



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 09:15 (local time)  
**Exercise Note:** This script is to be used by Exercise Control during a call to the Director of ECDC

**Inject 1 – SANCO Cabinet (Brussels) informs ECDC of an outbreak of diarrhoea and vomiting**

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Telephone Script

Good morning,

Exercise, Exercise, Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is Maria Gomez calling from the SANCO Cabinet at the European Commission in Brussels. We would like to inform you of an ongoing outbreak of diarrhea and vomiting in the European Commission. The 14 floor of the Berlaymont building in the Rue de la Loi, which houses the European Commission headquarters, is the most seriously affected.

The outbreak is currently causing 250+ cases in the commission building in Brussels. The added complications are that 3 commissioners including the health commissioner are believed to have caught the infection.

The media have got hold of the story and it is in danger of becoming an embarrassing political news item. Senior Commission officials here are requesting that SANCO C3 get on top of the outbreak and manage the media situation effectively. They will need ECDC advice and assistance in this.

Commission officials are also requesting closer liaison with the Belgian authorities and a reinforcement of public health measures to slow the spread of the infection.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 09:20  
**Exercise Note:** This script is to be used by Porton Exercise Control during a call to the Head of PRU

**Inject 2 – DG SANCO C3 asks PRU to collaborate on the response to the diarrhoea and vomiting outbreak**

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Telephone script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is Anita Blake from SANCO C3 in Luxembourg. We have been advised by the SANCO Cabinet in Brussels of the suspected Norovirus outbreak in the EC headquarters. In order to coordinate the situation effectively please can you keep us informed of any developments and any outputs that you generate. We will keep a watching brief on the situation and will aid you in any way we can but are aware that because this is an outbreak of infectious disease and not deliberate that you will take the lead on behalf of the Commission.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007

**Insert Time:** 09:30

**Exercise Note:** This is a print out of a news report to be handed by the ECDC Exercise Controller to a PRU Officer

#### **Inject 3 – Reuters and BBC Website News Report**

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See Attached
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## Hundreds of Commission staff hit by mystery bug

Mon June 4, 2007 7:07am

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BRUSSELS (Reuters) – An outbreak of vomiting and diarrhoea is affecting more than 200 staff in the 14 floor Berlaymont Building, which houses the European Commission headquarters. It is understood that as many as three Commissioners, including the Health Commissioner, have been affected by the bug and the number of cases is still increasing on a daily basis. Food poisoning has not been ruled out, as the outbreak is believed to have started four days ago at a drinks reception to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday the Commissioner for Internal Market and Services.



-ends-

Last updated: *Date, Time, UK*

## European Commissioners food poisoning scare

As many as three Commissioners, including the Health Commissioner and the Commissioner for Internal Market and Services have been hit by a mystery gastroenteritis bug in Brussels this week.

Over 200 members of Commission staff working in the Berlaymont Building, the site of many of the European Commission's offices, have been affected by the vomiting and diarrhoea illness.

### Have your say

Have you been affected by the mystery bug at the EU?

[➤ Send us your story](#)

The cause of the outbreak has not been established, but since the first victims fell ill following a Commission drinks reception, food poisoning is being investigated as a possible source.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 10:15  
**Exercise Note:** Confirmation of suspected Norovirus outbreak by Belgian authorities

#### **Inject 5 – Report from Belgian Public Health Department**

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The Federal Public Service of Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment in Belgium have only just been made aware of an outbreak of suspected Norovirus, based on clinical symptoms, in Brussels. The cases have arisen over the weekend and it was only on Monday morning at 9am CET, as a significant number of people fail to return to work, that we became aware of the situation. We have informed the Health Inspector for the Brussels metropolitan region who in turn has dispatched a public health investigation team to the Berlaymont building to start the investigation and is in the process of assembling a crisis management team.

