Annual report 2007
Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo, 18.02.2008

This report summarizes the work of the EpiNorth project in 2007. The report also functions as final technical report to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). The headings below are consistent with those under the heading Deliverables in the Annex 1 of the contract with ECDC.

The EpiNorth project
Countries of the European north have been facing serious challenges in the field of communicable diseases, and particularly for HIV/AIDS, sexually transmittable diseases, tuberculosis and anti-microbial resistance. These challenges are shared around the Baltic Sea, but were specially worsened in the 1990s in the Baltic countries and Russia. In order to face these challenges, the Nordic countries have jointly organised cooperation with the Baltic States and Russia since 1998; from 2000 under the banner of EpiNorth. It was financed until 2003 by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Norwegian Barents Health Programme and the participating countries.

In the three-year period 2004-2006, an increased cooperation was made possible when the European Union, through the Public Health Programme, joined the funding partners. The overall aim of the expanded EpiNorth project was to improve communicable disease control and communication in Northern Europe and across the border to neighbouring countries in order to reduce the spread of such diseases and thus safeguard public health in these parts of Europe.

The main idea of the EpiNorth project is to bring public health professionals from countries of the European north together across the former east-west divide to work for improved control of communicable diseases.

The EpiNorth website (www.epinorth.org) is an information centre of the EpiNorth project.

EpiNorth Journal
(Visit the web site here.)

Contents and editorial process

The 2007 volume included three issues of EpiNorth Journal, published in Russian and English on paper and on the Internet in both html and pdf formats.

The three issues contained 7 articles and 1 table. The authors were from Lithuania (2), Estonia (1) Russia (1) and Norway (2) and Sweden (1). The third issue of EpiNorth Journal was published in January 2008. One of three articles was re-published from the Eurosveillance with their permission.

The titles of the 2007 articles were:
• Tendencies in tuberculosis incidence in Estonia, 1998-2006
• Swimmers catch severe infections in the Baltic Sea
• Epidemiology of HIV infection in Lithuania, 1988-2005
• Outbreak of Salmonella Enteritidis linked to hospital in Kaunas region, Lithuania, 2006
• Assessment of prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV-infection in the Republic of Karelia (1999-2006)
• Cross-border investigation of a Shigella sonnei outbreak in a group of Norwegian tourists after a trip to Russia
• International surveillance with the new International Health Regulations

An updated and expanded version of the Notification of communicable diseases in the region, 2006 with status of infectious diseases in Barents and Baltic regions was published. It was based on the material EpiNorth Editorial Office got from the regions of the project.

All manuscripts were peer reviewed by staff from the participating institutes and edited by one of the editors.

Distribution and printing

The Editorial Office is still working with the Joon Stuudio from Tallinn, Estonia. Editorial assistant Olga Klimenko was invited to Tallinn by the Editor-in-Chief Kuulo Kutsar to visit Joon Stuudio and discuss the publishing process with director of design studio Ular Linnuste. The meeting was needed for better understanding of publishing process and networking between the Editorial Office and the Joons Stuudio.

This year each issue was printed in nearly 4000 bilingual (Russian and English) copies. All this articles were published in full format in html and pdf on the website of the EpiNorth project. One or more copies were sent to the recipients in 48 countries. The largest number of recipients is from Nordic countries and Russia. Recipients included national institutions and governmental bodies, medical libraries, regional/local surveillance offices, health administrators, universities, hospitals, general medical practitioners, students, and others.

EpiNorth Editorial Staff

Kuulo Kutsar from the Public Health Inspection in Estonia continued as Editor-in-Chief in 2007. The Associated Editors were Preben Aavitsland (Norway), Markku Kuusi (Finland), Kåre Mølbak (Denmark) and Karl Ekdahl (ECDC, Sweden). The Editor-in-Chief and the Associated Editors are responsible for the scientific content of EpiNorth Journal. Karl Ekdahl withdrew himself from the Associated Editors in December 2007. We all are very thankful to him for many years of his participation in the life of the EpiNorth Journal and project.

