

In this issue:

1. ECDC launches first ever European Antibiotic Awareness Day

Management Board elects new Chairman and Vice Chairman

2. Editorial by Director Zsuzsanna Jakab

External Evaluation – Management Board's opinion

ESCAIDE: Successful second edition in Berlin

3. Meeting & Visiting

4. In focus: ECDC's Health Communication Unit

6. EPIET: Give an EU dimension to your infectious disease control training

ECDC supports European preparedness against pandemic influenza

ECDC starts coordinating influenza surveillance

Hepatitis A: Sharing experience from recent outbreaks

7. The European public health microbiology community learns more about itself

First meeting of the Competent Bodies for threat detection & Emergency Operations Centre managers

Burden of Communicable Disease in Europe: Getting the full picture

Networking to help prevent food- and waterborne disease occurrence

8. Publications



From left to right: Mojca Drčar Murko MEP, Frieda Brepoels MEP, Prof Benoît Schlemmer, Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, John Bowis MEP, Adamos Adamou MEP, ECDC Director Zsuzsanna Jakab, Marios Matsakis MEP, Marian Harkin MEP, Kathy Sinnott MEP

ECDC launches first ever European Antibiotic Awareness Day

ECDC and the Commission launched the first ever European Antibiotic Awareness Day on 18 November based on the success of existing national public awareness campaigns like those in France, Belgium and Slovenia.

This Day is a European public health initiative to raise awareness about the problem of antibiotic resistance and to provide information to the general public about how everyone can contribute to keeping antibiotics effective.

The central message of European Antibiotic Awareness Day is that keeping antibiotics effective is everyone's responsibility. This means not using antibiotics for the wrong reasons, such as taking them for

viral infections such as colds or flu, and using antibiotics correctly by following the advice of a doctor.

Thirty-one European countries took part in the European Antibiotic Awareness Day, with activities ranging from the launch of new national campaigns, TV and radio spots, press conferences, billboard posters and distribution of public information leaflets, to name a few examples.

At EU level, a scientific seminar took place in the European Parliament, Strasbourg, with speeches by European Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, French Director General for Health, Prof Didier Houssin and ECDC Director Zsuzsanna Jakab.



From left to right: Marc Sprenger, Françoise Weber, Hubert Hrabčik, Zsuzsanna Jakab, Minerva-Melpomeni Malliori, Jacques Scheres

Management Board elects new Chairman and Vice Chairman

The ECDC Management Board has elected Dr Hubert Hrabčik (Chief Medical Officer of Austria) as its new Chairman and Prof Jacques Scheres (European Parliament representative) as its new Vice Chairman. The term of both appointments is for the period 2008-2010. The elections took place during the fourteenth Management Board meeting, which was held in Paris on 13-14 November 2008. At this meeting, the Centre's Work Plan for 2009 was approved subject to the requested budget of € 50.7 million being passed by the European Parliament and Council.

On this occasion the Board expressed its gratitude to Dr Marc Sprenger (Netherlands) and Prof Minerva-Melpomeni Malliori (European Parliament representative), for their dedication as Chairman and Vice Chair, respectively, since the start-up of ECDC's Man-

agement Board in September 2004. Both served two terms in these roles.

The Management Board meeting was hosted by France in the context of the French Presidency of the European Union. During the opening of the meeting, the Management Board Member for France, Dr Françoise Weber (Institute for Public Health Surveillance – InVS) welcomed the Board and described the mission and activities of InVS. On the second day of the meeting, Prof Didier Houssin highlighted the importance of cooperation at EU level to tackle health threats. He also conveyed the compliments of the French Minister of Health, Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, to the ECDC Board. Prior to the meeting, members of the Board also had the opportunity to visit InVS and attend a seminar presenting some of its key projects.

ECDC Insight is a newsletter published by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Stockholm. Any Item may be reproduced for personal use or non-commercial purposes provided the source is acknowledged.