Initial analysis of the situation suggests:

- A large number of cases with symptom onset on the same day suggesting a single source for the outbreak
- The severity of the illness indicates an unusually virulent strain of Norovirus, although neither the strain nor the disease are confirmed at this stage.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007

**Insert Time:** 10:40

**Exercise Note:** This is a print out of a news report to be handed by the ECDC Exercise Controller to a PRU Officer

**Inject 6 – Reuters and BBC Website News Report**

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See Attached
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Last updated: 4 June 2007. 1040, Brussels

## Death of European Official in food poisoning scare

There are new reports of a death amongst Commission officials hit by the mystery food bug circulating in the Commission building in Brussels. The dead staff member has not been named, but there is speculation now that the poisoning might be deliberate – a possible attempt to strike at the heart of EU Government.

Sources within the Berlaymont Building, the site of many of the European Commission's offices, estimate that as many as 220 people have been hit by the bug which causes prolonged vomiting and diarrhoea.

### Have your say

Have you been affected by the mystery bug at the EU?

[➤ Send us your story](#)

The cause of the outbreak has still not been established, but rumours are now circulating of a deliberate attack by poisoning food at a reception for senior officials and at least three Commissioners.



## Poisoning scare as Commission staff member dies

Mon June 4, 2007 10:40am

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BRUSSELS (Reuters) – News emerged today of a death amongst Commission staff in the European Commission Berlaymont Building as the outbreak of vomiting and diarrhoea claims more cases. There is now widespread speculation amongst Commission officials that the illness which has affected more than 200 staff in recent days may be the result of deliberate poisoning. The name of the dead official has not been made public, but concern is growing that the illness which started four days ago at a drinks reception, may have been the product of a sinister plot to destabilise European Government.



-ends-



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007

**Insert Time:** 10:45

**Exercise Note:** This script is to be used by Porton Exercise Control to ECDC

**Inject 7 – Telephone call from SANCO cabinet Brussels**

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Telephone script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is Maria Gomez calling from the SANCO Cabinet at the European Commission in Brussels. We have now heard of the unfortunate death of a colleague in the commission. The media are linking this with a deliberate act of poisoning in the commission. Of course this is not sensible but we wish to have as much information on norovirus in order to rebuff these claims robustly. We need to seize the initiative from the media and require ECDC to develop a media strategy, strongly supported by the scientific facts, to counteract the current media stories.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 11:15  
**Exercise Note:** Email update to ECDC  
**Inject 8 – Situation Report 11:00 CET**

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From Belgian Public Health Department

To ECDC

Situation Report Update at 11:00 CET

The public health investigation team have reported back to the public health service with a situation update.

- 267 staff affected including 3 commissioners.
- 1 fatality reported.
- Majority work at the Berlaymont building in Rue de la Loi
- Many have been identified as attending a 60<sup>th</sup> birthday party for the Irish Commissioner on June 1st.
- The external catering company for this event, which incidentally has never been used by EC before, is being contacted and a list of all attendees at the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday party being compiled.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007

**Insert Time:** 12:15

**Exercise Note:** This script is to be used by Porton Exercise Control during a call to the Head of PRU

#### **Inject 10 –WHO- Europe asks PRU for information on the norovirus outbreak**

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Telephone script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise, Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is WHO- Europe in Copenhagen. We have heard there is an outbreak of norovirus in the commission and would like to know what is happening and whether we need to become involved. Can you provide us with an update? This is probably best done by e.mail so I can share the output with colleagues. Do you have our email address?



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007

**Insert Time:** 14:15

**Exercise Note:** Email update to ECDC

**Inject 13 – Situation Report 14:00 CET**

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From Belgian Public Health Department

To ECDC

Situation Report Update at 14:00 CET

A public health team has been dispatched to the caterers (Corsa catering company) in Rue van Eyck in the Elsene region of Brussels to conduct interviews and collect samples of food for analysis. This includes a batch of oysters, the majority of which were served at the event. A second team has been dispatched to collect samples from a small number of the affected staff for analysis. It is not anticipated that the results will be available until tomorrow, Tuesday June 5 at the earliest. Additional staff will be drafted in tomorrow for the contact tracing process should that be deemed necessary.

