



Newsletter European Reference laboratory for Public Health on *Legionella*

Year 2026, Edition 1, 20 January

About us

The European Reference Laboratory in public health on *Legionella* (EURL-PH-LEGI) was designated by the [implementing regulation 2024/892](#). The beneficiaries of the EURL-PH-LEGI's actions are the laboratories of the European Legionnaires' Disease Surveillance Network (ELDSNet), coordinated by the ECDC.

The objectives of the EURL-PH-LEGI include:

- the standardization and harmonization of methods for the detection and characterization of *Legionella*
- the assessment and improvement of the quality of laboratory-based surveillance methods
- the provision of scientific advice and technical assistance to both, the ECDC and the laboratory network
- the establishment of a training program aimed at acquiring and strengthening laboratory and surveillance methods for *Legionella*

More information on the EURL-PH-LEGI can be found at our website [European Reference Laboratory for Public Health on Legionella](#).

EURL-PH-LEGI Consortium

The consortium consists of 4 National Reference Laboratories for Legionella (NRL-L) in the EU/EEA, each covering tasks based on their complementary expertise in the field of Legionella developed over several years:

- **Coordinator** : Hospices Civils de Lyon (France) – **Prof. Sophie Jarraud, Dr. Camille Jacqueline**
- Istituto Superiore di Sanità (Italy) – **Prof. Maria Luisa Ricci**
- Universitätsklinikum Carl Gustav Carus / TU Dresden (Germany) – **Prof. Markus Petzold**
- Instituto Nacional de Saúde Dr. Ricardo Jorge (Portugal) – **Prof. Joao Rodrigues**

All principal investigators within the consortium already hold European-level responsibilities related to *Legionella*, such as serving as members of the ELDSNet Coordination Committee or as members of the Executive Committee ESCMID Study Group for Legionella Infection (ESGLI). The consortium members widely recognized in Europe for their extensive expertise in the diagnosis and surveillance of legionellosis including its environmental aspects, the development of whole genome sequencing

methods in this field, and in managing outbreak events. They also bring substantial experience in training activities, including contributions to the EUPHEM training program, case study facilitation, and the organization of the ESGI European Congress as well as scientific webinars.



S. Jarraud



ML. Ricci



M. Petzold



J. Rodrigues



C. Jacqueline

Activities in 2025

Technical country visits

Capacity building at national level was strengthened through technical country visits. Following a call for expressions of interest that received strong engagement from Member States, two country visits were carried out in 2025. The visit to Lithuania focused on supporting the implementation of genomic surveillance, while the visit to Ireland aimed to reinforce diagnostic services for *Legionella*. For both visits, confidential reports were prepared in close collaboration with hosting laboratories to document findings and agreed follow-up actions. The EURL remains committed to assist and support laboratories after the visit to successfully conclude follow-up actions and provide any additional support required in the work areas of the EURL.



Lithuania



Ireland

Wet lab training

Training and knowledge transfer were strengthened in 2025. A comprehensive training needs assessment was conducted across the laboratory network, forming the basis for a structured training program. One in-person wet lab training on whole genome sequencing and genomic surveillance was delivered, alongside a scientific webinar focusing on microbiological investigations in outbreak settings. All training materials and recordings were made available through the ECDC Learning Portal to ensure broad and lasting access.



Five-day face-to-face training in the Hospices Civils de Lyon, France hosted by Prof. Jarraud and Dr. Jacqueline with participants from Croatia, Estonia, Romania, Greece, Spain, Czechia, Latvia and Slovenia

External Quality Assessment (EQA)

Improving and assessing laboratory quality was a major focus in 2025 through the design and implementation of the first EURL-PH-LEGI External Quality Assessment (EQA) schemes. These included a bioinformatics scheme based on whole genome sequencing data, as well as clinical and environmental schemes covering detection, isolation, characterization and typing of *Legionella* spp. Confidential individual performance reports were provided to laboratories, and a satisfaction survey was launched to support continuous improvement of future EQA activities. The publication of the EQA report is planned for February 2026.

Scientific and technical support to ELDSNet and ECDC

Throughout the year, the EURL-PH-LEGI provided scientific advice, reference diagnostic services and technical assistance to the laboratory members of the ELDSNet network and to ECDC. This included support for outbreak investigations and source attribution in several countries, investigations related to suspected antimicrobial resistance, and guidance on confirmatory testing, laboratory protocols and typing methods. The EURL-PH-LEGI also contributed to European surveillance activities by supporting updates to reference lists and participating in the EpiPulse pilot phase of the EU/EEA genomic surveillance of *Legionella pneumophila*.

Activities planned for 2026

First EURL-PH-LEGI laboratory network meeting

A major highlight will be the organization of the first EURL-PH-LEGI laboratory network meeting, planned to take place in Rome, bringing together ELDSNet laboratories to reinforce collaboration and information exchange. In parallel, the EURL-PH-LEGI will continue to implement its communication strategy and maintain its website as a central hub for information and visibility of project outputs.

Release of the laboratory handbook and other activities

The EURL-PH-LEGI laboratory handbook will be released in 2026 and includes recommendations on clinical diagnostic and environmental detection of *Legionella* spp. In addition, a structured study on PCR methods will be launched, starting with a questionnaire to assess PCR capacity in Member States in mid-2026. Monoclonal antibodies will be delivered to four laboratories to support their typing capacity. External quality assessment and technical country visits will remain central pillars of the EURL's activities. Finally, the EURL-PH-LEGI will organize a wet-lab training dedicated to antimicrobial susceptibility testing and a scientific webinar addressing the detection and diagnosis of *Legionella longbeachae*. In 2026, the EURL will continue to provide reference diagnostic services, technical advice, and direct support to both Member States and ECDC.

For more information please:

- Consult our website: <https://eurl-legi.eu/>
- Consult our linkedIn account: @EURL-PH-LEGI
- Consult our Sharepoint: Restricted to ELDSNet members (OCP Microbiology)
- Contact us at hcl.eurlphlegi@chu-lyon.fr



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