

# EU ready for Ebola threat: sources

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The European Union is equipped and ready to treat victims should the deadly Ebola virus, which has killed hundreds in West Africa, be found in member states, EU sources said Wednesday.

"We cannot rule out the possibility that an infected person arrives in Europe but the EU has the means to track and contain any outbreak rapidly," one EU source said.

"A suspected case was reported in Valencia in Spain, but it turned out to be negative," the source said. "The system worked. The patient was isolated and tests were carried out quickly."

The EU has a medical alert system to pick up any serious disease outbreak and all member states have the specialised hospitals and treatment regimes to cope, the source added.

The source said a key problem was to prepare countries bordering Ebola-hit Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, such as Ivory Coast "and even countries further afield."

"There are an increasing number of cases now in the capital cities. The disease has an incubation period of 21 days and people do travel a lot," the source added.

"And it's becoming harder and harder to find local personnel to look after the sick in the countries affected."

The EU announced earlier it had allocated an extra two million euros (\$2.7 million) to fight the Ebola outbreak spiralling out of control in West Africa, bringing total EU funding to 3.9 million euros.

"The level of contamination on the ground is extremely worrying and we need to scale up our action before many more lives are lost," EU Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva said.

The EU has deployed experts on the ground to help victims and try to prevent contagion but Georgieva called for a "sustained effort from the international community to help West Africa deal with this menace".

To date the epidemic has caused 670 deaths and 1,200 cases in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, among the world's poorest countries, with one case confirmed in Nigeria.

The World Health Organization says this is the largest recorded outbreak in terms of cases, deaths and geographical coverage.

The EU said the risk of the virus spreading to Europe was currently low, since most cases are in remote areas in the affected countries and those who are ill or in contact with the disease are encouraged to remain isolated.

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