The single fatality will undergo an autopsy early tomorrow morning to establish cause of death. It is not known at this time if the fatality is related in any way to the Norovirus infection but we believe this to be unlikely.

We believe we are effectively managing this public health crisis and welcome the continued support of ECDC and the commission.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 15:00  
**Exercise Note:** Telephone call from Porton Excon to ECDC

#### **Inject 15 – Request for help with media handling**

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##### Telephone script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise, Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is the Belgian Public Health Service Press Office. We are coming under increasing pressure from the media and would appreciate some assistance to ensure consistency of the media response. Can you share with us the public health messages which you would be advocating and any other press briefing material including Q&As that you intend to use.

An early response to this would be appreciated (16:30 latest) as we intend to hold a press conference at 17:00 CET



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 15:30  
**Exercise Note:** E.mail from Excon Porton (Belgian authorities) to ECDC  
**Inject 17 – Epidemiological opinion?**

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To ECDC,

We are coming under increasing criticism from local and national politicians that we are adopting a complacent attitude towards this outbreak and are not doing enough to protect our citizens from the norovirus outbreak. An eminent virologist from Rega Institute for Medical research at the Catholic University, Leuven is suggesting that if this is a new strain of norovirus then it may be far more harmful than previous strains, particularly as there has been a fatality. What is your risk assessment saying about the potential for this new strain and are there any additional measures you feel we should be taking other than:

- Closing the caterers until it is thoroughly cleaned and clear of the disease
- Advising the Commission to thoroughly clean the area where the party took place and adjoining facilities
- Advice to infected individuals to stay home until 48 hours after they feel better; to follow routine hygiene measures including hand-washing; to clean contaminated surfaces with a bleach based disinfectant; to avoid dehydration and keep a careful watch on those frail or elderly with the disease
- Contact tracing where appropriate and provision of public health advice to those contacts

We would welcome any support that ECDC can offer to counter this criticism

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## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 15:30  
**Exercise Note:** E.mail from Excon Porton (Belgian authorities) to ECDC  
**Injct 17 – Epidemiological opinion?**

---

To ECDC,

We are coming under increasing criticism from the Belgian media that we are adopting a complacent attitude towards this outbreak and are not doing enough to protect our citizens from the norovirus outbreak. An eminent virologist from Rega Institute for Medical research at the Catholic University, Leuven is suggesting that if this is a new strain of norovirus then it may be far more harmful than previous strains, particularly as there has been a fatality. What are your thoughts about the potential for this new strain and are there any additional measures you feel we should be taking other than:

- We are considering closing the caterers until the actiology of the outbreak is clear.
- Advising the Commission to thoroughly clean the area where the party took place and adjoining facilities
- Advice to infected individuals to stay home until 48 hours after they feel better; to follow routine hygiene measures including hand-washing; to clean contaminated surfaces with a bleach based disinfectant; to avoid dehydration and keep a careful watch on those frail or elderly with the disease
- Contact tracing where appropriate and provision of public health advice to those contacts

We would welcome any support that ECDC can offer to counter this criticism

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## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 07:30  
**Exercise Note:** Telephone call from Excon at ECDC (Austrian Health Ministry) to ECDC on duty officer  
**Inject 18 – Austria confirm diphtheria outbreak**

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#### Telephone script

Good morning.

Exercise, Exercise, Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is the Austrian health ministry in Vienna. We have just confirmed an outbreak of diphtheria in the capital city Vienna. To date four possible cases have been identified, one of whom has died. The bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* has been isolated from one of the patients and confirmed by PCR to be a toxin producer. This patient has died. Results are expected shortly from the other cases. We suggest a video-conference at 09:15 to provide you with further details. Can you provide us with a videoconference number on which to contact you?

