

## Minutes of the Sixty-third Meeting

### Stockholm, 27-28 March 2025

*Adopted by the ECDC Management Board at its Sixty-fourth meeting, 17-18 June 2025*

## Contents

Opening and welcome from the Chair (and noting the Representatives) .....	4
Welcome from the Director, ECDC.....	4
Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) ( <i>Document MB63/01</i> ).....	4
Adoption of the draft minutes of the Sixty-second meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 26-27 November 2024) ( <i>Document MB63/02</i> ).....	4
Update from the Director.....	4
Issues on the ECDC work from the geopolitical situation.....	5
Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024 ( <i>Document MB63/03</i> ).....	5
Update on key activities under the amended ECDC mandate and the Regulation on Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health (e.g. EUHTF, EURLs, Surveillance) and additional ECDC tasks arising from new EU legislative acts ( <i>Document MB64/04</i> ) .....	6
Memoranda of Understanding between ECDC and enlargement countries and international partners (IANPHI) ( <i>Documents MB63/05, MB63/06</i> ) .....	7
Summary of discussions held at the 57th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (Stockholm, 26 March 2025), including its recommendations .....	7
a) <i>IAS 2025 Audit Plan for ECDC</i> .....	7
b) <i>Provisional Annual Accounts 2024 (Document MB63/08)</i> .....	8
c) <i>Budget transfers 2024 – Quarter four 2024 (Document MB63/09)</i> .....	8
d) <i>Monitoring of the implementation of the Work Programme 2025 (Document MB63/10)</i> .....	9
e) <i>Progress report – Overview of 2025 Budget Implementation</i> .....	9
f) <i>Draft Assessment of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024 (Document MB63/11)</i> .....	9
g) <i>Reporting back from the MB working group on revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate</i> .....	10
h) <i>Reporting on additional topics discussed in the Audit Committee</i> .....	10
Update on ECDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA) including presentations from the Member States .....	10
Amendment of the Management Board decision on internal rules concerning restrictions of certain rights of data subjects in relation to processing of their personal data ( <i>Document MB63/12</i> ).....	11
Nomination of reporting officer for the Director's annual appraisal .....	11
ECDC Chief Scientist's Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Forum ( <i>Document MB63/13</i> ) .....	11
Discontinuing access by non-institutional third parties to TESSy data ( <i>Document MB63/14 Rev.1</i> ) .....	12
Recent and upcoming ECDC activities in the field of social and behavioural sciences .....	12
Update on ECDC Compliance: Implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy.....	13
Update from the European Commission.....	13

Update from the European Parliament.....	13
Update from the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU .....	14
Any other business.....	14
Annex: List of Participants .....	15

## Summary of Proceedings and action points – ECDC Management Board Meeting

The 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the ECDC Management Board (MB) convened on 27-28 March 2025 in Stockholm, Sweden. During the meeting, the MB:

- ❖ adopted the programme of the meeting;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the 62<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the MB with minor changes;
- ❖ approved the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2024, including the MB analysis and assessment of the CAAR and asked for an update on the categorisation of ECDC's scientific outputs and the progress made to assess the impact of scientific advice at a future MB meeting;
- ❖ approved the Provisional Annual Accounts 2024;
- ❖ approved the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between ECDC and enlargement countries with one minor change and agreed that the remaining MoU will be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure once finalised;
- ❖ approved the MoU between ECDC and the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI);
- ❖ approved the proposed amendment of the MB decision on internal rules concerning restrictions of certain rights of data subjects in relation to processing of their personal data;
- ❖ nominated Kirstine Moll Harboe, MB Member, Denmark, as reporting officer for the Director's annual appraisal;
- ❖ discussed key activities under the amended ECDC mandate and the Regulation on Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health (e.g. EUHTF, EURLs, Surveillance) and additional ECDC tasks arising from new EU legislative acts;
- ❖ discussed the Chief Scientist's Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Forum in 2024;
- ❖ took note of the update of the ECDC Director;
- ❖ took note of the issues on the ECDC work from the geopolitical situation and requested that an update be provided at the next MB meeting in June;
- ❖ took note of the summary of discussions held at the Fifty-seventh meeting of the Audit Committee (AC);
- ❖ took note of the status of the Internal Audit Service (IAS) 2025 Audit Plan for ECDC and agreed that, once received by the ECDC, the final 2025 Audit Plan will be sent to the MB for endorsement via written procedure;
- ❖ took note of the Budget transfers – fourth quarter 2024;
- ❖ took note of the monitoring of the implementation of the Work Programme 2025;
- ❖ took note of the Progress report – Overview of 2025 budget implementation; took note of the reporting back from the MB working group on revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate;
- ❖ took note of the update on the ECDC assessments of Member States' Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA) including feedback from assessed Member States;
- ❖ took note of the ECDC decision to discontinue transfers of case-based EpiPulse data to non-institutional third parties;
- ❖ took note of recent and upcoming ECDC activities in the field of social and behavioural sciences;
- ❖ took note of the update on ECDC Compliance: Implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Commission;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Parliament;
- ❖ took note of the update from the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

