

**ECDC Management Board**

**MB15/Minutes  
6 August 2009**



**Minutes of the Fifteenth Meeting of the  
ECDC Management Board  
Stockholm, 25-26 March 2009**

*Adopted by the Management Board at its Sixteenth meeting, 24-25 June 2009*

## Table of Contents

	Page
Summary of decisions .....	1
Opening and welcome by the Chair .....	2
Item 15: Director's briefing on ECDC's main activities since the last meeting of the Management Board .....	2
Item 1: Adoption of the draft agenda (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting) .....	3
Item 2: Adoption of the draft minutes of the Fourteenth meeting of the Management Board (Paris, 12-13 November 2008) .....	4
Item 3: Director's 2008 Annual Report on the Centre's Activities .....	4
Item 12: Working relations between ECDC and the Competent Bodies .....	5
Item 13: The role of the Advisory Forum following designation of the Competent Bodies ....	7
Item 10: Access to ECDC MS data by third parties .....	8
Item 14: How to Improve the Work of ECDC's Management Board .....	9
Item 9: Working with Member States: Needs, Expectations and Capacities .....	11
Item 4: Provisional Annual Accounts 2008 .....	11
Item 5: Preliminary Draft Budget 2010 .....	11
Item 6: Update on ECDC Implementing Rule No 25 concerning the Appraisal of the Director .....	12
Item 8: IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2009-2011 .....	12
Item 7: ECDC Multi-annual Staff Policy Plan 2010-2012 .....	13
Item 18: Draft Opinion on ECDC's 2007 Discharge Procedure of the ENVI Committee for the COCOBU .....	14
Item 11: Analysis of the Indicators for the Strategic Multi-annual Work Programme 2007-2013 .....	14
Item 16: Report of Implementation of the 2009 Work Programme in the first three months	15
Item 17: ECDC's Health Communication Activities and Support to Member States: Update on the Progress of Focus Groups .....	15
Item 19: Update on the Draft Seat Agreement .....	16
Item 20: Update regarding the European Commission's Vision of a European System of Reference Laboratories for Pathogens for Humans .....	16
Item 21: Other matters .....	16
ECDC Guidance on DTP Vaccination .....	16
Next Management Board Meeting in Warsaw (24-25 June 2009) and Preliminary Dates and Places of Future Meetings .....	18
Submission for Comments from the Management Board regarding the Draft Vacancy Notice for the Director of ECDC .....	18

## Summary of decisions

### The Management Board:

- Adopted the Draft Minutes of the Fourteenth meeting of the Management Board (Paris, 12-13 November 2008)
- Adopted the Director's 2008 Annual Report on the Centre's Activities
- Approved the Provisional Annual Accounts 2008
- Approved the Preliminary Draft Budget 2010
- Following an amendment, the ECDC Multi-annual Staff Policy Plan 2010-2012 was adopted
- Endorsed the IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2009-2011
- Agreed to the proposed actions and requested to select and nominate four or five of their Members for a Working Group who will, together with ECDC's team, steer and conduct a review of the needs, expectations and capacities of Member States

### The Management Board also:

- Noted the Director's Briefing on ECDC's Main Activities since the last meeting of the Management Board
- Took note of Access to ECDC MS Data by Third Parties
- Took note of Working Relations between ECDC and the Competent Bodies
- Took note of the Role of the Advisory Forum following designation of the Competent Bodies
- Took note of How to Improve the Work of ECDC's Management Board
- Noted the update on ECDC Implementing Rule N° 25 concerning the Appraisal of the Director
- Took note of the draft Opinion on ECDC's 2007 Discharge Procedure of the ENVI Committee for the COCOBU
- Noted the Analysis of the Indicators for the Strategic Multi-annual Work Programme 2007-2013
- Noted the Report of Implementation of the 2009 Work Programme in its first three months
- Noted ECDC's Health Communication Activities and Support to Member States: Update on the Progress of Focus Groups
- Noted the update on the Draft Seat Agreement
- Noted the European Commission's Vision of a European System of Reference Laboratories for Pathogens for Humans
- Noted the next Management Board meeting would take place in Warsaw, Poland on 24-25 June 2009

## **Opening and welcome by the Chair**

1. The Chair of the Management Board (MB), Prof. Dr. Hubert Hrabcik, welcomed everyone to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. He highlighted that this year ECDC is moving on to a new phase in its development. The establishment stage is over, the centre is consolidating activities and strengthening cooperation with the Member States in the interest of the EU citizens.
2. A warm welcome was expressed to the newly appointed alternates from the following countries: Estonia, Italy, Netherlands, Slovenia, as well as the observer from the European Commission, Maarit Kokki, who from 1 April 2009 will commence her work at the Centre as Advisor to the Director of ECDC and Coordinator of the Cabinet.
3. Apologies were duly received from: Bulgaria, Liechtenstein and the representative from the European Commission, John Ryan.

