



ECDC Management Board

Minutes of the Fifty-ninth Meeting Stockholm, 14-15 November 2023

Adopted by the ECDC Management Board at its Sixtieth meeting, 13-14 March 2024

Contents

Opening and welcome from the Chair (and noting the Representatives)	3
Welcome from the Director, ECDC.....	3
Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (<i>Document MB59/01</i>).....	3
Adoption of the draft minutes of the 58 th meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 14-15 June 2023) (<i>Document MB59/02</i>).....	3
Revised ECDC Strategy Implementation Roadmap 2021-2027 (<i>Document MB59/03</i>).....	4
Timeline and process for selection of ECDC Director 2024-2029 and other relevant matters	5
ECDC Draft Single Programming Document 2025-2027 (<i>Document MB59/04</i>).....	5
Summary of discussions held at the 53 rd meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (Stockholm, 13 November 2023), including its recommendations	6
a) ECDC Anti-Fraud Strategy 2024-2026 (<i>Document MB59/05</i>).....	6
b) Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2023 (<i>Document MB59/06</i>).....	7
c) Progress Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme 2023 (<i>Document MB59/07</i>)	7
d) Progress Report – Overview of 2023 Budget Implementation	7
e) ECDC Single Programming Document 2024-2026.....	8
<i>i)</i> Single Programming Document 2024-2026 (<i>Document MB59/08</i>).....	8
<i>ii)</i> Budget and Establishment Table 2024 (<i>Document MB59/09</i>)	8
f) Amendments to the Management Board Rules of Procedure and Audit Committee Mandate (<i>Document MB59/10</i>).....	9
g) AC membership matters.....	9
Update from the European Commission.....	9
Update from the European Parliament.....	10
Update from the Belgian Presidency of the European Council.....	10
Update from the Director.....	10
Information session: ECDC planning cycle	11
Annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee to the Management Board	11
Update on ECDC Compliance: Implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy.....	11
Any other business.....	12
Annex: List of Participants	13

Summary of Proceedings – ECDC Management Board Meeting

The Fifty-ninth meeting of the ECDC Management Board (MB) convened on 14-15 November 2023 in Stockholm, Sweden. During the meeting the MB:

- ❖ adopted the programme of the meeting;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Fifty-eighth meeting of the MB;
- ❖ conditionally approved the Single Programming Document 2024-2026;
- ❖ conditionally approved the Budget and Establishment Table 2024;
- ❖ approved the ECDC Anti-Fraud Strategy 2024-2026;
- ❖ discussed the revised ECDC Strategy Implementation Roadmap 2021-2027 and agreed that it be sent for approval via written procedure following the meeting;
- ❖ discussed the draft Single Programming Document 2025;
- ❖ discussed the timeline and process for selection of the ECDC Director 2024-2029 and other relevant matters in a closed session;
- ❖ took note of the summary of discussions held at the 53rd meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee;
- ❖ took note of the Progress report on implementation of the Work Programme 2023;
- ❖ took note of the Progress report – Overview of 2023 budget implementation;
- ❖ took note of the Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2023;
- ❖ took note of the proposed amendments to the MB Rules of Procedure and the Audit Committee Mandate and agreed to postpone the discussion to a future MB meeting;
- ❖ took note of the update on ECDC compliance;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Commission;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Parliament;
- ❖ took note of the update from the Belgian Presidency of the European Council;
- ❖ took note of the update from the ECDC Director;
- ❖ took note of the information session on ECDC planning cycle;
- ❖ took note of the annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee;
- ❖ took note of the update on ECDC compliance.

Opening and welcome from the Chair (and noting the Representatives)

1. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen, Chair of the ECDC Management Board, welcomed all the participants to the Fifty-ninth meeting of the Management Board (MB), which took place in Stockholm, Sweden. A special welcome was extended to Matyáš Fošum, alternate, Czech Republic (participating for the first time), Kirstine Moll Harboe, newly appointed member, Denmark, Rita Sá Machado, newly appointed member, Portugal, and Laurent Muschel, newly appointed alternate, DG HERA, European Commission.
2. Apologies had been received from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Latvia (proxy to Lithuania), Liechtenstein, Luxembourg (proxy to Belgium), Spain, as well as from DG RTD, European Commission. The following countries did not confirm their participation: Iceland and Romania.

