Since the previous CDTR, eight new cases of A(H7N9) infection have been reported in Shanghai (1), Zhejiang (1), Guangdong (4 including one death), Jiangsu (1) and Hong Kong (1).

## Influenza A(H5N1) - Multistate (world) - Monitoring human cases

Opening date: 15 June 2005

Latest update: 9 January 2014

The influenza A(H5N1) virus, commonly known as bird flu, is fatal in about 60% of human infections; sporadic cases continue to be reported, usually after contact with sick or dead poultry from certain Asian and African countries. No human cases have been reported from Europe.

→Update of the week

On 8 January 2014, Canada reported a fatal imported case of influenza A(H5N1) infection. This is the first confirmed human case of A(H5N1) in North America.

## Middle East respiratory syndrome- coronavirus (MERS CoV) - Multistate

Opening date: 24 September 2012

Latest update: 9 January 2014

Since April 2012, 178 laboratory-confirmed cases, including 75 deaths, of acute respiratory disease caused by Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), have been reported by national health authorities. To date, all cases have either occurred in the Middle East, have had direct links to a primary case infected in the Middle East, or have returned from the Middle East. The source of the virus remains unknown but the pattern of transmission points towards an animal reservoir in the Middle East from which humans sporadically become infected through zoonotic transmission. Human-to-human transmission has occurred between close contacts and in hospital settings, but there is no evidence of sustained transmission among humans. MERS-CoV is genetically distinct from the coronavirus that caused the SARS outbreak.

→Update of the week

Since the previous CDTR, one new case has been confirmed in a 33-year-old healthcare worker in Dubai, who has been in contact with an earlier reported confirmed case. He is currently in a critical condition.

One additional fatal case has been reported from Oman in a 59-year-old man, who had a history of daily exposure to camels and who participated in camel race events.

## Dengue - Multistate (world) - Monitoring seasonal epidemics

Opening date: 20 April 2006

Latest update: 9 January 2014

Dengue fever is one of the most prevalent vector-borne diseases in the world, affecting an estimated 50-100 million people each year, mainly in the tropical regions of the world. The identification of sporadic autochthonous cases in non-endemic areas in recent years has already highlighted the risk of locally acquired cases occurring in EU countries where the competent vectors are present. The dengue outbreak in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, Portugal, in October 2012 further underlines the importance of surveillance and vector control in other European countries.

→Update of the week

During 2013, no autochthonous dengue cases have been reported in Europe.

## Poliomyelitis - Multistate (world) - Monitoring global outbreaks

Opening date: 8 September 2005

Latest update: 9 January 2014

Polio, a crippling and potentially fatal vaccine-preventable disease that mainly affects children, is close to being eradicated as a result of global public health efforts. Polio remains endemic in three countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria, and there are currently outbreaks ongoing in five countries: Cameroon, Somalia, Syria, Ethiopia and Kenya.

→Update of the week

Since the previous ECDC update, three new wild poliovirus 1 (WPV1) cases have been reported to WHO: two from Pakistan and one from Afghanistan. No cases have been reported so far in 2014.

## II. Detailed reports

### Influenza - Multistate (Europe) - Monitoring 2013-2014 season

Opening date: 4 October 2013

Latest update: 20 December 2013

#### Epidemiological summary

Of 305 sentinel specimens tested across 24 countries, seventy (23%) from 11 countries were positive for influenza viruses. The viruses circulating this season remain well-matched with the 2013-14 seasonal vaccine viruses. Thirty-six hospitalised laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported by Ireland, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

In the EU/EEA Member States, since week 40/2013, of 390 sentinel specimens positive for influenza viruses, 362 (93%) were type A and 28 (7%) were type B. Of 291 influenza A viruses subtyped, 149 (51%) were A(H1N1)pdm09 and 142 (49%) were A(H3). This distribution differs to that in North America where more than 90% of influenza A viruses are A(H1N1)pdm09.

On 24 December, the US CDC issued a health advisory to clinicians regarding reports of severe respiratory illness among young and middle-aged adults in November and December 2013, many of whom were infected with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (pH1N1) virus. Multiple pH1N1-associated hospitalisations, including many requiring intensive care unit (ICU) admission, and some fatalities have been reported. The pH1N1 virus that emerged in 2009 caused more illness in children and young adults, compared to older adults, although severe illness was seen in all age groups. While it is not possible to predict which influenza viruses will predominate during the entire 2013-14 influenza season [*in the USA*], pH1N1 has been the predominant circulating virus so far. For the 2013-14 season, if pH1N1 virus continues to circulate widely, illness that disproportionately affects young and middle-aged adults may occur.

Web sources: [WISO](#) | [ECDC Seasonal influenza](#) | [US-CDC health advisory](#) | [CDC Seasonal influenza](#) | [FluWatch, Canada](#) | [FluView, USA](#)

#### ECDC assessment

Based on geographic reports of widespread, local or sporadic spread from the majority of countries and the increasing proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza virus across 11 countries, indicative of influenza transmission, the season appears to have started slowly in EU/EEA countries.

