

Minutes of the Sixty-second Meeting

Stockholm, 26-27 November 2024

Adopted by the ECDC Management Board at its Sixty-third meeting, 27-28 March 2025

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Summary of Proceedings and action points – ECDC Management Board Meeting

The Sixty-second meeting of the ECDC Management Board (MB) convened on 26-27 November 2024 in Stockholm, Sweden. During the meeting the MB:

- ❖ adopted the programme of the meeting;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Sixty-first meeting of the MB;
- ❖ elected Gesa Lücking, MB Member, Germany, as the new Chair and Lieven De Raedt, MB Member, Belgium, as the new Deputy Chair of the MB;
- ❖ approved the Single Programming Document 2025-2027. In the future, the MB will be provided with a track changed version of the SPD document to better show how stakeholder comments have been addressed in the text;
- ❖ approved the Budget and Establishment Table 2025;
- ❖ approved the First Supplementary and Amending Budget 2024;
- ❖ appointed Heli Laarmann, MB Member, Estonia, and Pernille Weiss, MB Member, European Parliament, as members of the Audit Committee (AC) and agreed to appoint a new AC Chair via written procedure after the meeting based on a proposal from the AC;
- ❖ appointed the MB working group for the revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and the AC Mandate;
- ❖ appointed Lorena Boix Alonso, MB member, DG SANTE, European Commission, and Mario Fafangel, MB Member, Slovenia as reporting officers for the Director's appraisal;
- ❖ discussed the draft Single Programming Document 2026-2028 and agreed that the document be sent to the MB for written consultation after the meeting with deadline for comments on 6 December 2024.
- ❖ took note of the update from the ECDC Director and agreed to include behavioural science on the agenda of the next MB meeting;
- ❖ took note of the update on the ECDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA). MB members were invited to extend an invitation to national experts to participate in the PHEPA Assessments;
- ❖ took note of the summary of discussions held at the 56th meeting of the ECDC AC;
- ❖ took note of the monitoring of the implementation of the Work Programme 2024;
- ❖ took note of the Progress report – Overview of 2024 budget implementation;
- ❖ took note of the update on the results of the 2024 ECDC Staff Engagement Survey and action plan;
- ❖ took note of the annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Parliament;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Commission. The Commission confirmed that, once finalised, the draft Terms of Reference of the fourth external evaluation of ECDC will be shared with the MB for comments.

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

1. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen, Chair of the Management Board (MB), welcomed the participants to the 62nd meeting of the MB, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden. A special welcome was extended to the newly appointed members/alternates: Barbora Macková, member, Czechia; Richael Duffy, member, Ireland; Frank Kooiman, member, The Netherlands; Martin Sojka, member, Slovakia; Olivia Wigzell, member, Sweden; Lorena Boix Alonso, member, DG SANTE, European Commission; Kasia Jurczak, member, DG RTD, European Commission; Pernille Weiss, member, European Parliament; Quique Bassat, member, European Parliament. Corine Van Lingen was participating as an adviser for the member from Netherlands.

2. Apologies had been received from Croatia (proxy to Slovenia), Romania, and Liechtenstein. In addition, at this point in time, Italy and Poland had no nominated member nor alternate in place. The Chair informed the MB that she would exceptionally vote on behalf of Finland during the proceedings as her alternate was not attending the MB meeting this time.

Welcome from the Director, ECDC

3. Pamela Rendi-Wagner, Director, ECDC, warmly welcomed the MB members noting that she was looking forward to fruitful discussions.

Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (*Document MB62/01*)

4. The draft programme was adopted without changes. The Chair asked each member whether s/he wished to add any oral declaration(s) of interest to her/his Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) submitted previously. None were declared.

The Management Board adopted the draft programme.

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 61st meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 12-13 June 2024) (*Document MB62/02*)

5. The draft minutes of the 61st meeting had been circulated ahead of the meeting. No requests for amendments were received and the minutes were adopted without changes.