For free subscriptions, please specify your requirements via e-mail: publications@ecdc.europa.eu

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Tomtebodavägen 11 A, SE-17183 Stockholm, Sweden, tel. +46 8 58 0000, e-mail: info@ecdc.europa.eu

Official publisher : ECDC • Director: Z. Jakab
• Editor: I. Hubert • Photo credits: European Parliament, ECDC p. 1, 2, ECDC, WHO, p. 3, ECDC p. 4, 5, 6, 7, Angus Nicoll p. 6 • Printed in Belgium • ISSN: 1830-7965 • Printed on chlorine-free paper • © European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

External Evaluation – Management Board’s opinion

After examining the results of the independent external evaluation of ECDC, the Centre’s Management Board (MB) adopted its Conclusion and Recommendation during an extraordinary meeting on 23 September. The MB has endorsed the findings that the Centre has established a ‘clear presence on the international stage’ and made a ‘significant contribution’ to fighting infectious diseases. The Board also reflected on the issue of when, and under what conditions, the mandate of ECDC could be extended.

The MB’s opinion was forwarded to the Commission together with the Final Report on the External Evaluation, to be conveyed to the Council and the European Parliament. The Commission has issued a Communication giving its views on the current work and future of ECDC.

Editorial by Director Zsuzsanna Jakab

Season’s greetings from ECDC!

The conduct of the first ECDC external evaluation, the organisation of the European Antibiotic Awareness Day, and the consolidation of ECDC scientific work made 2008 an exciting and challenging year for ECDC. Yet we are fully committed to achieving even more in 2009 to further reinforce the protection of European citizens’ health.

ECDC found the results of the external evaluation very encouraging. In a nutshell, the evaluation concluded that ECDC has accomplished much within a short space of time. It is regarded as a centre of scientific excellence and perceived to be relevant and important. We can therefore start deepening our activities, in particular those developed in 2008:

- On 18 November the first ever European Antibiotic Awareness Day took place across the EU. Coordinated by ECDC, it will be an annually recurring event.
- ECDC enthusiastically supports the draft proposal being developed by the Commission on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine: ECDC estimates that at least 40 000 people die prematurely each year across Europe from this preventable disease.
- ECDC contributed to the excellent conference held by the French Council Presidency on influenza pandemic preparedness. ECDC will carry on working closely with stakeholders next year to re-evaluate the EU’s preparedness.



- After the approval of the ECDC Framework Action Plan on Tuberculosis in Europe, ECDC will now work closely with Member States on its practical implementation.

In 2009, key priorities of our work programme will also include:

- Supporting the Commission initiative to prepare a proposal for a Council Recommendation on immunisation practices for families moving across Europe, by providing the necessary scientific background on childhood immunisation schedules.
- Planning the development of enhanced surveillance for several diseases including Hepatitis B and C.
- Developing a new website with multilingual content and offering access to key EU-wide surveillance data, disease facts and scientific advice.

My gratitude goes to Dr Marc Sprenger and Prof Minerva-Melpomeni Malliori, former Chair and Vice Chair of ECDC Management Board, for having accompanied ECDC during its start-up phase. I also acknowledge the valuable inputs from the Members of the Management Board and Advisory Forum, MEPs, colleagues at the Commission, others Agencies and WHO and I look forward to continuing the work in 2009.