#### Actions

ECDC will continue to produce the weekly influenza surveillance overviews during the northern hemisphere influenza season.

### Chikungunya outbreak - The Caribbean, 2013

Opening date: 9 December 2013

Latest update: 9 January 2014

#### Epidemiological summary

Cases reported as of 9 January 2014:

- Saint Martin (FR), 201 confirmed cases
- Saint Martin (NL), 2 confirmed cases
- Martinique, 48 confirmed cases and probable cases
- Saint Barthélemy, 25 confirmed cases and probable cases
- Guadeloupe, 10 confirmed and probable cases (with one imported from Saint Martin)
- French Guyana, 1 confirmed case imported from Martinique. Eleven suspected cases are being investigated.

#### ECDC assessment

Epidemiological data indicate that the outbreak that started in Saint Martin is expanding. Increasing number of cases are expected from the affected areas and the outbreak is likely to continue to spread geographically supporting the conclusions in the [ECDC risk assessment published on 12 December](#), stating that there is a high risk of chikungunya spreading in the Caribbean

3/14

region. The vector is endemic in the regions where it also transmits dengue virus. The Christmas peak in the Caribbean tourist season calls for vigilance for imported cases of chikungunya in the EU, including awareness among clinicians, travel clinics and blood safety authorities.

## Actions

ECDC published a [rapid risk assessment](#) on 12 December 2013 and an [epidemiological update](#) on 20 December.

## Saint Martin island



## Influenza A(H7N9) - China - Monitoring human cases

Opening date: 31 March 2013

Latest update: 9 January 2014

### Epidemiological summary

In March 2013, Chinese authorities announced the identification of a novel reassortant A(H7N9) influenza virus in patients in eastern China. Since then, 156 cases of human infection with influenza A(H7N9) have been reported from: Zhejiang (52 cases), Shanghai (35), Jiangsu (28), Henan (4), Anhui (4), Beijing (2), Shandong (2), Fujian (5), Hunan (3), Jiangxi (5), Hebei (1), Guangdong (10), Hong Kong (3) and Taiwan (2). In addition, the virus has been detected in one asymptomatic case in Beijing. Most cases have developed severe respiratory disease. Forty-nine patients have died (case-fatality ratio=31%).

Twenty-one cases have been reported since October 2013. Seventeen of these cases have occurred in previously affected provinces (Zhejiang, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Guangdong). Three of the cases have been reported in Hong Kong and one case in Taiwan. Both the cases in Hong Kong and the case in Taiwan have visited mainland China prior to falling ill.

**Web sources:** [Chinese CDC](#) | [WHO](#) | [WHO FAQ page](#) | [OIE](#) | [Chinese MOA](#) | [Hong Kong NHFPC](#) | [Hong Kong government news release](#) | [WHO DON](#) | [Taiwan CDC](#)

### ECDC assessment

Influenza A(H7N9) is a zoonotic disease that has spread in poultry in parts of eastern China, causing severe disease in humans. There is no evidence of sustained person-to-person transmission. Close to 3 000 contacts have been followed up, and only a few are reported to have developed symptoms, as part of three small family clusters. Many unanswered questions remain regarding this disease, e.g. the reservoir, the route of transmission, the spectrum of disease and the reason for an unusual age-gender imbalance.

There is an increasing number of cases reported from China since October signalling perhaps a new wave of the outbreak. However, this is not unexpected and the majority of patients live in areas where the virus has previously been detected and have had contact with poultry. There is no sign of sustained human-to-human transmission.

EU citizens travelling to and living in China are strongly advised to avoid live bird markets. The risk of the disease spreading to Europe via humans is considered to be low. However, it is not unlikely that people presenting with severe respiratory infection in the EU and a history of potential exposure in the outbreak area will require investigation in Europe.