## **Item 15: Director's briefing on ECDC's main activities since the last meeting of the Management Board**

4. ECDC's Director provided an update on recent developments in the Centre since the previous MB meeting, highlighting a number of successful initiatives, such as the launch of the European Antibiotic Awareness Day, the ESCAIDE conference in Berlin, the scientific seminar on HIV Aids with Nobel Prize winners at ECDC, as well as different meetings held, publications launched and the ongoing collaboration with other organisations.
5. The Director informed on a new procedure on arranging visits by pharmaceutical companies to ECDC. Visits are organised four times per year, with different companies and the presence of the Commission and EMEA, in order to discuss a specific topic.
6. The meeting of the DG Research Advisory Group on 24 November 2008 was also mentioned, and in relation to this the Director proposed that the representative of the Commission Anna Lönnroth (MB Alternate and present at this MB meeting) further briefs the members of the Board on the interactions between ECDC and DG Research, as well as on the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), during the upcoming MB meeting in June.
7. The Director informed on the results of the staff retreat held in February to discuss the corporate vision, the Centre's objectives and promotion of teamwork. The results of this retreat are being currently analysed and the outcome will be shared at the next MB meeting in June.
8. Following the above-noted briefing, a closed session was held solely in the presence of MB members and alternates, ECDC's Director, the Governance Officer and the rapporteur.
9. As regards to other topics raised by the Director during her briefing, members of the Board requested more information on the initiative of holding meetings with the pharmaceutical industries. It was also asked if similar activities with companies from other sectors occur. The Director clarified that ECDC exercises caution in order to avoid any conflict of interest, and as such, all relations with the industry take place exclusively through communications with the Centre's Chief Scientist, with clear guidelines. The meetings are

advertised in advance via the website. These meetings are important as ECDC needs to be kept updated on recent developments in pharmaceutical research, in particular, in areas such as antibiotic resistance. Similar initiatives with industries from other sectors do not yet take place, but guidance on this matter by the EC is much appreciated.

10. The Chair stressed the importance of transparency in the process of inviting the companies to these types of meetings, as well as coordination with other agencies.

11. One member stressed that these meetings represent an opportunity to discuss with the industry aspects that are vital from the public health point of view, citing as an example the issue of packaging formats of antibiotics and how these can also have an incidence in inappropriate use, which in turn contributes to the problem of antibiotic resistance.

12. The Alternate for the EC, Anna Lönnroth provided a brief on the work of DG Research with the pharmaceutical industry, explaining that a series of research networks were established. This experience can be shared with ECDC. The EC representative, Andrzej Rys, subsequently explained the importance of maintaining a more active role in this relationship, as there are also regulatory aspects involved. This relationship falls under the mandate of three DGs (Enterprise, SANCO and Research). He added that in the area of antibiotic resistance, during the Swedish EU Presidency, issues such as advertisement, packaging and easy access to antibiotics in certain countries could be addressed.

13. The member for Sweden then confirmed the interest in working closely with ECDC on addressing these issues related to antibiotic resistance during the EU Presidency.

14. The Alternate for the EC further explained the initiatives of the three DGs in relation with the pharmaceutical industry. She also briefed on the eMedicines Initiative, which focuses on the drug development process, in order to assess how it can become more efficient.

**Item 1: Adoption of the draft agenda (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting)** (*documents MB15/2 Rev. 3 and MB15/3 Rev. 2*)

15. The agenda was adopted without changes.

16. Declarations of Interest forms were duly distributed to the members in order to register any statement(s). Under agenda item 21 (Other matters), Ildefonso Hernández Aguado, Spain, declared that he received grants from MSD to write on public health indicators prior to joining the Spanish Government. Under the same agenda item, Pawel Grzesiowski, Poland, declared that he is taking part in the organisation of the MB meeting in Warsaw.

17. Proxy was given by John Ryan (EC) to Andrzej Rys (EC). Later during the discussions of agenda item 12, proxy was given from Bulgaria to Belgium.

**Item 2: Adoption of the draft minutes of the Fourteenth meeting of the Management Board (Paris, 12-13 November 2008) (document MB15/4)**

18. A correction was requested in paragraph number 138 of the draft minutes of the previous meeting, where it is stated: "... the ECDC Director recalled that the MB meeting in Warsaw in June 2009 will convene only in English and that no interpretation will be available." Two members of the Board pointed out that it has not been agreed to use only one language in the MB meetings held outside of Stockholm, therefore it needs to be ensured that the agreed language regime for MB meetings continues to apply.

19. ECDC's Director acknowledged that there is no unanimity on the issue of a language regime for the MB meetings held outside of Stockholm, and recalled that it was mentioned during the MB13, held in Helsinki, to use only English, i.e. not offering simultaneous interpretation in meetings held outside of Stockholm.

20. As a result of this discussion, ECDC's Director announced that in the upcoming meeting in Warsaw, the established language regime shall apply. The Chair added that there is still need for a final official decision of the MB on the language regime for the meetings, and that this issue needs to be further addressed in a future meeting. It was suggested to include this item in the agenda of the MB meeting in November 2009.

21. One member remarked that the draft MB minutes should be circulated earlier to the Board in order to allow sufficient time for review and comments.

22. The draft minutes with the requested correction were then adopted.

**Item 3: Director's 2008 Annual Report on the Centre's Activities**

23. Philippe Harant, ECDC Planning and Monitoring Manager, introduced the topic, highlighting how this edition takes into account recommendations made last year by the Internal Audit Service as to key areas of information to be added and stronger focus on outputs. The ECDC Founding Regulation stipulates that the report be adopted by the MB before 30 March each year. The draft report was circulated beforehand and comments were received by one MB member, requesting a correction in the contact data. It was also informed that the budget table will be updated in the final version, to include figures for 2009.

24. The Chair of the ECDC Audit Committee, Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson, then presented the Analysis and Assessment made by this body to the Director's Annual Report, to be added to the document. This analysis notes the achievements of the Centre, the ongoing improvements in the information and project management systems and improvements in efficiency. In addition, the MB recommends that future Annual Reports be further developed, in particular, in regard to the risks associated with operations and the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control systems.