ESCAIDE: Successful second edition in Berlin



On 19–21 November, 700 health experts gathered at the second European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (ESCAIDE) in Berlin. The conference, which was sponsored and jointly organised by ECDC, achieved its goal of (i) strengthening networks of professionals involved in applied infectious disease epidemiology; (ii) sharing scientific knowledge and experience in this field in Europe and internationally; and (iii) providing a dedicated platform for EPIET/FETP fellows to present their work. Four keynote plenary sessions addressed topical issues relating to communicable disease prevention and control: migration, vaccination, communication and vector-borne infections. In addition, over 200 submitted abstracts were presented in 20 oral ‘parallel’ sessions and

poster sessions. The abstracts were selected from over 250 submitted to the conference by a peer review process overseen by the ESCAIDE scientific committee. The accreditation of ESCAIDE 2008 by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME) for the first time permitted delegates to receive CME credits for attending the conference. The link with the EPIET programme remains: ‘training of trainers’ workshops open to experts professionally involved in providing training in applied epidemiology in a ‘learning by doing’ context were held for the first time. Conference materials are currently available on the ESCAIDE website.

Read more: www.escaide.eu

ECDC Director speaks to European Parliament's ENVI Committee

On 6 October ECDC's Director, Zsuzsanna Jakab, addressed a meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Food Safety and Public Health (ENVI). She reported on ECDC's activities over the past year and outlined the Centre's priorities for 2009. A key focus of her discussion with MEPs was how ECDC's activities support the work of the European Parliament and the practical benefit of ECDC's work for EU citizens. The work and leadership of ECDC was much appreciated by the MEPs who congratulated the Director and her staff on the impressive achievements of the last year. Areas for further joint work were highlighted during the discussions. Under an arrangement between ECDC and the European Parliament, the ECDC Director gives a report on progress achieved to the ENVI Committee at least once a year, usually in October.

ECDC meets with the Civil Society Forum

From left to right: Johann Fontaine, Marita van de Laar, Teymur Noori, Nikos Dedes, Zsuzsanna Jakab, Ton Coenen, Isabel Martinez Pino, Giedrius Likatavicius



On 16 July 2008 Ton Coenen and Nikos Dedes from the Civil Society Forum (CSF) met with the ECDC Director and the STI, HIV/AIDS and blood-borne viruses programme team. The aim of this meeting was to enhance their collaboration. One of the topics discussed was a proposal to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECDC and the CSF, after consultation with the Commission. The MoU could include more systematic reciprocal invitations to events, the calling of an annual bilateral meeting as well as information sharing when appropriate. ECDC and the CSF are strongly committed to working together in the future.

The European network for HIV/AIDS surveillance meets in Copenhagen



On 11 and 12 November 2008 the European network for HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe meets in Copenhagen to review the current status of HIV/AIDS epidemiology in Europe. The meeting is jointly organised by ECDC and WHO/Europe. The meeting addressed key HIV surveillance topics in general and in working groups in-depth discussion on how to improve the future HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe. On 1 December 2008 the HIV/AIDS surveillance report for 2007 was published on ECDC and WHO/Europe websites.

Read more: www.ecdc.europa.eu, www.who.int

ECDC's first visit to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia



ECDC delegation meets the Health Minister in Skopje

On 27-28 October, an ECDC team paid a first ECDC country visit to Skopje. The purpose was to establish contacts with key stakeholders, to prioritise areas for future collaboration and to discuss technical day-to-day working relations. The Minister of Health kindly received the ECDC delegation. Other meetings were held with the Institute for Health Protection and the WHO Country Office. ECDC warmly thanks all participants on this country visit, a visit which proved very positive with open and constructive exchanges.



Migration and health: Prof. McKee's talk

Migration and infectious diseases is an issue ECDC has been focusing on in 2008. Early in 2009 ECDC will publish a report on migration and infectious diseases in the EU, with special emphasis on TB, HIV and measles. In September, Martin McKee, Professor of European Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, attended an expert meeting on migration and infectious diseases convened at ECDC and also gave a lecture on the subject to ECDC staff. In this, Prof Martin McKee focused in particular on solidarity in an enlarged EU.

