

RESPIRATORY VIRUSES SECTION SEASONAL NEWSLETTER! 2025



IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

Season's Greetings

Key Activities 2025

Publications 2025

Routine Outputs

Meetings 2025

Highlights 2026

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

As the year draws to a close and we approach the holiday season, we in the ECDC Respiratory Viruses team would like to extend our warmest greetings to you with this end-of-year newsletter.

In this newsletter you can find the team's main achievements in 2025. Most of them saw your active contribution and involvement, and we therefore would like to deeply thank you for all your crucial input which is indispensable to us, and to share a summary of these achievements with you.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are prepared to build on these strong foundations and continue to strengthen our synergies and collaboration. We are really looking forward to it. In the meantime, we take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a well-deserved period of rest and celebration

Edoardo Colzani, on behalf of the ECDC Respiratory Viruses team



KEY ACTIVITIES 2025



Respiratory Virus Surveillance guidance

As many of you will be aware, we have been working on an update of the surveillance guidance for integrated surveillance of respiratory viruses at the EU level. This year we started two working groups involving some of you and a further one to come in January 2026.

Two of the subgroups will have completed their meetings this year:

Action-oriented surveillance objectives – draft objectives produced.

Right-sizing – meetings continued into early December, and work is ongoing at pace to develop draft recommendations for this.

Transition to EpiPulse Cases and change in record types

Three record types have already transitioned to EpiPulse Cases in 2025 (RESPIQUAL, INFLZOO and INFLZOOCONTACT). Thank you to all of you for attending the training and testing the platform.

The transition to EpiPulse Cases for respiratory virus data will continue in 2026. We want to ensure that all data that are collected have a purpose and contribute to fulfilling the objectives, therefore we have started mapping surveillance indicators to the new surveillance objectives. This will be particularly important as we review all the metadata in preparation for the transition to EpiPulse Cases next year. The DNCC and wider network will be consulted on metadata changes.

Public health EURL for respiratory viruses

As you may be aware, the European Commission has been introducing a network of European reference laboratories (EURLs) for public health.

The aim of these EURLs is to support national reference laboratories to promote good practice regarding diagnostics, testing methods, use of certain tests, notification and reporting of serious cross-border health threats.

Over the past year ECDC has been working with the Commission, including HaDEA, to establish the public health EURL for respiratory viruses (EURL-RV). The winning candidate is a consortium of 8 laboratories, which will be coordinated by Erasmus Medical Center-Viroscience. The nominated consortium will prepare during 2026 for their anticipated start in early 2027, when the EURL will become operational. [An EDCC news item was just published with further details.](#)

Zoonotic influenza

2025 has been a dynamic year for avian influenza; the detections of which has been increasing in wild birds in Europe, and as a result spill-over events to domestic poultry. Globally, infections in humans are being sporadically reported. ECDC therefore continues its efforts in the surveillance of zoonotic influenza and to support preparedness for potential human cases in EU/EEA, with the production of various scientific advice and guidance documents throughout the year, including the 'ECDC/EFSA scientific opinion on Preparedness, prevention and control related to zoonotic avian influenza'; the ECDC's 'Scenarios for pre-pandemic zoonotic influenza preparedness and response in the EU/EEA'; and the 'ECDC/EFSA Coordinated One Health investigation and management of outbreaks in humans and animals caused by zoonotic avian influenza viruses'. There have also been regular updates in the quarterly avian influenza overview reports and the ECDC Communicable disease threats report (CDTR) on human cases of zoonotic influenza reported globally.

Details of these, and all other, publications can be found further below.



KEY ACTIVITIES 2025

Experts from the Respiratory Virus team have also attended various meetings, conferences and contributed to expert panels on the topic this year including ESCAIDE and the 27th annual meeting of the European Society for Clinical Virology (ESCV), where ECDC had panel and keynote presentations; the Annual meeting for EURL of avian influenza; a Disease X seminar on A(H5N1) organised by Pandemix Center of Excellence and SSI; and a simulation exercise (SimEx) on 'medical countermeasures readiness and response to a natural cross-border threat to health' organised by DG HERA and held in November. There have also been regular scientific seminars organised jointly with EFSA on avian influenza throughout the year that will continue in 2026, to which the Network are invited.

The European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary (ERVISS)

The ERVISS dashboard continues as the primary output for near real-time surveillance, analysis and display of weekly surveillance data and trends in the EU/EEA. We have worked since summer to simplify the ECDC summary, making it shorter and focused on interpretation of the data, rather than presentation of individual indicators. We hope this is more useful to readers, but we always welcome feedback from the network about ways in which it could be improved. In the spirit of continual improvement, we have been working on several new features, as part of the annual ERVISS development cycle, and we plan to release these in early 2026.

We thank all countries for their regular reporting of data that makes the publication of ERVISS possible.