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

1. Gesa Lücking, Chair of the ECDC Management Board (MB), welcomed all the participants to the Sixty-third meeting of the MB, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden. A special welcome was extended to Paweł Grzesiowski, newly appointed member, Poland, and Andreas Johansson, newly appointed alternate, Sweden.
2. Apologies had been received from Italy as well as from Pernille Weiss, member, European Parliament (proxy to Quique Bassat, member, European Parliament).

## Welcome from the Director, ECDC

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

## Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (*Document MB63/01*)

4. The draft programme was adopted without changes. With regards to the agenda item on the Memorandum of Understanding between ECDC and the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI), the Chair informed the MB that Anne-Catherine Viso, MB Alternate, France, had announced a possible conflict of interest due to her role as Secretary-General of IANPHI and had suggested not to participate in any vote on this topic. The Chair had assessed the matter together with the ECDC Compliance Officer and the conclusion was that Anne-Catherine Viso could be present in the room during the discussions and could respond to questions from the MB members, if any. However, as a mitigation measure, she would not take part in the vote on the ECDC-IANPHI MoU.
5. No other conflicts of interest were declared.

The Management Board adopted the draft programme.

## Adoption of the draft minutes of the Sixty-second meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 26-27 November 2024) (*Document MB63/02*)

6. The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the 62<sup>nd</sup> meeting had been circulated to the MB ahead of the meeting. Minor comments were received from the European Commission (points 26 and 54) and with regard to the spelling (point 19). No further amendments were requested, and the minutes were adopted.

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

## Update from the Director

7. Pamela Rendi-Wagner, Director, ECDC, gave an update on recent ECDC activities. She mentioned the informal EPSCO meeting that had taken place earlier in the week where she had raised the decrease in vaccination rates in many Member States as well as the growing connection between communicable and non-communicable diseases (e.g. vaccine-preventable cancers). She also informed the MB of recent interactions with international stakeholders noting that she had met the Regional Director of WHO Europe in January and discussions were currently ongoing to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECDC and WHO Europe. The Director of Africa CDC had visited ECDC as well as representatives from the UK Health Security Agency. She then informed the MB of the ongoing reorganisation which aims to put in place a structure that best reflects the requirements of the amended ECDC mandate and allows ECDC to become more agile and anticipatory while strengthening the impact of the Centre's disease specific

work. Lastly, she mentioned that a staff event is planned end of April to celebrate ECDC's 20-year anniversary and a larger event for all ECDC's major stakeholders is planned in the autumn.

8. Following the presentation a few questions were raised regarding the timeline for the negotiations with WHO Europe. The Director clarified that the aim is to finalise the discussions on the MoU for the October WHO Regional Committee, but it will depend on the progress of the negotiations on a framework agreement between the European Commission and WHO, which will need to be finalised first. It was agreed that an update on the progress so far can be provided during the June meeting, while the actual MoU is likely to be ready for the November MB meeting at the earliest.

The Management Board took note of the update from the Director. The MB requested to receive information on the date of the 20-year anniversary event as soon as it was known.

## Issues on the ECDC work from the geopolitical situation

9. The Chair introduced the topic noting that the purpose was to discuss the impact on ECDC's work arising from the current geopolitical situation and how the MoU between ECDC and the US CDC is fulfilled.

10. Antonis Lanaras, Head of Section, Governance and International Relations, ECDC, recalled that the MoU with the US CDC was in place since 2007 with the aim to enhance technical cooperation between the organisations. He then presented the usual types of routine exchanges compared to recent interactions, that took place in January and March, especially with regard to epidemic intelligence. In addition, in line with the MoU, CDC is open to meet in case of a public health emergency. The conclusion was that there were some positive developments but there was less collaboration than before.

11. In the discussion that followed, some concerns were raised in relation to avian influenza, and it was inquired whether ECDC was receiving sufficient information from the US on the epidemiological situation. There were also concerns regarding the impact on global health security due to reduced funding.

12. The Director agreed that it was necessary to look at the global picture as well and specifically the impact on HIV, TB and vaccination programmes. With regards to ECDC's Rapid Risk Assessments on avian influenza she was confident that the epi contacts with the US were functioning and there were no elements for changing the risk assessment at this stage.