Hear what Prof. McKee had to say: www.ecdc.europa.eu (see ECDC TV box)

Experts on Preparedness and Outbreak Response meet at ECDC



Denis Coulombier, Evelyn Depoortere and Lara Payne

Reviewing and finalising the guiding principles for response to public health threats related to communicable disease at EU level was a key achievement of the third consultation on Outbreak Investigation & Response held on 23 October. Participants also appraised as an added value the threat assessments for the EU issued by ECDC in response to EWRS event notifications. During the previous day, the first consultation with the Competent Bodies for Preparedness focused on identifying strategies for mass gatherings with the sharing of experiences and lessons learned in 2008, and the identification of future opportunities for generic preparedness.

ECDC's Health Communication Unit (HUC): ECDC's voice

The mission of the Health Communication Unit (HCU) is to contribute to the development of the scientific field of health communication in Europe. Contributing to the maturing and expansion of this highly elaborate and complex area of study knowledge and practice within health systems at EU level is of crucial importance for HCU. Within ECDC, the unit is responsible for communicating the scientific and technical outputs of the Centre to European health

professionals and to the general public, as well as supporting the Member States in their communications activities. Improving communication efforts at all levels of public health intervention implies identifying and answering the needs at national level. Although the cooperation with the Member States through their Competent Bodies still needs to be deepened, HCU aims to establish ongoing processes of gathering evidence, developing and supporting in-

ternational research and supporting efforts to share good practice at national level. In essence, HCU proposes to contribute to the development of health communication in all its dimensions in the EU. Within the unit there are functions working with the scientific journal *Eurosurveillance*, press/media, the ECDC website, information services and ECDC publications. Professor Karl Ekdahl is the Head of HCU and Editor-in-Chief for *Eurosurveillance*.



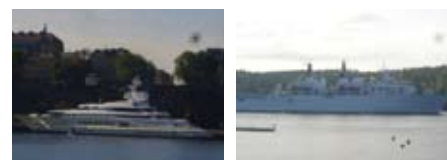
From left to right - first line at the bottom: Sarah Venkata, Tanja Gaidaichuk, Karl Ekdahl, Catherine Ginisty. Second line: Renata Mikolajczyk, Ben Duncan, Fabrice Donguy, Ines Steffens. Third line on the top: Daniel Ahlgren, Uwe Kreisel, Sarah Earnshaw, Sophia Wretö, Eeva Puputti, Paulo Moreira, Jouko Raatikainen, Isabelle Hubert. Absents from the picture: Gabriel Alexe, Nora Ovcharova, Kathrin Hagmaier, Kim Hutchings, Andrea Wurz, Sandra Cavallo, Stefanie Dannemann, Sami Dufva.

Liaising with media world-wide: ECDC's press office



Communication, dissemination of information and knowledge-sharing are top priorities for ECDC. This section provides you with an overview of ECDC press material, general information services, and of the events organised by us. If you are interested in infectious diseases as well as in the activities of ECDC, we invite you to explore various information resources in a number of ways. The press office of the ECDC is available to answer questions from journalists (e-mail: press@ecdc.europa.eu), reply to written questions from the general public, and supply pictures and audiovisual material relating to ECDC's work. This section runs information stands at major international conferences. We can also organise visits to ECDC both for journalists and stakeholder groups.

All boats lead to ECDC: the visitor service



Are you interested in meeting with us and visiting our premises? Would you like to organise a trip to ECDC for your students, or your institution? Don't wait longer: just contact the ECDC visitor service. Whatever boat sails you to Sweden, it will be our pleasure to show you our Centre and organise some lectures tailored to your area of interest.

Please note that ECDC is not in a position to pay for travel costs. For more information, please contact us at info@ecdc.europa.eu

ECDC TV: behind the scenes



Are you curious to know what is going on behind the scenes? Then watch ECDC TV. ECDC TV presents a selection of short video clips that will tell you more about meetings, projects or events run by ECDC. It is the alternative way to learn more about ECDC. Watch the news at: www.ecdc.europa.eu (see ECDC TV box on the right of the homepage).