Stein Andresen, the manager of the EpiNorth project and Vibeke R Gundersen, the editorial assistant left the project and the Norwegian Institute of Public Health this summer. The new editorial assistant Olga Klimenko started in September. She got a short transition with Vibeke R Gundersen while Elena Torgersen continued her work in the project. Olga Klimenko also participated as an observer at the Eurosurveillance Editorial group meeting in Stockholm in October. In this meeting, Preben Aavitsland presented the EpiNorth project. Elena Torgersen continued her work with EpiNorth Journal this year.
EpiNorth meetings

The meeting of the Editorial Group was held in March in Gardermoen, close to Oslo Airport, Norway. All members of the Editorial Group participated. Additionally, we had two guests from ECDC: Alain Lefebvre, responsible for country relations and coordination and Ines Steffens, managing editor of Eurosurveillance. The main issues were international cooperation and distribution of the Journal among the other regions and countries (Belarus, Russia, etc), urgency of EpiNorthData, interest in EpiVax, future modules of EpiTrain and future financing. A short report of the meeting is attached.

Stein Andresen participated in the EpiSouth meeting in Rome on the 29th of March. He presented EpiNorth’s experience in 2004-2006. He also presented EpiNorth at the European Health Forum in Bad Gastein, Austria.

The Editorial Board meeting took place at the Pasteur Institute, Saint-Petersburg, Russia on the 11th of December in connection with the Regional Epidemiologists meeting, organized by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health in collaboration with the Saint-Petersburg Pasteur Institute. Members of the Editorial Board were: Kuulo Kutsar (Estonia), Irina Lucenko (Latvia), Milda Zugutiene (Lithuania), Inga Velicko (Sweden), Preben Aavitsland (Norway), Andrei Chernyev (Murmansk), Roman Buzinov (Arkhangelsk), Tatiana Grunicheva (Kaliningrad), Elena Michailova (Leningrad oblast) and Roman Galimov (Republic of Komi).

Some of the members of the Editorial Board and Associated Editors could not participate because of the late invitation and some of them sent their replacement. The Editorial Office presented an update on the EpiNorth Journal and EpiNorth website, as well as future plans. Additionally, the meeting discussed participation of the new members of the Editorial Board. Invitations were sent to the main epidemiologists in the Republic of Komi, Novgorod and Pskov. Roman Galimov, a representative from the Republic of Komi was recommended by the main epidemiologist of the Republic of Komi and was included in the Editorial Board.

A short report of the meeting is attached.

Contacts with Eurosurveillance

Kuulo Kutsar, Preben Aavitsland and Olga Klimenko from the editorial group and office visited the Eurosurveillance Editorial Board meeting and presented EpiNorth. Managing editor of Eurosurveillance Ines Steffens participated in the EpiNorth Editorial Group meeting in St Petersburg. One article from Eurosurveillance was reprinted in EpiNorth. EpiNorth and Eurosurveillance published on their respective web sites the table of contents of each issue of the other journal.

EpiNorthData

(Visit the web site here.)

EpiNorth Data is the tabular presentation of annual surveillance data from the national and regional surveillance systems in Northern Europe, including several regions of Russia bordering the European Union. These standardised key figures for 2006 were published on the EpiNorth web site and in the EpiNorth Journal.
For three main reasons EpiNorthData is a unique data source that provides value beyond the data provided by WHO EURO in Copenhagen:

1. The data are collected directly from the sources that are the national/regional centres for infectious disease control in the Nordic and Baltic countries and in the North-West Russian regions. This allows for early updating and high quality.
2. The data are presented in both English and Russian languages. This makes EpiNorth Data a primary source of information for the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic countries (and for the many colleagues who speak Russian better than English) and for Russian colleagues.
3. Data from Russia are presented by region. Seven Russian regions participated including most of the regions with borders to six EU/EEA countries (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Norway).

EpiVax
(Visit the web site here.)

EpiVax presents the vaccination schedules of the countries in Northern Europe. This section has been updated with new data from Northern European countries for 2007. Data, used in tabular, was received from our partner-institutes and the European Surveillance Community Network for Vaccine Preventable Infectious Diseases (Euvac.net).

Although much of the same data are available on the web sites of WHO EURO and Euvac.net, we believe the EpiNorth compilation has some value. It gives data for Russia and it gives all the data in both English and Russian. It is an easily accessible source for those interested in Northern Europe.

EpiNews
(Visit the web site here.)