6. With regards to point 28 in the minutes, the European Commission noted that Philippe Roux would be replaced by Lorena Boix Alonso, MB member, DG SANTE, as reporting officer for the Director's appraisal following the recent changes in the MB membership. The Chair suggested addressing this point later during the meeting.

The Management Board adopted the minutes of the Sixty-first meeting of the Management Board.

Election of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the ECDC Management Board (*Document MB62/03*)

7. The Chair recalled the procedure for the elections and clarified that in accordance with the MB Rules of Procedure Article 2(8), the term of office of the new Chair and Deputy Chair would start the following day. She noted that there were two candidates, Heli Laarmann, MB Member, Estonia, and Gesa Lücking, MB Member, Germany, running for the position of Chair, and one candidate, Lieven De Raedt, MB Member, Belgium, running for the position of Deputy Chair.

8. In accordance with Article 2(2c) of the MB Rules of Procedure, the candidates gave a short presentation of themselves prior to the voting. Ásthildur Knútsdóttir, MB Member, Iceland, and Christian Schultheiss, Head of Section Legal Services, ECDC, were appointed as tellers.

9. Following the election procedure the results were announced. Gesa Lücking received the required number of votes and was elected as Chair and Lieven De Raedt was unanimously elected as Deputy Chair.

The Management Board elected Gesa Lücking as Chair and Lieven De Raedt as Deputy Chair of the Management Board.

Update from the ECDC Director

10. Pamela Rendi-Wagner gave an update on the main activities since she had taken up her functions as Director in June 2024. She reported on ECDC's work on mpox and avian influenza including the high media interest in ECDC's Risk Assessment on avian influenza published in August, which showed the importance of a timely and proactive approach. She also mentioned that the EU Health Task Force was now fully operational and had provided support through deployments in Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda) as well as within Europe (Olympic Games in France). With regards to collaboration with international partners, she said that ECDC had just signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Japan. In the last months, the Director had participated in many meetings and conferences and a topic that was raised repeatedly was how to regain trust in science, as well as in public institutions. To increase the impact of its outputs, ECDC will focus more on behavioural and social science and will embark on a project on tackling misinformation. To implement the amended ECDC mandate in the best possible way and to ensure a more efficient collaboration internally, the Director's office has been streamlined by moving some of the functions to other Units. In a follow-up step, further organisational adjustments will take place to better reflect the amended mandate and to meet the requirements of an agile organisation.

11. The MB members thanked the Director for her update and commended ECDC for the timeliness and scientific quality of its work on mpox and avian influenza. The MB agreed that rebuilding trust was crucial also considering the current geopolitical situation and increasing circulation of misinformation. One member suggested that networking and building a dialogue with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) could be beneficial especially as concerns communication. The MB also showed interest in ECDC's work on behavioural science and the Director suggested that this topic could be presented at a future meeting if the MB so wished. The Director also confirmed that the MB will receive regular updates on the organisational adjustments as soon as there is a clear direction.

The Management Board took note of the update from the ECDC Director. The MB agreed to include behavioural science on the agenda of the next MB meeting.

Update on ECDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA)

12. Thomas Hofmann, Head of Section, Emergency Preparedness and Response Support, Public Health Functions Unit, ECDC, gave an update on the ECDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA) carried out in accordance with Article 8 of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health (SCBTH). The presentation focused on the lessons learnt from the first assessments carried out in 2024. Based on these, a set of good practices have been identified and some changes have been introduced in the process such as the scheduling of a virtual meeting with all involved national experts in the preparatory phase to ensure a common understanding of the process and adjustments to the assessment agenda. The PHEPA practical guide is also being updated to incorporate key information. A call for nomination of country experts for 2025 missions is ongoing and a meeting on best practices identified by the countries is foreseen to take place in 2025.

13. Heli Laarmann, MB Member, Estonia, gave a brief update on the assessment mission conducted in Estonia on 1-4 October 2024 noting that more than 60 different experts from eleven institutions were involved in the country mission preparations and sessions. As Estonia had a WHO IHR Joint External Evaluation (JEE) in 2023, the results of the JEE report were taken into account by the assessment team.