13. The Chair thanked the ECDC for the update, concluded that the geopolitical situation is reflected in the work and priorities of ECDC and suggested that further information be provided to the MB at the next meeting in June.

The Management Board took note of the update on issues on the ECDC work from the geopolitical situation.

## Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024 (*Document MB63/03*)

14. Pontus Molin, Head of Unit, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented the ECDC Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2024 noting that his presentation would cover the content part while the analysis and assessment of the CAAR and the internal control part would be discussed in the afternoon under the reporting back from the Audit Committee (AC). He summarised ECDC's main achievements in 2024 noting that 99% of the outputs in the SPD 2024-2026 had been completed or were in the process of being completed.

15. He then presented some of the main highlights in public health preparedness, surveillance and disease prevention. The close collaboration with European and international partners continued in 2024. During the year, ECDC also implemented a new planning and monitoring tool, PRIME. ECDC's core budget amounted to EUR 93.9 million (an increase of 4% compared to 2023). In terms of budget implementation, he noted that the commitment rate was 99,1% (an increase of 2% compared to 2023) and the payment rate 74,7% (an increase of 2,9% compared to 2023).

16. In the discussion that followed it was commented that ECDC issued different types of scientific outputs, and it would be useful for the MB to get information on the impact and usefulness of the scientific information provided. Concerning ECDC's international work, it was pointed out that overseas territories

should also be considered. A question was also raised about the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in ECDC and whether there were recommendations on AI tools with a high security standard.

17. Responding to the question on ECDC's scientific outputs, Piotr Kramarz, Chief Scientist, ECDC, mentioned that ECDC had worked on the categorisation of scientific outputs and there were now three main categories of scientific outputs (monitoring and evaluation, assessments and guidance). Assessing the impact of scientific advice was difficult but ECDC was working on this matter reflecting on how these aspects could best be covered. To date, it has been addressed in the ECDC stakeholder surveys. He offered to provide an update on the scientific output categories and considerations on measuring the impact of scientific advice at a future MB meeting. Responding to a question on the definition of the "Information Asset Catalogue", François Mestre, Head of Unit, Digital Transformation Services, ECDC, clarified that this was a catalogue listing all information systems within the Centre including risk assessments. The MB Chair suggested including a definition of the term used in the CAAR for increased clarity.

18. Concerning AI, Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit, Public Health Functions, ECDC, explained that AI was mainly used in Epidemic Intelligence to facilitate the screening. ECDC is part of an agency network on AI and also has an internal AI working group to guide ECDC's adoption of AI tools and methodologies in a controlled way, ensuring that the associated risks are properly identified, understood, and mitigated. At EU level, the Artificial Intelligence Act, applicable to EU bodies, entered into force in 2024 and there is a list of approved tools. A 2-day workshop on AI awareness for threat detection and epidemic intelligence was arranged by ECDC for the OCPs for Epidemic Intelligence and the NFPs for threat detection, EWRS and IHR to share information on applications used by ECDC, possible risks, etc..

19. The Director mentioned that the possibilities for providing ECDC support to overseas territories had been discussed with Santé Publique France in November 2024 and one of the outcomes was to include experts from these territories in the PHEPA mission to France. Support through the EU Health Task Force (EUHTF) could also be considered but required a formal request from the Member State. The Chair suggested including a discussion on the procedure for providing support to overseas territories at a future MB meeting.

20. Following the discussion, the MB approved the content of the CAAR.

The Management Board approved the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024.

## **Update on key activities under the amended ECDC mandate and the Regulation on Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health (e.g. EUHTF, EURLs, Surveillance) and additional ECDC tasks arising from new EU legislative acts (*Document MB64/04*)**

21. Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit, Public Health Functions, ECDC, informed the MB about the ongoing work led by the Commission on developing Implementing and Delegated Acts under articles 13 and 14 of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health. She then presented the state of play of the implementation of the EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs). The suggested scope of the next EURL is respiratory diseases and a call for applications is expected to be launched in May 2025. Other activities include establishing operational working practices between SANTE, HaDEA and ECDC for monitoring and management of EURLs. She also briefed the MB about the proposed ECDC concept for integrating wastewater-based surveillance (WBS) into EU level surveillance and recent and upcoming assignments and key events of the EUHTF.

