



WHO Collaborating Centre for
Environmental Health in Contaminated Sites



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**First Plenary Conference COST Action IS1408
Industrially Contaminated Sites and Health Network (ICSHNet)
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ISCH COST Action IS1408

**Industrially Contaminated Sites and Health
Network (ICSHNet)**

Participating countries: Albania, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, FYR Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom. **Scientific coordination** ISS, Italy

http://www.cost.eu/COST_Actions/isch/IS1408

In Europe, earlier industrialization and poor environmental management practices have left a legacy of thousands of contaminated sites. Past and current industrial activities can cause local and diffuse contamination, to such an extent that it might threaten human health of resident populations, especially in vulnerable subgroups. Moreover, health, environment, and social aspects are strongly interconnected, local communities are often alarmed, and both scientists and policy makers have expressed concern. Distinct research initiatives on the health impact of contaminated sites have provided considerable evidence, however data are sparse, and assessments have seen a fragmentation of objectives and methods. It is therefore urgent to promote coordination and collaboration between researchers and risk managers to identify common strategies at European level to deal with this issue more systematically.

This Action aims at establishing and consolidating a European Network of experts and institutions, and developing a common framework for research and response through conferences, workshops, training and dissemination activities.

The Network will: clarify knowledge gaps and research priorities; support collection of relevant data and information; stimulate development of harmonised methodology; promote collaborative research initiatives, and develop guidance and resources on risk assessment, management and communication. A training Module for early-stage researchers on “Environmental health in contaminated sites” is one of the milestones of the Action, to strengthen in-country building capacity to deal with contaminated sites issues.

The benefits of the proposed Action concern scientific, societal, environmental and public health aspects. The proposal will result in the collection, formulation and dissemination of information and advice on contaminated areas, environment and human health. This information will address the identification and dissemination of research resources and tools on how to assess environmental health risks in contaminated sites; will include consideration of health and social inequalities; provision of guidance and resources on risk communication on environmental health risks in contaminated areas, including the transfer of scientific findings into the policy making process.

A variety of methods and tools for characterizing impacts on health will be shared, reviewed and organized, and a broad range of resources will be made available to researchers and risk managers with an Institutional mandate to deal with the issue. A suitable methodology and the data required for health assessments will be carefully identified also considering local needs and feasibility. The Action will develop a reference framework for assessing and responding to human health impacts in contaminated sites, based on best available evidence and methodology and building on expert consensus. The Action will ultimately provide Governments and local Authorities with resources and guidance to deal with contaminated sites and health.