From the Estonian perspective, the assessment process was well structured and logical and the preparatory sessions for the in-depth capacities provided useful input for the experts. One observation was that in smaller countries like Estonia many experts cover several capacities, and this should be considered when planning the agenda and the parallel sessions.

14. Pedro Gullón Tosio, MB Member, Spain, reported on the assessment conducted in Spain on 14-18 October 2024. Overall, the assessment had been a very positive experience for his country. He said that the preparatory work was crucial and the fact that the assessment team had learnt the complex system before the visit made the assessment smooth and helped formulating valid recommendations. The assessment also provided the opportunity for experts at national level to get together and strengthen their collaboration. The work is however very intense, and it is important to keep in mind possible overlaps with other important meetings. It was also challenging to get the local level involved. One recommendation he wished to highlight was to have a policy level person on board at the final meeting.

15. Olivia Wigzell, MB Member, Sweden, agreed that the planning and preparation of the assessment was crucial; the Swedish Public Health Agency had started planning in January while the visit took place in October. The assessment process required significant resources, and it was estimated that a total of 2000 work hours were spent between January and October. Concerning the lessons learnt, she mentioned that providing the background on the country's context may give a better overview than the submission of many documents. Some further dialogue at the beginning concerning overarching structures would also have been beneficial. The involvement in the earlier assessment visit in Finland provided a good example and allowed bringing learnings home.

16. The MB members thanked for the presentations noting that it was very useful to hear the experience and lessons learnt from other countries. Concerning the timeline for producing the report, Thomas Hofmann clarified that the aim was to send the draft report back within two weeks. He mentioned that the focus of the assessment was on infectious diseases, but it was important to involve representatives from the veterinary side for One Health as well as representatives of crisis coordination and transport. ECDC also clarified that the assessment reports may include recommendations relating to budget and resources even if these are national level responsibilities; these aspects are also part of the Article 7 questionnaires which are the basis for the assessments. It was acknowledged that recommendations regarding resource needs may be sensitive, and it is important to consider how this information is phrased.

The Management Board took note of the update on ECDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA). MB members were invited to extend an invitation to national experts to participate in the PHEPA Assessments.

ECDC Single Programming Document 2025-2027 (*Document MB62/04*)

17. Pamela Rendi-Wagner presented the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2025-2027. During 2025, ECDC will continue contributing to strengthening EU health security by addressing the following main priorities: digitalised and integrated EU level surveillance, EU joint emergency preparedness and response planning, EU Health Task Force, intensify strategic partnerships at the EU and international level, monitoring of vaccine effectiveness, support to countries to improve the vaccine coverage in the EU, AMR, and Sustainable Development Goals in the area of HIV, TB and hepatitis. The budget for 2025 amounts to EUR 92.6 million. The Budget and Establishment Table foresees 353 FTEs and 5 Seconded National Experts (SNEs) as well as additional staff resources to support externally funded projects.

18. Following the usual process, ECDC received comments on the SPD 2025-2027 from the European Commission in July 2024. In addition, comments were received from Member States, other EU agencies and WHO Europe. The Commission Opinion as well as the list of stakeholder comments with ECDC replies had been shared on the MB Extranet as part of the meeting documentation. Based on the comments received, ECDC had strived to improve and simplify the structure of the document for better readability.

19. The Chair thanked the Director for the presentation and noted that the decision on the 2025 budget would be taken under the Audit Committee summary in the afternoon. For the future, it was suggested to provide the MB with a track changed version of the document as it was difficult to see how the stakeholder comments had been addressed in the text.