Welcome from the Director, ECDC

3. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, warmly welcomed the MB members to the meeting noting that she was looking forward to fruitful discussions.

Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (*Document MB59/01*)

4. The Chair mentioned that the presentation on the Spanish Presidency of the European Council would be shared with the MB after the meeting as Spain was not represented at the meeting. Following discussions in the ECDC Audit Committee (AC) the previous day, she suggested keeping the item on MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate (scheduled for the afternoon) for information only and not for decision as the document had been shared late and needed some further work.
5. The draft programme was adopted with the above-mentioned change. The Chair asked each member whether s/he wished to add any oral declaration(s) of interest to her/his Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) submitted previously. None were declared. The Chair stressed the importance that potential candidates for the position of ECDC Director would not participate in the closed session.

The Management Board adopted the draft programme.

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 58th meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 14-15 June 2023) (*Document MB59/02*)

6. The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the 58th meeting had been circulated to the MB ahead of the meeting. Minor amendments had been requested by Germany (point 34), Sweden (point 31), and the European Commission (points 30, 33, 35 and 73).
7. In the context of the minutes of the previous meeting, the Deputy Chair and MB member representing the European Parliament asked for an update on the issue of the ECDC Final Annual Accounts 2022 and the final MB statement sent together with the accounts following the discussions during MB58.
8. The Director reported that several discussions had taken place with the European Court of Auditors (ECA) since the June MB meeting regarding the disagreement between ECA and ECDC on the eligibility of VAT in the HERA grants. Both ECA and ECDC had stuck to their original opinions and the matter had been included in the final ECA report with the auditors giving a qualified opinion on the VAT for the transactions relating to the HERA grants. Apart from the VAT issue, there were no other findings on the transactions. The discharge procedure had now started, and a hearing was scheduled on 29 November with the Budgetary Control Committee of the European Parliament. After the hearing, the Committee will deliberate and express an opinion on the ECDC discharge for 2022 to the Parliament.
9. The MB members representing the European Parliament commented that it was unfortunate that the MB statement on the Annual Accounts had not made any reference to the ECA opinion while the matter was still open as it could be perceived as a lack of transparency of the MB.

10. The Chair pointed out that the situation had been extensively described in the minutes of the 58th meeting (p. 8-11) where it was indicated that the MB had taken a conditional decision and two alternative draft statements had been prepared. There had been a preference in the MB for including a sentence referring to the ECA observation; however, ECA had thereafter requested this sentence to be removed as their report was still a draft and not to be disclosed.

11. The Director acknowledged the concerns expressed by the representatives of the European Parliament but recalled that both Commission and Member State lawyers had been consulted at the time and the matter was clearly explained in the minutes (*cf.* points 53-55). No objections had been raised during the discussions; however, one member representing Member States had abstained from the decision, which was noted in the minutes.

12. Following the discussion, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved without further changes.

The Management Board adopted the minutes of the Fifty-eighth meeting of the Management Board.

Revised ECDC Strategy Implementation Roadmap 2021-2027 (Document MB59/03)

13. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the revised ECDC Strategy Implementation Roadmap 2021-2027. She explained that the roadmap is a tool to provide guidance and facilitate the annual planning process. It defines what needs to be done at what point in time to achieve each of the strategic objectives in the amended ECDC Strategy 2021-2027 and contains agreed milestones for the implementation of the new tasks arising from the revised ECDC Founding Regulation. Work that can be considered as "business as usual" is not part of the roadmap. Apart from the amended Strategy, the inputs used for developing the roadmap were the high-level roadmap prepared in 2020, and the key desired outcomes formulated by the Heads of Unit and the Director as a result of the Ecosystem analysis performed by Ipsos. The revised roadmap was discussed in the MB Working Group on Legal framework related to ECDC strategic documents on 20 October and the final draft version was now submitted to the MB for approval.