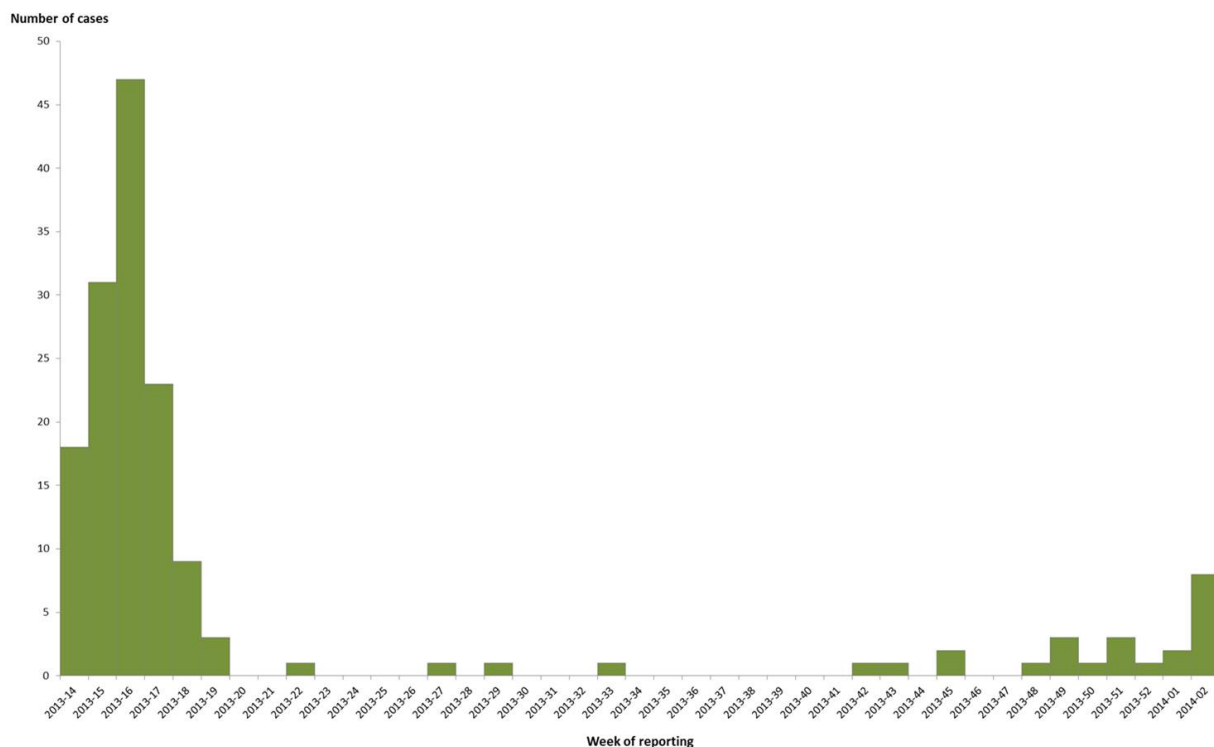
## Actions

The Chinese health authorities continue to respond to this public health event with enhanced surveillance, epidemiological and laboratory investigation including scientific research. ECDC is closely monitoring developments.

ECDC published an updated [Rapid Risk Assessment](#) on 8 May 2013 and a guidance for [Supporting diagnostic preparedness for detection of avian influenza A\(H7N9\) viruses in Europe](#) for laboratories on 24 April 2013.

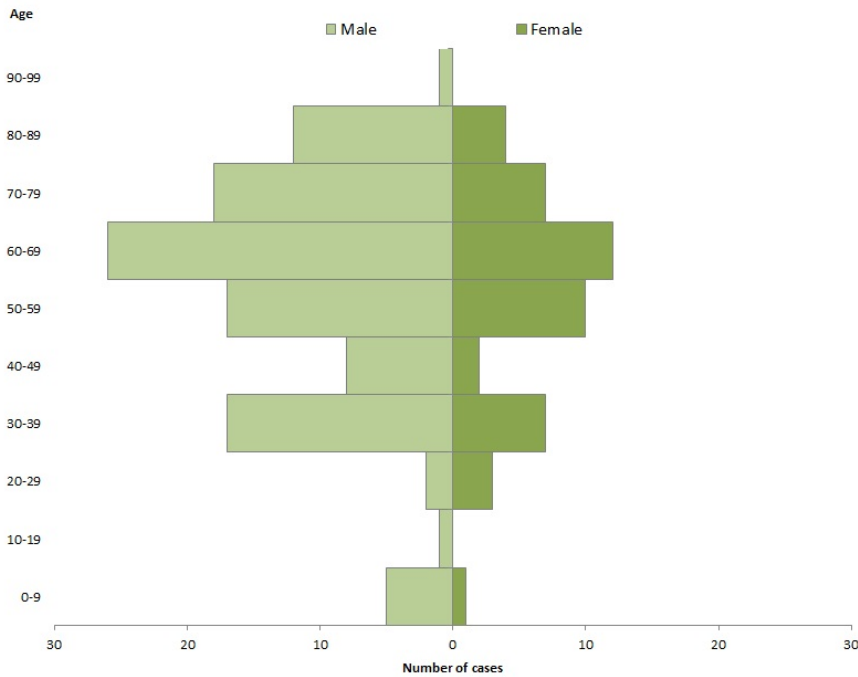
## Distribution of confirmed A(H7N9) cases by week of reporting, week 14/2013 to 02/2014, China (n=158)

Source: ECDC



Distribution of confirmed A(H7N9) cases by age and gender, 31/03/2013-10/01/2014, China (n=153\*)