20. Responding to comments and questions from the MB, it was clarified from ECDC's side that there was now a great momentum for wastewater surveillance with the urban wastewater directive entering into force. The aim was to integrate wastewater surveillance into the general surveillance objectives and to look at where it is feasible and adding value. ECDC has a role in developing guidance in collaboration with the Member States. Concerning climate change and One Health, it was noted that the work has so far focused on One Health and AMR, but it was clear that more work is needed on vector-borne diseases. ECDC is participating in the cross-Agency One Health Task Force and will increase its cooperation with the European Environment Agency (EEA). Responding to a question on EU classified information, ECDC explained that this related to a project to be implemented in 2025 based on the amended Founding Regulation which requires ECDC to deploy and operate a platform for exchange of EU classified information.

The Management Board approved the Single Programming Document 2025-2027. In the future, the MB will be provided with a track changed version of the SPD document to better show how stakeholder comments have been addressed in the text.

ECDC Draft Single Programming Document 2026-2028 (*Document MB62/05*)

21. Pamela Rendi-Wagner presented the draft SPD 2026-2028. She first described the general context noting that there were several factors to consider such as the strategic priorities of the new European Commission, the fourth external evaluation of ECDC to be conducted in 2025, the changing landscape of global health security, climate change, reduced trust and increase of mis- and disinformation as well as the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) cycle which will also come into play in 2028.

22. The priorities for 2026-2028 are partly the same as for 2025 but an increased focus is put on epidemic-prone and vector-borne diseases as well as on public health capacity building, communication and rebuilding trust as well as on international collaboration. The budget foreseen for 2026 amounts to EUR 92,3 million; the human resources are at the same level as in 2025 (353 FTEs and 5 SNEs). Concerning externally funded projects, the Director noted that the current projects with Western Balkans & Türkiye and the European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries as well as with Africa CDC will come to an end in 2025 and beginning of 2026 respectively. At present there was no clarity regarding the possible continued financing from DG NEAR.

23. The MB members welcomed the proposed priorities, but it was mentioned that further prioritisation might be needed as the list was still rather long, and more focus should be put on climate change and vector-borne diseases. It was also suggested to better include the Member State perspective, to provide some further details on ECDC's international work and to better emphasise ECDC's commitment to scientific independence.

24. The Director suggested providing time until 6 December 2024 for MB members to send additional comments if they so wished. In January 2025, the final draft SPD 2026-2028 including annexes will be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure and subsequently shared with the EU institutions.

The Management Board discussed the Single Programming Document 2026-2028. The MB agreed that the document be sent to the MB for written consultation after the meeting with deadline for comments on 6 December 2024.

Summary of discussions held at the 56th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (Stockholm, 25 November 2024), including its recommendations

25. The MB Chair mentioned that she had chaired the AC meeting the day before in the absence of a formally appointed AC Chair and added that she would shortly come back to the AC membership matters. As suggested by the AC members, a brief summary of the role and responsibilities of the AC was presented. The Chair then gave the floor to the ECDC colleagues to present the topics discussed in the AC.

a) First Supplementary and Amending Budget 2024 (Document MB62/06)

26. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services Unit, ECDC, presented the First Supplementary and Amending Budget 2024. She explained that the European Commission has proposed to reinforce ECDC by a total of EUR 737 000 (including EFTA contribution) for the financial year 2024 to cater for an increase in salaries. In addition, until this date, ECDC has incurred bank interests for an amount of EUR 380 000. This combined additional funding was therefore proposed to cover for staff related expenditure in Title 1, budget line 1100 "Basic salaries". The document also included information on the transfers made by the Director within the limits of her powers, in accordance with Article 26.1 of ECDC's Financial Regulation.

27. Furthermore, a total of EUR 6 735 000 EU funding had been additionally received from the contribution agreements: EUR 1 000 000 additionally for the ongoing 'EU for the Health Security in Africa' contribution agreement, EUR 5 535 000 for the EWRS contribution agreement signed on 3 September 2024, and EUR 200 000 additionally for the ongoing 'Reinforcement of the European Vaccination Information Portal' (EVIP) contribution agreement.

28. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen reported that the AC had taken note of the additional budget of EUR 1 117 000 assigned for salaries. Concerning budget transfers, the AC had asked for clarifications on the decreased budget for the Foresight project and the increased funds for the VEBIS project and a slide containing this information was displayed to the MB. In conclusion, the AC recommended the MB to approve the First Supplementary and Amending Budget 2024.