We will also post this message on EWRS shortly but wished to give you advance notification.

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## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 08:00  
**Exercise Note:** Posting on EWRS by Excon at ECDC  
Inject 19 – EWRS confirmation of initial report

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Posting on EWRS.

Exercise, Exercise, Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

From the Austrian Health Ministry:

This morning the Austrian health ministry wish to confirm an outbreak of diphtheria in Vienna. To date four possible cases have been identified, one of whom has died. The bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* has been isolated from one of the patients and confirmed by PCR to be a toxin producer. This patient has died. Results are expected shortly from the other cases. We will provide additional information as it becomes available.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 08:15  
**Exercise Note:** Telephone message from excon (SANCO C3) to on call officer ECDC  
Inject 20 Contact from SANCO C3

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Telephone message.

Exercise, Exercise, Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is SANCO C3. We have just seen an EWRS message from Austria with respect to a diphtheria outbreak. Are you aware?

How are you responding?

Please keep us informed of any developments and if you require any further assistance from C3 SANCO please let us know.

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## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 08:45  
**Exercise Note:** This script is to be used by Porton Excon (SANCO cabinet) during a call to ECDC

#### **Inject 21 –SANCO Cabinet asks ECDC about the implications for Europe**

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Telephone script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is Maria Gomez calling from the SANCO Cabinet at the European Commission in Brussels. We have just been made aware by SANCO C3 of an outbreak of diphtheria in Austria. What is your assessment of the situation and what are the implications for Europe? The minister will be asking for a briefing at 11:30 this morning before he holds a press conference at 12. This press conference was arranged yesterday in the wake of the norovirus outbreak but he is sure to be asked questions about the diphtheria outbreak as well. Please provide a situation report and a briefing document electronically to our e.mail address by 11:15 latest.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 09:15  
**Exercise Note:** This script is to be used by Porton exon (Vienna) during a videoconference with ECDC

#### **Inject 22 – Videoconference Austrian Health Ministry with ECDC**

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##### Videoconference script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is the Austrian Ministry of Health.

Introductions.....

The purpose of this call is to update you with all the information we currently have on the outbreak of diphtheria in Vienna. We are very busy here as I am sure you will understand so we will need to be brief.

I will read out a statement outlining our current knowledge and then we will try to answer any questions.

The Austrian health ministry can now confirm one case and three strongly suspected cases (awaiting confirmation on microbiology but PCR positive) of diphtheria in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

The first, the confirmed case, was an 82 year old female LS. She was brought to the Emergency room at the Wiener Krankenanstaltenverbund on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June and died 12 hours later of heart failure. Routine samples including throat swabs were taken for microbiology on entry to the ward. These were confirmed late on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June as possible *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* (following 48 hours growth on blood agar). Overnight PCR results confirm the bacterium AND the presence of the toxin gene.

Three further suspected cases were identified last night (Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June). Two family members, a husband and wife (ZM and AM), presented at a local clinic and were referred to the Wiener Krankenanstaltenverbund. They had the same address as LS and have similar symptoms (tonsillitis, low-grade fever and ZM had difficulty breathing).



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Both are former residents of Bosnia who moved to Austria in 1991. The wife did cleaning and other odd jobs for LS. They have no significant travel history.

The third suspected case is JK, a Slovakian citizen who, like ZM, works as a taxi driver in Vienna. He was admitted to the Unfallkrankenhaus Lorenz Böhler on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 4pm. He has now been transferred to be with the others in a dedicated ward at the Wiener Krankenanstaltenverbund.

JK lives in the Landstrasse district. He shares a small apartment with two others, one from Bulgaria, NT, and one from Turkey, AB. JKs' family live in Nitra, Slovakia. He last visited them 7 days ago on 29<sup>th</sup> May. At the time his only child, VK (7years old), was unwell with a sore throat and flu-like symptoms. JK was unconcerned and was due to visit his family again today, so had not been in touch since. We have contacted counterparts in Slovakia and provided them with all the details we have.

