Introduction

The threat of a pandemic influenza is an opportunity to strengthen the cooperation between different national and international institutions, specially between neighbour countries. In order to achieve the most effective and efficient response and reduce the possible damages in the context of global emergency situations, the process of pandemic planning should be based on joint activities between borders regions of Portugal and Spain.

Methodology

1. Organisation of Meetings between Northern Region of Portugal and Galicia Working Groups for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness.

- Santiago de Compostela, 22 Nov 2006, 1st Meeting of General Directorate of Public Health of Galicia - Spain and Department of Public Health of the Northern Region Health Administration of Portugal.
- Stockholm, Sweden, 4-6 December, 2006, 3rd ECDC Regional Workshop on Pandemic Preparedness; High concern with interoperability of countries of the EU and with neighbour countries.
- Porto, Portugal, 21 Feb 2007, 2nd Meeting of Department of Public Health of the Northern Region Health Administration of Portugal and General Directorate of Public Health of Galicia.
- Santiago de Compostela, 30 May, 2007, 3rd Meeting of General Directorate of Public Health of Galicia and Department of Public Health of the Northern Region Health Administration of Portugal.
- Porto, Portugal, Oct 2007, 4th Meeting of Department of Public Health of the Northern Region Health Administration of Portugal and General Directorate of Public Health of Galicia.

2. Design and carry out of a Simulation Exercise - The scenario of the exercise started with the identification of an outbreak of avian influenza in wild birds in Galicia, followed by the occurrence of cases either of bird–to–human and between humans transmission in residents of the Northern Region of Portugal.

Results

A simulation exercise of an avian influenza outbreak affecting wild birds and humans was developed by Galicia, during a period of 8 days in April - May 2007 and the e-mail was used as the communication tool. During the exercise, the national guidelines for WHO phase 3 pandemic influenza alert were tested. During the meetings for the preparation of the pandemic influenza simulation exercise was possible to work in others public health programmes like tuberculosis; HIV infection; food borne diseases, improving the development of a strong partnership between the two regions.

Conclusions

- Although the global aim of this cooperative work was not yet completely achieved, the shared experience and knowledge were considered very positive for both Health Authorities, and should be improved.
- Were identified some aspects that need to be reviewed, namely:
  - to establish standard guidelines for the different interveners
  - to clarify and improve the distribution procedures and the prescription criteria of chemoprophylaxis.
- The need to reinforce the cooperation through borders was considered important, also for other Regions and other Public Health problems.