14. Lieven De Raedt, MB Member, Belgium, reported back from the last meeting of the MB working group. He said that the working group had welcomed the document and considered it a valuable tool for ECDC and for the MB. Some questions had however been raised on whether the roadmap should be considered as an internal document or also used for external communication and to what extent it is flexible and can be updated if the need arises. The working group had felt that the current table was rather difficult to digest and not so accessible for an external audience. It could however be used as a basis for developing an external communication around the roadmap. The conclusion of the working group was that the MB could adopt the roadmap in its current format, but it should be ensured that MB members are given the opportunity to ask for clarifications during and after the meeting as needed.

15. The floor was then opened for comments. The member representing DG SANTE noted that the European Commission was generally pleased with the roadmap but had a few comments which would be sent in writing concerning mainly the timing of some of the outputs. The member representing DG HERA observed that there was no reference to forecasting or modelling in the roadmap even if these were mentioned in the amended Founding Regulation. He also suggested adding a reference to cross-sectional risk assessments, as well as waste-water surveillance and interoperability of IT solutions. One member representing the Member States welcomed the roadmap but felt that there was a need for clarity on how Member States will be involved throughout the work. Concerning communication to the general public, she stressed that Member States should be able to adjust messages to their local context when needed. There was also some concern regarding the use of information from patient records (*cf.* Action Area 2.3 on digital solutions for surveillance). Another MB member commented that the roadmap was a useful tool for those already familiar with ECDC's work but probably not sufficient for external communication. With regards to the report on possible future threat scenarios for ECDC and European public health to be delivered in 2024 (*cf.* Action Area 1.3), she said that the threat scenarios would need to be reviewed and updated regularly, at least every two years. With reference to Action Area 5.4. on Digital transformation services, one MB member asked why only ChatGPT was mentioned as a tool to be explored for language processing tasks while there are several other existing tools, and the field is constantly developing.

16. The Director thanked for the comments and said that there was a balance to be found as to how detailed the roadmap should be. She recalled that in previous discussions on the roadmap in 2021, there had been a conscious choice to keep the document high-level and not to go into details on the implementation as such information will be included in the annual work plans. If there was a need for a different tool for external communication that could be looked at separately, but she suggested keeping the roadmap output focused for the internal use of ECDC and the MB. With regards to patient records, she mentioned that one part of the project was to look at how patient data privacy can be ensured.

17. Responding to the question on the use of ChatGPT, François Mestre, Head of Unit, Digital Transformation Services, ECDC, clarified that ECDC had developed a secure environment for ChatGPT without risk of disclosure of personal data and it was also a question of cost. ECDC had however recently established an internal working group on Artificial Intelligence which will look at the public health benefit of different tools.

18. Referring to the comment on threat scenarios, Mike Catchpole, Chief Scientist, ECDC, agreed that the scenarios will have to be updated and the review frequency will need to be determined. Concerning modelling, he said that it had become business as usual and therefore was not explicitly mentioned in the roadmap but will appear in the SPD.

19. In concluding the discussion, the Chair suggested that the roadmap be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure following the meeting to provide some additional time for comments. The MB members agreed with this approach.

The Management Board discussed the revised ECDC Strategy Implementation Roadmap 2021-2027 and agreed that the document be sent for approval via written procedure following the meeting.

Timeline and process for selection of ECDC Director 2024-2029 and other relevant matters

20. This item was discussed in a closed session (Members of the MB only). Before the discussion, the Chair repeated that potential candidates for the position of ECDC Director should not participate in the closed session. Another shorter closed session was held on the second meeting day to continue the discussion.

ECDC Draft Single Programming Document 2025-2027 (*Document MB59/04*)

21. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the Draft Single Programming Document (SPD) 2025-2027. She mentioned that 2025 will be the second year of implementing the adapted ECDC Strategy. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that there are several anticipated changes that might influence the ECDC Work Plan 2025. At the global level, the new international pandemic treaty and the review of the International Health Regulations (IHR) are expected to be in force in 2025. At EU level, a new EU strategic agenda and priorities of the European Commission will be set following the European elections taking place in June 2024. A new ECDC Director should be in place as from June 2024 and there will also be other changes in the ECDC management with two Heads of Unit retiring during 2024. In addition, the external evaluation of ECDC will be conducted in 2025 including an assessment of the progress made in implementing the amended mandate.

