

## The EpiSouth Project in the Mediterranean and Balkans: monitoring the progress of Network development

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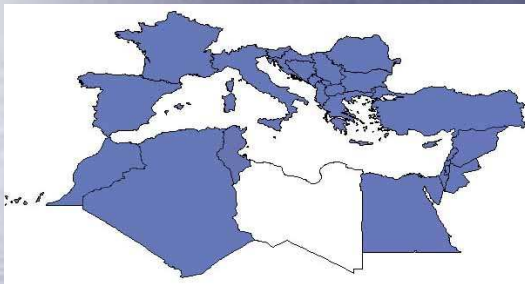


Figure 1. The EpiSouth Network

### BACKGROUND

The Mediterranean region shares common public health problems. In 2005, several European Public Health Institutes decided to elaborate a framework of collaboration on epidemiological issues for improving communicable diseases surveillance and control, communication and training in the Mediterranean and the Balkans. The Project, co-financed by DGSANCO and supported by the Italian MoH through the EpiMed Project, started in October 2006 and currently represents a network of epidemiologists from 26 European and non-European countries plus 6 collaborating institutions (DGSANCO, ECDC, Italian MOH, WHO-EURO, WHO-EMRO, WHO-LYO)



First EpiSouth Meeting - Rome March 2007



Second EpiSouth Meeting - Athens December 2007

### OBJECTIVE AND METHODS

In order to assess how participants perceive the progress toward the Network building a questionnaire was distributed and self-administered to all participants during the first EpiSouth Meeting (Rome, March 2007) and the second EpiSouth Meeting (Athens, December 2007)

### RESULTS

The questionnaire was compiled by 24 out of 65 (37%) and 43 out of 75 (57%) participants in Rome and Athens respectively. The majority of Athens respondents (83%) think that EpiSouth's goals were set in a **participatory fashion** compared to the 68% in Rome (Q2). The 83% and 55% of respondents in Athens and Rome, respectively, believe that EpiSouth is creating a **supportive culture** (Q8). The 80% in Athens sense that members are considerate **toward others** compared with the 70% in Rome. The 78% in Athens feel that **cohesion** is already solid, compared to half in Rome (Q10). The 65% in Athens and 68% in Rome believe that **opinions are confronted** explicitly and successfully. Half of participants both in Athens and Rome think that all members have significant **control over decisions**. The 80% and 70% in Athens and Rome, respectively, look at the Network as a great opportunity for personal and organizational **creativity and evolution** (Q14).

### CONCLUSIONS

Networking is vitally important to ensure active and balanced participation, information sharing and coordinated response to health threats. This assessment shows that critical aspects such as supportive culture, cohesion and creativity are perceived as growing by the EpiSouth Network's members.

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