Need more information? – contact ECDC's info mail box

ECDC wants to hear from you! If you are looking for information on infectious diseases, if you have questions about ECDC, the info mail box service is for you. Don't hesitate to raise your queries at: info@ecdc.europa.eu

Scientific communication at ECDC: keeping the public health community informed

The Scientific Communication Section takes care of the whole publication process. This involves several technical aspects such as reformatting and page layout as well as text editing, polishing and proofreading. Since many of ECDC's authors are writing in a language other than their mother tongue, HCU

editors help them express themselves clearly and correctly.

Some of ECDC's publications are the result of co-publishing projects, for example with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) or WHO/Europe. The recently published joint report on *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe 2007* proudly displays both the WHO and the ECDC logos. The section also is responsible for ECDC's overall design and visual identity.

Spread the word



Once approved for distribution, publications are posted on ECDC's website as PDF downloads. A monthly e-mail newsletter informs interested parties about ECDC's latest online publications (subscribe by sending an e-mail to: eva.puputti@ecdc.europa.eu). In many cases, printed versions are also available and can be ordered by emailing a request to publications@ecdc.europa.eu.

Dissemination is a central part of the Section's work. Through a network of Competent Bodies — institutions or scientific bodies in the Member States — the Scientific Communication Section connects with its target audiences in the Member States. The Competent Bodies system ensures that ECDC's scientific publications reach the right people, at the right time, in the right country.

Although most materials are published in English, those aimed at a wider audience are made available in the 23 official EU languages plus Icelandic and Norwegian. From 2009, executive summaries of the key scientific reports will also be translated, in order to reach a wider segment of the public health community.

Web services



The Web Services team is responsible for managing ECDC user-oriented and interactive services. The team covers the current website as well as the intranet and the portal projects including additional services such as the transfer of the surveillance network websites which are now under ECDC responsibility.

The coordination of the ECDC Information System, in close cooperation with the ICT department, is also an important task of the team.

The team is currently focusing on the launch of the new ECDC portal (first quarter 2009) which will include knowledge-sharing platforms and multilingual content, and on the development of an intranet that will be vital with the ECDC's continuing fast expansion.

The team has a real horizontal role within ECDC. The main tasks of the team are the maintenance, improvement and updates of the ECDC website on a regular basis.

The team also plays an important role in advising and supporting all the new applications that are launched (e.g. a 'wiki' feature). Should there be a Europe-wide health emergency, everyone in the team is trained and will be mobilised to manage the information flow, internally through the intranet and externally through the ECDC website.

Eurosurveillance



Eurosurveillance is a scientific journal devoted to the epidemiology, prevention and control of infectious diseases. It features rapid

communications, surveillance and outbreak reports, longer in-depth research articles, reviews and news. Funded with an EU grant in 1995 but published by ECDC since 2007, the journal enjoys full editorial independence from the Centre. In 2008 a number of changes were introduced to increase the journal's scientific impact and to make it more attractive to its readers: The editorial policy was adapted and a new attractive website was launched. The homepage now displays a full table of contents with the latest weekly issues that feature both rapid communications and long articles. Several special issues on specific subjects have been published in 2008 highlighting

important aspects associated with diseases such as seasonal influenza, hepatitis B and C, and HIV. The journal's scientific excellence is under the guidance of 15 Associate Editors with eminent scientific and public health backgrounds, including David L Heymann, WHO Assistant Director General. For the first time, representatives from the three candidate countries were appointed to the editorial board this autumn. In 2008 the journal has also deepened the collaboration with EpiNorth and EpiSouth networks. The journal is published online free of charge every Thursday and PDFs of all articles are available shortly after publishing at: www.eurosurveillance.org

EPIET: Give an EU dimension to your infectious disease control training

Katerina Widgren, Sandra Guedes and Janusz Janiec



Until January 2009, European public health professionals are warmly encouraged to apply for the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (EPIET) programme. If you are a medical practitioner, public-health nurse, microbiologist, veterinarian or other health professional from the EU with previous experience in public health and a keen interest in epidemiology and are interested to learn how to control infectious diseases, the EPIET programme is a rewarding two-year investment.

