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## Editorial

### Andreas Gilsdorf, Robert Koch Institute, Germany

In March 2015, the AIRSAN Project was invited to conduct its 24-Month Meeting in the framework of the CAPSCA-EUR/04 Meeting (Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation). We very much appreciated this valuable opportunity to present the AIRSAN Project and its achievements to a large audience of representatives from the public health and the aviation sector of EU Member States, but also of successor states of the former Soviet Union.

Amongst others, within this meeting an adapted version of the AIRSAN Training Tool has been tested under the particular condition of stakeholders not acting in their routine environment. Given this artificial setting, the test of the adapted version of the AIRSAN Training Tool was a good experience and perceived as a success.

## News from the AIRSAN Coordination

### Astrid Milde-Busch, Robert Koch Institute, Germany

In July 2015, a no-cost extension of the AIRSAN Project until 31 December 2015 was granted by CHAFEA (Consumers, Health, Agriculture & Food Executing Agency). The no-cost extension time will enable us to finalize the products of the AIRSAN Project. The achievements and finalized outputs will be presented and discussed during the AIRSAN Final Meeting in Berlin on 10 and 11 September 2015.

At the same time, we are looking for future funding options, in order to ensure the continuation of the joint work within the AIRSAN Project including the active maintenance of the AIRSAN Website and the AIRSAN Network. In addition to the reinforcement of implementation of AIRSAN at national level within each EU Member State, it is important to support the international knowledge and expertise exchange. The EU-funded scheme "COST" might provide this opportunity. AIRSAN Partners as well as interested stakeholders who are not yet AIRSAN Partners and representatives from Non-EU countries are invited to contact us in order to strengthen a joint application.

### Editorial Board

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## Recent meetings

### CAPSCA-EUR/04 Meeting

CAPSCA (Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation) invited representatives from the aviation and the public health sector to participate in the CAPSCA-EUR/04 Meeting. Participants from more than 40 countries, including successor states of the former Soviet Union and Non-EU Member States, attended this meeting which took place on 23-26 March 2015 at Schiphol Airport Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

During this meeting the achievements and activities of the AIRSAN Project were presented to the broad audience of the CAPSCA participants on 25 March 2015. The audience was very interested in the AIRSAN Project and its outcomes, e.g. the AIRSAN Guidance Documents, and useful discussions were initiated.



### AIRSAN 24-Month Meeting

The AIRSAN 24-Month Meeting took place as a back-to-back event to the CAPSCA-EUR/04 Meeting on 25 and 26 March 2015 at Schiphol Airport Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

The aim of the AIRSAN 24-Month Meeting was to present the activities and achievements of the AIRSAN Project after two years of project duration to a wider audience of stakeholders. Future collaboration and possible funding options to further support the joint activities were discussed in an internal meeting with the AIRSAN Partners.

The following important achievements of the AIRSAN Project were demonstrated:

- the AIRSAN Website including the AIRSAN Communication Platform (WP5),
- the open-access online AIRSAN Bibliography and the AIRSAN Network (WP4),
- the AIRSAN Guidance Documents “Contact tracing – Collaboration between public health and aviation sector” and “Rapid assessment and management of biological threats on board of an aircraft or at the airport” (WP4), and

- the AIRSAN Training Tool (WP6).

Further, the AIRSAN Team at RIVM performed a guided simulation exercise. The CAPSCA audience were split up in 4 groups and had to solve a challenging situation. Although this exercise was not really an AIRSAN product it was a very good example what can be done to stimulate the cooperation between different stakeholders responsible for assessing a specific situation on board.



The AIRSAN Partners were informed that a no-cost extension of the AIRSAN Project until 31 December 2015 was applied for at CHAFEA.

Based on the outcomes of the AIRSAN 24-Month Meeting the AIRSAN Coordination Team is pleased to conclude that the AIRSAN Project is on track with its deliverables and milestones.

Planned activities for the no-cost extension period are:

- Update of the AIRSAN Website,
- Update of the AIRSAN Bibliography,
- Development of the final version of the AIRSAN Guidance Documents and the AIRSAN Training Tool and making them available on the AIRSAN Website,
- Expansion of the AIRSAN Network,
- AIRSAN Final Meeting on 10/11 September 2015.