EuroMOMO

European mortality monitoring

ECDC's work with EuroMOMO continues; we are in the 3rd year of the 4-year FWC with SSI. Following on from the EuroMOMO face-to-face network meeting in September 2024, the EuroMOMO Hub continues its work reviewing the underlying statistical methods and performance of the EuroMOMO model, resulting in lively discussions with the Network. Work is also ongoing to generalise the attributable mortality model (AttMOMO), originally developed to estimate the contribution of influenza to excess mortality, to be able to estimate the contribution of multiple pathogens and control for temperature. The hub is planning a country visit to recruit new countries to the network. If your country is interested in starting routine all-cause mortality monitoring, then please contact us!

AURORAE

It was a busy and fruitful penultimate year for the AURORAE consortium; work continued across the three main respiratory viruses to support Member States. Activities have included laboratory support through the provision of whole-genome sequencing (WGS) protocols and training in WGS for RSV, and the continuation of antigenic characterisation of both SARS-CoV-2 and influenza viruses. There have been several rounds of EQAs, including wetlab EQAs on both SARS-CoV-2 and RSV; Bioinformatic EQAs from 2023-2025, featuring several rounds covering SARS-CoV-2 baseline assessment; zoonotic influenza; and seasonal influenza; and the results from the EQA assessment programme on influenza virus from 2023 were published in October.

In addition, as planned, a range of training activities were offered in support of the Member States, including face-to-face wet/dry lab trainings; twinning visits, webinars, and the provision of diagnostic and characterization support through the offer of protocols for influenza and SARS-CoV-2. There have also been a number of virtual trainings made available, for example in October there was an e-learning course on the essentials of SARS-CoV-2 sequencing and data analysis. In total, some 495 participants from the Member States took part in the 22 trainings provided by AURORAE across the year.

PUBLICATIONS 2025



JANUARY

[Coordinated One Health investigation and management of outbreaks in humans and animals caused by zoonotic avian influenza viruses](#)

[ECDC/EFSA Scientific Opinion on Preparedness, prevention and control related to zoonotic avian influenza](#)

MARCH

[Impact of SARS-CoV-2 variant mutations on susceptibility to monoclonal antibodies and antiviral drugs: a non-systematic review, April 2022 to October 2024.](#)

[Does COVID-19 vaccination reduce the risk and duration of post COVID-19 condition?](#)

JULY

[Epidemiological and Clinical Insights into Enterovirus Circulation in Europe, 2018-2023: A Multicenter Retrospective Surveillance Study](#)

SEPTEMBER

[Influenza virus characteristics, week 40 2024 to week 33 2025, EU/EEA](#)

NOVEMBER

[Survey report on national seasonal influenza vaccination recommendations and coverage rates in EU/EEA countries, 2024/25](#)

[Threat Assessment Brief \(TAB\): Assessing the risk of influenza for the EU/EEA in the context of increasing circulation of A\(H3N2\) subclade K](#)

DECEMBER

[Scenarios for pre-pandemic zoonotic influenza preparedness and response](#)

Related documents:

- [Short instruction manual](#)
- [Downloadable Excel tool](#)
- [Press release](#)

[Preparedness of public health laboratories for respiratory infectious diseases](#)

ROUTINE OUTPUTS

ECDC-EFSA Avian influenza Overview Reports

[September-December 2025](#)

[June-September 2025](#)

[March - June 2025](#)

[December 2024-March 2025](#)

Annual Epidemiological Report

[Zoonotic Influenza Annual Epidemiological Report \(AER\) for 2023](#)

External Quality Assessments

MARCH – [EQA of molecular detection and variant typing of SARS-CoV-2 in European expert laboratories in 2023](#)

SEPTEMBER – [External quality assessment for molecular detection, subtyping and characterisation of potentially zoonotic type A influenza viruses, 2024](#)

OCTOBER – [ECDC/WHO Euro seasonal influenza EQA 2023 report](#)

Communicable Disease Threat Report (CDTR)

Although the [CDTRs](#) cover all ECDC disease areas, there are regular updates contained therein on respiratory viruses, including the human cases of zoonotic influenza reported globally.



Respiratory Virus Annual Meeting

The tenth WHO/Europe - ECDC Joint European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Meeting, was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina on 2–3 June 2025. Around 125 participants attended in-person, and many more online, from across the European region to discuss surveillance of seasonal and pandemic influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and RSV, with a focus on strengthening integrated respiratory virus surveillance and preparedness in the European Region. The meeting report will be shared with the Network as soon as possible.

Disease Network Coordination Committee (DNCC) Meetings

There were two dedicated DNCC meetings this year, the first in March (face-to-face) and a second (virtual) meeting in October.

At the March meeting, the agenda focussed on:

- Consultation on the scope and plan for updating the guidance on surveillance of respiratory viruses in the EU/EEA.
- Information on ECDC's ongoing and planned activities in 2025 on respiratory viruses.
- Discussion of suggestions for relevant topics for the annual network meeting.

At the October meeting, the focus was on providing information on:

- The surveillance of respiratory viruses guidance development including proposed surveillance objectives.
- EpiPulse cases/metadata updates.
- Mapping of severe respiratory disease indicators in the EU/EEA.
- The finalised document on scenarios for pre-pandemic zoonotic influenza preparedness and response.

