



PRESS RELEASE

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New EU Project to help healthcare systems prepare for medical emergencies



The KIOS Research Center of the University of Cyprus is participating in an important EU research and innovation project to develop technology that can help medical services to be better prepared and able to respond to emergency situations appropriately and efficiently.

Large-scale disaster incidents such as the earthquake in Haiti, the Fukushima tsunami, and even the very recent hurricane Sandy that hit the US east coast, or health epidemics like the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic, Ebola virus, put extreme pressure on the capacity of emergency response of medical systems and highlight

the important role of coordination between health services to respond to mass medical emergencies and casualty incidents. Healthcare systems have an essential role to play in the response to emergency situations which endanger the health and wellbeing of individuals, but during large-scale events, resources are over stretched. In all large-scale emergencies and disaster situations the consequences of health services being unprepared and/or poorly coordinated could be particularly dramatic in terms of casualties, diseases, as well as the mental health of the affected population, etc. These circumstances underline the need for enhanced communication between medical institutions and other organizations involved in disaster management.

The EU research project *COncORDE* ("Development of Coordination Mechanisms during Different Kinds of Emergencies") aims to develop a Decision Support System (DSS) to help address some of these challenges. The aim is to develop a system with appropriate technological innovations, capable of strengthening the preparedness and interoperability of medical services during an emergency situation. The tool also will lead to improvements in emergency management and crisis management systems and will assist decision-makers to extract reliable intelligence to guide their actions.

The designed support system will have a number of useful features. It will be adaptable to different environments and different types of incidents. It will incorporate existing operational assets related to security, trust, and infrastructure in order to build a more robust Decision Support System. The systems will also be tested through pilot installations and by specially trained end-users.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), has shown special interest in the project, due to its significance and has promised practical support throughout the duration of the project.

The project partnership is multidisciplinary with participation of fourteen different organizations, from the UK, Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Turkey, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, and Belgium. The coordinator of the project is Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in the UK.

The relevant KIOS research team is being led by Professors M. Polycarpou, C. Panayiotou and G. Ellinas. The team will be leading the design of the overall CONCORDE systems architecture and will be making significant contributions to the analysis of stakeholder requirements, as well as in the testing and pilot evaluation of the system.



The project is co-funded by the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013) – SECURITY

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