29. In the discussion that followed, the MB inquired about the 10 million EUR allocated to digital transformation, and it was clarified by ECDC that this amount covered all the costs for software and licences, fees for hosting applications, etc., as well as the support to core business such as EpiPulse and EWRS. According to projections, a moderate increase of the costs can be expected as costs are generally rising. In addition, there are expectations for more digitalisation which means increased investments.

30. The Chair commented that the AC had also noted the significant amount allocated to digital transformation when discussing the 2025 budget. She suggested that there might be a need to provide more detailed information on these large sums in the future for better clarity and transparency.

The Management Board approved the First Supplementary and Amending Budget 2024.

b) Monitoring of the implementation of the Work Programme 2024 (Document MB62/07)

31. Stefan Sundbom, Head of Section, Planning and Performance, Resource Management Services Unit, ECDC, presented an overview of the implementation of the work programme 2024. By November 2024, 86,29% of the outputs were ongoing and 12% completed, while one output (related to health care associated infections) had been paused due to lack of resources and resources re-prioritised to other outputs. A list of all planned outputs under each of the five Strategic Objectives (SO) was provided in Annex 1. Stefan Sundbom then briefly presented some examples of achievements in each of the SOs.

32. In the AC meeting, ECDC had explained that the monitoring of the outputs was now managed directly in the new planning and monitoring system PRIME. ECDC suggested to work with the AC on the type and level of information to report to the AC/MB while taking into account previous input already provided on the development of the MB dashboards.

The Management Board took note of the monitoring of the implementation of the work programme 2024.

c) Progress Report – Overview of 2024 Budget Implementation

33. Anja Van Brabant gave an overview of the 2023 budget implementation up until 18 November 2024. She explained that EUR 90.5 million or 97.4% had been committed from the total budget of EUR 92.9 million. From the committed amount, EUR 56.3 million (60.6% of the total budget) had been paid, while EUR 1 million was in the workflow to be paid. Concerning the budget carried forward from 2023 (EUR 22.9 million), 92.6% had been paid so far, which was significantly higher than in the same period of the previous year (81.3%).

34. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen reported that the AC had taken note of the continued positive trend of the implementation of the 2024 budget.

The Management Board took note of the Progress Report – Overview of 2024 Budget Implementation.

d) Budget and Establishment Table 2025 (Document MB62/08)

35. Anja Van Brabant recalled that the Draft Budget 2025 had been approved by the MB in January 2024 through written procedure as part of the SPD 2025-2027 (Annex II & III). The initial total amount requested was EUR 92.2 million. Due to a decrease of the EFTA proportionality factor applicable for 2025 and an increase of the EU contribution by EUR 1 006 000 (incl. EFTA contribution) to cover for the salary increase, the ECDC budget for the financial year 2025 amounts to EUR 92.6 million, which is approximately at the same level as the initial budget for 2024.

36. The Establishment Plan 2025 foresees 225 Temporary Agents and 128 Contract Agent posts. In addition, the Centre will have 32 Contract Agents to support projects funded by EU grants. The Budget 2025 evolution by title compared to the initial 2024 budget is as follows: 4.1 % increase in title 1 (staff expenditure), 2.3 % decrease in title 2 (infrastructure & administrative expenditure), and 4.7% decrease in title 3 (operational expenditure). The ratio between Administrative Expenditure (title 1 & 2) and Operational Expenditure (title 3) for 2025 is 59% versus 41%.

37. During the AC meeting, ECDC had given clarifications on the activities covered under the core budget (EU and External Cooperation (BL 3009)) and the external cooperation work performed under the Contribution Agreements. It was further mentioned that the Translation costs (BL 1173) have been reduced mainly due to the use of AI. As mentioned, the AC had also noted that the budget line for Digital Transformation (BL 3005) is in fact the largest of all the operational budget lines. In conclusion, the AC recommended the MB to approve the Budget and Establishment Table 2025, pending the final adoption of the EU budget 2025 by the European Parliament and the Council.