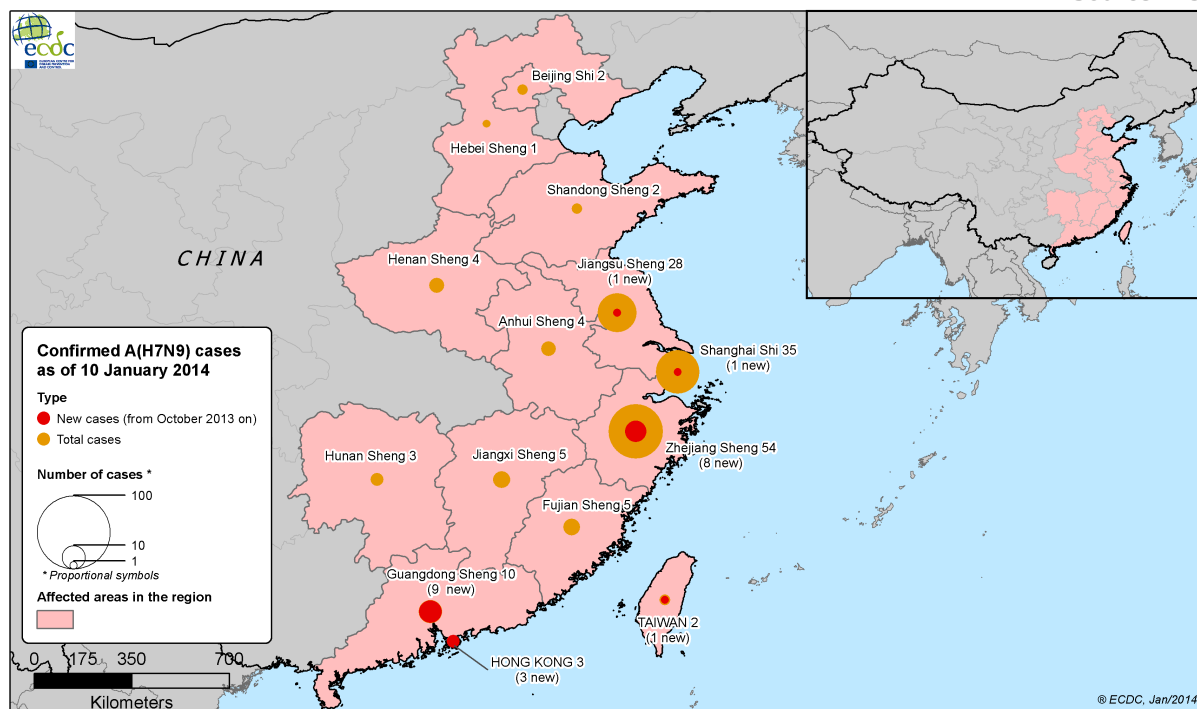
Source: ECDC



\* 5 cases where age or gender is missing have been excluded

## Distribution of confirmed A(H7N9) cases by place of reporting, week 14/2013 to 02/2014 (n=158)

Source: ECDC SRS



## Influenza A(H5N1) - Multistate (world) - Monitoring human cases

Opening date: 15 June 2005

Latest update: 9 January 2014

### Epidemiological summary

A fatal case of A(H5N1) was reported on 8 January 2014 in Canada. The case had onset of symptoms on 27 December 2013 during a return flight from Beijing to Edmonton via Vancouver. The patient developed symptoms while flying that worsened during travel. The patient was admitted to hospital on arrival in Edmonton and passed away on 3 January 2014. The clinical presentation, fever, malaise and headache, was consistent with meningo-encephalitis and did not involve the respiratory system which is unusual for A(H5N1) infection. Tests at a reference laboratory confirmed influenza A(H5N1) infection on 7 January. The case had not been outside of Beijing during the trip to China and had not visited live bird markets or farms.

Thirty-nine human cases with influenza A(H5N1) virus infection have been laboratory-confirmed worldwide since the beginning of 2013 and as of 9 January 2014. The countries affected during this period are Cambodia (26), Egypt (4), Indonesia (3), China (2), Vietnam (2), Bangladesh (1) Canada ex China (1). Among these cases, 25 were fatal, most of them in Cambodia (14). The last

7/14



case of A(H5N1) in China was reported in February 2013.

From 2003 through to 9 January 2014, 649 laboratory-confirmed human cases with avian influenza A(H5N1) virus infection have been officially reported from 15 countries. Of these cases, 385 have died.

In Cambodia, the reported incidence of human cases has increased in 2013 compared to previous years (26 cases in 2013 compared with 21 cases from 2005 through to December 2012). However, the case-fatality ratio among reported cases has decreased (54% in 2013 compared with 90% over all previous years).

Web sources: [ECDC Rapid Risk Assessment](#) | [Avian influenza on ECDC website](#) | [WHO updates](#) | [WPRO updates](#)

## ECDC assessment

The risk of secondary cases and co-primary cases among the close contacts of the Canadian case is considered to be very low since more than 10 days have passed since the onset of disease, transmission of A(H5N1) on board aircraft has never been documented, and there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission of A(H5N1) ever occurring. The risk of healthcare-associated transmission in Canada is considered to be very low.