We have not been able to contact the Turkish citizen, AB, but have dispatched a public health physician to his address in the hope of interviewing him. The Bulgarian, NT unexpectedly returned to Plovdiv on Friday as his elderly mother has died.

The Austrian authorities are having difficulty contacting health officials in Bulgaria and have no formal contact with Turkey and would appreciate help in this from ECDC as we are very busy dealing with our own crisis.

Questions?

Thank-you. We will send you an electronic version and a hard copy of this statement. What e.mail address and fax number should we send it to?



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007

**Insert Time:** 09:30

**Exercise Note:** Excon Porton (email) to norovirus incident email at ECDC

**Inject 23 – Update from FPS – Belgium on Norovirus outbreak**

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Update from FPS - Public health, Belgium at 09:00 CET

- The pathologist reports that the fatality associated with the norovirus outbreak was more likely due to chronic heart disease.
- No laboratory results have been received at this time. They are expected late morning.
- Report from Health inspector, Brussels metropolitan area; states that catering staff have now been interviewed. One was ill on the 31<sup>st</sup> May and stayed at home but, although still unwell, returned to work on the 1<sup>st</sup> June and was involved in the preparation of the food for the event at the Berlaymont building. Two further employees had been ill the same days (31st May/1<sup>st</sup> June) including a cook, and two more were absent yesterday, 4<sup>th</sup> June. The health inspector had ordered the caterers closed with immediate effect on Monday evening and provided recommendations for disinfection. No functions were catered for over the weekend and the caterers withdrew from an event planned for Monday evening. It is expected the caterers will remain closed for up to a week. There have been no further reports of Norovirus outbreaks across the city.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 09:45  
**Exercise Note:** This script to be faxed and emailed to ECDC

#### **Inject 24 – Statement from Austrian health Ministry**

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##### Statement from Austrian health Ministry

09:15 CET 5 June 2007

The Austrian health ministry can now confirm one case and three strongly suspected cases (awaiting confirmation on microbiology but PCR positive) of diphtheria in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

The first, the confirmed case, was an 82 year old female LS. She was brought to the Emergency room at the Wiener Krankenanstaltenverbund on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June and died 12 hours later of heart failure. Routine samples including throat swabs were taken for microbiology on entry to the ward. These were confirmed late on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June as possible *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* (following 48 hours growth on blood agar). Overnight PCR results confirm the bacterium AND the presence of the toxin gene.

Three further suspected cases were identified last night (Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June). Two family members, a husband and wife (ZM and AM), presented at a local clinic and were referred to the Wiener Krankenanstaltenverbund. They had the same address as LS and have similar symptoms (tonsillitis, low-grade fever and ZM had difficulty breathing). Both are former residents of Bosnia who moved to Austria in 1991. The wife did cleaning and other odd jobs for LS. They have no significant travel history. The third suspected case is JK, a Slovakian citizen who, like ZM, works as a taxi driver in Vienna. He was admitted to the Unfallkrankenhaus Lorenz Böhler on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June at 4pm. He has now been transferred to be with the others in a dedicated ward at the Wiener Krankenanstaltenverbund.





## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



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JK lives in the Landstrasse district. He shares a small apartment with two others, one from Bulgaria, NT, and one from Turkey, AB. JKs' family live in Nitra, Slovakia. He last visited them 7 days ago on 29<sup>th</sup> May. At the time his only child, VK (7years old), was unwell with a sore throat and flu-like symptoms. JK was unconcerned and was due to visit his family again today, so had not been in touch since. We have contacted counterparts in Slovakia and provided them with all the details we have.

We have not been able to contact the Turkish citizen, AB, but have dispatched a public health physician to his address in the hope of interviewing him. The Bulgarian, NT unexpectedly returned to Plovdiv on Friday as his elderly mother has died. We have no further details for him except he lived in the village of Rogosh, part of Plovdiv.