The Management Board approved the Budget and Establishment Table 2025.

e) Reporting on additional topics discussed in the Audit Committee

i) ECA Special Report on the EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

38. During the AC meeting, a representative from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) had presented the ECA Special Report on the EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall conclusion of the report was that the EU medical agencies (i.e. ECDC and EMA) "generally managed well in unprecedented

circumstances". The AC had discussed the contents of the report and ECDC clarified its view on the observations received. It was mentioned that many actions had already been taken but ECDC will develop a more detailed action plan internally. The AC will monitor the implementation of the recommendations as part of the oversight of audit observations presented at each AC meeting.

ii) Update on Audit Observations and Status of Audit Observations

39. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen gave a brief overview of the matters discussed under the update on audit observations, which is provided at each AC meeting. ECDC had clarified that the Internal Audit Service (IAS) audit on the "preparation, review and validation of external communication content" has been postponed to Q3 2025. The work on the IAS recommendation on the Joint Reclassification Committee (JRC) is close to being finalised following successful discussions with the ECDC Staff Committee on a new system for reclassifications. The AC will continue to carefully monitor the progress in the implementation of any pending audit observations.

The Management Board took note of the update from the Audit Committee.

f) AC membership matters

40. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen reminded the MB of the need to appoint an additional AC member representing the Member States as well as a new member representing the European Parliament. It was also necessary to appoint a new chairperson.

41. In the discussion that followed, Heli Laarmann, MB Member, Estonia, was appointed as member of the AC. The representatives of the European Parliament requested to come back to this matter the following day as they needed some additional time to discuss among themselves. On the second meeting day, the MB appointed Pernille Weiss as AC member representing the European Parliament. It was agreed to decide on the AC Chair via written procedure after the meeting once the AC members had had the opportunity to exchange and jointly agree on the candidate to put forward.

The Management Board appointed Heli Laarmann, MB Member, Estonia, and Pernille Weiss, MB Member, European Parliament, as members of the Audit Committee. The AC Chair will be appointed via written procedure after the MB meeting based on a proposal from the AC.

g) Appointment of MB working group for revision of MB Rules of Procedure and Audit Committee Mandate

42. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen recalled that the AC had suggested to form a small working group (including two MB members and one AC member) to work on the revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate. The decision on the composition of the working group was taken on the second meeting day as follows (four members volunteered to join the group): Sigrid Kiermayr, MB Member, Austria; Constantinos Papantoniou, MB Member, Cyprus; Anne-Catherine Viso, MB alternate and AC Member, France; and Charlotte Möndel, MB Alternate, Germany. The group will have the support of ECDC's legal and governance teams respectively.

The Management Board appointed the MB working group for revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate.

43. In concluding the proceedings of the first meeting day, Anni Virolainen-Julkunen thanked the MB members for their support and trust during the time she had served as MB Chair. She emphasised how rewarding it had been to be able to work together with the ECDC Director and her staff as well as with all the Member States, the European Commission and the European Parliament. She would continue as MB member representing Finland for the time being.

44. Pamela Rendi-Wagner thanked Anni Virolainen-Julkunen for her longstanding commitment and dedication to the work of ECDC having served as MB member for 13 years including as Deputy Chair and Chair of the MB for several years. She had also led the MB through the challenging times of the pandemic.

Day 2 – Opening and welcome by the Chair

45. Gesa Lücking, MB Chair and MB Member, Germany, opened the second day of the meeting as the newly appointed Chair. She suggested a minor change in the order of the items given that the representatives of the European Parliament had to leave the meeting slightly before the closure. The MB members agreed with the proposed adjustments in the agenda.