22. In the discussion that followed, one MB member mentioned that there had been challenges related to the coordination between the administrative (HaDEA) and the scientific part (ECDC) in the first round of EURLs, but he understood that the process had now been improved. Responding to a question on the coordination of the EURLs and the DURABLE network, Vicky Lefevre clarified that the EURLs have specific tasks outlined in the legislation including a role in standardisation and capacity building, while the DURABLE network is more research oriented related to medical countermeasures. Concerning waste-water surveillance, it was noted that it should complement classical surveillance, and the cost-effectiveness



should be considered as it was difficult for the public health sector to react on some of the signals. Vicky Lefevre responded that to understand how WBS can be best integrated into EU level surveillance (including standardisation, data interpretation, and the cost-effectiveness), ECDC will need more information from experts in the Member States. For this reason, ECDC is suggesting setting up a specific WBS network. She confirmed that the WBS is meant to complement traditional surveillance and ECDC sees benefits in particular for early warning. It was clarified that the Implementing Act on the enhanced capacity of the EUHTF would go to comitology on 1 April 2025.

The Management Board discussed key activities under the amended ECDC mandate and the Regulation on Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health (e.g. EUHTF, EURLs, Surveillance) and additional ECDC tasks arising from new EU legislative acts.

## **Memoranda of Understanding between ECDC and enlargement countries and international partners (IANPHI) (*Documents MB63/05, MB63/06*)**

23. Antonis Lanaras, Head of Section, Governance and International Relations, Director's Office, ECDC, presented a set of Memoranda of Understanding between ECDC and enlargement countries (Albania, Kosovo\*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Ukraine). He described the collaboration so far with candidate countries and potential candidates noting that the current ECDC Accession Support Action (IPA6) funded by the European Commission is ending on 30 April 2025. Formalising the cooperation with the national public health authorities in these countries through MoU is therefore necessary to ensure the continuity of the collaboration. He then presented the areas and modalities of cooperation and clarified that all the MoU followed the same standard text.

24. The Chair suggested removing the reference to EpiPulse to allow ECDC to ensure that data protection requirements are fulfilled in each country. The MB approved the MoU with the suggested change.

25. Antonis Lanaras then presented the MoU between ECDC and the International Association of National Public Health Institutes (IANPHI). He described the areas and modalities of collaboration noting that the text followed the model of existing MoU between ECDC and other CDCs. The MB approved the proposed MoU without changes.

The Management Board approved the Memoranda of Understanding (Mou) between ECDC and enlargement countries with one minor change and agreed that the remaining MoU (Bosnia Herzegovina, Serbia and Türkiye) will be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure once finalised. The Management Board also approved the MoU between ECDC and IANPHI.

## **Summary of discussions held at the 57th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (Stockholm, 26 March 2025), including its recommendations**

26. Heli Laarmann, MB Member, Estonia, and Chair of the Audit Committee (AC) gave a brief introduction and then gave the floor to the ECDC colleagues to present the topics discussed in the AC meeting held the day before.

### ***a) IAS 2025 Audit Plan for ECDC***

27. Stefan Sundbom, Head of Section, Planning and Performance, Resource Management Services Unit, ECDC, reported that the Internal Audit Service (IAS) 2025 Audit Plan had not yet been received but the IAS has indicated that they will perform the audit on the "preparation, review and validation of external

---

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



communication content” in 2025 (postponed from 2024). In the second part of 2025, the IAS will carry out an in-depth risk assessment and thereafter prepare the Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2026-2028.

28. The AC Chair reported that the AC had taken note of the situation and had supported ECDC’s suggestion that the IAS 2025 Audit Plan to be sent to the MB for endorsement via written procedure as soon as it is available. The MB agreed with this proposal.

The Management Board took note of the status of the IAS 2025 Audit Plan for ECDC and agreed that the final 2025 Audit Plan be sent to the MB for endorsement via written procedure once available.

### ***b) Provisional Annual Accounts 2024 (Document MB63/08)***

29. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services Unit, ECDC, presented the Provisional Annual Accounts 2024 of ECDC.

30. The provisional accounts were audited by an external audit company (Baker Tilly – Belgium) in February 2025 and their report was issued on 25 March with a clean opinion on the accounts. The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has performed two audits related to the 2024 budget: the first one in November 2024 and the second one in January 2025. On 20 March 2025, ECA issued its first report containing one preliminary finding related to procurement. The Centre has four weeks to submit its reply. ECDC is expecting to receive the report from the second audit during April 2025. Anja van Brabant clarified that the preliminary finding stated that ECDC should have listed also the Framework Contracts in its Financing Decisions, but this did not put into question the clean opinion on the accounts as such.

31. Anja Van Brabant then presented the budget execution in 2024 as compared to 2023 noting that from the total 2024 budget (C1 funds) of EUR 93,9 million, 99,14% had been committed (compared to 97,14% in 2023), and 74,7% had been paid (compared to 71,97% in 2023). From the EUR 22.8 million carried forward from 2023 (C8 funds), EUR 21.8 million or 95,7% had been paid (compared to 83,9% in 2023). In terms of the budgetary outturn, she mentioned that EUR 1.1 million is to be returned to the European Commission in 2025, compared to EUR 10.7 million the previous year.