EpiNews is a poster board where we publish information about upcoming conferences, seminars, meetings, where epidemiologists and other interested specialists from our region can participate. Furthermore, we announce new issues of EpiNorth, Eurosurveillance monthly and EpiSouth. The news items published in 2007 are listed in the table below in reverse chronological order.

EpiNews was originally meant also to contain news about outbreaks and disease trends. During 2007, we realised, however, that there was a need to separate disease news from more general announcements. Thus, we launched the EpiWatch section, see below.

| 1. December issue of Eurosurveillance monthly available online |
| 2. The Editorial Board meeting of the EpiNorth Journal, 11 December 2007 |
| 3. Fourth International Conference “Pasteur’s ideas in prevention of infectious diseases”, 2-4 of June 2008, Pasteur Institute, Saint-Petersburg, Russia |
| 4. Regional Epidemiologists’ meeting, 10-11 December, 2007, Pasteur Institute, Saint-Petersburg, Russia [17.12.07] |
| 5. Nordic Summer School in Methods of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (NordForsk course) [27.11.07] |
| 6. November issue of Eurosurveillance monthly available online |
7. 6th Russia-wide with International Participation Scientific Conference "Molecular Diagnostic 2007", 28-30 of November 2007, Moscow, Russia
8. Successful EpiTrain V in Vilnius [30.10.07]
9. EpiNorth Journal, vol.8, No 2 available online
10. October issue of Eurosurveillance monthly available online
11. The new EpiSouth Electronic Bulletin is launched! [09.10.07]
13. International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases, 16-19 March 2008, Atlanta, USA
14. Second Eastern Europe and Central Asia AIDS Conference (EECAAC), 3-5 May 2008, Moscow, Russia
15. Northern European Conference on Travel Medicine, NECTM 2008
16. 21-24 May 2008, Helsinki, Finland [28.09.07]
17. EpiNorth Journal, vol. 8, No 1 is available online [28.09.07]
18. September issue of Eurosurveillance monthly available online [13.09.07]
19. August issue of Eurosurveillance monthly available online [03.09.07]
20. EpiNorth's biannual report is available online [23.08.07]
21. Notifiable infectious diseases in Russian Federation in 2007 – report of first half-year [05.08.07]
22. EpiTrain V – next course in advanced epidemiology of infectious diseases to be held in Vilnius [26.07.07]
23. Russian – Norwegian Conference “Surveillance of Infectious Diseases in Barents Region” held in Arkhangelsk 21-22 June [06.07.07]
24. New issue of Eurosurveillance monthly available online [06.07.07]
25. Vacancy: New managing editor for EpiNorth [05.07.07]
26. Editors thank Vibeke Gundersen for building the EpiNorth [05.07.07]
27. Seminar in Murmansk on the prevention and control of tuberculosis [05.07.07]
28. ECDC publish 2005 annual report on infectious diseases [04.07.07]
29. Chief editor thanks Stein Andresen, outgoing EpiNorth leader [03.07.07]
30. International Health Regulations entered into force on June 15 [19.06.07]
31. Infectious Diseases in Northern Europe 2006 [21.05.07]
32. Style of medical and life-science writing in English [09.05.07]
33. International conference in Arkhangelsk: "Surveillance of Infectious Diseases in the Barents Region” [02.05.07]
34. Summer school on modern methods in biostatistics and epidemiology [02.05.07]
35. Work-shop on translation of scientific texts for EpiNorth Journal and web-site [20.04.07]
36. EpiNorth meeting in Oslo 27 March [03.04.07]
37. New issue of Eurosurveillance monthly online [19.02.07]
39. EpiNorth Journal, vol 7, No 4 available online [05.02.07]
40. Avian influenza in domestic birds in Krasnodar krai [31.01.07]
41. European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training [29.01.07]
42. Surveillance of infectious diseases in Denmark 2006 [25.01.07]
43. Master’s Programme in Public Health in Arkhangelsk [22.01.07]
44. V & I News – Information about vaccination and immunization in Europe [16.01.07]
45. Lectures from EpiTrain III and IV [12.01.07]
46. New Co-ordinator of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme [09.01.07]
EpiWatch

(Visit the web site here.)