46. The Chair then reminded the MB of the need to replace the previous MB member representing DG SANTE by the current member from DG SANTE, Lorena Boix Alonso, as reporting officer for the Director's appraisal. In addition, she had herself served as reporting officer but needed to be replaced as the Chair automatically becomes appeal assessor in the process and she could not hold both roles. Mario Fafangel, MB Member, Slovenia, volunteered for the role of reporting officer. Consequently, the MB appointed Lorena Boix Alonso and Mario Fafangel as reporting officers alongside Jean-Claude Smith, MB Member, Luxembourg, who already held this function.

The Management Board appointed Lorena Boix Alonso, MB Member, DG SANTE, European Commission, and Mario Fafangel, MB Member, Slovenia, as reporting officers for the Director's appraisal.

Results of the ECDC Staff Engagement Survey 2024 and action plan

47. Pontus Molin, Head of Unit, Resource Management Services, ECDC, recalled that the preliminary results of the 2024 ECDC Staff Engagement Survey had been presented to the MB during its last meeting in June. He now provided an update on the main results as well as information on the benchmarking with other EU agencies. He explained that with an overall Total Favourable (TF) of 57%, ECDC ranks 8th of the 12 agencies benchmarked. This TF is however in line with other agencies belonging to the "cruising speed" cluster.

48. Pontus Molin then presented the co-creation process followed to develop the action plan ensuring staff feedback on the proposed actions. The action plan focuses on three priority areas over five dimensions of the survey: 1) Leadership and Transparency; 2) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and 3) Collaboration and Efficiency. The aim is to concentrate on tangible Centre-wide actions achievable by summer 2025. In parallel, line managers and staff are encouraged to identify specific issues for their own team development together with the respective Heads of Section and Heads of Unit. He clarified that there was no cross-agency action plan to address common challenges, but the matter could be brought up in the Agencies' network.

49. In the discussion that followed, the MB asked for clarifications on whether the implementation of the action plan would be done in parallel with the planned restructuring and it was mentioned that organisational changes often create concerns among staff. Pontus Molin responded that the survey results indicated that staff wished to see change. The details and timeline of the restructuring had however not yet been defined. The Director confirmed that there were indications of a desire for change among staff and the restructuring was seen as an opportunity rather than a problem. It was also necessary to adapt the internal structure to the amended ECDC mandate. Responding to a question on the action related to redefining the scientific orientation and strategic prioritisation, Piotr Kramarz, Chief Scientist, ECDC, explained that the amended mandate had brought forward some new areas such as climate change that needed to be looked at in a holistic way. Other topics to consider were ECDC's role in travel advice, surveillance standards and objectives and digital health. Regarding prioritisation and de-prioritisation, ECDC wants to increasingly use inputs such as burden of disease. He confirmed that the Advisory Forum will be involved in these discussions and consulted on the scientific priorities.

The Management Board took note of the results of the ECDC Staff Engagement Survey 2024 and action plan.

Annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee to the Management Board

50. Panagiotis Papathanasiou, Member of the ECDC Staff Committee (SC), thanked the MB for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the ECDC SC. He mentioned that 2024 was a particularly significant year for the Centre and its staff with the new ECDC Director as well as two new Heads of Unit taking up their function. He noted that the SC was committed to fostering a constructive dialogue with management during this period of transformation and change. The SC address also touched upon the high workload and stress experienced by many staff members. As an example of positive collaboration with the management, Panagiotis Papathanasiou mentioned the successful negotiations on the new reclassification system which will enter into force in 2025.

51. The Chair thanked the SC for their presentation noting that the staff is the most valuable asset of an organisation. She added that the MB was aware of the high workload affecting many staff.

52. One MB member mentioned that he would meet with ECDC colleagues in charge of AMR in the afternoon and suggested that it might be useful for other MB members as well to exchange with ECDC experts on relevant topics in connection to MB meetings. Several MB members agreed that having the opportunity to meet additional ECDC colleagues before or after the MB meeting would be beneficial depending on the availability on both sides.