32. The AC Chair reported that the AC had received clarification about one of the Contribution Agreements signed in 2024 through which ECDC will provide support for Health Resilience to Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. The agreement is in place for three years and for an amount of EUR 2.1 million of which EUR 1.9 million was received in 2024. In conclusion, the AC recommended the MB to approve the Provisional Annual Accounts 2024.

33. The MB Chair congratulated ECDC for the high budget execution and the fact that the outturn was significantly lower than the previous year. The Director noted that the successful implementation was the result of very hard work, and she took the opportunity to thank the ECDC colleagues for their efforts.

The Management Board approved the Provisional Annual Accounts 2024, including the report on Budgetary and Financial Management.

### ***c) Budget transfers 2024 – Quarter four 2024 (Document MB63/09)***

34. Anja Van Brabant presented the budget transfers carried out in the last quarter of 2024. She mentioned that a budget transfer of EUR 124 336 had been performed between Titles to Title 2 to cover for the onboarding fee for the new financial system from the European Commission “SUMMA”, which ECDC will start using in October 2026. A budget transfer of EUR 349 990 was also performed within Title 3 to cover for “GenEpi-BioTrain” (training programme in genomic epidemiology and public health bioinformatics).

35. During the AC meeting, ECDC had explained that SUMMA will have to be rolled out in ECDC as in other EU agencies and will replace the current ABAC system. ECDC was selected to go live in 2026 but has agreed with the Commission to go live in 2027 instead due to the ongoing reorganisation at ECDC.

The Management Board took note of the Budget transfers 2024 – Quarter four 2024.

***d) Monitoring of the implementation of the Work Programme 2025  
(Document MB63/10)***

36. Stefan Sundbom presented the status of the implementation of the work programme 2025. As of March 2025, 83% of the outputs were in progress and 2% completed. One output had been postponed (deployment of the financial system SUMMA), and 19 outputs (14%) had not yet started. A list of all planned outputs under each of the five Strategic Objectives (SO) was provided in Annex 1 of the document. Stefan Sundbom then briefly presented some examples of main achievements in each of the SOs.

37. The AC Chair reported that the AC had taken note of the fact that 85% of the outputs were in progress or completed and that ECDC was working to further improve the monitoring system, with preparing guiding principles for the definition of SPD outputs and finalising the PRIME dashboards.

The Management Board took note of the monitoring of the implementation of the Work Programme 2025.

***e) Progress report – Overview of 2025 Budget Implementation***

38. Anja Van Brabant gave an overview of the 2024 budget implementation up until 23 March 2025.

39. She explained that from the total budget of EUR 92.6 million, EUR 62.5 million (67,5%) had been committed, and from the committed amount, EUR 13.3 million (14.4%) had been paid, which was comparable with the figures from the same period in 2024. A total of EUR 23.08 million had been carried forward from 2024; of this amount, EUR 5.3 million (23%) had been paid.

The Management Board took note of the progress report- Overview of 2025 Budget Implementation.

***f) Draft Assessment of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2024  
(Document MB63/11)***

40. Stefan Sundbom noted that the policy achievements (part I of the CAAR) had not been discussed in the AC. He briefly described the content of the other parts of the CAAR (part II-V) noting that these include the main building blocks for the Director's Declaration of Assurance and the overall conclusions regarding the implementation of the Internal Control Framework (ICF). Based on the analysis of relevant documents as well as self-assessments performed, it is concluded that no significant weaknesses are reported from the different building blocks that would have an impact on the Director's Declaration of Assurance for 2024. A proposal for the format and content of the Draft MB Assessment of the CAAR 2024 had also been presented to the AC for opinion.

41. The AC Chair reported that ECDC had provided further clarifications on the results of the assessment of the implementation of the ICF including the Internal Control Survey performed in ECDC. The AC had proposed to include the building blocks of assurance in the presentation to the MB to better explain the system in place. The AC recommended the MB to approve the MB analysis and assessment of the CAAR 2024 as presented.

42. Following the presentation, the Chair commented that the assessment of the ICF was indeed an important part of the CAAR and suggested that the full document be shared with the MB for information in the future to provide a better overview. She asked whether there were any objections on the proposed text of the MB assessment; no objections were raised, and the text was thus approved.

The Management Board approved the MB analysis and assessment of the CAAR 2024.

### ***g) Reporting back from the MB working group on revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate***

43. Charlotte Möndel, MB Alternate, Germany, Chair of the MB Working Group on revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate, reported that the working group had held its first meeting via videoconference on 20 March. During the meeting, the working group had selected a Chair and Deputy Chair and agreed on the Terms of Reference of the group. As a next step, the group will analyse the current texts and look at the previous proposals for amendments. The next meeting will take place within a month.