25. The representative for Austria inquired about their recent correspondence pertaining to the results of the EPIET evaluation in the context of the Annual Report of the ECDC Director 2008. ECDC's Director informed that the Centre had sent a reply to Austria on 24 March 2009 clarifying the rationale for having postponed the evaluation of EPIET to 2009 in order to allocate additional resources for a more in-depth and comprehensive external evaluation.

26. The Vice Chair congratulated the Centre for the improvements in the report, as it also reflects the consolidation of ECDC's activities. The boxes with quantitative data were regarded as highly useful. He inquired about the motive for the reorganisation in the structure of the report, particularly in terms of the order in which the different Units are presented. In reply to this, Philippe Harant explained that this was done according to the structure of ECDC's Work Programme. The Vice Chair also recommended a change in the box referring to key products in the area of surveillance in 2008, as the work with the candidate countries should also be mentioned.

27. The Director added that continuous improvement in this publication is sought. As administrative issues need to be included in this kind of publication, a future discussion is pending on target audiences. It also needs to be assessed how to comply with the recommendation mentioned earlier on adding the issues of risks associated with operations, while at the same time ensuring readability of the report.

28. Members of the Board then adopted unanimously and by a show of hands the 2008 Annual Report on the Centre's Activities 2008 and the MB's Analysis and Assessment of the Director's Annual Report.

### **Item 12: Working relations between ECDC and the Competent Bodies** *(document MB15/13)*

29. The ECDC Director presented a document that further defines the working relations and procedures between the Centre and the Competent Bodies (CBs). This document was developed with the support of the Advisory Forum (AF) and its ad hoc Working Group, and among other issues, it addresses the roles of the CBs in relation to the AF.

30. A decision was sought from the MB in order to guide future work with the CBs. A review will take place in March 2010 following a meeting with CBs planned for autumn 2009. The Director added that during one of the forthcoming MB meetings in 2009, a discussion should take place on the need for a specific focal point in the disease specific areas.

31. The Chair then asked the MB members if they agreed to the general approach outlined in the document.

32. One Member referred to paragraph 77(c) of the document, where roles of the CBs for general surveillance are explained. The differences are not always clear, particularly in relation to the roles of the general contact point for ECDC relations mentioned in paragraph 77(a), and in relation to other contact points, for example for communication. It was also mentioned that sometimes ECDC's expectations are not clear to persons proposed as contact points.

33. The usefulness of the document was acknowledged by several Members, but a number of issues that need further consideration were raised during the discussion. A plethora of structures is described in the document; the functions ascribed to CBs keep growing and therefore the complexity increases, with a consequent risk of creating confusion. In relation to this, the creation of yet another structure, as proposed in the document, namely the

## **ECDC Management Board MB15/Minutes**

“communities of practice”, was also questioned, as it would further complicate matters and affect efficiency.

34. A discussion also ensued on the difference in roles of the AF in relation to the CBs. AF members are not representing a Member State but provide an advisory function, while the CBs do represent the Member State. Yet, for some countries, the AF member is also the CB Director. It was conveyed that there is a need to further clarify when a member of an ECDC working group or committee is acting in his/her individual capacity or as a representative of his/her country.

35. One member summarised three issues that needed to be identified: What are the existing needs? How can they be addressed by the existing structures? Is a new structure needed?

36. It was also cautioned that the document shall always adhere to the stipulations of ECDC’s Founding Regulation regarding the role of the CBs.

37. The member for the UK requested a correction in the list of CB’s annexed to the document. The entry for the Department of Health was missing.

38. One member proposed to further work on the document, so as to present a more simplified structure that is sustainable in the future.

39. The Chair referred to the content of ECDC’s Founding Regulation, which clearly defines in article 2(a) what is meant by CB, stating the principles that shall apply. CBs shall be “recognised by Members States’ authorities as providing independent scientific and technical advice or capacity for action”. He acknowledged the difficulties some countries face in maintaining a clear overview of these structures, in particular when there are so many different contact points. Therefore, he suggested that this document be further revised. In addition, an assessment shall be done in some countries on how this relation works and the results should be incorporated in the revised document. It was proposed to discuss further an interim report in the November MB meeting.

40. The Director thanked the Members for their useful input and acknowledged that the ECDC Founding Regulation is complex and broad, hence the difficulty in defining the interaction with the CBs, which were created after the MB and AF were already operational. Moreover, for some time the AF actually had to take over the role of the CBs. She clarified that the CBs are the institutional basis in the Member States and recalled that prior to their designation, definitions were developed and based on these, each country appointed a number of CBs. The task is now to simplify the list, taking into account different functional areas and the roles of the CBs as stated in the Founding Regulation.

41. In the light of this discussion, the Director highlighted the importance of the upcoming CB meeting and the importance of having MB members present on that occasion. She also acknowledged the concerns raised regarding the creation of the “communities of practice” and proposed that this idea be discussed further.

42. The Chair then summarised the conclusions of this discussion. The MB acknowledges that further work is needed on this document, ECDC shall incorporate the comments made, the proposed structures need to be simplified, and the results of the upcoming meeting with the CBs in October 2009, as well as of planned assessment visits to some countries shall be



incorporated into the revised document. Additionally, the discussion on this matter shall continue in the November MB meeting.

43. The Members of the Board agreed to these proposals. The member for Germany added a comment acknowledging that ECDC's Founding Regulation lacks clarity on this matter. He also proposed to share in a future meeting the experience of Germany, as a similar analysis of structures is being carried out in this country.