The evidence points to an isolated case who was infected following exposure in China, although the source and mode of transmission has not yet been established. A(H5N1) is a strain of avian influenza that occasionally crosses the species barrier and infects humans. Sporadic cases originating in areas where A(H5N1) transmission has been documented in the recent past are therefore not unexpected.

Although the case reported from Canada had an atypical clinical presentation and exposure to potentially infected birds has not been established, these circumstances do not change the conclusions in the latest ECDC [Risk Assessment](#) of 12 January 2012. ECDC concurs with the recommendations made by the Canadian Public Health Agency which are in line with the ECDC recommendations that: Europeans travelling to China and South-East Asia should avoid live poultry markets and any contact with chickens, ducks, wild birds, and their droppings. This reduces the risk of exposure not only to A(H5N1) but also to A(H7N9). Poultry meat and eggs should be well cooked.

Hong Kong reported the world's first outbreak of bird flu among humans in 1997, when six people died. Most human infections are the result of direct contact with infected birds, and countries with large poultry populations in close contact with humans are considered to be most at risk of bird flu outbreaks. There are currently no indications of a significant change in the epidemiology associated with any clade or strain of the A(H5N1) virus from a human health perspective. This assessment is based on the absence of sustained human-to-human transmission, and on the observation that there is no apparent change in the size of clusters or reports of chains of infection. However, vigilance for avian influenza in domestic poultry and wild birds in Europe remains important.

## Actions

ECDC follows the worldwide A(H5N1) situation through epidemic intelligence activities in order to identify significant changes in the epidemiology of the virus. ECDC re-assesses the potential of a changing risk for A(H5N1) to humans on a regular basis.

WHO is now reporting H5N1 cases on a monthly basis. ECDC will continue monthly reporting in the CDTR to coincide with WHO reporting.

## Middle East respiratory syndrome- coronavirus (MERS CoV) - Multistate

Opening date: 24 September 2012

Latest update: 9 January 2014

### Epidemiological summary

As of 10 January 2014, 178 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV have been reported by local health authorities worldwide, including 75 deaths. The following countries have reported MERS-CoV cases:

Saudi Arabia: 141 cases / 57 deaths

United Arab Emirates: 12 cases / 4 deaths

Qatar: 7 cases / 4 deaths

Oman: 2 case / 2 death

Kuwait: 2 cases/ 0 deaths

Jordan: 2 cases / 2 deaths



UK: 4 cases / 3 deaths  
Germany: 2 cases / 1 death  
France: 2 cases / 1 death  
Italy: 1 case / 0 deaths  
Tunisia: 3 cases / 1 death

Twelve cases have been reported from outside the Middle East: in the UK (4), France (2), Tunisia (3), Germany (2) and Italy (1). In France, Tunisia and the United Kingdom, there has been local transmission among patients who have not been to the Middle East but have been in close contact with laboratory-confirmed or probable cases. Person-to-person transmission has occurred both among close contacts and in healthcare facilities. However, with the exception of a possible nosocomial outbreak in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, secondary transmission has been limited. Twenty-two asymptomatic cases have been reported by Saudi Arabia and three by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The 4th meeting of the IHR Emergency Committee concerning MERS-CoV was held on 4 December 2013. The Committee concluded that there was no reason to change its previous advice to the Director-General. Their unanimous decision was that the conditions for a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) have not at present been met.

Based on events since its last meeting, the Committee emphasised the need for:

- investigative studies, including international case-control, serological, environmental, and animal-human interface studies, to better understand risk factors and the epidemiology
- further review and strengthening of such tools such as standardised case definitions and surveillance, and further emphasis on infection control and prevention.

**Web sources:** [ECDC's latest rapid risk assessment](#) | [ECDC novel coronavirus webpage](#) | [WHO](#) | [WHO MERS updates](#) | [WHO travel health update](#) | [WHO Euro MERS updates](#) | [CDC MERS](#) | [Saudi Arabia MoH](#) | [Eurosurveillance article 26 September](#) | [Oman MoH](#) |

## ECDC assessment

The source of MERS-CoV infection and the mode of transmission have not been identified, but the continued detection of cases in the Middle East indicates that there is an ongoing source of infection in the region. There is therefore a continued risk of cases presenting in Europe following exposure in the Middle East, and surveillance for MERS-CoV cases is essential.

The risk of secondary transmission in the EU remains low and could be reduced further through screening for exposure among patients presenting with respiratory symptoms and their contacts, and strict implementation of infection prevention and control measures for patients under investigation.

## Actions

ECDC's latest [epidemiological update](#) was published on 25 November 2013.