The Austrian authorities are having difficulty contacting health officials in Bulgaria and have no formal contact with Turkey and would appreciate help in this from ECDC as we are very busy dealing with our own crisis.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 10:00  
**Exercise Note:** This script to put on EWRS

#### **Inject 25 – EWRS message from Slovakia**

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At 09:00 CET 5<sup>th</sup> June, Slovakian authorities were contacted by colleagues in Austria reporting a confirmed outbreak of diphtheria in Vienna and a potential case in a male Slovakian citizen currently in a Viennese hospital. He has recently visited his family in Slovakia.

The Slovakian health department have contacted the regional public health centre in Nitra who have in turn dispatched a public health team to the neighbourhood where the family lived. We have also contacted health departments in the other regions to be on the look out for cases of diphtheria.

We will make more information available as we have it.



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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 10:15  
**Exercise Note:** This script is a telephone call to ECDC from Porton Excon  
**Inject 26 – Telephone message from SANCO C3**

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Transcript of telephone conversation.

This is SANCO C3. Can I speak to the person in charge?

Have we asked the member states to tell us what control measures they may be considering implementing in the light of the outbreak of diphtheria in Austria?

Also, if asked, are ECDC developing recommended control measures that they can distribute to Member states on request? We believe that would be very useful.



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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 10:30  
**Exercise Note:** This script to put on EWRS

#### **Inject 27 – EWRS message from Bulgaria**

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This is the Bulgarian health department.

Following a report on EWRS at 08:00 from the Austrian health department, the Bulgarian authorities are reporting a cluster of undiagnosed respiratory disease in Plovdiv. This cluster only came to the attention of public health officials late yesterday afternoon (4<sup>th</sup> June 2007) following the deaths of two elderly people in a block of apartments in the east of the city late last week and another six cases of the same disease in others living in the area, diagnosed yesterday. These six cases have been hospitalised. We have deployed public health teams to the area to carry out further checks and have advised all health professionals across the country to be aware of the situation. Samples have been collected from the victims but it will take 48h before we have confirmation.

We are concerned that we may be dealing with a significant outbreak of diphtheria in Plovdiv.



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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007

**Insert Time:** 10:40

**Exercise Note:** This is a print out of a news report to be handed by the ECDC Exercise Controller to a PRU Officer

**Inject 29 – Reuters and BBC Website News Report**

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See Attached
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Last updated: 5 June 2007. 1040, Vienna

## Death in Vienna Hospital from Diphtheria

This morning there are early unconfirmed reports of four cases of diphtheria in a hospital in Vienna, Austria. One of the cases has reportedly died of the illness but so far there is no information about the identity or the nationalities of the patients.

The Austrian hospital is understood to be treating the infected patients in an isolation ward and nursing and medical staff are using barrier nursing techniques to avoid contracting the illness.

Diphtheria is a communicable disease which can cause cardiac failure. Its early symptoms include sore throat, fever, swollen glands and respiratory problems. It can be prevented through vaccination.

### Have your say

Are you worried by this health alert?

[➤ Send us your story](#)

## Death from Diphtheria in Vienna Hospital

Tues June 5, 2007 10:40am

[Email this article](#) / [Print this article](#)

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VIENNA (Reuters) – News was emerging this morning of a death and three other associated cases of diphtheria in a Vienna hospital. The patients were understood to be receiving treatment in special isolation facilities, with all healthcare staff wearing protective clothing.



Diphtheria is an infectious disease which causes sore throat, swollen glands and high fever. It can cause impaired breathing and cardiac failure. No information was available on the identity of the dead patient and it is not yet known whether the four are Austrian nationals.