The Management Board took note of the reporting back from the MB working group on revision of the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate.

### ***h) Reporting on additional topics discussed in the Audit Committee***

44. With regards to the regular update on audit activities, the AC Chair reported that no new observations had been received by ECDC, one had been closed by ECDC, and five observations remain open. The IAS recommendation on the Joint Reclassification Committee, planned to be implemented in Q1 2025, had now been finalised and can be sent to the IAS for review. The AC had taken note of the explanations given and will continue to follow the progress on the implementation.

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

## **Update on ECDC Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA) including presentations from the Member States**

45. Vicky Lefevre gave an update on the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Assessments (PHEPA). She presented the schedule for the first three-year cycle of assessment missions noting that eleven missions had been carried out since May 2024, eight were planned for Q2-Q4 2025 and eleven scheduled for 2026. In January 2025, ECDC piloted a PHEPA mission combined with the WHO Joint External Evaluation (JEE) in the Netherlands and later in 2025 two pilot missions would take place combining PHEPA with the DG SANTE F2 One health fact finding mission. For the second 3-year assessment cycle, it is suggested to select fewer in-depth capacities and focus more on the country action plans. A discussion on PHEPA including preliminary aggregated findings from the first missions, is scheduled to take place back-to-back with the Health Security Committee (HSC) plenary in Luxembourg in May.

46. Following the ECDC presentations, members from Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, and Portugal, briefed the MB about the experience from their respective country's perspective. All members stressed the importance of thorough preparation well in advance of the assessment. The technical calls on the in-depth capacities one month prior to the mission had been appreciated. Some challenges were faced in finding the right mix of experts and involving the regional and local level in the exercise. Concerning the joint PHEPA-JEE, the member from the Netherlands mentioned that the joint PHEPA-JEE had been a very positive experience although hugely work and resource intense.

47. In the discussion that followed, it was suggested that it would be useful for the MB as well to hear about the main areas for improvement identified in the first phase of assessments. The MB also discussed that some countries may decide not to publish the assessment report for security or other reasons but, in any case, ECDC had the information and could identify gaps. A further discussion could take place in the HSC on possible ways to share (parts of) the reports between Member States in cases where these are not published.

48. The Chair thanked the MB members for presenting their experience and for their openness. It was confirmed that the country presentations could be shared via the MB Extranet.

The Management Board took note of the update on the PHEPA including presentations from the Member States.

## **Amendment of the Management Board decision on internal rules concerning restrictions of certain rights of data subjects in relation to processing of their personal data (*Document MB63/12*)**

49. Christian Schultheiss, Head of Section, Legal Services, Resource Management Services Unit, ECDC, informed the MB of the need to amend the MB decision from 2019 on internal rules concerning the restriction of certain rights of data subjects in relation to processing of their personal data. The reason for the amendment is to comply with audit recommendations received from the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS). In accordance with the EDPS recommendation, it is suggested to amend Article 4 to explicitly require involvement of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) in all steps of the process and that the DPO's involvement is documented in writing. The MB approved the proposed amendments as indicated in the document.

The Management Board approved the proposed amendment of the MB decision on internal rules concerning restrictions of certain rights of data subjects in relation to processing of their personal data.

## **Nomination of reporting officer for the Director's annual appraisal**

50. This item was discussed in a closed session (MB members only). Kirstine Moll Harboe, MB Member, Denmark, was nominated as reporting officer alongside the two previously appointed reporting officers Lorena Boix Alonso, MB Member, DG SANTE, and Jean-Claude Smith, MB Member, Luxembourg.

The Management Board nominated Kirstine Moll Harboe, MB Member, Denmark, as reporting officer for the Director's annual appraisal.

## **ECDC Chief Scientist's Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Forum (*Document MB63/13*)**

51. Piotr Kramarz summarised some of the main highlights of the work of the Advisory Forum (AF) in 2024. Among the major topics discussed in plenary meetings, he mentioned the survey on public health workforce capacity that had been shared with Member States, the revision of the ECDC Fellowship curriculum, evidence-based public health methods, wastewater-based surveillance and the future direction of the VEBIS project (aimed at estimating vaccine effectiveness). He also provided information on AF working group topics and written consultations over the year as well as suggestions for the future arising from the last AF meeting where working groups had discussed ways to further enhance the ECDC work with the AF. During 2024, ECDC had reactivated the AF preparatory group, composed of several AF members, which proved very helpful in building the meeting agendas and ensuring relevance of the topics.