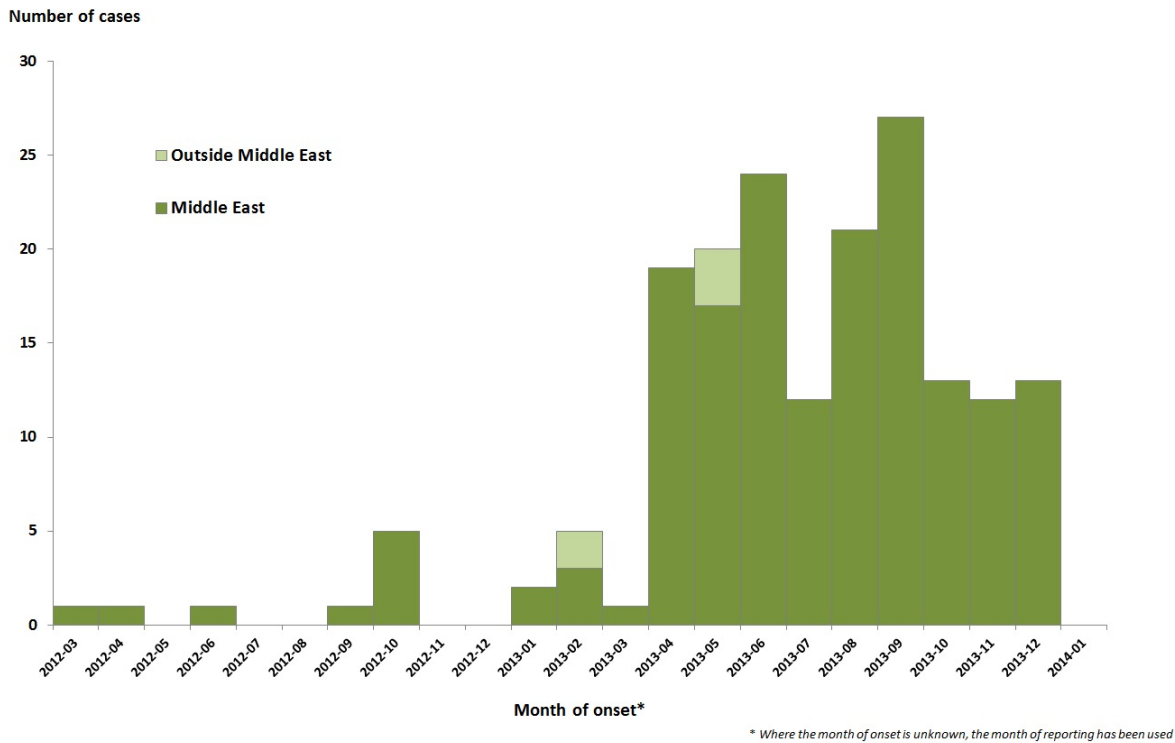
The latest update of a [rapid risk assessment](#) was published on 7 November 2013.

The first 133 cases are described in [EuroSurveillance](#) published on 26 September 2013.

ECDC is closely monitoring the situation in collaboration with WHO and EU Member States.

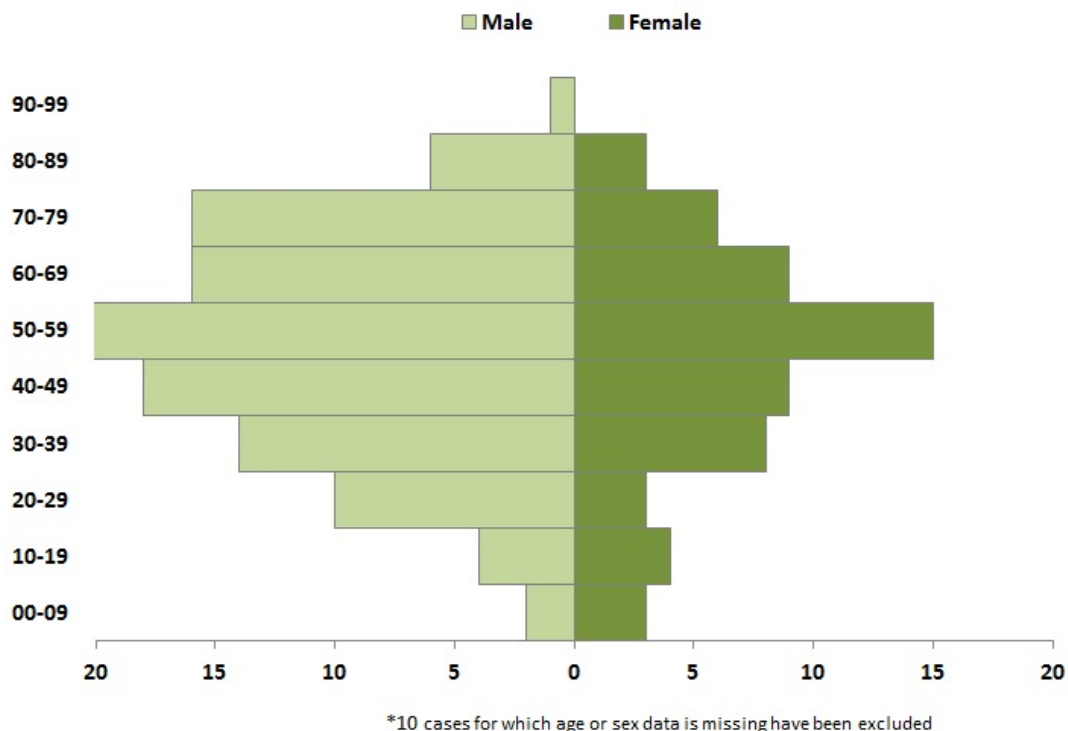
Distribution of confirmed cases of MERS-CoV by month of onset and place of probable infection, March 2012-10 January 2014 (178\*)