The programme provides training and practical experience in intervention epidemiology at national and regional centres for surveillance and control of infectious diseases in the EU. ECDC has been funding the programme since 2006. In 2009 ECDC will pay the salaries of 20 fellows. For more information on how to apply to the programme, please contact Viviane Bremer at viviane.bremer@ecdc.europa.eu, tel: + 46 (0)8 586 01 156.

[Read more: www.epiet.org](http://www.epiet.org)

Hepatitis A: Sharing experience from recent outbreaks

This autumn, extensive outbreaks of Hepatitis A, especially affecting injecting drug users, have been observed in the Czech Republic and Latvia. An outbreak among the Roma population in the Slovak Republic also occurred. In order to support ongoing response actions, ECDC, together with the Latvian Public Health Agency and with participation from WHO, organised a technical consultation in Riga on 11 November 2008 with the Competent Bodies for response from the Czech Republic, Latvia and the Slovak Republic. The aim was to share experiences in response activities to these recent outbreaks and discuss the response options available, with a particular focus on vaccination. Public health experts from Italy, Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom also contributed to the presentations and discussions.

ECDC supports European preparedness against pandemic influenza

Angus Nicoll speaking at the ESWI conference



Getting ready for the next influenza pandemic is a challenge taken very seriously by ECDC. On 3–5 September 2008, national representatives from all over Europe, ECDC, the Commission and WHO gathered at Eurogrippe, a seminar organised by the French EU Presidency and supported by ECDC. Zsuzsanna Jakab presented an overview of progress in the EU on preparedness against an influenza pandemic and helped identify areas where progress is still required: in particular the involvement of services and functions outside the healthcare sector – the multi-sectoral approach – and the coordination of Member States' actions during a pandemic – national inter-operability. ECDC estimates that achieving good pandemic preparedness will take countries a few years of hard work, and

is concerned that some countries are slowing down their efforts. National pandemic plans drawn up by Member States are very impressive, but ECDC feels that more work is necessary to ensure their implementation (e.g. through simulation exercises and making sure they will work at the local level). ECDC then participated in the third European Conference organised by the European Scientific Working group on Influenza (ESWI) on 14–17 September 2008. In a presentation, Angus Nicoll, coordinator of ECDC's Influenza Programme, explored options for pandemic countermeasures in Europe and co-chaired a session on pandemic preparedness. ECDC participated in both events with an information stand to increase awareness of its on-going activities.

ECDC starts coordinating influenza surveillance



A network of doctors and laboratories across Europe monitor the annual influenza epidemics and from this winter onwards this surveillance is being coordinated by ECDC. The laboratories provide weekly updates on the number and types of influenza viruses they have found, while the doctors report the number of patients they see each week who have influenza-like illnesses. This surveillance has been happening each winter since 1996 and was previously coordinated by

the EU-funded European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS). Now it is being supported by ECDC under a new contract with the Community Network Reference Laboratory. In a parallel development, in October Eurosurveillance published a special issue on influenza vaccination and ECDC highlighted the benefits of older people getting vaccinated. Figures published in *Eurosurveillance* show significant differences in the percentage of elderly people vaccinated against influenza each year in different EU countries. This showed that few countries are on course to meet the World Health Assembly target of vaccinating 75% of people aged 65 or over by 2010. Indeed, in most countries vaccine coverage among the elderly is well below the target level.