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

Update from the European Parliament

53. Pernille Weiss provided a brief update noting that the European Parliament was just about to vote on the new College of Commissioners. She also mentioned the new EP Public Health Committee (SANT), which will assume responsibility for the health policy matters previously overseen by the ENVI Committee including topics within ECDC's remit.

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

Update from the European Commission

54. Lorena Boix Alonso briefed the MB about the work to develop the Union prevention, preparedness and response plan, which is foreseen to be finalised in spring 2025. Concerning Member States' reporting on prevention, preparedness and response planning (Article 7 of the SCBTH), she mentioned that the country profiles will be confidential, but an overview of the general recommendations will be published in Q1 2025. Regarding the fourth external evaluation of ECDC, she mentioned that the Terms of Reference were currently being finalised and would be shared with the MB for comments. The external evaluation is foreseen to be conducted during March-October 2025. Responding to a question from the Chair, Lorena Boix Alonso confirmed that the evaluation would also examine the feasibility of extending the mandate of the Centre to address the impact of cross-border threats to health on non-communicable diseases.

55. Laurent Muschel, DG HERA, European Commission, updated the MB on activities related to medical countermeasures. He mentioned the recent delivery of mpox vaccine to the DRC as well as other African countries to which several Member States had contributed. He also touched upon the joint procurement of zoonotic influenza vaccine as well as ongoing negotiations for the procurement of antivirals effective against avian influenza. In the discussion that followed, a few MB members raised concerns about the delays experienced in the donation of vaccines to Africa. Laurent Muschel clarified that the delays were not caused by HERA but were due to a complex process in which several international partners were also

involved as well as in some cases delays in the authorisation of the vaccine in the receiving country. He agreed, however, that it was important to draw conclusions from the experience to further improve the process.

56. Kasia Jurczak, DG RTD, European Commission, briefed the MB about ongoing activities in the research area. The update touched upon the Commission's initiative in the area of life sciences as well as on the European Partnerships on Pandemic Preparedness and One Health/AMR respectively.

The Management Board took note of the update from the European Commission. The Commission confirmed that, once finalised, the draft Terms of Reference of the fourth external evaluation of ECDC will be shared with the MB members for comments.

Any other business

57. The Chair adjourned the meeting and thanked all the MB members for their active participation and the outgoing Chair for her precious work and engagement over the years. She also thanked the interpreters and the MB Secretariat for their support.

58. The following MB meeting is scheduled to take place in Stockholm on 27-28 March 2025.

Annex: List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Austria	Sigrid Kiermayr	Member
Belgium	Lieven De Raedt	Member
Bulgaria	Angel Kunchev	Member
Cyprus	Constantinos Papantoniou	Member
Czechia	Barbora Macková	Member
Denmark	Kirstine Moll Harboe	Member
Estonia	Heli Laarmann	Member
Finland	Anni Virolainen-Julkunen (<i>Chair first meeting day</i>)	Member
France	Caroline Semaille	Member
	Anne-Catherine Viso	Alternate
Germany	Gesa Lücking (<i>Chair second meeting day</i>)	Member
Greece	Christos Hadjichristodoulou	Member
Hungary	Ágnes Dánielisz	Member
Ireland	Richael Duffy	Member
Latvia	Jana Feldmane	Member
Lithuania	Audrius Ščeponavičius	Member
Luxembourg	Eveline Santos	Alternate
Malta	Patricia Vella Bonanno	Member
The Netherlands	Frank Kooiman	Member
	Corine van Lingen	Advisor
Portugal	Cristina Abreu Santos	Alternate
Slovakia	Martin Sojka	Member
Slovenia	Mario Fafangel	Member
Spain	Pedro Gullón Tosio	Member
Sweden	Olivia Wigzell	Member

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
European Commission		
DG SANTE	Lorena Boix Alonso	Member
DG HERA	Laurent Muschel	Member
DG RTD	Kasia Jurczak	Member
European Parliament		
	Pernille Weiss	Member
	Quique Bassat	Member
EEA Countries		
Iceland	Ásthildur Knútsdóttir	Member
Norway	Øystein Riise	Member