Source: ECDC SRS



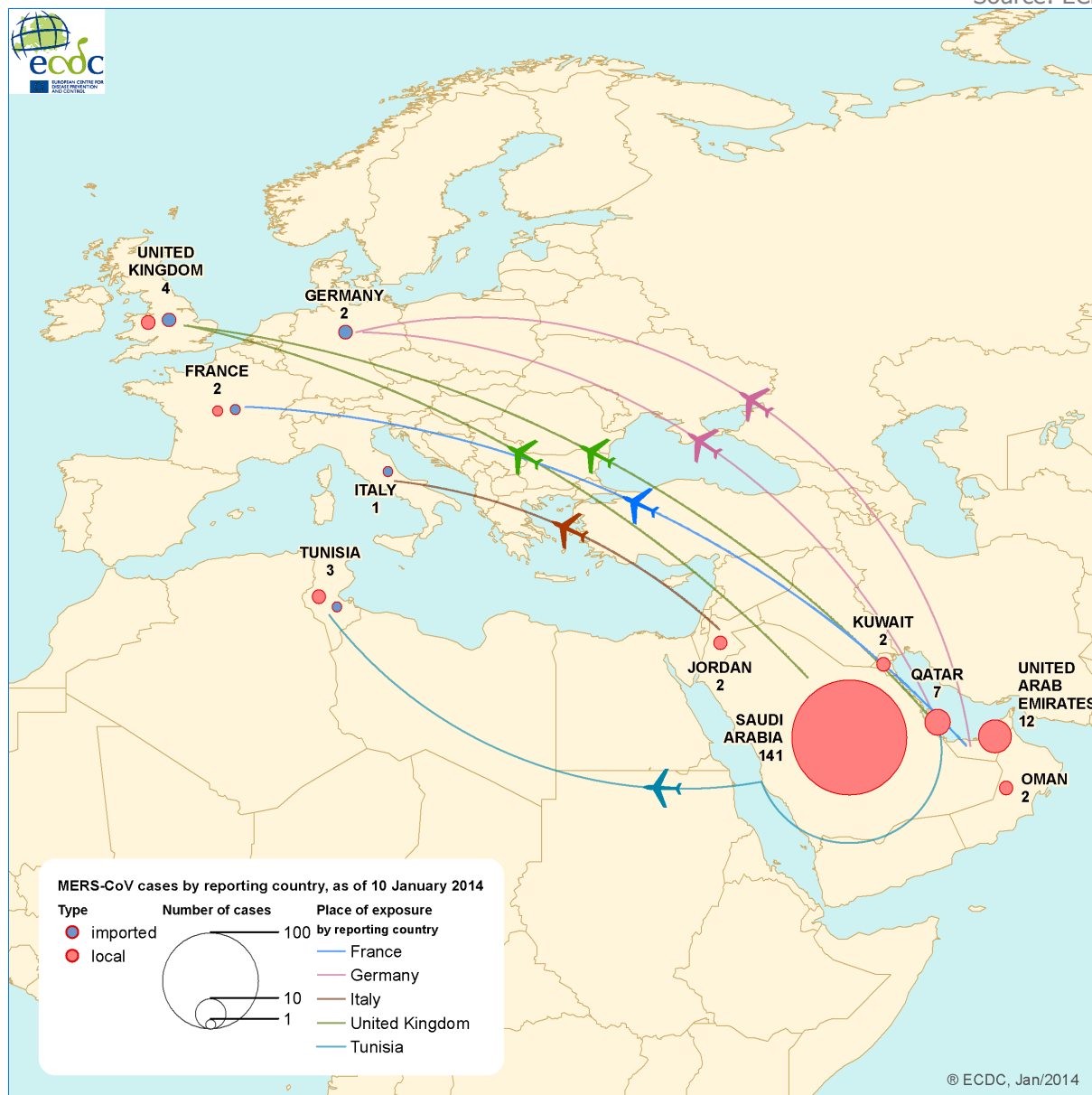
Distribution of confirmed cases of MERS-CoV by gender and age group, March 2012- 10 January 2014 (168\*)

Source: ECDC SRS



## Distribution of confirmed MERS-CoV cases by place of reporting, March 2012-10 January 2014

Source: ECDC SRS



## Dengue - Multistate (world) - Monitoring seasonal epidemics

Opening date: 20 April 2006

Latest update: 9 January 2014

### Epidemiological summary

**Europe:** No autochthonous cases have been detected so far in 2014.

**Asia:** Malaysia has been experiencing a severe dengue year, characterised by rapid increase in the number of reported cases since September, with high levels sustained to date. Cumulatively for 2013, there was almost a two-fold increase relative to 2012. Singapore has equally been severely affected. There was almost a five-fold increase compared with 2012. In Indonesia, Bali reported 5 870 cases in 2013, most of them in Denpasar. In Pakistan, Karachi in Sindh province continues to report dengue activity.