[Read more: www.eurosurveillance.org](http://www.eurosurveillance.org)

The European public health microbiology community learns more about itself



On 25–26 September the ECDC National Microbiology Focal Points (NMFPs) gathered for the third time. Nominated at national level, NMFPs represent the public health microbiology communities in the EU and the EEA/EFTA countries. At this meeting, the preliminary results of a survey ‘Public Health Microbiology: Systems, Structures, Gaps and Needs’ were unveiled. Two types of information were collected: (i) data to map the public health laboratory resources in the EU; (ii) information about the needs of Member States in terms of training, defining core competencies and good practice models of reference laboratory selection and review. An ad hoc working group of ECDC staff and NMFPs was set up to

review the results of the survey. Formal and informal exchanges of information are a key feature of the NMFP meetings. For the first time, several countries (France, Malta, Romania and Sweden) gave presentations on how national public health microbiology is organised. Furthermore, participants were given the opportunity to comment on the ECDC 2009 work programme in the area of microbiology. Representatives from Turkey, Croatia and FYROM were invited as observers. Close collaboration with the Commission and WHO continues in this area.

Read more: www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/Activities/Microbiology/

First meeting of the Competent Bodies for threat detection & Emergency Operations Centre managers



Improving capacity and increasing the interoperability between ECDC and the Member States in the area of threat detection has

been a key goal for ECDC since its creation. In order to fully involve the Member States, national experts were invited on 28–29 October to share our threat detection strategy and give input to ECDC’s development and the 2009 work programme. The meeting was also the occasion for hands-on training on how to access the ECDC threat tracking tool and an exploration of the first test version of the Epidemic Intelligence Information System (EPIS), which ECDC is developing to facilitate sharing of information between risk assessors.

Member States invited to briefing sessions by ECDC Preparedness and Response Unit

An effective response to infectious disease health threats implies a coherent approach among Member States and input from experienced public health experts, coordinated at EU level. In this context, ECDC has started offering briefing sessions on the Agency’s activities and functioning with regards to threat detection and response. During a one week visit, Member State representatives have the opportunity to become fully acquainted with ECDC’s epidemic intelligence systems, the

Emergency Operations Centre, and ECDC’s capacity to support response – including the deployment of outbreak assistance teams. These sessions are a unique occasion to exchange views on best practice and share expertise built up at ECDC and national level. Hosted by the Preparedness and Response Unit, the briefing sessions take place at ECDC’s premises in Stockholm throughout the year. For more information, please contact pru.secretariat@ecdc.europa.eu

Burden of Communicable Disease in Europe: Getting the full picture

Ensuring comprehensive knowledge of the existing and future burden of infectious diseases in the EU is a challenge ECDC will be addressing over the four coming years in order to provide baseline figures for planning and prioritising both EU and national efforts. In 2007 ECDC, along with the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), published a pilot study in Eurosurveillance that evaluated the burden of seven infectious diseases. Building on this previous experience, ECDC’s preparation for the BCoDE (Present and Future Burden of Communicable Disease in Europe) project accelerated substantially this autumn with a request for proposals to launch the project. It aims to develop a methodology, measure and report on the current and future burden of communicable diseases in EU and EEA/EFTA countries. It will look at as many of the 49 infectious diseases listed in the Parliament and Council Decision 2119/98 as is feasible and possibly other conditions and health issues. It will also consider how to measure the impact of public health interventions such as vaccination, emerging trends including demographic change and global climate change, and the burden of chronic diseases which may be consequences of infections including infection-associated cancers. Key stakeholders of the project include ECDC, Member States, the Commission, and WHO.

Networking to help prevent food- and waterborne disease occurrence

On 1–2 October 2008 public health experts from across the EU met at ECDC to discuss the latest techniques for monitoring and controlling outbreaks of food- and waterborne diseases. EU countries have been working together in this area for several years, and the experts at this meeting exchanged ideas on how to further enhance this cooperation.

Read more: www.ecdc.europa.eu

New Publications

For more information: publications@ecdc.europa.eu

Mission report: Measles outbreak in Austria

In response to an outbreak of measles ahead of the European Football Championship 2008, the Austrian health authorities requested a rapid risk assessment of the situation. A team of experts from ECDC and the EU surveillance network for vaccine-preventable diseases (EU-VAC.NET) travelled to Austria to assess the extent of the outbreak, assess the risk for further spread in Europe, and meet with the relevant parties to help define strategies for EURO 2008.