Furthermore, the DNCC was informed about and consulted on:

- A then- upcoming virology meeting (held in November) that would inform the surveillance guidance.
- The new ERVISS summary.
- The anticipated public health focus of the work of the Respiratory Virus (RV) Section in 2026 and 2027.

Virology Face - to - Face Meeting

In November, ECDC hosted virologists from across Europe to strengthen surveillance of respiratory viruses – including influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and RSV. The objective of the meeting was to consider the opportunities to (re)define virological information collected by ECDC during the revision of the respiratory virus surveillance guidance and the ongoing change from TESSy to EpiPulse Cases. Discussions during the meeting focussed on how virology can support public health actions including virological data being translated into evidence to support decision-making and help reduce the impact of respiratory infections across the region.

Over the course of 2025, ECDC has hosted 28 online webinars and seminars covering both surveillance and laboratory topics.

Joint ECDC-WHO surveillance webinars

ECDC together with WHO/EURO jointly organised five webinars focused on routine respiratory virus surveillance in 2025 to discuss the current epidemiological situation, vaccine effectiveness and other pressing surveillance topics. The webinars include the 2024/2025 mid and late-season webinar, a webinar on the use of thresholds in surveillance as well as the 2025/2026 start and mid-season webinar. We thank all countries that agreed to present at these webinars and actively participate in exchange across Europe.

Zoonotic influenza surveillance webinars

Due to the current global avian influenza epidemiological situation, ECDC organised four webinars to present and discuss published ECDC protocols, reports and changes to data collection for zoonotic influenza. Additional topics in the webinar included country experiences and ongoing work on Epipulse Cases and a working case definition.

Scientific webinars on avian influenza

Together with the European Food Safety Authority and the European Reference laboratory for avian influenza, ECDC continued to organise quarterly scientific webinars on avian influenza where the current epidemiological situation and genetic characteristics of avian influenza viruses in animals and humans are presented, bringing together both the animal and human health sectors. There were further seminars, one hosted by the Aurorae consortium on "avian influenza in human specimens – genomic analyses and experiences from the field", as well as another EU case definitions and data collection.

Joint ECDC – WHO Laboratory network webinars

During 2025, ECDC/WHO EURO held joint laboratory network meetings once a month (January – June / September – December). A number of topics were discussed including focus meetings on zoonotic / swine flu; SARS-Cov-2 including sequencing; seasonal influenza; and RSV. Other topics discussed were: severe adenovirus outbreaks; updates on GISAID; review of the influenza season '24/'25 including the virological analysis; updates on both dry and wetlab EQAs for influenza, SARS-Cov-2 and RSV; outcomes of the influenza vaccine composition meeting for season '25/'26; a global overview of the current influenza season; update on the respiratory virus EURL and feedback from the recent EU/EEA RV virology technical meeting on virus characterisation. The intention is to continue with these meetings, on the same monthly schedule, in 2026. We appreciate your participation and collaboration at these meetings.

Launch of Guidance for integrated surveillance: As presented above, work on the surveillance guidance is continuing apace. The drafting will be completed during the first half of 2026, with a view to publishing before the Annual Meeting in June.

RSV guidance for adults: In late 2025 the Respiratory virus team began exploring the production of an ECDC guidance for RSV in older adults. The early activity aims to establish the high-level policy questions that will guide and shape the evidence gathering and subsequent analysis. For Q1, we intend to launch an open call to establish an Expert Panel that will work alongside the ECDC disease experts and other stakeholders. The bulk of the work will then be done throughout 2026, with a target publication date during the first half of 2027.

In-depth analysis of surveillance data for Respiratory Viruses: At ECDC we are currently assessing the feasibility of multi-country studies using surveillance data in agreement and close collaboration with the Network.

Respiratory Virus Annual Meeting: As per our usual programme, we plan to host the next ECDC Respiratory Virus Annual Meeting in May / June in 2026. Planning will start in earnest early in 2026, with the practical arrangements so that you can be informed of the dates and location as soon as possible, followed closely by the development of the agenda.

Disease Network Coordination Committee (DNCC): Our current intention just now is to have 3 DNCC meetings in 2026. Two virtual meetings; one in February and another in the autumn. We aim to have at least one face-to-face meeting with the DNCC each year and for next year, we hope to organise back-to-back with the Annual meeting in May / June.

Epipulse cases: As mentioned above, work on the implementation of Epipulse cases will continue in 2026.

End of EuroMOMO Framework Contract (FWC): The current FWC will expire on 08 November 2026.

End of Aurorae Framework Contract (FWC): The FWC will expire on 21 June 2026. The continuation of some activities is expected for a period of up to 6 months after the contract end date (in line with contractual terms and conditions). From 2027, the newly designated EURL will take over some of the activities covered by Aurorae. During 2026, we expect that the following activities of Aurorae will take place: one round of wet and dry lab EQAs for influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and RSV, and an expanded Bioinfo EQA will include RSV, alongside the ongoing influenza and SARS-CoV-2 assessments; as well as additional courses including face-to-face trainings, twinnings, and virtual courses.

RESPIRATORY VIRUSES TEAM



ECDC wishes you peaceful holidays
and a happy and healthy New Year!

