



Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) & Santé publique France Joint Event: High-level Meeting on Risk Communications for Public Health Emergencies: *“How Can We Include Migrants & Ethnic Minorities?”*

10-11 October 2018, Paris, France

Scope & Purpose

Background

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and Santé publique France have partnered to host a multi-country, High-level Meeting focusing on managing risk communications for public health emergencies.

Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) Public Health Network

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)¹, founded in 1997, is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation representing the 53 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)² Partners: 30 European and 21 Asian countries, plus the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat. Following the 6th ASEM Summit (ASEM6; 2006; Helsinki, Finland), where the leaders expressed their determination to combat avian influenza and a possible human influenza pandemic, the “ASEM Initiative for the Rapid Containment of Pandemic Influenza”, financially supported by the Government of Japan, was launched at the 9th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting (ASEM FMM9; 2009; Hanoi, Viet Nam). Since then, the 2 components of the Initiative (ASEM stockpile of anti-viral drugs and personal protective equipment, as well as ASEF Public Health Network) have contributed to strengthening ASEM Partners’ capacity for managing public health emergencies.

From 2010 to 2013, ASEF Public Health Network organised a series of workshops within the project “Asia-Europe Foundation – Accurate Scenarios Active Preparedness (ASEF-ASAP)”³, to strengthen multi-sectoral pandemic preparedness and response. Among the recommendations developed from these workshops, strengthening risk communications emerged as a common need across sectors. Following this recommendation, ASEF has implemented 5 workshops/meeting on different aspects of risk communications since 2013. Both the health and non-health sectors across Asia and Europe underscored the need for building capacity for managing communications throughout health crises and for attaining policy and programme support for risk communications.

Santé publique France

Santé publique France was created on 27 April 2016 as the national public health agency, resulting from the merging of the French Institute for Public Health Surveillance (InVS), the French Institute for Health Promotion and Health Education (Inpes) and the Establishment for Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (Eprus).

Santé publique France serves the population in all aspects of public health based on scientific knowledge, data and information. It supports the government and society in improving the health and well-being of the population. Santé publique France has a population-based approach with the objective of reducing social health inequalities in all areas of public health: infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases, environmental health and occupational health.

The agency safeguards public health through its works in epidemiological monitoring, surveillance, alert and response; and through its scientific expertise in healthcare that allows it to develop evidence-based interventions for prevention

¹ <http://www.asef.org>

² <http://www.ASEMinfoboard.org/>

³ <http://asef.org/pubs/asef-publications/2947-accurate-scenarios-active-preparedness>

and health promotion. It supports key players in public healthcare, contributes to preparedness and management of health crises and provides support for the implementation of response plans.

Santé publique France operates at the national level thanks to several dedicated networks and partnerships engaging health professionals, and several stakeholders outside the health sector. Openness and dialogue with stakeholders and the civil society are one of the founding principles of the agency.

The agency is present throughout the national territory with regional units, including overseas territories.

Santé publique France hosts the main office of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI).

Including Migrants and Ethnic Minorities into Risk Communications – “No One Left Behind”

In 2017, ASEF Public Health Network together with the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) organised a High-level Meeting gathering senior officials to discuss “political interface”, which was highlighted as an essential factor in achieving effective risk communication. The meeting identified possible obstacles to make appropriate decisions during public health emergencies, and recommended strategies to overcome difficulties. Meanwhile, other challenges related to risk communications were highlighted, and one of these was how to reach ‘special target’ audiences, including foreigners and the physically-challenged.

The rapid flow of migrants from one region to another has serious public health implications. Population movement has increased dramatically in recent years, yet this has not been incorporated into the risk communication strategies of countries.

In 2018, ASEF and Santé publique France jointly host the “High-level Meeting on Risk Communications for Public Health Emergencies” with a focus on how to reach special population, particularly migrants and ethnic minorities.

Objectives of the High-level Meeting

The overall aim of this High-level Meeting is to strengthen countries’ capacity to support Emergency Risk Communications (ERC) for Public Health Emergencies (PHE), especially in relation to migrants and ethnic minorities. It will explore difficulties related to migrants/ethnic minority groups at the time of PHE. The High-level Meeting will try to identify possible obstacles to including migrants and ethnic minorities in ERC and develop strategies to communicate risks to such population before, during and after PHE. The specific objectives are:

- To identify difficulties to inform diverse populations about PHE;
- To discuss possible solutions to include migrants and ethnic minorities in ERC;
- To develop recommendations on actions needed to inform migrants and ethnic minorities about PHE.

Target Audience

The High-level Meeting will address 3 target audiences: 1) Senior-level officials who work in the area of migrants and ethnic minorities; 2) Government officials in charge of health emergency communication; and 3) Migrants’ health experts. More specifically:

- Senior-level officials, advisors and/or other decision-makers from ASEM Partners’ Ministry of Health or equivalent
- Chief/directors of ASEM Partners’ national health agencies or high-level staff with experience in working, informing and communicating with migrant populations
- Spokesperson/senior-level media personnel from ASEM Partners’ Ministries of Health or equivalent
- Representatives of international organisations and NGOs

Expected Outcomes

The High-level Meeting will foster the exchange of good practices in establishing and improving on PHE risk communications processes between Asia and Europe. A meeting report summarising the key recommendations and conclusions will be developed.

Date and Location

This High-level Meeting will take place on 10-11 October 2018, in Paris, France.

