On 8 July 2013, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) will launch a new version of the Epidemic Intelligence Information System for food- and waterborne diseases (EPIS-FWD) with new features that will contribute to multidisciplinary collaboration during FWD outbreak investigations.

As part of its mandate, ECDC identifies, assesses and communicates threats to human health from FWD [1]. ECDC launched in 2010 the first EPIS-FWD, a restricted web-based communication platform bringing together multidisciplinary experts to ensure the early detection and coordination of the response to multi-state outbreaks through the timely sharing of cross-sectorial information [2, 3]. Based on Microsoft SharePoint technology, this system gathers more than 350 epidemiologists, microbiologists but also policymakers and risk managers. The majority of them are from the 27 European Union (EU) Member States and the three European Economic Area (EEA) countries (Iceland, Norway and Lichtenstein); however, experts from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States also contribute actively to the information exchange (as a follow-up of Enter-net [3]). For the past three years, EPIS-FWD has proved to be successful in strengthening the collaboration between stakeholders and also in ensuring the timely detection and smooth coordination of the response to food-borne outbreaks [4, 5].

The second version of the EPIS-FWD platform will include, among other things, two new features. The first is the Molecular Typing Cluster Investigations (MTCI), an area dedicated to the assessment of microbiological clusters of *Salmonella*, Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and *Listeria monocytogenes* infections detected through The European Surveillance System (TESSy). This area is targeted at microbiologists from the EU/EEA countries while the information will be available to epidemiologists from all the affected countries. The second new feature consists of the Urgent Inquiries and Urgent Inquiries associated forums, which are the outbreak alert and investigation tools. The Urgent Inquiries are by default open to the entire EPIS-FWD network (all 38 present members of the network). The Urgent Inquiries associated forums are dedicated areas linked to the Urgent Inquiries to share information about the outbreak investigation among a restricted number of experts. For each forum, experts from the network are invited to contribute. In addition, nominated experts outside the EPIS-FWD network, such as food-safety experts, veterinarians, environmental experts, from the network countries or any expert or organisation outside the network can also be invited to join in a timely manner. These forums may include discussions, questionnaires, working documents for co-editing and line listings. These restricted forums should facilitate the exchange of information between the countries and sectors. In addition, the new version of the EPIS-FWD platform encompasses a geographic information system allowing the display of cases up to the Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) level 3 [6].

EPIS-FWD is part of the EU-wide systems to combat food-borne diseases. Effort should be made to integrate EPIS-FWD with systems such as TESSy, the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) and the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS), with the aim of strengthening multidisciplinary collaboration and consequently preventing the occurrence of human infections.

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