22. The Director then recalled the main ECDC priorities for 2025 noting that these had been discussed during the June MB meeting. The budget for 2025 will amount to 93 184 711 EUR, of which 39 179 000 EUR for operations. Additional resources are foreseen for the implementation of externally funded projects. The total number of staff foreseen for 2025 is 358 full time equivalent (FTE) posts, of which 225 temporary agent posts, 128 contract agents and five seconded national experts.

23. Following the presentation a few minor comments were raised. It was suggested to include a reference to vaccine hesitancy in the text. Responding to a question on ECDC's engagement with international associations such as the Global Health Security Alliance (GloHSA), the Director clarified that ECDC participated in activities of GloHSA only on invitation by the European Commission. Responding to a question on the tool used for website statistics, François Mestre, Head of Unit, Digital Transformation

Services, ECDC, clarified that ECDC had in fact recently changed from Google Analytics to Matomo as it considered the latter more privacy friendly. A few MB members including one of the members representing the European Commission mentioned that they would send comments in writing.

24. The Director suggested providing time until 8 December 2023 for MB members to send additional comments if they so wished. In January 2024, the final draft SPD 2025-2027 including annexes will be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure and subsequently shared with the EU institutions following the usual process.

The Management Board discussed the Single Programming Document 2025-2027.

Summary of discussions held at the 53rd meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (Stockholm, 13 November 2023), including its recommendations

25. The Chair noted that the Audit Committee (AC) membership issues had been briefly discussed during the closed session including the fact that the AC was currently without a Chair as the previous AC Chair, Daniel Shine, had recently left his functions in the MB and AC. The 53rd AC meeting, held the day before, had been chaired by Zofija Mazej Kukovič, Deputy Chair of the MB and member of the AC.

26. Zofija Mazej Kukovič gave a summary of the discussions in the AC meeting noting that the Internal Audit Service (IAS) had presented the final report of the IAS audit on Information Security Management in ECDC. The AC had received further clarifications on cyber-attacks (it is often not possible to determine from where they come), the staff security training (ECDC is planning additional training and self-assessments) and on disaster recovery plans for critical business functions defined in the ECDC Business Continuity Plan. The AC had taken note of the observations and recommendations and was looking forward to the ECDC Action Plan to be completed by 1 December 2023.

27. With regards to the regular update on audit activities, Stefan Sundbom, Internal Control Coordinator, Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, reported that since the last AC meeting, one new final observation (no. 105) had been received by the ECDC, but not accepted. This related to the final annual accounts 2022 and the disagreement between the European Court of Auditors and ECDC on the eligibility of VAT under the HERA Incubator grants. One observation had been closed by ECDC (no. 54) and one was currently open (no. 55) with a target implementation date of Q4 2023.¹

The Management Board took note of the summary of the AC discussions.

a) ECDC Anti-Fraud Strategy 2024-2026 (Document MB59/05)

28. Stefan Sundbom, Internal Control Coordinator, Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, recalled that the MB had approved the current ECDC Anti-Fraud Strategy (AFS) 2021-2023 during MB50 in November 2020. The updated AFS includes three strategic objectives for the period 2024-2026 and an action plan. The strategic objectives are: 1) Internal anti-fraud training; 2) Perform an annual review and refine the fraud risk assessment over time; 3) Select an area annually in which to further analyse and potentially improve the controls in place. In line with the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies, the MB was requested to adopt the AFS 2024-2026.

29. Zofija Mazej Kukovič reported that the AC had taken note of the systematic approach applied and considered the AFS appropriate. The AC therefore recommended the MB to adopt the AFS 2024-2026.

The Management Board adopted the ECDC Anti-Fraud Strategy 2024-2026.

¹ Both these observations are related to the IAS Audit on Human Resources Management and Ethics (final report received January 2021).

b) Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2023 (Document MB59/06)

30. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented the Second Supplementary and Amending Budget (SAB) 2023, consisting of the budget transfers approved by the Director since the beginning of 2023. The main transfers were mentioned in the summary part of the document and the details of the distribution of the 2023 budget transfers were listed in Annex 1. A budget transfer of EUR 2 229 800 had been executed from title 3 to title 1, to further support staff-related expenditure needs. The topic was presented to the MB for information.