### CAPSCA-Global Symposium

The CAPSCA-Global Symposium took place on 28-30 April 2015 at ICAO Headquarters, Montreal, Canada. The overview of the AIRSAN Project including its main objectives and outcomes was presented to a wide audience of international participants representing all continents.

The practical importance of the AIRSAN Guidance Document ‘Remote risk assessment and management of communicable disease event on board of an aircraft’ raised active discussions; the further application opportunities were discussed.

Members of the audience showed an interest to become members of the AIRSAN Network and to cooperate within future activities.

## Recent developments

### No-cost extension (Work Package 1)

Initial funding for the AIRSAN Project was granted for 24 months, ending in March 2015. However, the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa had strong impact on the preparedness and response activities in many countries and international organisations, thus also influencing the activities of the AIRSAN Partners.

Therefore, in January 2015, an application for a no-cost extension of the AIRSAN Project until December 2015 was submitted to CHAFEA. In July 2015, CHAFEA has confirmed that the no-cost extension was granted, providing more time to take the development in the context of the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease into consideration and to finalize the outputs of the AIRSAN Project.

### AIRSAN Guidance Documents Survey 2015 (Work Package 4)

One of the most useful achievements of the AIRSAN Project is the AIRSAN Bibliography compiling an overview of guidance material covering public health topics in the aviation sector issued by international organizations. The AIRSAN Bibliography can be accessed via the AIRSAN Website (<http://www.airsan.eu/Achievements/Bibliography.aspx>). By May 2014, the AIRSAN Bibliography included 48 documents, which had been identified in a survey amongst AIRSAN Partners, conducted in September 2013.

In March 2015, all AIRSAN Partners and the AIRSAN Network Members were contacted and invited to participate in a second survey to identify recently developed or revised guidance material in order to update the AIRSAN Bibliography.

Overall, 15 participants responded (12 AIRSAN Partners, 3 AIRSAN Network Members). Of all participants, 5 represented the public health sector, 8 represented the aviation sector including international organizations and 2 represented other sectors.

The proposed list of documents relevant to the area of public health and aviation is extensive and comprehensive; however, according to the opinion of the survey participants a total of 11 documents were identified as needing revision; 2 of these are currently in the process of reviewing and 1 has already been

updated. Additionally 3 documents were suggested to be added to the list.

Taken together, the consultation of ICAO and WHO (as key stakeholders of the AIRSAN Project) and the current AIRSAN Guidance Documents Survey identified additional 21 new documents which need to be reviewed in order to update the AIRSAN Bibliography. Thus, in total after the review of the newly identified documents, the AIRSAN Bibliography will contain a total of 69 documents. Six additional documents that were already included in the bibliography were updated since the first survey in 2013 and need to be reviewed again. Each document will be reviewed by 2 to 3 scientists from AIRSAN Team at RKI.

Furthermore, with the current AIRSAN Guidance Documents Survey, 2 new topics were identified where guidance is still missing: 'communication to passengers' and 'cleaning, deep cleaning or disinfection on aircrafts'. Future efforts should focus on the development of guidance documents to address these issues.

We would like to thank all survey participants for their contribution.

### Pilot exercise using the AIRSAN Training Tool to test the AIRSAN Guidance Documents at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport (Work Package 6)

On 23 June 2015, the developed AIRSAN table top exercises as described in the AIRSAN Toolkit were tested in cooperation with the airport and public health authorities in Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, Netherlands.



This fourth exercise of the AIRSAN Training Tool was completely executed based on the training manual from the AIRSAN Toolkit. The scenarios of the AIRSAN Toolkit were used in two different exercises: In the morning session the exercise on contact tracing was held with representatives from two airlines and the Municipal Health Service Kennemerland. After lunch, medics, the airport manager of Schiphol, border security and a

regional safety officer were additionally invited to participate in the second exercise in relation to risk assessment on board an aircraft.

The exercise took place in a table-top setting which is designed to test the theoretical ability of a group to respond to a situation. Participants discussed their role and responsibilities, based on legal or procedural standards.

## Application for further funding of upcoming activities (Work Package 1)

During its life the AIRSAN Project has succeeded in building up a solid network of experts representing the public health and the aviation sector; several important outcomes were achieved.

The partners of the AIRSAN Project have expressed their interest to continue joint work aiming to keep and expand the AIRSAN Network, to further develop and implement coherent and harmonized recommendations and guidance material in the field of response to public health threats in or related to air transport or air travel and to strengthen the training component. A COST Open Call, an EU-funded programme that supports European cooperation in science and technology is one of the suitable options currently accepting applications.