**Item 13: The role of the Advisory Forum following designation of the Competent Bodies** (*Document MB15/14*)

44. ECDC's Director presented for discussion a document to review the role of the Advisory Forum (AF) following designation of the Competent Bodies. This is an outcome of the external evaluation of the Centre, as one of the results of this evaluation was that the role of the AF had diminished once the CBs were in place. The issue at hand was not to abolish the AF, given the strong legal basis for this body in the Founding Regulation, its role as advisor to ECDC and provider of support for the Director in several areas, and also in the light of the role played by this body so far. The focus of the discussion was rather to assess ways to improve the work of the AF. The document presented for discussion included a proposal to establish a Scientific or Steering Committee within the AF, and offered possible scenarios for its work.

45. In the discussion that followed, Members acknowledged the useful work of the AF, stressing the importance of this body's scientific oversight on the work of ECDC.

46. A discussion ensued on the independence of the AF. Some Members argued that perhaps the independence of the AF is compromised by the fact that ECDC's Director is chairing its meeting. In response to this, ECDC's MB Chair referred to the Founding Regulation, wherein it is clearly stated that the AF shall be chaired by ECDC's Director. It was then discussed if the Regulation should be revised to address this issue.

47. It was also mentioned that the independence will always be difficult to achieve as long as this body is part of the Centre's structures, but it was recognised that an independent, critical and objective oversight function by the AF is very important. One member added that the clear definition of the profile of the AF members is crucial for the achievement of this.

48. Some members mentioned that the proposed Scientific/Steering Committee could help in preparations for the AF meetings, while other members questioned the creation of yet another structure, referring to the concerns raised during the discussion of the previous agenda item and the burden that is put on Member States by having such variety of committees and numerous meetings.

49. The Vice Chair requested a correction in paragraph 5 of the document, in the statement that the AF is "the only body that has full overview of the entire activities of the Centre". This sentence does not acknowledge the input given by other bodies, such as the MB and the Audit Committee. Therefore, the following correction was suggested: "the only body that has full overview of the scientific activities of the Centre."

## **ECDC Management Board MB15/Minutes**

50. The representative of the EC explained that further improvements are needed on how the AF works, but there was no evidence for the need to create another level of management within this body through the creation of a Scientific/Steering Committee. He also pointed out that the most important issue at hand was the interaction between the CBs and the AF.

51. In reply to the issues raised during the discussion, ECDC's Director recalled that the Centre's Founding Regulation clearly states that it is the Director's role to chair the AF meetings, and that the AF shall meet four times per year. She also recalled the importance of the input that the AF working groups provide to the activities of the AF, and suggested that the proposed Scientific/Steering Committee takes over the role of these working groups. As it would be chaired by an AF member, this guarantees independence and aids in the peer review of ECDC's scientific agenda. She then clarified that a decision on this matter was not needed at this point, and that following further discussions, the issues could be addressed again during the next MB meeting in June.

52. The MB Chair concluded that the creation of an additional Committee is not needed, a correction will be made to paragraph 5 of the document as suggested above, the chairmanship of the AF remains unchanged, and during the upcoming MB meeting, the issue will be discussed again, which will also take into account new input received following the next AF meeting, which is scheduled to convene in May.

53. No objections were raised by Members of the Board to this proposal.

### **Item 10: Access to ECDC MS data by third parties** (*Document MB15/11*)

54. The Head of ECDC's Surveillance Unit, Andrea Ammon, presented the item, explaining that the Founding Regulation calls for appropriate procedures to facilitate consultation and data transmission and access. As requested during a previous MB meeting, a document was presented to the Board for discussion and guidance. This document included in Annex 1 a procedure on data submission, access and use.

55. The Chair added that various institutions have approached ECDC with requests for access to data. Andrea Ammon confirmed that several organisations have already made such requests and a prompt answer was needed.

56. During the discussion, members highlighted the importance of ensuring proper use of the data while at the same time respecting the principle of transparency. In addition, before releasing any data to third parties, it needs to be ensured that it has been appropriately validated by the countries. Access should be granted only to aggregated data. A possible misuse of the data needs to be considered; therefore, appropriate criteria and protocols for the release must be defined, and the organisations that request access must clearly state the purpose of their request.

57. One member requested a correction in the title of the document, in order to clarify that it refers to access to TESSY data. The Chair informed that the discussion on access to other types of data and on data protection issues in general should be discussed at the next MB meeting in June.

58. The Chair proposed that when requests come from European Institutions they could be handled promptly, as they comply with the same regulations on data protection as ECDC does.

59. In the light of the discussion, a further review of the document was proposed, and on the second day of the meeting, a revised document was presented to the MB suggesting next steps. The Chair explained that the first of the three suggested steps required approval from the MB and the two last ones were for information only.

60. Members were generally satisfied with the wording of the revised text, but a new formulation was requested for item A:

- a) “MS, EEA/EFTA countries, the EC, EU agencies and WHO EURO will have direct access to TESSy after the foreseen users have undergone training in the use of TESSy. Publications referencing another country’s data (except for the publicly available aggregate data) should be sent for agreement to the respective country’s approver of data publication before the publication.”

61. A discussion ensued regarding the issue of reciprocity of data from ECDC data users. The Director explained that such arrangements already exist between ECDC and certain agencies of the EU vis-à-vis contractual agreements or Memoranda of Understandings.

