

Memorandum of Understanding of the European Network for the Diagnostics of "Imported" Viral Diseases (ENIVD)

Through Ebola epidemics in Zaire and Gabon, introduction of West-Nile virus into the Americas, SARS, Chikungunya, and Avian Influenza over the past years, we all became aware that dangerous infections could be imported into Europe in a very short time. Because of such emerging problems and due to the great number of viral pathogens it is necessary to establish a European network of collaboration in this field. The improvement of diagnostics of these "imported" and emerging virus infections is the most important step in detecting the pathogens and dealing with them. Therefore a European collaboration in the area of diagnostics of these virus infections is necessary.

In twenty two meetings scientists from laboratories working in the field of diagnostics of "imported" viral diseases in Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, FYROM, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom have build up a network to improve the diagnostics of "imported" viral infections and have worked out objectives to be addressed in this collaboration:

1. Maintain a network of European laboratories working on diagnostics of "imported", rare and emerging viral infections of European Interest. Provide mutual help in the exchange of diagnostic samples, i.e. sera, viruses, methods, and information in order to improve diagnostics.
2. Identify those viral infections more likely to be imported and co-ordinate the objectives and identify laboratories, capable and willing to perform the rapid diagnostics (<24h) of an acute case, suspected to be infected with a viral haemorrhagic fever.
3. Work out recommendations for standardization, biosafety requirements and quality control in diagnostics laboratories involved in the diagnostics of such diseases.
4. Identify and operate standard assays according to defined quality control criteria.
5. Optimize limited resources by exchanging reagents, methodologies, and expertise.
6. Encourage regular contact within the network through meetings, exchange and training of personnel in biosafety and new laboratory techniques.
7. Open the network for members of other European laboratories.
8. Organize and co-ordinate international activities with the national or international organizations like ECDC, WHO, and CDC.

For further development and the integration of other European members, the project needs European funding in order to maintain the European network and to improve and standardise diagnostic techniques. This will offer an opportunity for technology transfer within the European community and result in better and more efficient diagnostics in the individual countries. In the long run, this initiative offers a chance of increasing the awareness of responsible medical institutions in each country of the EU regarding the problem of emerging and re-emerging viral diseases. By creating these surveillance activities, we will be able to better recognize and respond to threatening emerging and re-emerging diseases in the future. In supporting this group of experts, it will be possible to initiate a co-ordinated international effort to deal with these problems. This offers the chance for future interventions and an effective and close co-operation with the WHO, and also for the future implementation of proposed activities.

We welcome this collaborative network and we are willing to participate in this "European Network for Imported Virus Diseases". We will support this initiative as much as we can and it would be a pleasure for us to be of assistance in this concerted action.

Date

Place

Signature of collaborator

The obligations contained in the above manifest are acknowledged as binding on ourselves as the employer of the collaborating partner.

Date

Place

Signature for institution

STAMP OF INSTITUTION