**Caribbean:** Cuba had 900 suspected dengue cases in 2013. Despite a recent declining trend over the past four weeks on the French Caribbean islands of Saint Martin, Martinique and Saint-Barthélemy, the dengue epidemic is still ongoing at the same time as a chikungunya outbreak.

**Americas:** High dengue activity is reported across most states of Mexico. In Central America, Panama is reporting dengue

11/14

activity.

According to a scientific opinion article published on the Nature website, the risk of dengue at venues in Brazil during the 2014 FIFA football World Cup may reach peak transmission season in Fortaleza, Natal, and Salvador states.

**Oceania:** More than 400 cases of dengue fever have been reported in Fiji since the start of November 2013. Nearly 200 cases were recorded during the first week of 2014. The strain most often seen in Fiji is DNV-1. The currently circulating strain is DENV-3 which has not been affecting the country for 20 years.

Queensland in Australia has reported cases in several affected areas with both DENV-1 and DENV-3 in recent weeks.

New Caledonia experienced a severe dengue year with rapid increase in the number of reported cases since late 2012. In addition, French Polynesia has been experiencing increasing levels of dengue since mid-2013, with high levels sustained to date (more than 1 000 cases reported in 2013).

**Websources:** [ECDC Dengue](#) | [Healthmap Dengue](#) | [MedISys](#) | [ProMed Asia-Pacific update](#) | [ProMed Americas update](#) | [WPRO updates](#)

## ECDC assessment

ECDC monitors individual outbreaks, seasonal transmission patterns and inter-annual epidemic cycles of dengue through epidemic intelligence activities in order to identify significant changes in disease epidemiology. Of particular concern is the potential for the establishment of dengue transmission in Europe. Before the 2012 outbreak in the Autonomous Region of Madeira, local transmission of dengue was reported for the first time in France and Croatia in 2010. Imported cases are being detected in European countries, highlighting the risk of locally acquired cases occurring in countries where the competent vectors are present.

## Actions

ECDC has published a technical [report](#) on the climatic suitability for dengue transmission in continental Europe and [guidance for invasive mosquitoes' surveillance](#).

From week 28 onwards, ECDC has been monitoring dengue on a bi-weekly basis.

## Poliomyelitis - Multistate (world) - Monitoring global outbreaks

Opening date: 8 September 2005

Latest update: 9 January 2014

### Epidemiological summary

For the year 2013, 372 cases of poliomyelitis have been notified to WHO worldwide compared with 223 for 2012. All cases were due to WPV1. Eight countries have recorded cases in 2013: Somalia (183), Nigeria (51), Pakistan (85), Kenya (14), Afghanistan (12), Ethiopia (6), Syria (17) and Cameroon (4). No cases have been reported so far in 2014.

Web sources: [Polio Eradication: weekly update](#) | [MedISys Poliomyelitis](#) | [ECDC Poliomyelitis factsheet](#) | [WHO mission to Israel](#) | [Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin](#)

### ECDC assessment

Europe is polio free. The last polio cases within the current EU borders were reported from Bulgaria in 2001. This was an imported outbreak and it was demonstrated that the WPV originated from India. The latest outbreak in the WHO European Region was in Tajikistan in 2010, when importation of WPV1 from Pakistan resulted in 460 cases. The last indigenous WPV case in the WHO European Region was in Turkey in 1998. An outbreak in the Netherlands in a religious community opposed to vaccinations caused two deaths and 71 cases of paralysis in 1992.

The recent detection of WPV in environmental samples in Israel and the confirmed and ongoing outbreaks in Syria and Somalia highlight the risk of re-importation into Europe. Recommendations are provided in the recent ECDC risk assessments:

[Rapid Risk Assessment on suspected polio cases in Syria and the risk to the EU/EEA](#)

[Wild-type poliovirus 1 transmission in Israel – what is the risk to the EU/EEA?](#)

## Actions

ECDC follows reports on polio cases worldwide through epidemic intelligence in order to highlight polio eradication efforts and identify events that increase the risk of re-introduction of wild poliovirus into the EU.

Due to the current situation of polio, the threat will be followed weekly.

The Communicable Disease Threat Report may include unconfirmed information which may later prove to be unsubstantiated.