-ends-



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 10:45  
**Exercise Note:** Responses to be put on EWRS by excon ECDC, if request for measures goes out

#### **Inject 30 – Response to EWRS posting from ECDC re Control measures**

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REMINDER to Excon

Assuming EWRS message has been posted by ECDC requesting what control measures member states may be considering implementing in the light of the outbreak of diphtheria in Austria, Excon need to develop some responses for each country and post these on EWRS. Two countries should also ask what ECDC are recommending.





## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 11:00  
**Exercise Note:** Email from Porton Excon (Bulgaria) to ECDC

#### **Inject 31 – Request for support from Bulgaria**

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Update for ECDC – Current situation In Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

Austria have just informed the Bulgarian health ministry by telephone that they are trying to trace a Bulgarian national, Nikola Todorov, who was recently in contact with one of their diphtheria cases and who has recently returned to Plovdiv, Bulgaria. This is the name of one of the hospitalised cases from the suspected diphtheria outbreak and the son of one of the deceased. The health department now believes that there is strong evidence to point towards an outbreak of diphtheria in Bulgaria.

We urgently request the support of ECDC in managing this outbreak. Respiratory tract infections are common in Bulgaria so it will be important to identify those with diphtheria.

What additional information do you require from us for this request to be actioned?



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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 11:00  
**Exercise Note:** EWRS message from ECDC Excon (Slovakia)  
**Injct 32 – Update from Slovakia**

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Update on Current situation in Slovakia – sitrep prepared at 10:30 CET

Initial reports from the public health team in Nitra indicate that they do not believe that the 7yo son, VK has diphtheria but an atypical respiratory disease. However to be sure they are taking the family of J K to the local hospital to undergo observation and do further tests. They have collected samples (throat swabs and blood) for routine microbial analysis. However we do not have the specialist capability for rapid confirmation of diphtheria (*Corynebacterium* specific PCR) and request that ECDC help identify a laboratory in the EU where they can send samples for these rapid confirmatory tests. Meanwhile we will establish contact tracing teams to follow up any contacts of the wife and family.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 11:30  
**Exercise Note:** Email from Porton Excon (Bulgaria) to ECDC

#### Inject 34- – Formal request for support from Bulgaria

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#### Request for Assistance

##### Aim

The Health department of the Bulgarian Government formally request the assistance of the ECDC in supporting our Public health teams with the control of the current outbreak of Diphtheria.

##### Objectives

In particular we need expertise to assist with the following aspects of the outbreak:

- 2 epidemiologists to aid in the control of the outbreak
- A laboratory diagnosis specialist (microbiological and molecular) to share expertise with our laboratories in Plovdiv and Sofia
- A vaccine expert to advise on strategy and targeting

##### Duration

We expect the mission to last for up to 4 weeks but this will be dependent on progress against the outbreak and could be shorter. The mission should begin as soon as possible to maximise the value of ECDCs expertise and input.

##### Contact point

The contact point in the health ministry will be Irina Popov who will assist with all logistical arrangements for this mission. Please contact her through the normal channels of communication you have been using throughout this crisis.

Signed

Deputy Minister for Health



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 11:45  
**Exercise Note:** Email from Porton Excon (others) to ECDC  
**Inject 35- – Expert Volunteering to help**

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To the crisis manager – ECDC

I have just been informed by a former colleague who now works in ECDC that you might be looking for an expert in Diphtheria detection to support a mission in Bulgaria for a few weeks. I am an expert in microbial growth and physiology, microbial DNA extraction and PCR as well as being trained to work in a Containment Level 3 laboratory. I have extensive experience with a range of pathogens. I am available immediately as I am sure my University employers will be happy for me to go. Please let me know by return if I can be of service,

Regards,

Martin Bellish BSc, PhD

University of Salisbury



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 12:00  
**Exercise Note:** EWRS message from ECDC Excon (Belgium) to ECDC  
**Inject 36 – Norovirus update**