EpiWatch was started as a separate feature in October 2007, based on our experience of communicating information about avian influenza last year. EpiWatch is the epidemic intelligence function of the EpiNorth project. On EpiWatch we now publish news about outbreaks of communicable diseases from the Nordic and Baltic countries, the Russian Federation and from neighbouring countries, based on reports on official web-pages, reports from our network, mass media, and other sources. These sources are scanned regularly for news about outbreaks in our part of Europe. We published also some news from outside our region, like Stavropol region in the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The idea was that this news about major outbreaks could be interesting for our region.

Increasingly, correspondents from the participating institutes are assisting in identifying items for the EpiWatch section. The headlines of the EpiWatch postings in 2007 were the following:

2. Update on avian influenza in Poland, 23 December 2007
3. Update on avian influenza in Russia
5. Avian influenza in Poland, 13 December 2007
7. Avian influenza in Rostov region, Russia
8. Outbreak of Salmonella Enteritidis infection in Copenhagen, Denmark
9. New cases of rectal lymphogranuloma venereum in Copenhagen, Denmark this autumn
10. Tuberculosis in Bryansk region, Russia
11. Escherichia coli O157 infection in Iceland [15.11.07]
12. Problems with tuberculosis and scabies in Kaliningrad region, Russia
13. Enteric infections in Podolsk and Saint-Petersburg, Russia [15.11.07]
14. Focus on ascariasis in Kaliningrad region, Russia [09.11.07]
15. Outbreak of Salmonella Weltevreden in Norway
16. Outbreak of hepatitis A in Arkhangelsk region, Russia
17. Outbreak of shigellosis was registered in Zaporozhskij region, Ukraine
18. Outbreak of aseptic meningitis in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia [15.10.07]
19. Outbreak of shigellosis in Stavropol region, Russia [10.10.07]
20. Aggravation of trichinellosis situation in the Russian Federation
21. Tick-borne encephalitis - a serious problem in Russia this summer [09.10.07]
22. Outbreak of shigellosis from imported baby-corn in Denmark [05.10.07]
24. Avian influenza in domestic birds in Krasnodar krai [31.01.07]

EpiTrain

(Visit the web site here.)
EpiTrain is a chain of training courses in epidemiology of infectious diseases. As it was planned for this year together with Centre for Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control in Lithuania, the EpiTrain V was organized in Vilnius.

There were 35 participants from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, and Norway. Five facilitators from Norway, Denmark, and Lithuania helped with organization of the seminar. Almost one third of all participants came from different new institutions.

The main themes of EpiTrain V were a) capacity building for the International Health Regulations, b) guidelines for prevention and control of communicable diseases, and c) risk assessment. All topics were worked out in details during the lectures and workshops.

The schedule of the EpiTrain V module is given here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Sunday 21</th>
<th>Monday 22</th>
<th>Tuesday 23</th>
<th>Wednesday 24</th>
<th>Thursday 25</th>
<th>Friday 26</th>
<th>Saturday 27</th>
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<tr>
<td>0900-1000</td>
<td>Welcome and introduction Preben, Elena, Olga</td>
<td>Q and A on group work Risk assessment of events Preben Aavitsland</td>
<td>Risk assessment exercise in groups</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion of risk assessment group work</td>
<td>Epidemic intelligence meeting Kathrine Borgen</td>
<td>Presentation and discussion of group work</td>
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<td>1000-1030</td>
<td>Coffee</td>
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<td>1030-1115</td>
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<td>1115-1200</td>
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<td>1200-1300</td>
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<td>1300-1430</td>
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<td>1430-1500</td>
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<td>1700-1900</td>
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<td>1900</td>
<td>Dinner at restaurant Locys</td>
<td>Dinner in hotel</td>
<td>Sightseeing and dinner in Vilnius</td>
<td>17:30 Sightsseeing and dinner in Vilnius</td>
<td>Free time</td>
<td>18:00-20:00 Dinner at hotel</td>
<td>Free time</td>
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For the main group work throughout the week, the participants were divided in groups to either create an assessment and plan of action for surveillance, reporting, notification, verification and response to public health events in accordance with the IHR, or to prepare guidelines for specific topics:

- **Group A**: Guidelines for management of cases of scabies in the community
- **Group B**: Guidelines for management of cases of gonorrhoea and their contacts
- **Group C**: Guidelines for management of cases of hepatitis A in kindergartens and schools
- **Group D**: Assessment and plan of action for IHR Annex 1a for a chosen country
- **Group E**: Assessment and plan of action for IHR Annex 1a for a chosen country