Guidance: Priority risk groups for influenza vaccination

This paper identifies and describes population groups at increased risk for severe outcomes of influenza ("risk groups") and advocates vaccination for two major groups, namely a) persons in the older age group, usually 65 years and older; and b) persons with chronic medical conditions.

Meeting report: Annual meeting on TB surveillance in Europe

This year's meeting — hosted jointly by ECDC, WHO/EURO and KNCV — provided an overview of the epidemiological situation for TB in the European Region. It also showcased the new 'ECDC/WHO Europe Joint TB Information System' that is now ready for data collection and analysis. Participants discussed surveillance objectives, new surveillance variables, the future of the annual TB report, and the terms of reference for the new TB Surveillance Coordinating Group. The meeting took place on 3–4 June 2008 in The Hague, Netherlands.

Keeping Europe Healthy: ECDC in action

What does ECDC do for Europeans? This short general brochure explains ECDC's role, how it is organised, and explains its activities in key areas. This brochure will also be available in all official EU languages, Icelandic and Norwegian in 2009.

Protecting health in Europe: our vision for the future

This brochure explains ECDC's multiannual strategy (2007-2013) for a general audience. First, it looks at past and present infectious disease threats in Europe and the factors that contribute to Europe's vulnerability to infectious diseases, then gives an overview of ECDC's seven priority work areas that set out how we will work to improve these issues. This brochure will also be available in all official EU languages, Icelandic and Norwegian in 2009.

HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Europe 2007

Since January 2008, ECDC and the WHO/Europe have jointly coordinated HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe and produced a first joint report on HIV/AIDS in Europe. Although limited by incomplete reporting, it states that HIV infection is of major public health importance in Europe. In EU/EFTA, Men having Sex with Men (MSM) are most at risk for HIV/AIDS followed by the heterosexual population and Injecting Drug Users (IDU). In the Eastern region of Europe, IDU remains the predominant mode of transmission. In 2007, 48 892 HIV infections and 5244 AIDS diagnoses were reported.



Upcoming events...

08–12.12.2008	ECDC Preparedness & Response Briefing Session, Stockholm, ECDC
19–23.01.2009	ECDC Preparedness & Response Briefing Session, Stockholm, ECDC
February 2009	Advisory Forum meeting, Stockholm, ECDC (TBC)
02–06.02.2009	ECDC Preparedness & Response Briefing Session, Stockholm, ECDC
12–13.02.2009	Expert meeting on behavioural surveillance, Lausanne
16–17.02.2009	TESSy STI training, Stockholm, ECDC
17–18.02.2009	Expert meeting on Chlamydia surveillance, Stockholm, ECDC
23–27.02.2009	ECDC Preparedness & Response Briefing Session, Stockholm, ECDC
09–13.03.2009	ECDC Preparedness & Response Briefing Session, Stockholm, ECDC
17–18.03.2009	Annual meeting of the European Invasive Bacterial Infections surveillance network, Stockholm, ECDC
23–27.03.2009	ECDC Preparedness & Response Briefing Session, Stockholm, ECDC
25–26.03.2009	Management Board 15th meeting, Stockholm, ECDC
May 2009	Advisory Forum meeting, Stockholm, ECDC (TBC)
May 2008	4th ECDC National Microbiology Focal Points meeting, Stockholm, ECDC
24–25.06.2009	Management Board 16th meeting, Warsaw
September 2009	Advisory Forum meeting, Stockholm, ECDC (TBC)
05–06.11.2009	Management Board 17th meeting, Stockholm, ECDC
December 2009	Advisory Forum meeting, Stockholm, ECDC (TBC)

TQ-AF-08-002-EN-C