

Extract from “Guiding principles for response to public health threats related to communicable diseases and diseases of unknown origin, at EU level”

Part I. 5. EU threat action plan

Following the circulation of the ECDC initial threat assessment through the EWRS, the Commission may call a EWRS teleconference to assess the need for coordinated measures in the EU and to prepare a MS, ECDC and EC joint plan of action for response to the public health alert, therefore covering risk assessment and risk management issues.

To ensure a coordinated approach, a European ad hoc response team is created, with participation of the main stakeholders (with as a minimum: affected MS, ECDC, SANCO C3) (see annex 1). Meetings will often consist of a teleconference with one or more of the following objectives:

- Update on the status of the outbreak investigation – to include epidemiological and microbiological perspective as needed, as well as veterinary and environmental elements;
- Specific attention may be given to the case definition in use, protocols in place for patient management, diagnostics and contact tracing, identification of the population at risk, and measures to prevent new cases;
- Update on the actions taken by all actors – the need for an outbreak assistance team (OAT) can be considered;
- Consideration of when, how and by whom information about the event should be made public. Consideration of media/public opinion risks associated with the event and development of appropriate media messages and/or defensive lines;
- Decision on who takes the lead for the follow-up of the continuous risk assessment related to the outbreak – the coordination role is assigned on a case by case basis, and may be undertaken by e.g., the index country or ECDC;
- The coordination of the actual management of the outbreak is always ensured by the Commission.

The minutes of such meetings as well as the final action plan are shared with all stakeholders through EWRS. Through a consultative process the affected MS, the Commission, and ECDC agree on the exact extent of ECDC’s involvement in supporting response activities, as foreseen in the European level plan of action.