52. In the discussion that followed, several MB members commented on the workforce capacity survey noting that the lack of clear definitions of different public health professions made it challenging to fill in the survey. The need to take local circumstances into consideration was also stressed. Vicky Lefevre mentioned that after the ECDC survey WHO had published a roadmap on national workforce capacity. ECDC encourages Member States concerned by potential shortages in their public health workforce to assess their current public health workforce situation, needs and opportunities for progress using this WHO roadmap and to set up registries for public health workforce. She agreed that there would need to be a more harmonised approach for a follow-up survey and added that a discussion on the work force capacity survey would also take place in the HSC General Working Group in April.

53. Responding to a question on the recent detection of zoonotic influenza in a sheep in the UK, Piotr Kramarz confirmed that ECDC had received comprehensive information from the UK chief veterinarian.

54. In concluding the discussion, the Chair thanked the Chief Scientist for the report and stressed the importance of synergies between the MB and the AF.

The Management Board took note of the Chief Scientist Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Forum.

## **Discontinuing access by non-institutional third parties to TESSy data (*Document MB63/14 Rev.1*)**

55. Vicky Lefevre informed the MB of the decision to discontinue transfers of case-based TESSy/EpiPulse data to non-institutional third parties (e.g. universities, research centres, private companies) as of end of January 2025 to comply with the EU Data Protection regulation (EUDPR). The reason is that ECDC cannot rely on an adequate legal basis to transfer pseudonymised data related to health to non-institutional third parties. ECDC has consulted the Commission (DG SANTE) on the issue, and the Commission confirmed ECDC's view that there is currently no specific legal basis for transferring case-based health data to non-institutional third parties in ECDC's Founding Regulation or in the SCBTH Regulation. The TESSy policy will therefore be updated to reflect this change. It is expected that the European Health Data Space (EHDS) Regulation will provide a legal basis for ECDC to make pseudonymised data available also to non-institutional third parties, under the conditions established by such Regulation. The obligation to make data available pursuant to EHDS will apply from 26 March 2029.

56. Following the presentation, a few MB members raised concerns noting that this was a sensitive point from the research point of view. They inquired about the number of requests that might be affected and emphasised the importance of finding an interim solution. Members also inquired whether there was a possibility for researchers to request the data on national level. Vicky Lefevre replied that researchers can indeed approach Member States for data requests, in the case GDPR and national legislation apply. She also explained that ECDC always consults Member States before sharing case-based data with third parties and that in certain instances MS were somewhat reluctant to share their data, for instance if they considered that there was no public health benefit in the proposed research or if the requester was a private research entity.

57. The Chair concluded the discussion noting that ECDC had to follow the legislation in place but added that it is in the discretion of the Commission to assess the impact of the data protection rules on public health research.

The Management Board took note of the ECDC decision to discontinue transfers of case-based EpiPulse data to non-institutional third parties.

## **Recent and upcoming ECDC activities in the field of social and behavioural sciences**

58. John Kinsman, Acting Group Leader, Prevention and Behavioural Change, Disease Programmes Unit, ECDC, briefed the MB about ECDC's activities in social and behavioural sciences. He mentioned that ECDC is moving towards an increased focus on social and behavioural sciences which is in line with the expectations of the amended ECDC mandate. He then presented the "ECDC Lighthouse", an online Community of Practice for Prevention launched at the ESCAIDE conference in November 2024. The objective of the Lighthouse is to provide training in the use of behavioural and social sciences for prevention of infectious diseases and to link people with similar experience and expertise together to allow for sharing of best practices. It also includes a "living" knowledge base for its members. It is open for anyone in the EU/EEA to join (excluding those with commercial interests in the area of ECDC's mandate). In addition to the work on the Lighthouse, the Prevention and Behaviour Change team has arranged two training workshops for Ukraine on social and behavioural sciences funded through the EU Initiative on Health Security and has given presentations and trainings for a range of other stakeholders within and outside the EU.



59. The MB members welcomed the ECDC initiative and the increased focus on behavioural insights. Responding to a question on possible support to countries on how to use behavioural science in the area of vaccination and AMR, John Kinsman mentioned that several workshops are planned, including on vaccination later in 2025. He acknowledged that the messaging needs to be tailored to local and sometimes even sub-local level; the "5Cs" model is a helpful tool to be used at local level for understanding facilitating factors and barriers for vaccination in a population. Social media naturally also plays an important role in this context.

The Management Board took note of the update on recent and upcoming ECDC activities in the field of social and behavioural sciences.

