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Asia, Europe 'not ready for new diseases

Public sector mechanisms in Asia and Europe are ineffective in dealing with public health threats in the form of emerging pandemic diseases, say health, food and environment experts.

The ongoing E. coli bacteria outbreak, which has claimed the lives of 35 people in Germany and one in Sweden, was the most obvious example at the moment of governments and societies of the two regions paying the price for their failure to come up with active pandemic preparedness systems, the experts said yesterday at a workshop organised by the Asia Europe Foundation (ASEF).

The ASEF, an international, non-profit organisation based in Singapore, was formed to promote mutual understanding and collaboration between the people of Asia and Europe through health, cultural, intellectual and people-to-people exchanges.