The Management Board took note of the Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2023.

c) Progress Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme 2023 (Document MB59/07)

31. Maarit Kokki, Head of the Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, presented the status of the implementation of the work programme 2023 as of October 2023. She said that 88% of the planned activities had been started, 3% were identified as achieved, 6% were delayed, 2% had been cancelled, and 1% had not yet started. She then presented a few highlights of the activities carried out under each Strategic Objective. She recalled that more information on ECDC's main activities and achievements throughout the year can be found in the "ECDC Highlights", which are delivered directly to all MB members and other ECDC stakeholders on a quarterly basis.

32. In the AC, ECDC had clarified that it is working on a new planning and monitoring system (PRIME), and therefore the presentation to the MB (including graphs) will change in 2024. The system for defining the status of an activity (cancelled, postponed etc.) will also be better defined.

33. Responding to a question on the recently established Cross-Agency Task Force on One Health, the Director clarified that the Task Force was technical in nature but had been endorsed by the Directors of all five participating EU agencies (ECDC, ECHA, EEA, EFSA and EMA).

The Management Board took note of the Progress Report on the implementation of the work programme 2023.

d) Progress Report – Overview of 2023 Budget Implementation

34. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, gave an overview of the 2023 budget implementation up until 9 November 2023.

35. She explained that from the total budget of EUR 90.2 million, EUR 86.6 million (95.7%) had been committed, and from the committed amount, EUR 49.4 million (54.8%) had been paid, while EUR 3.5 million were in the workflow to be paid. A total of EUR 25.2 million had been carried forward from 2022; from this amount, EUR 20.3 million (80.6%) had been paid, while EUR 195 000 were in the workflow to be paid.

36. In the AC meeting, ECDC had clarified that there will be further payments made on the carried forward amount (C8) before the end of the year, however, these will not fully cover the total amount carried forward.

The Management Board took note of the Progress Report - Overview of 2023 Budget Implementation.

e) ECDC Single Programming Document 2024-2026

i) Single Programming Document 2024-2026 (Document MB59/08)

37. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2024-2026, which is based on the revised ECDC mandate and follows the amended ECDC Strategy 2021-2026. During 2024, ECDC will continue contributing to strengthening EU health security by addressing the following main priorities: enhanced support to EU Member States and the European Commission in emergency preparedness and response planning, reinforced surveillance and monitoring, building profound knowledge of Member States to better target ECDC interventions, and strengthened strategic partnerships at the EU and international level. ECDC will also continue to address priority issues at European level (AMR, SDGs in the area of HIV, TB and hepatitis, monitoring of vaccine effectiveness, support to countries to improve the vaccine coverage in the EU).

38. Following the usual process, ECDC received comments on the SPD 2024-2026 from the European Commission in June 2023. In addition, comments were received from Member States, other EU agencies and WHO Europe. The Commission Opinion as well as the list of stakeholder comments with ECDC replies had been shared on the MB Extranet as part of the meeting documentation.

ii) Budget and Establishment Table 2024 (Document MB59/09)

39. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, then presented the Budget and Establishment Table 2024. She recalled that the Draft Budget 2024 had been approved by the MB via written procedure in January 2023 as part of the draft SPD 2024 (Annex II and III). The budget for 2024 amounts to EUR 92.8 million, which is approximately EUR 2.5 million higher than the initial budget from 2023. The Establishment Plan 2024 foresees 225 Temporary Agent and 128 Contract Agent posts. In addition, the Centre will have 29 Contract Agent posts to support international projects funded by EU grants.

40. The 2024 budget evolution by title compared to the initial 2023 budget will be as follows: 4.1% increase in title 1 (staff expenditure), 8.4% increase in title 2 (infrastructure & administrative expenditure), and 0.4% increase in title 3 (operational expenditure). The increase in title 2 is mainly due to upcoming building related expenditure and additional MS licences, administrative software licences and cloud services.

41. During the AC meeting, ECDC had clarified that the budget for title 1 includes the 73 new posts received for the amended mandate, of which 68 have already been filled. It was also mentioned that ECDC expects to sign a new contribution agreement with the European Commission regarding the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) in early 2024, with a value of EUR 10 million over five years. This amount is not inscribed in the general ECDC budget as it will only be included when the cash is transferred from the Commission. The budget increase for salaries of 4.1% includes the estimated reduction of the weighting factor for the first six months of 2024. The increase in the building related expenditure is related to having external consultants assess the ECDC green-house gas emissions and assess the effective use of space/working environment. With these clarifications, the AC recommended the MB to approve the Budget and Establishment Table 2024.

