



PORTFASTFLU

Portable and Automated Test for Fast detection and surveillance of influenza



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## PRESS RELEASE

### **European PORTFASTFLU project to develop rapid screening system that will revolutionise control of influenza epidemics**

Evry, 28<sup>th</sup> april 2009 - PORTFASTFLU is a €3.8 million, European Union FP7 funded project ([www.portfastflu.com](http://www.portfastflu.com)) which aims to develop and validate a rapid diagnostic system for influenza that will be used for surveillance and early detection of influenza, and as a point-of-care tool in developed and developing countries.

The system will be fully automated, and will combine microfluidic based RNA extraction and RT-PCR with real-time microarray in one small footprint machine. The device will allow on site detection of influenza virus in clinical or veterinary samples, including avian and current porcine flu, as well as H and N subtyping of the other various influenza known viruses.

Partners in the Portfastflu research project are Coordinator Genewave (Palaiseau, Genopole Evry, France [www.genewave.com](http://www.genewave.com)) Nottingham Trent University (Nottingham, UK) Biosensia (Dublin, Ireland) CIRAD (Montpellier, France) VIB University of Ghent (Ghent, Belgium) Ikerlan (Mondragon, Spain) Gaiker (Zamudio, Spain) Basque Foundation for Health Innovation and Research (San Sebastian, Spain) Whatman (Maidstone, UK).

The technology would improve the diagnosis time for all forms of influenza, including H5N1 avian influenza and H1N1 porcine flu. In the

event of an emerging pandemic Influenza, the ability to rapidly diagnose and type influenza virus in the field would have enormous impact on the spread of the outbreak, reducing human cases and mortality rates.

The technology could also prove to be a vital tool in the fight against high and low pathogenic avian influenza, making it possible to set up exclusion zones and cull infected birds much faster, before infection spreads. This preventative measure is seen by many countries as highly beneficial to the controversial use of avian influenza vaccines.

Halfway through the project (April 2009), capacity to identify the various strains (type A, H1N1, H2N3, H3N2, H5N1, H5N2, H7N1, H7N7, H9N2, H9N9 et type B) has been demonstrated. Clinical tests in hospitals and in the field will start in December 2009.



Matrix of detected influenza strains. Source: CIRAD, Montpellier

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