



Welcome Spring!



Editorial

Dear EAN Friends,

Welcome to the much awaited new edition of the EAN newsletter!

Sorry for the delay. We were waiting for spring to be actually here and the winter viruses to go away before sending out the Spring issue of the newsletter.

While waiting, we took the opportunity to revamp the layout. We hope you like the new design.

Since this is the first newsletter of the year, it contains updates about our plans for 2013.

Following our board meeting in Easter we are pleased to be launching soon a much needed member survey.

We are also already fully involved in organizing ESCAIDE 2013 which will be held in Stockholm

In the stories from the field you can read about the first major outbreak of dengue in the European territory.

Finally, as you may know the EPIET programme is constantly evolving and the Chief Coordinator will update us on the recent changes.

Enjoy the read!

Yours,

The EAN Board



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In October last year ECDC requested the support of one EPIET fellow to go to Madeira, Portugal, during the course of the first documented outbreak of dengue in Europe in modern history.

I have to thank my then co-fellows in London - Ettore, Arnaud and Victoria - for applying. Probably, without their encouragement, I would not have put my name forward: I had only just started my EPIET training, had limited experience with outbreak investigations, and the situation there seemed very complex.

When they called from ECDC I was asked to leave immediately. At the time I was in Edinburgh for the ESCAIDE conference, so I flew to Madeira instead of heading back to London. I arrived in Funchal (20+ degrees and sunny) all dressed up, with a winter coat and a scarf on.

I found myself almost on another planet: working in shirtsleeves at the end of the autumn, on the top floor of the Madeira Regional Health Agency, with giant cruise ships coming and going through the harbour in front of me, and the most beautiful, ever-changing sky throwing up hundreds of hues of blue in the course of the day.

Of course it was not easy: we were in the middle of a big outbreak, in an unprecedented situation, and the task was not only to investigate the epidemic, but also to support the local authorities in developing a new surveillance system and to support recommendations and public health actions for control and prevention of dengue. To complicate matters

further, Madeira was receiving a lot of attention from international press: for a place that lives on tourism, dengue is bad news for economics, as well as for population health.

Team work and good coordination are always mentioned in the first chapter of every epidemiology book, but a first-hand experience really gave me a measure of how important and challenging they are in real life.

Another lesson has been to manage tight working schedules under stressful conditions. It requires a clear mind and logical thinking at all times.

One of the main challenges for me was that we had to deal with many actors and stakeholders together. Supporting the measures for mosquito control could only be achieved through intense collaboration of the field epidemiologists with the entomologists, the laboratory staff, the statisticians, the public health experts, the engineers and the technicians, the regional and national authorities, and so on. Action would have been impossible without the integration of different data and pieces of information like a jigsaw puzzle.

Of course, I had to learn more on

dengue and other vector-borne diseases as well: my previous knowledge was confined to the exam of infectious disease in medical school. This might seem relatively unimportant, but vector-borne diseases like chikungunya, dengue, West Nile fever and malaria have already made a comeback in Southern Europe. Chances are, with climate change and global travelling, they might become more common in the future. As an Italian, who knows if this experience in Madeira will come in handy in years to come?

As for the added value of being an EPIET fellow, one of the initiatives of the Madeira health authorities was to publish a multilingual flier to inform tourists about the outbreak and to promote safety measures. To speed up the process, I asked my EPIET colleagues and friends to help, and in a matter of 48 hours we got back translations in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Russian and even simplified Chinese.

So, this has been my very exciting beginning of EPIET! When I look back to 6 months ago, however, my first thought is not about the difficulties we found along the way, but that all the people I worked with, both from Madeira, Portugal and ECDC, and the great team work we did together, and the amount I learnt in a very short time.

With hindsight, I am very happy I applied for the mission, and have learnt that I have to take every chance I am offered. Aside from the great working experience, I got to visit an incredibly beautiful island, refresh my Portuguese, make new friends and eat swordfish with fried bananas.



This year, we held the **Annual EAN Board meeting** in London. All six members of the board (Lorenzo, Arnaud, Chris, Giovanna, Georgia and Maria) spent 2 days discussing the issues around EAN, the network, the relationship with the EPIET programme office and some ideas on the way forward for our unique network. The usual issues surrounding the annual report, membership fees, ideas on how to fund travel grants, ideas on how to increase the engagement of the network members and such were discussed.



In brief...