The main aim of COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) is to encourage and enable professionals from different countries including those with fewer resources, to connect, to develop jointly new ideas and new initiative and to share knowledge. This programme is specifically designed to fund:

- networking (meetings),
- training activities,
- dissemination activities and publications, and
- short-term scientific missions (exchange of staff members between participating institutions).

The areas of work that could be addressed through the COST application are the following:

- coordination and expansion of the network of stakeholders in the public health and aviation sector and enhancement of timely inter-sectoral knowledge exchange on communicable diseases in air travel to enable more coherent and rapid response,
- strengthening of preparedness in the area of cross-border public health threats in air travel including knowledge generation, sharing and training, and
- identification of the risk of transmission of communicable diseases in air transport.

Currently 25 partners including AIRSAN Project partners and new colleagues have agreed to join the application. However, we are also very much interested in inviting new partners, in particular those representing the aviation and public health sectors in Eastern and Central Europe. Should new partners be interested in joining an application for funding by COST, please contact us ([AIRSAN@rki.de](mailto:AIRSAN@rki.de)) for further information.

## Next steps

### AIRSAN Final Meeting

All AIRSAN Partners are invited to participate in the AIRSAN Final Meeting on 10 and 11 September 2015 in Berlin.

Objectives of the AIRSAN Final Meeting are:

- to present an update of activities of the AIRSAN Project,
- to discuss identified capacity gaps related to the project achievements and to review the success of individual work packages, and
- to have an open discussion on the future of the AIRSAN collaboration.

### Finalization of the activities of AIRSAN

To finalise the outstanding activities, during the remaining months of 2015 the AIRSAN Project needs:

- to update the AIRSAN Bibliography,
- to finalize the AIRSAN Training Tool,
- to potentially conduct another table-top exercise using the final version of the AIRSAN Training Tool,
- to finalize the dissemination of the outputs of the AIRSAN Project,
- to prepare the final technical and financial reports of the AIRSAN Project, and
- to conduct the final evaluation of the AIRSAN Project.

The routine activities should be finished in October 2015. Deadline for submitting the final reports is end of December 2015. The final evaluation will be conducted in February 2016.

## People from the AIRSAN Project

We will use this and the upcoming issues of the AIRSAN Newsletters to introduce you to the key team member from the Associated Partners organisations as well as to some individual persons who support the AIRSAN Project.

### AIRSAN Team at National Institute of Public Health, Poland

The AIRSAN Project entered into our team in the National Institute of Public Health - National Institute of Hygiene through the International Health Regulation “gate”.

Once it was decided in 2007 that the National IHR Focal Point (NFP) was going to be based in our Institute, Professor Andrzej Zieliński set it up to the highest standards from the very start. Now, we have our own dedicated office, staff of three, a bunch of colleagues from the Epidemiology Department who help us to cover all the night shifts and myself, who tries to coordinate it all. We are also carefully supervised by Professor Zieliński and the Head of Epidemiological Department, Małgorzata Sadkowska Todys.



AIRSAN Team at National Institute of Public Health, Poland (left to right): Radosław Izdebski, Franciszek Radziszewski, Łukasz Henszel, Janusz Janiec.

It did not take long after we started the NFP to realize that many public health cross-border threats spread internationally through air travels. In addition with a growing number of passengers and increasing tons of cargo annually, the AIRSAN Project appeared as a dream. Especially as it came just after our experience with the biggest mass gathering sport event we ever organized jointly with Ukraine: the European Football Championships in 2012, when around 1 million football fans travelled to and between the two countries. On one occasion I met friends whom I knew from my EPIET years and they came with the question if we would be

interested to join the project, the answer could have been only one. Together with Professor Zielinski, we have signed the agreement papers and we are now on-board of AIRSAN flight.

**Franciszek Radziszewski** reached his master diploma in public health (Medical University of Warsaw) in 2011. Since the end of 2012, he works at the Polish IHR Focal Point. His daily work is to obtain information from different official and unofficial sources and to deal with identified events for prompt initiation of public health response. He said: “Since I realized how many different situations I can meet in my daily work I am sure it is not possible to be bored in this field.”

