

Status, quality and specific needs of Ebola virus diagnostic capacity and capability in laboratories of the two European preparedness laboratory networks EMERGE and EVD-LabNet |

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From December 2013 to March 2016, West Africa experienced the largest Ebola virus (EBOV) outbreak to date, leading to a European-wide activation of laboratory preparedness and response. At the end of the outbreak, laboratories associated with the two European preparedness networks of expert laboratories EMERGE JA and EVD-LabNet were invited to participate in an assessment of the response of European laboratories to the EBOV outbreak, to identify learning points and training needs to strengthen future outbreak responses. Response aspects assessed included diagnostics, biorisk management and quality assurance. The overall coverage of EBOV diagnostics in the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) was found to be adequate although some points for quality improvement were identified. These included the need for relevant International Organization for Standardization (ISO) accreditation, the provision of EBOV external quality assessments (EQA) in periods where there is no emergency, facilitating access to controls and knowledge, biorisk management without compromising biosafety and a rapid public health response, and the need for both sustained and contingency funding for preparedness and response activities.