Member survey to be launched soon: how to get to know each other even better

Since the start of EPIET in 1995 and the establishment of the EAN in 2001, there hasn't been any evaluation of who EAN members are. Where are we living now? What are our main fields of expertise? What are we expecting from EAN? What can we do to improve the network? So many questions unanswered... But not for long!

We are currently designing a survey to better know EAN members, and examine your satisfaction and expectations with the network. We are planning to roll out the questionnaire in May. So be ready and let's beat any previous response rates you had during outbreak investigations. We need you if we want to improve EAN!

2013 European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (ESCAIDE) - 5-7 November 2013, Stockholm, Sweden



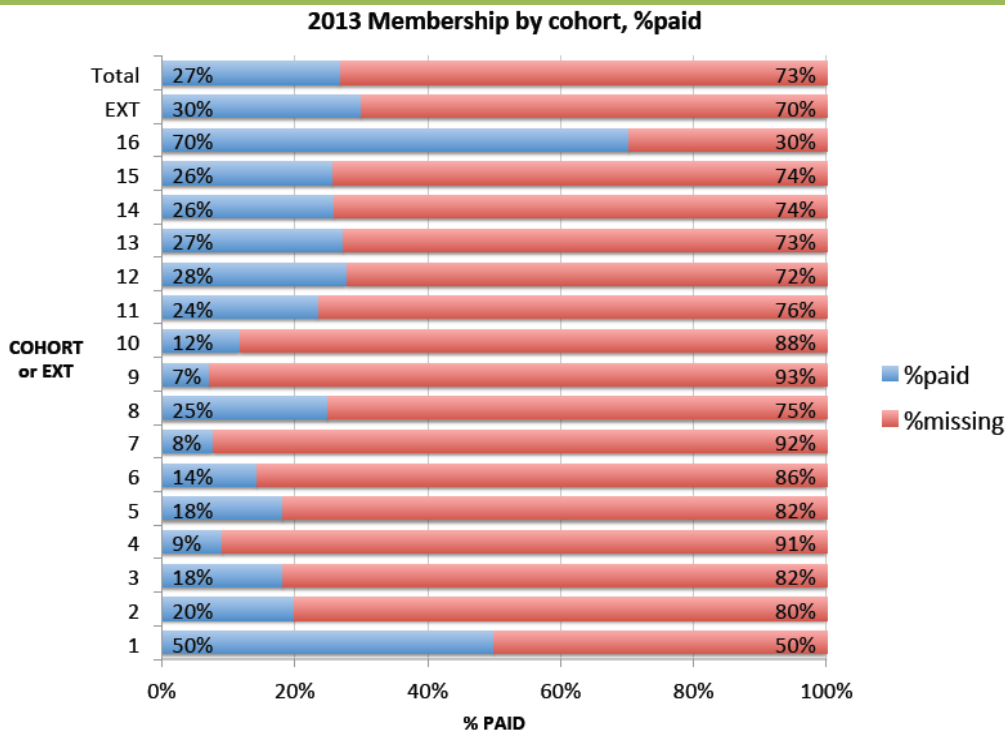
The conference will be hosted at the Stockholm Waterfront Congress Centre in the centre of the City. Online registration will open in mid-May and the call for abstracts will be from early June to mid-July.

As usual we are part of the conference committee and we plan to continue with the traditional activities of the EAN prize, EAN travel grants (depending on availability of funds!) and the EAN photo contest.

Membership fees allow sustainable funding for EAN activities. Your small contributions can go a long way!

As of 02 February 2013, 73% of EAN members have not yet paid their fees. If you don't know your payment status for the year 2013 or previous years please write an email to eanboard@gmail.com will let you know

Figure 1. Proportion of members that paid their fees by cohort and external members. Blue bars represent the proportion of paid fees, Red bars represent the proportion of