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11:30 CET

Preliminary results from the laboratory (based on RT-PCR) indicate that the causative agent for this outbreak was norovirus. DNA sequencing suggests however that the strain is not the GII Minerva strain. The number of cases reported this morning has dropped to 184. The public health authorities in Belgium remain confident that they are effectively managing the crisis and the acute phase is now starting to resolve as the reported incidence of the disease is declining despite increased awareness among the medical community in Brussels. A further update on the situation will be posted 09:00 CET 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 13:00 CET  
**Exercise Note:** Telephone call from Porton Excon (SANCO cabinet) to ECDC  
**Inject 37- – Norovirus update**

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Telephone script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is Maria Gomez calling from the SANCO Cabinet at the European Commission in Brussels. Following the latest message on EWRS by Belgium and a discussion with the Belgian Federal public health service we can confirm that the pressure being applied by the commission to resolve the norovirus outbreak is now receding. The press are also no longer interested. All efforts should now be channelled to managing the diphtheria outbreak. Please keep us informed of events and thank-you for your assistance with the norovirus incident.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 13:00 CET  
**Exercise Note:** Telephone call from Porton Excon (SANCO cabinet) to ECDC  
**Inject 39- – Strategy for managing diphtheria outbreak**

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#### Telephone script

Hello,

Exercise, Exercise Exercise. This is Exercise Brown Lagoon.

This is Maria Gomez calling from the SANCO Cabinet at the European Commission in Brussels again. The commissioner is requesting a briefing on the strategy to manage the diphtheria outbreak now it appears to be in at least two member states of the EU.

Specifically he wishes to know about

- the availability of antitoxin
- population immunity
- what vaccination strategies are most likely to be effective?
- what are the target groups for vaccination?

He requires a response by 15:00 CET. Please email it using the email address provided.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 13:30  
**Exercise Note:** EWRS message from ECDC Excon (Slovakia)  
**Injct 40 – Update from Slovakia**

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Update on Current situation in Slovakia – sitrep prepared at 13:15 CET

We at the Slovakian Health ministry confirm we have identified 17 further cases of an atypical respiratory disease in the town of Nitra, none of which are believed to be diphtheria. Samples have been taken for further analysis and infected individuals given antibiotics and advised to remain at home until symptoms have resolved. The Slovakian health ministry intend to take no additional measures until the results of tests have confirmed the identity of the infection. We will post an EWRS update at 08:00 CET tomorrow 6<sup>th</sup> June 2007





## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 4 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** 13:45  
**Exercise Note:** This is an e.mail from Porton Exercise Control (others) to ECDC

#### **Inject 41 – CDC Atlanta asks ECDC if it needs any help?**

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To ECDC

This is the Respiratory and Enteric Viruses Branch of CDC-Atlanta. We heard you have a problem with a diphtheria outbreak in Vienna and were enquiring if you need any assistance from us. As you are aware we have a considerable expertise in the Center and are always happy to offer support to colleagues overseas. We are also keen to obtain samples to aid our studies on what is now a very rare disease. Please advise if you need assistance

Best regards,

John S. Montgomery III MD MPH

Division of bacterial and mycotic disease

National Center for Infectious Diseases

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

1600 Clifton Rd,

Atlanta, GA 30333,

U.S.A.



## EXERCISE BROWN LAGOON



### EXERCISE - EXERCISE - EXERCISE

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**Exercise Date:** 5 June 2007  
**Insert Time:** ~13:45  
**Exercise Note:** This is a hand-in from ECDC Excon to OAT lead  
**Inject 42 –Physical deployment of OAT**

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#### OAT Team

For the purposes of this exercise, when ready, a minimum of two people from the OAT should deploy with all appropriate equipment to the following co-ordinates:

N: 59°20.012'

E: 18°01.239'

The OAT should set up the equipment at these coordinates and contact the ECDC EOC using the communication means provided (mobile, email, satellite, video). Once two-way contact has been established, the OAT should repack equipment, return to the EOC and debrief