42. Following both presentations, the floor was opened for comments. Responding to questions from the MB, the Director explained that the management of EWRS was part of the standard operations and covered by the regular ECDC budget while the additional budget foreseen through the new contribution agreement was intended for further development of the platform. As for the contribution agreements for international work, the Director clarified that these covered work in line with ECDC's core tasks such as preparedness and mainly targeted neighbouring areas of Europe: Western Balkans and Turkey as well as European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries. It was true that the external funding could not be guaranteed beyond the current contribution agreements, but it was noted that it was rather common that EU agencies received such grants from the European Commission (DG NEAR in particular).

43. One MB member said that she needed to get agreement from her Ministry of Finance before approving the SPD 2024-2026 and the Budget and Establishment Table 2024. The Chair suggested providing time until the following Monday close of business (20 November) for possible comments on both

documents. If no comments were received by the indicated deadline, both documents would be considered approved.²

The Management Board conditionally approved the Single Programming Document 2024-2026 and the Budget and Establishment Table 2024. In case of no comments received by close of business 20 November 2023, both documents will be considered approved.

f) Amendments to the Management Board Rules of Procedure and Audit Committee Mandate (Document MB59/10)

44. Zofija Mazej Kokovič reported that the AC had discussed the proposed changes to the MB Rules of Procedure and the AC Mandate and concluded that the documents needed some further work. The AC therefore suggested to keep the item on the agenda of the MB for information but not for decision. The AC had also requested ECDC to collect examples of rules of procedure and audit committee mandates from other EU agencies as a comparison.

45. The Chair agreed that it was more useful to postpone the discussion on the documents to the next meeting. She added that it might be helpful to set up a working group to look into the matter but suggested having the AC membership clarified first.

The Management Board took note of the proposed amendments to the Management Board Rules of Procedure and the Audit Committee Mandate. It was agreed to postpone the discussion to the next MB meeting.

g) AC membership matters

46. The AC had also touched upon the need to appoint a new AC member representing the European Commission, a new member representing the Member States, and to select a new permanent Chair of the AC.

47. In the discussion that followed, Isabel de la Mata, MB Alternate, DG SANTE, European Commission, and Rita Sá Machado, MB Member, Portugal, came forward as volunteers for the two vacant member positions in the AC. The MB expressed its support for both appointments. The AC Chair will be selected among the AC members during their next meeting.

The Management Board appointed Rita Sá Machado, MB Member, Portugal, as member of the Audit Committee representing Member States and Isabel de la Mata, MB Alternate, DG SANTE, as member representing the European Commission.

Update from the European Commission

48. Isabel de la Mata, MB Alternate, DG SANTE, European Commission, briefed the MB about ongoing activities in the area of health. The update focused on the implementation of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health (SCBTH) as well as other recent activities within the ECDC remit (e.g., One Health, AMR). She confirmed that a written summary of her update would be shared with the MB following the meeting.³

49. Laurent Muschel, MB Alternate, DG HERA, European Commission, briefed the MB on the implementation of the HERA-ECDC working arrangements with regular exchanges on epidemic intelligence, laboratory network, preparedness and response planning. He also briefly presented some of HERA's flagship projects: EU FAB, HERA Invest, global wastewater surveillance, joint procurements, and recent calls for proposals.

² No objections were received by the indicated deadline and both documents were thereby approved.

³ The written summary was shared with the MB on 14 November 2023.

50. With regards to the Advisory Committee on Public Health Emergencies to be set up in 2024, the Chair asked how the European Commission was going to combine information coming from different sources considering that ECDC also provides scientific advice. Isabel de la Mata responded that the Advisory Committee will only work in times of crisis and will consist of independent experts from different fields (epidemiology, health economics, etc.). One of the first steps will be to establish the terms of reference of the Committee.

51. One MB member raised some concern regarding the ongoing call for applications for EU reference laboratories (EURLs) noting that laboratories interested in forming a consortium for a specific EURL topic were encouraged to contact ECDC but, to date, no reply had been received from ECDC while the deadline for applications was approaching. Isabel de la Mata, MB alternate, DG SANTE, replied that if there were several Member States having similar issues, the deadline for applications could possibly be extended. She asked MB members to contact her via email as soon as possible in this case as it was necessary to act quickly if the deadline was to be extended beyond the current one (30 November 2023).