62. One member added that other organisations, like the ones that generate statistical and socio-economic data, should also reciprocate. It was then suggested that clear rules for data use be developed, perhaps in the form of a contract or a partnership document, covering reciprocity and providing information about how the data will be used.

63. The members agreed they were not ready to make a decision on this item. The Chair called for a revised document to be prepared by Andrea Ammon, which will also include a list of agencies, highlighting where agreement currently exists and where it needs to be built, to be circulated among the MB members prior to the next MB meeting. A final decision is expected to be made at the next meeting in June. The Chair requested the Heads of Units to be present for the discussion.

#### **Item 14: How to Improve the Work of ECDC’s Management Board** *(document MB15/15)*

64. As agreed in a previous meeting, the Director presented for discussion the advantages and disadvantages of the possible need for a bureau of the MB to prepare decisions and facilitate consensus. Two possible scenarios were presented: 1) to create a steering committee of the MB, which would meet a day before the MB and use the same documentation; and 2) to appoint members of the MB to follow up on specific topics with ECDC staff between two meetings and report back to the MB. Two more issues were added to the discussion: changing the month of the annual MB meeting outside Stockholm and considering the participation of an AF representative at an MB meeting.

65. The first issue discussed was the possibility of changing the annual MB meeting held outside Stockholm, currently held in June, to March or November, when the weather in Stockholm is less pleasant. The member for Spain, the country that is preparing the meeting

## **ECDC Management Board MB15/Minutes**

outside Stockholm in 2010, informed that the facility chosen to host the event operates only between May and October; therefore it would be impossible to change the month of that meeting in 2010. The Director will consult the countries holding Council presidencies in 2011 in order to explore the possibility of holding the meeting either in March or November.

66. In response to a question from the floor, the Chair explained that the cross representation between the MB and the AF involves the attendance of one representative from each body to the other's meetings in order to improve the exchange of information. The Director added that it would be a good idea to consider a joint meeting of the MB and the AF for 2010, but meanwhile considering the participation of an AF representative at an MB meeting to improve communication.

67. Regarding the suggestion of implementing a steering committee, several members expressed concerns. They argued that a steering committee could cause imbalance of power between MB members and inhibit discussion and participation of all members. There was a concern about the danger of having inner and outer groups, and some members stressed that advantages do not offset risk of alienating members. It was also highlighted that, if implemented, a steering committee should not replace working groups, which should continue to be used for specific tasks. The Chair emphasised that, if a steering committee is created, the decisions of the MB would not be transferred in any way and nothing would be excluded from the agenda.

68. There were also several positive reactions to the idea of a steering committee. It was acknowledged that a steering committee could save MB members' time, allow work to be more focused, increase efficiency and communication, and facilitate decisions, with less postponing of decisions. It was pointed out that there should be a regular rotation of members in the steering committee.

69. One of the representatives of the European Parliament reminded the Board about past difficulties in establishing a consensus about the size of the MB at the time of the negotiations in the Parliament of the Regulation establishing the Centre, and that any formal change would strengthen the argument that a smaller MB would be more efficient.

70. One member suggested inviting representatives from other EU agencies (EMEA was mentioned in particular) to the June MB meeting in Warsaw to share experiences about this topic. There were no objections.

71. The Chair acknowledged the utility of the comments and proposed a more detailed paper, including other EU agencies' experiences and the comments and concerns expressed by MB members, to be presented to the June MB meeting for decision. In agreement with the Chair, the Director thanked the Board for the interesting discussion and stressed that one of the advantages of implementing a steering committee for certain items is saving MB members' time.

**Item 9: Working with Member States: Needs, Expectations and Capacities** (*document MB15/10*)

72. As requested in the previous meeting, the Director presented a proposal for the creation of a working group to study the needs, expectations and capacities of Member States, including objectives, process, team composition and selection, potential deliverables and timescales. The MB was asked to agree to the proposed actions, and to select and nominate members to participate in the review together with ECDC representatives and external and independent consultants/experts.

73. The main concern of the Board was related to the costs of the proposed actions, and suggestions of ways to reduce the cost were made, for instance, increasing communication through teleconferences, reducing the number of country visits, and using a questionnaire to collect information. The Director explained that the idea is not to plan extra activities, but to link activities to the existing ones. In response to a question from the floor, she clarified that the selection and appointment of consultants is the Director's responsibility and that standard procedures must be followed for this process. She agreed with the increased use of teleconferences, and added that a questionnaire is planned and that all members of the MB, AF and Competent Bodies will be contacted.

74. The Chair noted that no additional meeting would be created and that the questionnaire would be the first task of the working group, to be presented to the MB in June. He then asked members to express their willingness to participate in the working group either to the Director or himself before the end of the meeting.

**Item 4: Provisional Annual Accounts 2008** (*document MB15/5*)

75. Theodoros Orfanos, Head of Finance and Accounting Section and Accounting Officer, ECDC, introduced the financial statements and budget outturn of ECDC for 2008. The financial statements comprise the balance sheet and the economic outturn account as of 31 December 2008, the cash-flow table and the Statement of Changes in Capital. The budgetary accounts give a detailed picture of the implementation of the budget.

76. The Chair of the Audit Committee (AC) and member for Sweden, Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson, gave feedback from the committee meeting held on 24 March 2009. It was reported that AC members requested clarifications on several issues including the breakdown of costs, the difference between the budget outturn and the economic outturn, changes in capital, and the high level of carryovers, and explanations were provided by the ECDC Accountant and Head of Administration. The AC recommended that the MB approve the Provisional Annual Accounts 2008.