The learning objectives for groups A-C were: “After the group work the participant will be able to

- understand when there is a need for guidelines
- know a process to produce guidelines
• understand how to find, appraise and grade evidence that can serve as a basis for guidelines
• plan the implementation of guidelines”

The learning objectives for groups D and E were: “After the group work the participant will be able to
• know the background and purpose of the International Health Regulations
• know the minimum requirements of the IHR concerning detection, assessment and notification of events
• assess national capacities
• prepare a plan of action for assuring that the capacities are present and functioning”

The participants also worked in groups to try the new risk assessment tool EpiRisk for assessing events.

Preben Aavitsland held several lectures and was responsible for the pedagogical part. EPIET fellows from different cohorts facilitated in the groups and some of them gave lectures as well. All lectures were given in English without translation. The cultural programme was exciting both for participants and organizers, because it was the first time EpiTrain was held in Vilnius. Participants of the course had an extensive sightseeing in Vilnius and went to the medieval castle in Trakai.

Participants received evaluation forms on which they could express their opinions and impressions. The majority agreed that the lectures were of good quality and very useful, the objectives and contents of the case studies were relevant and appropriate to the overall goals and learning needs. Some participants mentioned that they missed more variety of topics. In the end of the seminar all the participants got a diploma and CD-ROM with all the training materials. The same CD-ROM is appended to this report and will be available on the EpiNorth web site.

EpiTrain is also a collection of training material, published on the EpiNorth web site. A publication of lectures from EpiTrain V is planned in March 2008 pending a technical upgrade of the web site.

EpiLinks
(Visit the web site [here](#).)

EpiLinks is a library of links to communicable disease epidemiology web sites in Europe and Russia. This section was regularly updated throughout the whole year. Some of a new links were added, like Centre for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, Lithuania and European Public Health Law Network (EPHLN).

Partners involved
The project has been coordinated by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health represented with the project manager Preben Aavitsland.

Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Norway
• Administration of project.
• Running and updating of the web site and all its features.
• Management of the editorial processes of the EpiNorth Journal, including the meetings of the editorial group and the editorial board, contacts with authors, translations, proof reading, contacts with subscribers.
• Execution of the EpiTrain course, both administratively and professionally.
• Peer review of articles.

Health Protection Inspectorate, Estonia
• Editing of the EpiNorth Journal (editor-in-chief Kuulo Kutsar)
• Contacts with the typesetting studio and printing office.
• Peer review of articles.
• Participation in editorial group and board
• Participation in EpiTrain course.
• Contributions to EpiNews, EpiWatch, EpiVax, and EpiNorthData

National Public Health Institute, Finland
• Peer review of articles.
• Participation in editorial group and board.
• Contributions to EpiNews, EpiWatch, EpiVax, and EpiNorthData.

Statens Seruminstitutt, Denmark
• Peer review of articles.
• Participation in editorial group and board.
• Contributions to EpiNews, EpiWatch, EpiVax, and EpiNorthData.

Directorate of Health, Iceland
• Peer review of articles.
• Participation in editorial group and board.
• Contributions to EpiNews, EpiWatch, EpiVax, and EpiNorthData.

State Agency "Public Health Agency", Latvia
• Participation in editorial group.
• Participation in EpiTrain course.
• Contributions to EpiNews, EpiWatch, EpiVax, and EpiNorthData.

Centre for Communicable Disease Prevention and Control, Lithuania
• Participation in editorial group.
• Participation in EpiTrain course.
• Contributions to EpiNews, EpiWatch, EpiVax, and EpiNorthData.