EAN Bank Details

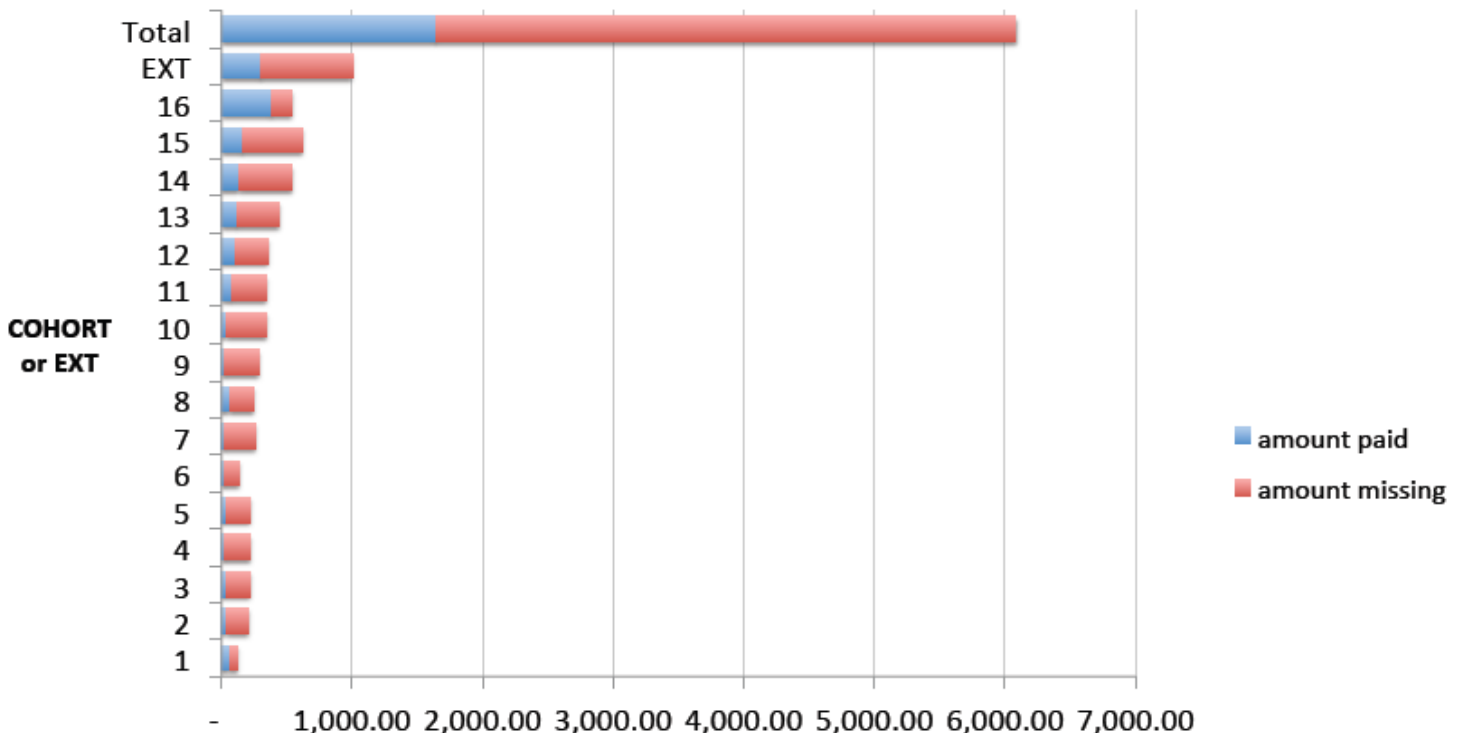
Name of Bank: HSBC UK
 Bank address: HSBC UK, 18
 London Street, Norwich NR2 1LG,
 UK
 Account Holder: Epiet Alumni
 Network
 Account number: 71822755
 Sort code: 400515
 IBAN: GB11MIDL40051571822755
 BIC/Swift: MIDLGB22

Please indicate your name and membership year as reference in the bank transfer and also send an email to eanboard@gmail.com to inform us about your payment (sometimes names are not correctly transmitted with the transfer).

NB: The account is in the UK so also payments in GPB are allowed. In case GBP is your preferred currency contact the EAN Treasurers at eanboard@gmail.com

Figure 2. Amount paid fees by cohort and external members. Blue bars represent the amount of paid fees, Red bars represent the amount of unpaid fees for the year 2013.

2013 Membership by cohort, value paid in EUROS as of 02/02/2013



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	EXT	Total
amount paid	60.00	40.00	40.00	20.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	60.00	20.00	40.00	80.00	100.00	120.00	140.00	160.00	380.00	300.00	1,640.00
amount missing	60.00	160.00	180.00	200.00	180.00	120.00	240.00	180.00	260.00	300.00	260.00	260.00	320.00	400.00	460.00	160.00	700.00	4,440.00



If you still haven't heard about Coursera yet, you are probably the minority! This is the new trend in adult education, offering not only access to high quality content for students that can't afford it, but also by making professors look good, by empowering them to build their own audience. Coursera gives them the opportunity to build an audience outside of the classroom, allowing them to have 10,000 students instead of 50. Coursera, being an educational technology company, founded by computer scientists Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller, has come to change the perspectives of on-line adult education! The website (www.coursera.org) was launched in February 2012 and is counting more than 3,5 million courserians over the world!