77. The Provisional Annual Accounts 2008 were approved by unanimity.

**Item 5: Preliminary Draft Budget 2010** (*document 15/6*)

78. Theodoros Orfanos presented the budget proposal for 2010. The budget would increase by 14% from EUR 50.7M in 2009 to EUR 57.9M in 2010 with the following breakdown: 1) staff expenditure (Title I): 21% increase to EUR 27.5M; 2) administrative expenditure (Title

## **ECDC Management Board MB15/Minutes**

II): 7% increase to EUR 7.2M; and 3) operating expenditure (Title III): 9% increase to EUR 23.2M. The number of Temporary Agents would increase to 200 posts (18% increase). Approval from the MB was requested.

79. One member inquired about the reasons for the high increase in two items of the budget: Socio-medical infrastructure (Title I) and Information and communication technology (Title II). Theodoros Orfanos explained that the first one is related to the increase in recruitment of staff, and the second one was a mistake.

80. One member suggested the inclusion of 2008 accounts to the document to facilitate comparison, and inquired how the carry over could be diminished between 2009 and 2010. Theodoros Orfanos responded that the final report will include 2008 data, and that ECDC is allowed to carry over only what has been committed by year-end. The Director confirmed that the high carry over was a problem but the budget commitment in 2008 was also high. The aim for 2009 is to have more than 60% of payments executed by the end of the year.

81. Some questions were raised about the recruitment process, especially about how ECDC plans to recruit many employees in a short period of time. The Director reminded the Board that the staff represents the main asset of a knowledge-based organisation like ECDC, and that is why 48% of the proposed budget has been allocated to cover expenses with salary and staff-related costs. She explained that ECDC had a high turnover in 2008 and many posts had to be re-advertised since the appropriate individuals for the vacancies could not be found. Furthermore, recruitment is a slow process that usually takes six to eight months. In order to tackle this problem and reduce the number of vacant posts, in 2009, the Centre is taking the following actions: 1) strengthening the recruitment team; and 2) advertising all vacancies in the beginning of the year.

82. The Chair prompted the members to vote and the Preliminary Draft Budget 2010 was approved by unanimity.

### **Item 6: Update on ECDC Implementing Rule No 25 concerning the Appraisal of the Director** (*document MB15/7*)

83. At its last meeting, the MB adopted ECDC Implementing Rule N° 25 concerning the Appraisal of the Director subject to the agreement of the Commission. Elisabeth Robino, ECDC acting Head of Administration, informed the Board that the Agreement was obtained on 22 December 2008, and the Commission confirmed that the mandate of the reporting officers (appraisers) is for the duration of the mandate of the MB. The appointed appraisers were Françoise Weber (member from France) and Andrzej Rys (representative of the Commission).

### **Item 8: IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2009-2011** (*document MB15/9*)

84. Elisabeth Robino presented the Internal Audit Service (IAS) Audit Plan for 2009-2011, including planned work, timing, audit themes planned and procedures.

85. The document was discussed with the Audit Committee of the MB. The Chair of the AC, Irène Nilsson-Carlsson, reported that the Committee was given an update of the audit



activities in the Centre and on the status of the audit observations. The AC expressed a positive opinion on the Plan.

86. Due to the fact that recruitment is an important issue for ECDC in 2009, one member inquired whether the audit of the Human Resources Management had been considered for 2009 instead of 2010, as planned. The Chair of the Audit Committee explained that no member of the committee had made such proposal and the audit of Financial Management, foreseen in 2009, is equally important. Elisabeth Robino added that the audit of Financial Management occurred in March.

87. There were no more comments. The IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2009-2011 was adopted.

### **Item 7: ECDC Multi-annual Staff Policy Plan 2010-2012** (*document MB15/8*)

88. Elisabeth Robino presented the 2010-2012 Staff Policy Plan, the third edition of a three-year rolling plan. The plan describes the Centre's staffing policy and principles and presents budget implications of the envisaged staffing evolution (200 Temporary Agents, 100 Contract Agents and Seconded National Experts plus interims). The Director sent the plan to the Commission in December 2008 for consultation, in accordance with the Commission's guidelines, and comments were received in February 2009 and duly taken into account. The document will be sent to the Commission and Budgetary Authority by 31 March 2009 in accordance to the Financial Regulations.

89. One member inquired about the reference to "difficulties related to living in Sweden" in relation to the Centre's high turnover in 2008. Elisabeth Robino responded that it referred mainly to problems related to the lack of a Swedish personal identification (personnummer), difficulties in finding housing in the Stockholm area, the climate (cold and lack of daylight in winter) in Sweden. She added that turnover could be explained by other reasons, too, including competition from other EU agencies. The Director explained that some agencies have posts in higher grades than ECDC, which make them attractive to candidates, and stressed that the Centre conducts exit interviews and collects information regarding employee's reasons for leaving.

90. The variations in the currency exchange rate (Euro/SEK) were pointed out by a member as one of the possible causes of the high turnover. Elisabeth Robino clarified that the turnover of staff is not linked to the depreciation of the Swedish currency. A coefficient adjustment is in place and staff salaries in Euro are converted to SEK. Furthermore, staff members are entitled to receive part of their salaries in Euro. The Director added that there is a salary review every year and staff members are compensated according to exchange rate fluctuations. The Commission is responsible for the calculations. The representative of the Commission informed that there are three EU agencies outside the Eurozone (ECDC, EEA and EMEA) and stated that he would investigate the issues regarding exchange rates.