Directorate of the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Well-being (Rospotrebnadzor) in the following federal subjects of the Russian Federation: Leningrad oblast, City of St.Petersburg, Arkhangelsk oblast, Republic of Karelia, Kaliningrad oblast, Murmansk oblast, Nenets okrug and the Republic of Komi:
• Participation in editorial group.
• Participation in EpiTrain course.
• Contributions to EpiNews, EpiWatch, EpiVax, and EpiNorthData.
Countries involved
The following countries have been involved in 2007:
- The EpiNorth web site is based in Norway, but is of course available to all countries.
- The EpiTrain course was conducted in Lithuania with participants from Norway, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Russia.
- The EpiNorth editorial group meeting was held in Norway.
- The EpiNorth editorial board meeting was held in Russia.
- The EpiNorth Journal was edited, typeset and printed in Estonia.
- The EpiNorth Journal was distributed to subscribers in the participating countries Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Russia. In addition, there are subscribers in other EU countries (Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Netherlands, France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, UK, Slovakia, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, Czech, Austria, Poland, Spain, Ireland) and in USA, Cuba, Belarus, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Macedonia, Switzerland, Israel, Cambodia, India, Croatia, Bosnia, Turkmenistan, Canada, Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia.

Finances
In 2007, the EpiNorth project received funding from the following sources:
- The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
- The Norwegian Barents Health Programme
- The Norwegian Institute of Public Health
- Other participating institutes

Separate financial reports will be sent to the funding sources according to their specific requirements, including a report of the manpower used.

Achievements and further developments
Achievement of the objectives

In 2007, the EpiNorth project fulfilled its objectives: Three issues of the journal were published, a successful course module was arranged, data were collected and presented, and news was presented. A new feature, the EpiWatch epidemic intelligence section was added and proved highly successful.

Further developments

EpiNorth’s relations with ECDC and its journal Eurosurveillance grew tighter in 2007. Stimulated by the common interests and shared visions, the collaboration has run smoothly in 2007. This relationship will be even closer in 2008.

The Norwegian Barents Health Programme continues to support the non-EU/EEA parts of EpiNorth. In 2008, we expect closer interaction with other projects under this programme, both those based at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and those based elsewhere. Of special interest is the links to the International School of Public Health in Arkhangelsk, a Nordic-Russian collaboration with the Northern Medical State University.

At the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, EpiNorth is based in the Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology. This department has several projects in the eastern parts of the WHO EURO region. These projects benefit from the team of six co-workers with Russian
as their mother tongue. This groups fits well with the new global collaboration strategy of the institute.

In 2007, we also started planning further thematically and geographically expansion and discussed these ideas with our main funding partners:

- In geographic terms, we plan to expand to Belorussia and Ukraine; we already have published some EpiWatch pieces from these regions, and article from Belorussia have been published in the Journal. We also plan to include representatives from Pskov and Novgorod regions in the Editorial Board.
- EpiWords is our glossary of some 800 epidemiological terms in English and Russian. This glossary will be published on the EpiNorth web site as EpiWords.
- EpiScience is a new feature on the EpiNorth web site where we plan to publish - in Russian and English - abstracts of relevant scientific contributions, such as scientific reports from ECDC, scientific articles form the main Russian epidemiological and public health journals and other scientific material relevant to our readers.

As the project grows to include more countries, a closer collaboration is needed also with the WHO EURO office in Copenhagen.
EpiNorth Meeting at Gardermoen  
27.03.2007

This was the annual meeting of EpiNorth’s editorial staff; Editor-in-chief, Associated Editors and Secretariat. Venue was Rica Gardermoen Hotel close to Oslo Airport. Participants were Markku Kuusi (Finland), Karl Ekdahl (Sweden), Kåre Molbak (Denmark), Preben Aavitsland (Norway), Stein Andresen, Vibeke R. Gundersen, Elena Torgersen (Secretariat), Kuulo Kutsar (Estonia). In addition there were two guest: Alain Lefebvre (ECDC), Ines Steffens (Eurosurveillance).

Annual report 2006

The annual report 2006 was presented in detail. This was the next to final version which will be sent to the European Commission. Stein Andresen will present it to Germain Thinus during the following days in connection with the EpiSouth meeting in Rome. It was suggested to add more information about the distribution of paper copies to the different countries/regions. We should also add a comment that the article “Rabies in Belarus” was not only reprinted by WHO Rabies Bulletin, but also by Eurosurveillance.

It would be interesting to get an overview of the Russian language journals on infectious disease epidemiology. Andrej Grjibovskij at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) will be asked to make a small inventory.

EpiNorthData will continue even if the Nordic data are also available on other web-sites. EpiNorthData are unique in that they are timely and show the Russian data for the neighbouring regions. At WHO and other sites only the aggregated data for the Russian Federation as a whole are available. It is important that the Nordic data are also presented on www.epinorth.org to assure the reciprocity.