So what is coursera?

Is a website which provides free online courses in the fields of Computer Science; Healthcare, Medicine, and Biology; Society, Networks, and Information; Humanities and Social Science; Mathematics and Statistics; and Economics, Finance, and Business. Courses are offered by 62 (and increasing) prestigious universities around the globe, in five different languages (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese).

How does it work?

All you need to attend a class is an email account, an Internet connection and 5-6 hours to spend each week. Usually, each course includes short video lectures on different topics and assignments to be submitted, usually on a weekly basis. The assignments can include online quizzes, handout exercises, computer exercises, mini peer review projects and even a final exam. All studying materials suggested and software used in the course (if any) can be downloaded by anyone with no cost (e.g. R, ArcGIS etc). As the number of students attending a course is huge (it can reach more than 10,000 students), usually you are asked to join course's blog, to get your queries answered by peers or even to form local study groups!

Will you get a certificate?

Usually students who successfully complete the class (handing essays on time, filling in the online quizzes, succeeding in final exams –where applicable- etc) receive a statement of accomplishment signed by the instructor of the course. Recently Coursera also offers the opportunity to students to be able to earn "Verified Certificates" for a small fee. The new option, called Signature Track. The certificate, however does not include credit toward a degree program, it simply aims to give them a more meaningful way to prove that they've completed the course.

Would you recommend it?

Having attended a couple of Coursera courses, I would say that I would highly recommend it. Although you can see that is still in an experimental phase (often encountered problems with the online quizzes, communications within the blogs, team assignments- mostly technical support problems etc), the overall quality of the classes (level, objectives, assignments) is very good! The instructors are usually very enthusiastic offering the course in the "Coursera way" and try to engage new students using lots of social media, youtube channels etc.

You must never forget though, that in the end this is an online course and it does take a lot of your free time and it does ask you to spend extra hours in front of your screen watching the lectures, writing assignments etc, which personally, makes it a bit exhausting....

A selection of upcoming courses that might be of interest:

1. Epidemiology: the basic science of public Health- <https://www.coursera.org/course/epidemiology>
2. AIDS - <https://www.coursera.org/course/aids>
3. Epidemics- the dynamics of Infectious Diseases –PennState Uni, <https://www.coursera.org/course/epidemids>
4. Rationing and Allocating Scared medical resources - <https://www.coursera.org/course/rationing>
5. Vaccine Trials: Methods and Best Practices- <https://www.coursera.org/course/vacctrails>
6. An introduction to global health- This course gives you an introduction to the most important challenges to human health facing the world today. Themes covered include global policies, health systems, changing disease patterns, IT and health, population dynamics, and health promotion - <https://www.coursera.org/course/globalhealthintro>
7. Social epidemiology <https://www.coursera.org/course/socialepi>
8. Community Change in Public Health - <https://www.coursera.org/course/communitychange>
9. Disaster Preparedness - <https://www.coursera.org/course/disasterprep>
10. Introduction to data science - <https://www.coursera.org/course/datasci>
11. Maps and geospatial revolution- <https://www.coursera.org/course/maps>
12. Statistics: making sense of data -<https://www.coursera.org/course/introstats>
13. Computing of data analysis- <https://www.coursera.org/course/compdata>
14. Data management for clinical research- <https://www.coursera.org/course/datamanagement>

Note: be tempted to enrol in as many courses as you wish!



Where are you now?

We would like to launch a new column for the newsletter entitled "Where are you now?". We are asking EAN members from the early cohorts to provide a short paragraph about how their professional life is now years after the completion of the programme. If you would like to suggest a story from yourself or a colleague please contact us at eanboard@gmail.com



Epi-App

EAN member Sabrina Bacci recommends a tablet application called "Solve the Outbreak" by CDC.

Check it out here:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/solve-the-outbreak/id592485067?mt=8>



What are the newest developments for EPIET and EUPHEM?

