



## EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Joint Action

Preparedness and action at points of entry  
(ports, airports, ground crossings)

Joint Action 04-2017 / Grant Agreement Number: 801493

### Learning during the crisis: Assessing COVID-19 experiences at European Points of Entry (POEs)



#### - preliminary results - Airports -

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On behalf of the EU Healthy Gateways Joint Action consortium

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## Learning during the pandemic – COVID-19

- ...showed the essential role that points of entry play in both the dissemination and the prevention of the cross-border spreading of disease
- ...is a shared experience for points of entry in Europe
- ...is far from over...



## In-action learning

- What were the challenges during the COVID-19 management at European points of entry?
- What facilitated the COVID-19 management?
- What are the needs for the future response?

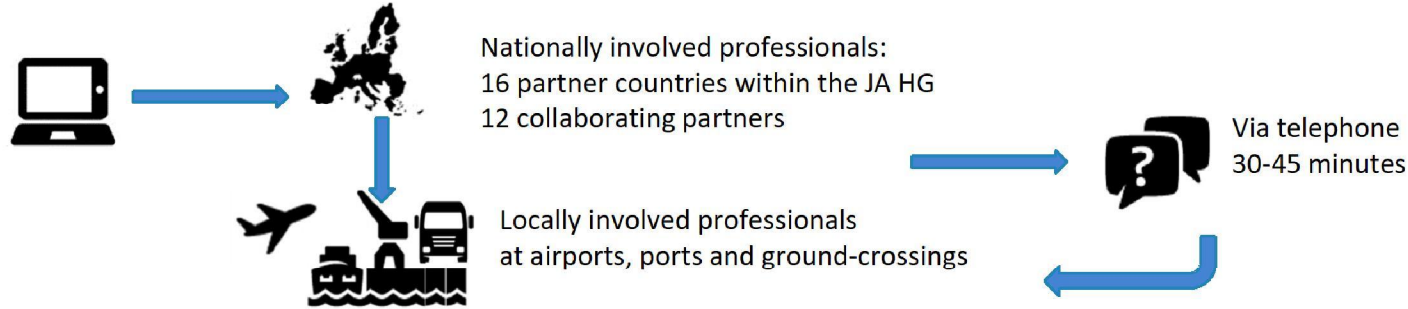


# Methods





# Methods



<b>Inclusions</b>	<b>N=24</b>
<b>Countries</b>	<b>N=11</b>
<b>National level</b>	<b>N=5</b>
<b>Regional / local</b>	<b>N=19</b>
Airport	N=15
Port	N=12
GrCr	N= 4

**Preliminary results - Analysis:**

- Deductive coding on the main research questions
- Summarizing codes per interview
- Detecting elements
- Finding overarching themes

**Further analysis**

- Deductive analysis: organization of the response, operationalisation
- Inductive analysis, emerging themes



# Major challenges



## Capacity

- Lack of staff → an overload of work
- Personal protective equipment: stocks of good quality



## International contact tracing

- Manually written and handled PLFs
- International contact tracing
- Interdependency with airlines



## Communication

- Professional communication: keeping everyone updated; averting fear.
- Public communication: explain differences in, and changing policies; averting fear



# Major challenges



## Dealing with travelers

- Incoming travelers through other EU countries
- Seasonal workers, crew changes
- Accommodating quarantined persons
- Trust in provided health information, concealing.

*In Europe, we don't operate the same way. And because borders are open, people from risk areas will be able to enter your country and there is nothing you can do about it.*  
– PH MD (airport)



## Organization and information management

- Information management, prioritizing
- Flexibility in a hierarchical and bureaucratic structure



## Uncertainty

- Knowledge gaps, contradicting guidelines, changing travel numbers, economical consequences for the airport and airline.



## What were successes?

- Prepared:
  - Have clear structure prepared with clear roles
  - Networking and knowing each other in cold times
  - To be cooperative / client-oriented always

*We knew each other very well.  
The lines have always been short with the [Airport].  
- PH nurse (airport)*



## What were successes?

- Ad hoc operationalized:
  - Recognize an event on time
  - Meeting local stakeholders together

*It starts with taking something serious. [...] Many say that it all started in March, but we have the feeling we are in it since half January. And that is the same now. We are already in it.*  
- PH nurse (port)



## What were successes?

*Now thanks to what happened we are more close, we are all in the same boat. So, we stopped to be formal and we try to find a solution together.*  
- MD (airport)

*as there was a lockdown here there were people who actually worked in museums or other parts of the city which were closed, they supported us in this crucial phase of high infection numbers in contact tracing and some basic administration tasks. – MD (Airport)*

### Response

- **Attitude / dedication / leadership**
- Fast and direct communication
  
- Exchange of knowledge among colleagues, stakeholders, airports in the country and in Europe
- Guidelines on a European level
  
- **Creative ways to attract staff**
- Digital PLFs, using passenger lists to verify quarantine



## What are the highest needs?

- Additional public health staff
- **PH professionals at the airport**
- Better updates about neighbouring regions, countries and points of entry
- A common international approach
- More flexibility in adjusting measures and response
- Means to perform timely international contact tracing

*it is important to actually be at the airport, to feel and taste. - PH nurse (airport)*



## Concluding: Continue in-action learn



We should use the lessons learned of the past months for the upcoming ones, such as:

- Facilitating active networking and exchange
- Integrating approaches (European, national)
- Facilitating fast contact tracing
- Training staff employment

**Conducting in-action and after-action reviews of the public health response to COVID-19**

June 2020

**GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING A COUNTRY COVID-19 INTRA-ACTION REVIEW (IAR)**



Ref: ECDC, June 2020; WHO, July 2002

## Thank you