

The ISCIII leads the Mediterranean and Black Sea network for training of epidemiologists to strengthen health security.

The National School of Health of ISCIII coordinates the European MediPIET project, which aims to improve health security in the Mediterranean and Black Sea Region by strengthening public health capacities to face possible biological, chemical, radiological or nuclear threats.

The Institute of Health Carlos III, through the National School of Health, leads the EU funded project MediPIET within the framework of the European Initiative of Centers of Excellence to mitigate biological, chemical, radiological or nuclear risks. The objective of MediPIET is to improve health security in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region by developing training and networking activities for the prevention and control of communicable diseases and/ or other threats posed by natural or manmade biological, chemical or radio nuclear risks.

This project, which was started in 2013 and in which the ISCIII has played a key role, will continue its development over the next two years with the leadership of the Institute, which has the support of the Spanish Foundation for Cooperation, Health and Social Policy (CSAI), the French Agency for Public Health and the Public Health Institute of Greece. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) provide scientific advice.

The program aims to strengthen the capacities of public health and surveillance institutions in the EU neighboring countries (North Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans and the Black Sea), through the creation of a network of scientific and technical cooperation in the field of early detection of and response on matters of public health, communicable diseases surveillance and CBRN threats.

The first of the nine training modules included in the above mentioned programme in intervention epidemiology for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea regions, began on July 8th. The opening session was conducted by Antonio Sarria, director of the School of Health, with the participation of Isabel Noguera, scientific coordinator of MediPIET and researcher of the School; Marieta Iradier, coordinator of the FCSAI, and Isabelle Daoust-Maleval, of the General Directorate of International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission.

Experts in epidemiology and public health at international level collaborate in the course, coming from different centers of the ISCIII: the National Center of Epidemiology, the National Center of Microbiology and the own National School of Health. Professionals from the Coordination Center for Health Alerts and Emergencies of the Ministry of Health, Consumption

and Social Welfare, the Ramón y Cajal Hospital in Madrid, the National Public Health Agency of France and the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control also participate. (ECDC). Twenty-two professionals from Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo¹, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco, Moldova, Montenegro, Palestine², the Republic of Macedonia of the North, Serbia, Tunisia and Ukraine. Turkey and Israel participate as observers attend this first course. Fifteen of them are part of the third cohort of students of the MediPIET project and will continue in this learning-by-doing programme over the next two years. The training is carried out from work places through public health activities, surveillance, outbreak studies, and evaluation of surveillance systems, research projects and international missions. The project plans to replicate the training in the participant's institutions, multiplying the transmission of knowledge in the participating countries.

The ISCIH and Spain have been pioneers in this type of programs for decades. Since 1994, 20 cohorts of intervention epidemiologists have been trained through the Applied and Field Epidemiology Program (PEAC) of the ISCIH. MediPIET is the regional equivalent of this type of programs, as well as the European Training Programme in Epidemiology of Intervention (EPIET).

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICI Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

² Instead of Occupied Territories of Palestine