The Management Board took note of the update from the European Commission.

Update from the European Parliament

52. Marilena Koppa, MB Member, European Parliament, gave a brief update noting that the work in the European Parliament would soon start slowing down due to the European elections taking place in June 2024. The last ENVI Committee meeting is scheduled on 19 March 2024. She mentioned that a subcommittee on Public Health (SANT) had been created under the ENVI Committee earlier in 2023. This gave the opportunity to discuss public health related issues in more depth, including topics within ECDC's remit.

The Management Board took note of the update from the European Parliament.

Update from the Belgian Presidency of the European Council

53. Lieven de Raedt, MB Member, Belgium, informed the MB of the Belgian EU Presidency starting on 1 January 2024. With the European elections taking place in June 2024, it was a good moment to reflect on what has been achieved so far and what the expectations are for the next five years. The ambition of the Belgian Presidency is to make the case for keeping health high on the agenda of the next European Commission. Under the slogan "a Europe that cares, prepares and protects", it proposes a number of policy areas where the collaboration at EU level would benefit from being enhanced: health work force, unmet needs, healthy populations, preparedness governance, clinical trials, AMR, and security of medicine supplies. The dates of the main presidency events are expected to be known in December.

The Management Board took note of the update on the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Update from the Director

54. The Director gave an update on recent ECDC activities focusing on One Health related work. She mentioned that an internal ECDC One Health Task Force had recently been set up as well as a Cross-Agency One Health Task Force with ECDC, ECHA, EEA, EFSA, and EMA. The Director also briefed the MB about her recent country visits in France and Ireland and noted that enhanced relations with Member States will be in focus for her remaining time as ECDC Director. In this context, ECDC recently carried out interviews with Directors of Coordinating Competent Bodies (CCBs) to better understand their needs and expectations. The interviews were followed by an on-line meeting with CCB Directors and National Coordinators to discuss the outcomes and next steps. One of the outcomes of the discussions is that a strategic advisory group of CCB Directors will be set up. The group will meet the ECDC Director once per year in spring, while a virtual meeting of all CCB Directors and NCs will take place once per year in the autumn. As a next step, ECDC will suggest Terms of Reference for the advisory group. The Director then updated the MB on recent international work and media activities as well as other relevant topics. She highlighted the conference on HIV and stigma organised in September under the Spanish EU Presidency, which showed that stigma was still a large problem including in the health care sector.

55. Following the presentation, the MB discussed that workforce shortages in the health sector was one of the most critical issues in many Member States and there were concerns that the new legislation will further increase the workload. It was important to avoid duplication with WHO as concerns the surveys and assessment visits to be performed under the SCBTH Regulation and to ensure that the work done brings added value as to keep staff motivated. The MB also touched upon the value of waste-water surveillance and ECDC's role in this work. It was clarified that DG HERA was in the lead of the project to develop a global waste-water sentinel system while ECDC would be one of the main users of the data generated from the system.

The Management Board took note of the update from the Director.

Information session: ECDC planning cycle

56. Karolina Bachmann, Organisational Performance Officer, Executive Office, Director's Office, and Stefan Manescu, Budget Officer, Resource Management Services, ECDC, gave a presentation on the ECDC planning cycle as requested previously by the MB. The presentation focused on the regulatory requirements and background, the content of the Single Programming Document (SPD) and how it is linked to the ECDC Strategy, the work programme structure, the financial resources and budget nomenclature and the main steps of developing the SPD including budget approval.

57. The Chair thanked Karolina Bachmann and Stefan Manescu for the comprehensive presentation. Responding to a question on the level of flexibility in the plans, Karolina Bachmann clarified that the implementation of the work programme is continuously monitored and in case of additional requests the work plan can be adjusted as needed. Any substantial changes to the work plan will however require MB approval. In terms of resources needed for drafting the SPD, she stressed that it was a truly collaborative work with input being provided by all Units and Sections.

The Management Board took note of the information session on the ECDC planning cycle.

Annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee to the Management Board

58. Olivier Briet, Member of the ECDC Staff Committee, thanked the MB for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the ECDC Staff Committee (SC). He stressed that staff wellbeing was at the heart of the SC's work. He recalled that the previous address to the MB had focused on the high workload of many staff members and with the amended ECDC mandate and new tasks being assigned to the Centre there were still signs of heavy workload. There was also some concern among staff related to the upcoming changes in the Centre's management. Other topics followed by the SC included the ongoing work to revise the internal reclassification system and the prevention of harassment. He thanked the Director on behalf of the SC for her commitment to preventing all forms of harassment.

59. The Chair thanked Olivier Briet for the presentation noting that the MB highly valued the commitment of the ECDC staff. She said that the MB was doing its best to speed up the process of the Director's selection hoping that the interviews could take place in January or February 2024. The Director clarified that the vacancy notices for the two Head of Unit positions will be published at the end of November or early December. If the new Director is in place on 16 June, he or she will appoint the Heads of Unit based on a suggested shortlist. If the process is delayed, then the current Director will appoint the concerned Heads of Unit.

The Management Board took note of the annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee.

Update on ECDC Compliance: Implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy

60. Marie-Amélie Ekström, Compliance Officer, Resource Management and Support Unit, ECDC, updated the MB on the implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy. She recalled the main steps of the process for submitting Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI) and Annual Declarations of Commitment

(ADoC) by MB/AF members/alternates/observers and added that non-compliance with the requirement to submit DoI resulted in the prohibition to participate in MB/AF activities and meetings, and the access to documents and procedures shared with MB/AF being cut.

61. By end of June 2023, the compliance rate was 94% for the MB and 97% for the AF respectively. For Rapid Risk Assessments, the compliance rate was 100% and for meetings with external experts 98%; this figure however only covers meetings that the compliance officer was informed about. Concerning potential conflicts of interests (CoI), for the MB, one member and two alternates were identified with potential CoI towards Article 17 of the MB Rules of Procedure; one actual or potential CoI was identified towards points-tasks on the agenda of MB57 and MB58 respectively. Marie-Amélie Ekström then briefly presented the main steps of the independence policy for ECDC staff noting that full-scale implementation of the policy had started in 2023. The compliance rate for the current year was 100%.

The Management Board took note of the update on ECDC Compliance.

Any other business

62. The Chair mentioned that the preliminary dates agreed for the MB meeting dedicated to select the next ECDC Director were 23-24 January or 20-21 February 2024. The final date will be confirmed as soon as possible. As agreed during the closed session, a small MB working group will prepare for the interview session. The ECDC Executive Office/Governance will provide support as needed.

63. The following MB meeting is scheduled to take place in Stockholm on 13-14 March 2024.

64. Lastly, the Chair thanked all the MB members for their active participation during the meeting. She also thanked the interpreters and the MB Secretariat for their support.

Annex: List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Austria	Sigrid Kiermayr	Member
Belgium	Lieven De Raedt	Member
Croatia	Bernard Kaić	Member
Czech Republic	Matyáš Fošum	Alternate
Denmark	Kirstine Moll Harboe	Member
Estonia	Heli Laarmann	Member
Finland	Anni Virolainen-Julkunen (<i>Chair</i>)	Member
	Taneli Puumalainen	Alternate
France	Anne-Catherine Viso	Alternate
Germany	Gesa Lücking	Alternate
Hungary	Ágnes Dánielisz	Member
Italy	Sandro Bonfigli	Alternate
Lithuania	Audrius Ščeponavičius	Member
Malta	Patricia Vella Bonanno	Member
The Netherlands	Florien van der Windt	Member
Poland	Michał Ilnicki	Alternate
Portugal	Rita Sá Machado	Member
Slovakia	Ján Mikas	Member
Slovenia	Mario Fafangel	Alternate
Sweden	Karin Tegmark Wisell	Member
	Camilla Wallander	Alternate
European Parliament		
	Zofija Mazej Kukovič	Member
	Maria Eleni Koppa	Member

European Commission		
DG SANTE	Isabel de la Mata Barranco	Alternate
DG HERA	Laurent Muschel	Alternate
EEA Countries		
Norway	Øystein Riise	Member