



EVD-LabNet Newsletter Q1, February 2024

About EVD-LabNet

EVD-LabNet is a multi-disciplinary network of expert laboratories. The aim of EVD-LabNet is to strengthen Europe's laboratory capacity and capability to respond to emerging, re-emerging and vector-borne viral disease threats. The network laboratories are located in the EU/EEA, EU candidate countries. These laboratories have a strong basic and/or translation research competence in virology and human (reference) diagnostics and/or experience in diagnostic test development for viral pathogens. The network is a continuation of ENIVD that was founded about 30 years ago and has been known as EVD-LabNet since 2016.

Face-to-Face Training on Virus Culture and Characterization at the Institute of Virology, Vaccines, and Sera (Torlak) – Belgrade, Serbia

From 6 to 8 February 2024, 15 trainees from 11 EU and 4 EU-enlargement countries received training in virus culture, virus quantification, and virus neutralization at the Institute of Virology, Vaccines, and Sera (Torlak) in Belgrade, Serbia. Trainers from Torlak, The National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) in the Netherlands, and The University Hospital (Azienda Ospedale Università) of Padova, Italy have been teaching classes in the laboratory and in the classroom. The course was highly valued by the participants in the after-course evaluation. The number of course applications exceeded the number of spots available at the course. A spare list of applicants has been established for a potential future rerun of the course if funding can be secured.



Trainers and trainees from EVD-LabNet training at the Institute of Virology, Vaccines, and Sera (Torlak) in Belgrade, Serbia.

Scientific Support

ECDC is preparing a technical report addressing the “*The risk of tick-borne encephalitis virus transmission via substances of human origin*” and invited EVD-LabNet members from Erasmus MC, University of Helsinki, and the University of Ljubljana to provide input on the virus characteristics. The technical report should be published on the ECDC website during Q1 of 2024.

2022 External Quality Assessment (EQA) of Alphaviruses

In 2022 an EQA for molecular detection of emerging alphaviruses (including SINV, ONNV, MAYV, BFV, RRV, EEEV, WEEV, and VEEV) was initiated. The EQA recruited 23 participants. Individual results were reported back to the participants to support timely corrective actions if needed. In-depth analysis is currently ongoing and will be presented in a full technical report and manuscript for a wider audience, Q1 2024. The EQA was a collaboration between Aix Marseille University, ANSES-Maison-Alfort and RIVM.

2023 External Quality Assessment of Mosquito-borne Viruses

In 2023 an EQA for molecular detection of DENV, CHIKV, ZIKV, JEV, and YFV was initiated. DENV and CHIKV are more frequently detected in autochthonous cases in certain parts of the EU with established *Ae. albopictus* populations. These autochthonous cases are a result of limited local transmission following import of the virus through viraemic returning travellers. ZIKV, JEV and YFV are occasionally diagnosed in European labs in returning travellers depending on the epidemic status



of these viruses outside the EU. In the end, 36 laboratories from across Europe (24 countries) participated and submitted results. Analysis has begun, laboratories have received their results and certificates of participation. In-depth analysis is currently ongoing and will be presented in a full technical report and manuscript for a wider audience, Q1 2024. The EQA was a collaboration between Aix Marseille University and RIVM.

2024 Network Survey – Capability and Capacity of Laboratories for DENV, CHIKV, ZIKV, and CCHFV

In Q1 of 2024 32 laboratories from 28 countries across the European region completed a technical survey to help ECDC gather more details about the capacity and capability that laboratories have for diagnostics of DENV, CHIKV, ZIKV and CCHFV. The survey has closed, and a technical report is the process of being written and will be shared with all the laboratories that completed the survey.

EVD-LabNet in 2024 and 2025.

EVD-LabNet activities will continue into Q1 of 2025. It is foreseen that in 2025 the network activities will be incorporated in the workplans of the two to be established EURLs for public health operating in the scope of EVD-LabNet: The EURL for vector-borne viral pathogens and the EURL for emerging, rodent-borne and zoonotic viral pathogens. The EURL on vector-borne viral pathogens will be a consortium of RIVM (Bilthoven, the Netherlands, coordinator), INSERM (Marseille, France), AUTH (Thessaloniki, Greece), AOUP (Padova, Italy) and UL-IMI (Ljubljana, Slovenia). The EURL on emerging, rodent-borne and zoonotic viral pathogens will be a consortium of FOHM (Stockholm, Sweden, coordinator), IP (Paris, France), INMI (Rome, Italy) and NGGYK (Budapest, Hungary).

Upcoming activities.

Please keep an eye on our website [Emerging Viral Diseases-Expert Laboratory Network \(EVD-LabNet\)](https://europa.eu/emerging-viral-diseases-expert-laboratory-network) (europa.eu) for upcoming events including webinars and the next annual meeting (save-the-date for the week of 11 november 2024).

For more information, please contact at: EVD-LabNet@RIVM.nl