**Radosław Izdebski** graduated in 2014 from the Public Health Department at Warsaw Medical University, specialization health promotion and epidemiology. During his studies he completed an internship in the Polish branch of the WHO. Both the knowledge and experience gained during the internship let him understand the complexity of the public health issues and the importance of implementing International Health Regulations. He said: “My particular interests in International Health Regulations made me start working in NFP Poland in the National Institute of Public Health - National Institute of Hygiene where I can develop myself professionally and learn a lot from the most prominent experts in the area of epidemiology and public health. My interests in the implementation of IHR along with the professional experience gathered at the NFP encouraged me to think about writing a doctoral dissertation on this topic.”

**Łukasz Henszel** started his professional adventure with the theme of disease control and prevention during the doctoral program when he learnt more practical skills in the field of infectious diseases. In 2009 he got his PhD degree in Medical Biology and the same year he started to work at the NFP in Poland. In his opinion, this experience helped him to expand his knowledge about the epidemiology with a wide range of different public health threats. Now, the interest in newly emerging and re-emerging diseases is his main focus.

**Janusz Janiec** is a medical doctor, however attracted by the importance of prevention programs in human health. He entered public health and epidemiology through engagement in the European Project called CASCADE, which focused on HIV cohorts of recently infected patients. After a few years of developing this project in Poland, to broaden his experience he started the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training programme (EPIET), for which he was placed in the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Cardiff, Wales. During EPIET years, he had a chance to meet many highly experienced and friendly experts from many countries and to be exposed to many different public health crises. Starting from

investigations of local outbreaks to international assignment related to the WHO/ECDC mission to FYROM to investigate the national outbreak of mumps. After completing the program in 2010, he came back to his home institute. With wider horizons on how vast the problem of global public health actually is, and a strong will to combat any newly emerging public health threats he was very happy to accept the post of NFP Coordinator in Poland. Dealing with cross border threats comes with many challenges but also with fulfilling satisfaction of work.

## Birgitta de Jong, ECDC



- Could you, please, shortly describe your professional background? How did you start to work in the area of public health and/or the aviation sector?

I started working at the Swedish National Bacteriological Laboratory (nowadays part of the Public Health Agency of Sweden, Folkhälsomyndigheten, [www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se](http://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se)), in the laboratory with water microbiology. This provided me with an insight of all the different pathogens that can spread through water, both drinking water and recreational water. This led to an increased interest in public health. After being involved in several outbreaks investigations, I started to combine the work in the laboratory with working in the Department of Epidemiology where I was made responsible for the surveillance of food and waterborne diseases. However, slowly the epidemiology of infectious diseases became my greatest interest and I left the laboratory work. After working for many years in the department of epidemiology, I decided to move on and focus on the regional level. I started therefore to work with the County Medical Officer. In this job, I had my first contacts with preparedness planning in airports and harbours. Today I am the coordinator of the European Legionnaires' Disease Surveillance Network (ELDSNet) and the group leader of the EU preparedness group in the Surveillance and Response Support unit at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

- Which were your most important experiences in the field of public health and/or the aviation sector?

It is impossible for me to pick just a few experiences. However, if I have to, I would focus on teaching, as this

is a very important area for me. I have been lecturing students at the Faculty of Medicine in the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, but I have also been teaching in a small community, talking about how to avoid food poisoning with municipality staff from the school canteens. Both experiences have been equally important to me. To be involved in an outbreak investigation where several thousands of people are affected is also something that is very important and every outbreak brings new knowledge.

- Why did you join the AIRSAN Network? What motivates you to contribute to the AIRSAN Project?

I joined the AIRSAN Network because I believe that it is necessary to build a good level of preparedness for the next outbreak of a contagious disease, and the network offers great opportunities to do that. Travelling - for work purposes or for leisure could today, more than ever, be involved with spread of a disease.

- What motivates you to contribute to the AIRSAN Project?

In my view, if the aviation sector works closely with the public health sector, we are likely to find together the right measures to counteract spread of disease via travel.

- Which three benefits do you expect from the AIRSAN Project?

1. Development of a strong multi sectoral approach where competencies from different areas will result in this network.
2. Provide good examples to all airports in the EU region so that preparedness plans are developed and maintained.
3. Develop a "one stop shop" for guidance documents, EU regulations and other documents related public health issues in the aviation sector.

- Do you have some personal remarks?