There have been no major updates to the EpiVax section this year. It presents vaccination calendars for partner countries. It is possible that this section can feature information from ECDC in the future. It would be interesting to add coverage data from the countries and regions.

On average one news item per week was published in the EpiNews section in English and Russian throughout 2006. It is important in attracting readers that there are regular updates. This is a section which we would like to expand further by more epidemiological information.

Originally it was planned to have one EpiTrain course (Module III) in 2006, but since the length of the courses had been shortened from 10 days to one week, there were funding left, and Germain Thinus suggested to arrange one extra module. The participants of the first three modules were very interested in this, and a module IV was consequently arranged in Oslo in December 2006.

Future financing of the EpiNorth collaboration

Funding from the European Commission’s Public Health Programme ended in December 2006. Up till now, the work has continued though in-house financing from the NIPH. A detailed draft contract for
funding of the EpiNorth project from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control for 2007 had been sent out a few days prior to the meeting. Aavitsland and Andresen will look at it and give comments to the economy part. The final contract should be ready very soon. EpiNorth will continue in its present form for the first year, while the details of the collaboration between EpiNorth and ECDC and Eurosurveillance for the period 2008-2010 will be discussed.

(Vibeke R. Gundersen)
EpiNorth Editorial Meeting in Saint-Petersburg
11 December 2007

This is a short version of the minutes of meeting from the Editorial Board Meeting held 11 December in the Saint-Petersburg Pasteur Institute, Russia. Participants were Preben Aavitsland (Norway), Kuulo Kutsar (Estonia), Irina Lucenko (Latvia), Inga Velicko (Sweden), Milda Zygutiene (Lithuania), Elena Mikhailova (Leningrad Region), Roman Buzinov (Arkhangelsk), Andrei Chernev (Murmansk), Elena Torgersen (Norway, Editorial Office), Olga Klimenko (Norway, Editorial Office). There were also two guests: Roman Galimov (Republic of Komi) and Andrey Tulisov (WHO).

Annual report 2007

The draft of the annual report 2007 was presented. Editorial Board got the updated information about the changes that had happened in the Editorial Office during 2007. Preben Aavitsland, who chaired the meeting, told that due to reasons mentioned above, only two issues of EpiNorth were published so far. But he informed the Editorial Board that the third issue expected to be published in January 2008. A separate question for discussion was distribution. Irina Lucenko suggested sending paper-copies to the institute and not to the director’s name. A discussion about collection of articles took place as usual. There were suggestions about thematical issues, cooperation with young researches and more short articles on a defined topic.

Olga Klimenko presented changes on the EpiNorth website to the members of the Editorial Board and guests. Special attention was paid to the new feature EpiWatch and the process of publication small news in both EpiNews and EpiWatch. Members of the Editorial Board expressed their williness to continue collaboration on collecting EpiData, EpiVax and more frequent exchange of correspondence with the Editorial Office. Participants of the meeting got the information about the EpiTrain, Module V as well.

Plans for 2008

A closer collaboration with Eurosurveillance was a point on the agenda. Earlier conversations with Ines Steffens show great interest for mutual collaboration. Plan is to have a meeting in the beginning of 2008. Both EpiNorth and Eurosurveillance re-printed each others articles before, but did not have any policy for that. A need for future collaboration with ECDC was expressed as well. ECDC has funded EpiNorth in 2007 and EpiNorth is interested in co-operation in 2008 also.

Further expansion to Belorussia, Ukraine and some new regions of North-West Russia, like the Republic of Komi, Pskov and Novgorod is desirable for 2008. Roman Galimov, a guest from the Republic of Komi on the Editorial Board meeting, expressed his interest in the work of the Editorial Board. Participants agreed on sending an invitation to the Head of Rospotrebnadzor in the Republic of Komi and Rospotrebnadzor in Pskov and Novgorod. Members of the Editorial Board showed their willingness to help with contacts in Belorussia and Ukraine.

Time and the venue for the next meeting will be decided later and all members of the Editorial Board will be notified in advance. Most likely, that this meeting will be organized together will either Regional Epidemiologist’s meeting or the next EpiTrain.

(Olga Klimenko)