91. In response to a query, the Director explained that there is no job satisfaction survey in place at ECDC, but a staff retreat was held in February 2009 and feedback has been received from staff, especially regarding the matrix organisational structure of the Centre, to which new staff find difficult to adapt. The Director reassured the MB that the issues brought up by staff are being dealt with and stated that she will share the outcome of this work at the next

## **ECDC Management Board MB15/Minutes**

meeting in June. In response to a question, she added that ECDC employees do not have a union, but there is a Staff Committee, which participated actively in the discussions regarding the Seat Agreement.

92. The Staff Policy Plan 2010-2012 was adopted with an alteration on page 4 of the document, suggested by a member: to delete "...partly due to the difficulties related to living in Sweden" in the second paragraph from the bottom.

### **Item 18: Draft Opinion on ECDC's 2007 Discharge Procedure of the ENVI Committee for the COCOBU** (*document MB15/16*)

93. Elisabeth Robino updated the Board briefly on this issue. The ENVI Committee of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union issued in December 2008 a draft opinion recommending the discharge for the implementation of the budget of ECDC for the financial year 2007. The opinion was adopted by the ENVI Committee on 10 February 2009. Adoption by the CONT (Committee on Budgetary Control) is expected to take place in April 2009. On 29 January 2009, the Council also issued a draft report proposing the discharge.

### **Item 11: Analysis of the Indicators for the Strategic Multi-annual Work Programme 2007-2013** (*document MB15/12*)

94. Philippe Harant, ECDC Planning and Monitoring Manager, updated the MB on the indicators for the Work Programme. Concentrating his presentation on methodology, he presented details of the one-year pilot phase: timeline, number of indicators per target, elements measured by indicators, advantages of implementing indicators, challenges raised during the first use, and further steps needed.

95. Several members agreed with the view that the indicators should remain unchanged for the time being and all of them should be reviewed/updated in 2010.

96. In response to questions from the floor, Philippe Harant explained that the indicator "number of citations of ECDC-authored work" takes into account only papers authored by ECDC, and not individual authors that may be linked to ECDC (such as members of the AF and the MB). He agreed that it would probably be possible to refine this indicator in the future to include individual authors, but warned that it would require deeper analysis and additional time to be implemented. In terms of the use of number of meetings as an indicator, he explained that criteria must be defined in order to assess which meetings would impact upon Member States and/or provide scientific output.

97. In response to a query regarding Strategic Indicator 1 (Support to the MB and AF to fulfil their Governance and advisory role), Philippe Harant clarified that tools to support the MB and AF are being developed (Intranet and Extranet) and the monitoring of MB/AF decisions, currently done by EXC, is being systematically reviewed and new tools shall be implemented.

98. It was suggested that meetings to which ECDC is invited to attend could be an indicator in Target 6 (ECDC communication output). It was also suggested that, with the transfer of



several network websites to ECDC, it would be important to compare data on web access pre- and post-transfer.

99. The Director thanked the members for the interesting comments and noted that one important task is to find a satisfactory way of measuring the Member States' uptake of ECDC guidance. She added that the Centre is now working on the implementation of a management information system (MIS).

100. Karl Ekdahl, Head of the Health Communication Unit, explained that the tools to support the AF and MB will be integrated into the Intranet. ECDC's web portal will be launched in April, and the Extranet, expected to be launched in the summer, will allow MB members to have direct access to documents and a discussion forum, as well as working together with documents. Network websites are being integrated into the portal, and more accurate statistics, such as number of hits per page or per subject, will be made available.

### **Item 16: Report of Implementation of the 2009 Work Programme in the first three months**

101. Philippe Harant updated the MB on the Centre's activities in the first quarter of 2009.

102. One member commented that it is not necessary to detail the implementation of the work plan and asked for a briefer explanation next time, with a focus on projects facing difficulties, especially difficulties involving the Member States. The Director clarified that everything is always shared with the MB, however, March is still very early in the year to perceive difficulties. In June and November, the Centre will be in a better position to present these problems to the MB. The Chair requested that a review of the work programme be carried out in the June and November meetings.

### **Item 17: ECDC's Health Communication Activities and Support to Member States: Update on the Progress of Focus Groups** (*document MB15/Info Note*)

103. Karl Ekdahl provided the MB with an update on the focus group study conducted across the EU27 in order to identify ways to make communications effective with EU citizens. He presented the key findings of the recently concluded report and committed to report back to the MB in June on how to work together with MS on communications.

104. One member inquired whether ECDC had been compared to the US CDC in terms of providing information to the public. Karl Ekdahl responded that that has not been done, as the Centre's main focus is to provide scientific evidence and examples of good practice to Member States. Furthermore, the Centre is building its resources in health communications in order to support Member States in this area and will provide tools, but basic communication is done by Member States.

105. Regarding the focus groups study, one member inquired whether this methodology could be used to assess the success of campaigns such as the European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD). Karl Ekdahl responded that a Eurobarometer survey is planned with this intent. In response to another question, he stressed that it is difficult to measure the impact of a one-

## **ECDC Management Board MB15/Minutes**

day campaign, but data showed that the consumption of antibiotics has decreased in Europe after previous successful national campaigns.

106. Karl Ekdahl also informed the MB about a press conference to be held in Warsaw in June in parallel with the next MB meeting. He emphasised that journalists would not be participating in the social part of the event, and that the conference will be closely aligned with the MB meeting programme, without overlapping of items. Invitations will be sent to journalists in all Member States.