I am looking forward to continuing the work together with the AIRSAN Partners. The Ebola outbreak has shown that the need for guidance documents is great in an outbreak situation. If more documents are ready on time, Europe will be able to respond in a faster way to a threat coming from an infectious disease.

## Airports at a glance

### Brussels Airport, Belgium (by Dominique Wagner)

#### Statistics (2014)

- IATA code: BRU
- Passengers: 21.9 Mio.
- Cargo: 454,000 tons (70% Non-EU)
- Aircraft movements: 231,528
- Employees: 60,000
- Hub for: SN Brussels, Jet Airways, DHL, Singapore Airlines Cargo



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#### About the airport

Brussels Airport is the main airport in Belgium, and links the capital of Europe with the rest of the world. In recent years, it has developed to become a multi-modal hub based around passengers, airlines, cargo, business partners and airport staff and the co-operation between these players.

Eighty airlines connect Brussels Airport with 228 destinations worldwide, with a privileged historical link to Central Africa. Transporting 454,000 tons of cargo a year, the Brucargo hub plays a key role in international logistics and in the success of specific industries. Brussels Airport particularly stands out internationally for its dedicated infrastructure for the transport and handling of products that require an unbroken cold chain, like pharmaceutical and biotech products. Brussels Airport was the first airport in the world where stakeholders of the cargo community in a joint approach to receive the CEIV Pharma certification November last year. Currently 11 companies active at Brucargo, the cargo site of the airport, are participating in the program.

With a growing number of nearly 22 million passengers a year, more than 260 airport companies and direct and indirect employment of 60,000 people, it has a central position at Belgian and European level.



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Brussels Airport was declared the winner of the World Routes Award at the annual Routes conference in Chicago in 2014. It also won the main prize in the category of airports between 4 and 20 Mio passengers. Brucargo was declared best cargo airport in the world for 2014 at the World Air Cargo Awards in Shanghai.

The airport premises cover 1245 hectares, in the middle of a highly urbanized zone, which generates some constraints.

In the passengers terminals there are 43 shops, 31 food and drinks sections and 15 points of services.

Brussels Airport has direct train connections to 39 cities, including from the Netherlands, with cities such as Rotterdam and The Hague. The frequent train shuttle to Brussels Midi Station allows a direct link with the fast trains (Eurostar, Thalys and ICE trains to Germany).



© Brussels Airport

In 2000, the Brussels Airport Company was officially certified ISO 14001 and it was renewed until 2015. 2012 saw the first ever external audit of the energy policy of Brussels Airport Company. Brussels Airport Company successfully passed the audit and became the first airport in the world to be awarded the ISO 50001 certificate for its energy management. Brussels Airport Company is constantly working to maintain these certificates. Every action it undertakes is assessed for improvement. Every three years, the entire system is submitted to a certification audit. In addition, a supervisory audit is held every year.



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In order to manage its emissions in a structural way, Brussels Airport Company in 2010 chose to participate in the Airport Carbon Accreditation Scheme. The accreditation scheme contains four levels of award (fourth level being carbon neutrality). In December 2012, Brussels Airport was carbon accredited at “Optimisation” level. To further reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions airport operators have to engage third parties at the airport in implementing measures to reduce carbon emissions. Actions were taken to reduce the consumption of natural gas, electricity and fossil fuel. What made the biggest impression however was the collaboration between various airport partners regarding Continuous Descent Operations (CDO) or ‘green landings’ and Collaborative Decision Making (CDM) as well as the waste, energy and water management policy that was set up in joint collaboration.

In order to comply with a number of statutory obligations as imposed in the environmental permit, in 2012 a completely modernized noise measuring system was commissioned: the Airport Noise and Operation Management System (ANOMS). This system links operational and meteorological data to the regular data supplied by the 21 noise measuring posts.

Systematic noise recording allows the evolution of aircraft noise to be closely monitored and the establishing of noise contours. Between 2000 and 2013,

the total surface area within the noise contours fell by 30%. The decrease in the number of (night-time) movements and the evolution towards the use of more modern aircraft have played an important part in this.

By imposing a maximum value on the permissible amount of noise nuisance per flight, noisy aircraft are banned during certain periods (night and weekend slots are limited). The restrictions imposed by way of the ‘quota counts’ (the noise characteristics of the aircraft are taken into consideration in the rates applied for landing and take-off fees ) make Brussels Airport one of the strictest European airports in terms of controlling the impact of noise.