

# SANIPORT: Belgian Control regarding the International Health Regulations on Board of Ships and Aircrafts

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Peter Devlieghere  
Project Leader SANIPORT



# Health Border Control

➔ SANIPOINT:

public health services at  
international airports and ports



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# Saniport

- Legal Basis
- Organisation
- Missions
- Actual
- Difficulties - Challenges



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## Legal Basis

The missions of the Saniport agents are based upon:

- 1) International Health Regulations
- 2) Royal Decree of October 29th, 1964

A new Decree is under construction. This Decree will take into account:

- Revised « International Health Regulations »
- Experiences in the field in Belgium and abroad
- Competence of the different Belgian institutional levels



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## Legal Basis

The competence in Belgium to take action in sanitary issues is divided between different institutional levels:

- Federal Government is competent for the International Level and the Belgian borders
- Flanders, Brussels and the Walloon are competent for preventive medicine, including vaccination and infectious diseases



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# Saniport

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# Organisation

Important elements that determine the organisation and operation of Saniport:

- The global vision of public health as it emanates from the revised International Health Regulations



- Saniport is an operational structure that depends upon the Federal Public Service Health (=Ministry of Health)

- Saniport has a strong connection with our emergency planning

- Saniport has a 24 hours continuity of service



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# Organisation

1. The global vision of public health as it emanates from the revised International Health Regulations

1969

The main idea is that there will be a treatment for every infectious disease in the near future

→ Limitative list of infectious diseases (without an estimated treatment yet)



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# Organisation

2005

The main idea is the existence of multi resistant organisms and bioterrorism

- Every situation with a potential public health risk
- Not mere surveillance but also a global vision on public health
- Measures to protect the population on the Belgian surface



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# Organisation

2. Saniport is an operational structure that depends upon the Federal Public Service Health (=Ministry of Health)

→ Eventually it is always a doctor who decides what measures should be taken



# Organisation

3. Saniport is strongly connected with our emergency planning

## EMERGENCY PLANNING

- 1) In Belgium there is the Royal Decree of 16 February 2006 which provides an overall legislation regarding the response to emergency situations.
- 2) It provides a multidisciplinary emergency and intervention plan.
- 3) It distinguishes several disciplines: for each one of these disciplines at least one particular emergency and intervention plan is drafted.



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# Organisation

These disciplines are:

1. relief work operations
2. medical, sanitary and psychosocial assistance
3. police in the emergency scene
4. logistical assistance

The second section is a competence of the Federal Public Service Health (=Ministry of Health)



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## Organisation

→ In case of a serious food poisoning in a home of rest or on board of a ship, doctors will lead the 'emergency operation'

→ In the second discipline (sanitary section) an emergency plan for a pandemic flu has been elaborated



# Organisation

3. Saniport provides a 24 hours continuity of service

1) The controllers of SANIPOINT provide a 24 hours continuity of service

2) Following authorities also provide a 24 hours continuity of service:

- Federal health inspectors (doctors)
  - Medical Surveillance Cell
  - MEDA (Medical permanence in Brussels Airport)
- Within 30 minutes a doctor will be on the spot