## Update on ECDC Compliance: Implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy

60. Marie-Amélie Ekström, Compliance Officer, Resource Management Services Unit, ECDC, updated the MB on the implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy. She recalled the main steps of the process for submitting Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI) and Annual Declarations of Commitment (ADoC) by MB/AF members/alternates/observers and added that non-compliance with the requirement to submit DoI resulted in the prohibition to participate in MB/AF activities and meetings, and the access to documents and procedures shared with MB/AF being cut. She then provided statistics for 2024 noting that the compliance rate for the MB was 94%. A new more user-friendly platform for the submission of electronic DoIs is scheduled to be launched at the end of 2025.

61. The Chair said that she was pleased to see the high compliance rates but invited all MB members to encourage their colleagues to submit any pending DoIs with the aim of reaching 100% compliance.

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

## Update from the European Commission

62. Lorena Boix Alonso, MB Member, DG SANTE, European Commission, thanked the MB members for their input on the Terms of Reference of the fourth external evaluation of ECDC and added that the members will shortly be contacted by the contractor for participating in a survey as part of the evaluation. A call for evidence (public consultation) will be published early April. The presentation also referred to the Commission's ongoing work to develop the Union prevention, preparedness and response plan, which is expected to be published in the autumn. She also mentioned the recent Commission proposal for a Critical Medicines Act and the EU Preparedness Union Strategy to prevent and react to emerging threats and crises.

63. Wolfgang Philipp, MB Alternate, DG HERA, European Commission, briefed the MB about the main findings of the HERA review published on 26 March. He also reported on ongoing work to develop a strategy on medical countermeasures as well as a stockpiling strategy and updated the MB on activities related to joint procurements.

64. Kasia Jurczak, MB Member, DG RTD, European Commission, reported on the work to prepare a new Strategy for European Life Sciences. A Call for Evidence had been published, and she encouraged ECDC and Member States to provide input.

The Management Board took note of the update from the European Commission, including on the fourth external evaluation of ECDC.

## Update from the European Parliament

65. Quique Bassat, MB Member, European Parliament, gave a brief update. He highlighted the recent debate in the Parliament on the Commission proposal on the Critical Medicines Act where competitiveness and strategic partnerships were brought forward. He also referred to recent discussions in the Parliament

Committee on Public Health (SANT) and the exchange of views held in February with the WHO Regional Director for Europe.

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

## Update from the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU

66. Paweł Grzesiowski, MB Member, Poland, briefed the MB on the Polish Presidency of the EU, which started on 1 January 2025. He mentioned that the Presidency focuses on seven security dimensions, one of which is health security. The health priorities include prevention and health promotion, mental health of children and adolescents, digital transformation of healthcare and medicines security. He also informed the MB of recent and upcoming key events noting that the Informal EPSCO Health Council had taken place on 24-25 March and the next Health Council meeting is scheduled on 13 June.

The Management Board took note of the update from the Polish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

## Any other business

67. The Chair thanked all the MB members for their active participation during the meeting. She also thanked the interpreters and the MB Secretariat for their support.

68. The following MB meetings are scheduled to take place in Stockholm on 17-18 June and 25-26 November 2025 respectively.



## Annex: List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Austria	Sigrid Kiermayr	Member
Belgium	Lieven De Raedt ( <i>Deputy Chair</i> )	Member
Bulgaria	Angel Kunchev	Member
Croatia	Bernard Kaić	Member
Cyprus	Constantinos Papantoniou	Member
Czechia	Matyáš Fošum	Alternate
Denmark	Kirstine Moll Harboe	Member
Estonia	Heli Laarmann	Member
Finland	Anni Virolainen-Julkunen	Member
France	Anne-Catherine Viso	Alternate
Germany	Gesa Lücking ( <i>Chair</i> )	Member
	Charlotte Möndel	Alternate
Greece	Christos Hadjichristodoulou	Member
Hungary	Ágnes Dánielisz	Member
Ireland	Richael Duffy	Member
Latvia	Jana Feldmane	Member
Lithuania	Audrius Ščeponavičius	Member
Luxembourg	Jean-Claude Schmit	Member
Malta	Patricia Vella Bonanno	Member
The Netherlands	Frank Kooiman	Member
Poland	Paweł Grzesiowski	Member
Portugal	Cristina Abreu Santos	Alternate
Romania	Amalia Serban	Member
Slovakia	Martin Sojka	Member
Slovenia	Mario Fafangel	Member

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Spain	Pedro Gullón Tosio	Member
Sweden	Olivia Wigzell	Member
<b>European Parliament</b>		
	Quique Bassat	Member
<b>European Commission</b>		
DG SANTE	Lorena Boix Alonso	Member
DG HERA	Wolfgang Philipp	Alternate
DG RTD	Kasia Jurczak	Member
<b>EEA Countries</b>		
Iceland	Ásthildur Knútsdóttir	Member
Liechtenstein	Silvia Dehler	Member
Norway	Øystein Riise	Member