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# MED: HEALTH, EPISOUTH PLUS DETECTION PROJECT STARTED

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(ANSAmед) - ROME, OCTOBER 15 - Today marked the start of the EpiSouth Plus project that will integrate the network of EpiSouth epidemiologists, active since 2006, to monitor health risks, especially infections, that are capable of moving between the various countries that face the Mediterranean, but which belong to different political regions and continents. There are two conventions of the European Commission that allocate to the Italian National Health Institute the network that involves the 27 Countries of the Mediterranean and Balkan areas (9 in the EU, 5 in North Africa, 6 in the Middle East and 7 in the Balkans).

Silvia Declich, director of the Epidemiology and Infective Diseases ward of Cnesps (Centro nazionale epidemiologico di sorveglianza e promozione della salute), explained that "The new EpiSouth plus project is an extension of activities previously fielded with the purpose of consolidation cooperation between very diverse countries and will also have, for the first time ever, its own network of laboratories of reference".

A statement added that the objective of EpiSouth Plus is to "strengthen health security in the Mediterranean basin and in the Balkans through the strengthening of preparation and the response to potential threats to health, in addition to their early identification at national and regional level in the context of the implementation of the WHO's IHR-2005 International Health Regulation".

The Project plans to "boost national capacities through the implementation of harmonised and coordinated actions on the basis of national preparation and response plans and identifying specific strategies that will ease the exchange of information, warnings and procedures between EU and non-EU countries involved in the EpiSouth network". The project also provides for the creation of a network of regional laboratories of reference; the consolidation of the use of the platform for "epidemic intelligence" and early warning; the promotion of national plans; the creation of guidelines and recommendations. (ANSAmед).

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