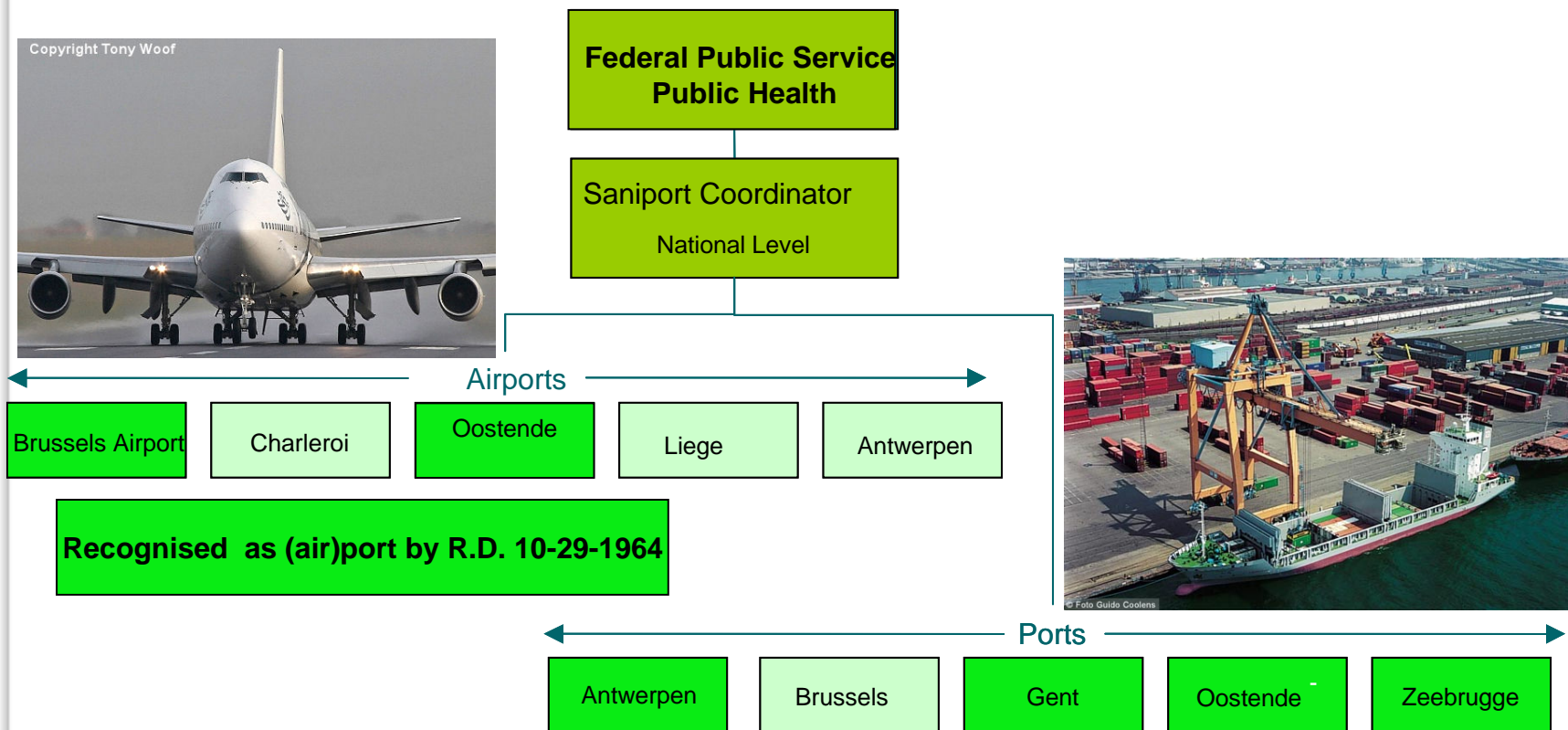


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# Organisation



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# Organisation

## Saniport Coordinator (Vacant Position)

### Seaports (6 persons)

GENT, OOSTENDE en ZEEBRUGGE

Dion DAMMAN (coordinator)  
Inge STEENHOUT

ANTWERPEN

Annie CLEVER  
Rita WILLEMS  
Mia DE BAERDEMAECKER  
Dirk VAN REUSEL

### Airports (9 persons)

FEDERAL

Jean-Marie RISSELIN (coordinator)

Guy BUYSSE  
Béatrice DE BOSSCHER  
Diane WITTESAELE  
Ludo LOX  
Roger CRISPEYN  
Gerry VAN BELLE  
Julie CIRICHELLI  
Renaud HALIN



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# Saniport

- Legal basis
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- **Missions**
- Actual
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# Missions

## 1. Collaboration

A good collaboration with all the stakeholders is essential for SANIPORT:

Health Inspectors

Medical Services and Hospitals

Food Agency and Veterinary Services

Police and Customs

Communities - Regions

Port and Airport Authorities

Flight Control - Pilotage

Airlines Operators - Agents

Captain / Officers in command / Crew

Aviation Inspection - Navigation Inspection



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# Missions

## Continuous Risks

### Routine measures

Conveyances

Cargo & containers

*Hygiene, Maritime Declaration of Health*

### Specific measures for certain known risks

Standing recommendations

Vector control

Vaccination

*Airport malaria / Quarantine diseases*

## Sudden heightening Risks

- **Detection**

- Information & verification
- Notification
- Risk assessment

- **Response**

- Temporary recommendations
- Support to investigate & control

**Always international context**

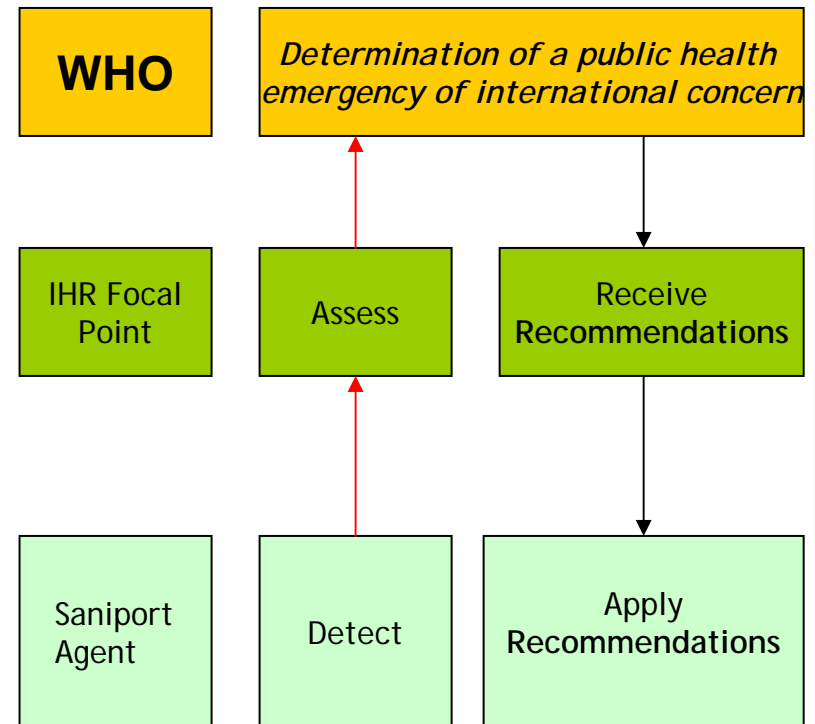


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# Missions

- Detect unexpected or unusual public health events
- **Communicate** to National Coordinator
  - assess the potential for international disease spread
  - **notify** WHO of them, if necessary
  - receive recommendations
- apply recommendations



# Missions

## 2. Ships and Aircrafts

- Sanitary control (infection and contamination) on board
- Control people (passengers, crew) at arrival or departure
- Reception of national and international health authorities



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# Missions

## 3. Ships

- Deliver Ship Sanitation Certificate (SSCEC of SSCC) after sanitary inspection
- Control of the Maritime Health Declaration
- Water samples



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# Missions

## 4. Aircrafts

- Control on desinsectisation
- Destruction of food in luggage and destruction of luggage containing food
- Deliver LAISSEZ-PASSER for the transport of corpses (Convention of Berlin 10 February 1937)



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# Saniport

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# Actual

## 1. Recently we had to deal with:

- scabies
- food poisoning (sample is taken by a doctor)
- gastro-enteritis on board of a cruise ship
- a complaint of the navigation police
- the new influenza A/H1N1 virus



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# Actual

## 2. New Influenza A/H1N1 virus

Remark: Thanks to the 24 hours continuity of service it is easy to take measures

- 1) Specific measures taken by the Interministerial Commission for Influenza:
  - contact tracing of infected persons → passenger lists
  - possibility for all passengers arriving in Brussels Airport to fill out a document concerning their health situation



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## Actual

### 2) Specific measures taken by SANIPORT:

- Making the port authorities susceptible for the problem
- Distribution of folders to the passengers returning from a country out of the Schengen area affected by the new influenza A/H1N1
- Hanging of posters in the entrance hall of Brussels Airport



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## Actual

- Pilotage asked every ship to fill out the Maritime Health Declaration → affirmative response → Pilotage informs SANIPORT
- At the gates of ferry's folders were distributed and posters were hanged (Oostende - Zeebrugge)
- Instructions to fill out the Passengers Locator Cards (PLC) if a suspect passenger is declared on board during the flight



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# Saniport

- Legal basis
- Organisation
- Missions
- Partners
- **Difficulties - Challenges**



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# Difficulties - Challenges

## 1. General

- Food samples: SANIPORT controllers are not qualified and are not trained to take food samples
  - This is a problem especially in Brussels Airport (security)
- A close partnership with all services at the ports and the airports should be maintained and intensified



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# 31 Difficulties - Challenges

## 2. Ports

- 1) We will encounter difficulties if we want to comply with the interim guidelines of the WHO regarding the control of:
  - drink water circuits
  - sewage systems
  - engine rooms
  - and ballast tanks

Reason: These controls are very technical and require a specific training for the personnel

- 2) In the future we will sharpen our controls on board of cruise ships and ferry's



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# Difficulties - Challenges

## 3. Airports

Control of cargo and especially the control of its desinsectisation.

Reason:

- Effectiveness of residual fumigant
- Packaging of the cargo
- Access to Storage



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# Difficulties - Challenges

## 4. Institutional and Financial

- Belgium has a complicated structure with scattered competences for various institutional entities
- At this moment we are confronted with a lack of financial resources and personnel



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