### **Item 19: Update on the Draft Seat Agreement** (*document MB15/17*)

107. Elisabeth Robino briefly updated the MB on the Draft Seat Agreement.

108. The member for Sweden, Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson, confirmed that the new Swedish legislation aimed at granting a personal identification (personnummer) to ECDC staff will enter into force on 1 July 2009 and the Swedish Tax Authorities have a system in place to quickly issue personnummers.

109. The representative of the Commission reported that the issues regarding the agreement have been discussed with the EU Commissioner for Health, Androulla Vassiliou.

110. The Chair welcomed the progress made to date and stated that a decision regarding the agreement could be taken in November 2009. He requested two documents for that meeting, namely, a message from ECDC's Staff Committee evaluating the impact/effects of the new legislation, and a message from the Director on the same matter.

### **Item 20: Update regarding the European Commission's Vision of a European System of Reference Laboratories for Pathogens for Humans** (*document MB15/18*)

111. The representative of the Commission, Andrzej Rys, reported that there is no overlapping between ECDC's and the Commission's work regarding this issue. He informed that the Commission is finalising negotiations with contractors and work would start in a few weeks. He assured the members that they would be informed about further developments.

### **Item 21: Other matters**

#### **ECDC Guidance on DTP Vaccination**

112. As requested by the member for Germany, a discussion was held about the ECDC Guidance on DTP Vaccination. The representative pointed out that a press release related to the publication of the document implied that ECDC recommended one type of vaccination schedule. He stressed that EU and ECDC have no legal competence on vaccination and ECDC's role is to indicate alternatives to be considered by Member States instead of laying down recommendations.

113. The representative of the Commission explained that vaccination strategies, being a cross-border issue that involves different systems and cultures, need to be carefully developed. Therefore, the Commission is developing a programme on vaccination this year and had asked ECDC to compare vaccination schedules. The programme, which will use

ECDC's scientific output on this topic, is still in preparatory phase and is planned to be finalised in September. There will be a meeting of national experts in May to allow consultation amongst countries. The results of these discussions will be shared with the MB.

114. There was a lively discussion about the role of ECDC regarding vaccination, which according to many members should be to issue guidance and promote best practices without prescribing recommendations to Member States. Several members strongly expressed the view that ECDC should not make political recommendations or suggestions for action. It was added that preventive medicine depends on a series of factors unrelated to science and recommendations in this area would be beyond ECDC's mandate. Regional aspects should be considered, as several countries have devolved power to regional authorities regarding vaccination schedules, and ECDC experts should not override Member States' scientific experts' opinions.

115. Johan Giesecke, Chief Scientist, ECDC, clarified that ECDC's Founding Regulation stipulates that the Centre "should foster the exchange of best practices and experience with regard to vaccination programmes." He added that childhood immunisation has been discussed in several MB meetings and included in the Work Programme since 2006. As well, the *ad hoc* panel appointed for production of the guidance report was set up according to ECDC standard procedure, with the AF consulted on the choice of names and on drafts of the document. The Chief Scientist recalled that a large number of comments was received (the majority included in the report), and informed that, according to the regulation, the panel has now been dissolved.

116. It was requested that the expression "best practices" for vaccines be clarified as the term can imply that only one solution is preferred, whereas there is a variety of approaches on this topic and one size does not fit all. It was suggested that "good practice" would be a better term.

117. The member for Hungary informed that her country has modified its vaccination schedule as a result of ECDC's work.

118. The Director thanked the members for the interesting discussion and reiterated that the draft document has not yet been published. She confirmed that ECDC has a clear mandate to conduct this work and that vaccines are included in ECDC's Work Programme. With respect to the process, she also recalled that the Centre has a mandate to set up *ad hoc* scientific panels and has followed procedures correctly. The scientific panel worked on the project for two years and their report had been presented to the AF on three occasions in 2008. Comments were taken on board, although not all of them were agreed upon, and the document produced was intended primarily as a guidance report. She acknowledged that the word "recommendation" had been erroneously used in the executive summary of the draft report, and that when this came to light, publication of the report was postponed. The Director suggested, as a next step, to revisit the document at the next AF meeting for further review and to invite the scientific panel to the same meeting in May to allow for more discussion with the Member States.

119. One member underlined that scientific papers should not present policy and the MB should not get involved with science. Another member added that the role of the MB is to

## **ECDC Management Board MB15/Minutes**

verify whether the Director has complied with the Founding Regulation. While underlining the sensitivity of this issue, the Director agreed and reminded the Board of her role to approve all ECDC documents based on advice from the AF, and the MB's responsibility to ensure that she has followed the rules and has consulted the AF accordingly.

120. Concluding the discussion, the Chair emphasised that the AF's role is to discuss the content of communication whereas the MB's role is to discuss the mode of communication.

### **Next Management Board Meeting in Warsaw (24-25 June 2009) and Preliminary Dates and Places of Future Meetings**

121. The member for Poland informed that arrangements are being made with respect to the organisation of the next meeting that will be held in Warsaw. He also conveyed that a visit to the Polish National Institute of Public Health will be offered.

### **Submission for Comments from the Management Board regarding the Draft Vacancy Notice for the Director of ECDC (*document MB15/Info Note*)**

122. The Chair drew attention to the Draft Vacancy Note for Director of ECDC but, due to a lack of time, the item was not discussed.

123. The Chair then proceeded to adjourn the meeting, thanking the members of the MB for the interesting and helpful discussions. He also conveyed his appreciation to ECDC staff for having prepared the meeting, including the documentation, and thanked the interpreters for their superior work.