In 2012, ECDC consulted EPIET and EUPHEM stakeholders (Including all EAN members) on the future of the EPIET and EUPHEM fellowships. The results of this consultation are available as a news item from www.epiet.org.



On the basis of these results, a number of changes were implemented:

- 1) **Rotation of EPIET EU-track seats by Member States.** Traditionally, EPIET EU-track fellows were assigned to training sites as per a matching process based upon expressed preferences from candidate fellows and training sites. This tended to favour Member States with a longer history of hosting EPIET fellows and Member States that were able to open more training sites at the subnational level. The 2012 EPIET consultation with ECDC and EPIET stakeholders indicated that 80% of respondents supported a change towards a more equal distribution of fellows through rotation. Hence, from 2013, the 12 seats available for EPIET-EU track fellows will equally rotate across EU/EEA/EFTA Member States. The first priority is given to Member States that did not host any EU-track fellows in the previous cohort. EPIET EU-track seats that remain are assigned to other Member States according to the total number of fellows hosted in the past (favouring member states who received less fellows the past). For Member States that have more than one EPIET training site, the Coordinating Competent Body (CCB) or the National Training Focal Point (NTFP) decide which training site should host the EPIET EU-track fellow. Following this new procedures, the training sites that will receive EU track fellows in 2013 are located in Greece (KEELPNO), Austria (AGES), Poland (PZH), Portugal (DGS), Finland (THL), Ireland (HPSC), Italy (ISS), Norway – (FHI), Denmark (SSI), Spain – (ISCIII), Netherlands – (RIVM) and Germany (RKI). Additional information on the rotation of EPIET EU-track seats may be found in the ECDC document that will govern the EPIET EU—track fellowship in 2013 and on the www.epiet.org website.
- 2) **Change of salary for the 2013 cohort.** In 2012, EU-track fellows (EPIET and EUPHEM paths) were hired by their training sites and received a net monthly salary of 2,600 euros (after taxes, adjusted by the country of residence) with an additional monthly allowance for mobility, removal and language classes. For the 2013 cohort, following the recommendations of the stakeholders, EPIET and EUPHEM EU track fellows will also be hired by their training sites but will receive a lower net monthly salary (2,200 euros after taxes, adjusted by the country of residence) with a possibility of claiming expenses removal and language classes from the employer.
- 3) **MS track for EUPHEM.** 12 MS-track seats will be open in 2013. Of these, 2-4 will be assigned to EUPHEM path fellows, according to criteria depending on the training sites and candidate fellows.

ECDC will continue to consult with stakeholders on the future strategic orientations of EPIET and EUPHEM to resolve issues that may have arisen from the changes implemented in 2013.

How will these changes affect the EAN?

The new changes go in the direction of more involvement of more training sites for a broader diversity in the experience that EPIET and EUPHEM can bring to fellows. They will affect EAN by generating newer generations of graduates with more diverse experiences. However, the new rotation mechanism across member states led to a number of questions from stakeholders. Questions were raised in terms of ways to address the issue of regional sites in countries that had made substantial investment to develop those and methods used to ensuring quality in the training sites. With respect to the regional sites, the 33rd ECDC advisory forum recommended to make use of all possible tracks of the EPIET family of fellowships (e.g., EPIET associated programmes [e.g., Austria, Norway, UK and German FETPs]; MS-track,) to make sure no regional site would be left empty. Maintaining quality in the training sites and throughout the EPIET fellowship are at the heart of the ECDC training section work plan. ECDC published a set of frequently asked questions on the www.epiet.org Internet site about the new rotation system that may be of interest for EAN members.

How can the EAN support the EPIET and EUPHEM programme?

As always, EAN can best support the programme by remaining closely involved. We try to run draft documents and plans through the EAN board for feedback. In addition, critical steps for which input of EAN is always welcome include the recruitment panel, supervision at the training site and training modules when opportunities arise. Finally, from 2013, the work of the outgoing cohort (2011) will be reviewed by an external review panel for the sake of providing recommendations for the continuous quality improvement of EPIET. The details of this external fellowship review are described in the 2012 edition of the curricular process guide (Available from ECDC Internet site). EAN will be de facto a member of the panel and we look forward to hearing from you!

If you want to know more about these developments, visit:

- <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/epiet/Documents/FAQ-EURotation%20webversion.pdf>
- <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/epiet/Documents/EPIETConsultationResults.pdf>