



ECDC Management Board

Minutes of the Twenty-third Meeting of the ECDC Management Board

Stockholm, 9-10 November 2011

Adopted by the Management Board at its Twenty-fourth meeting, 28-29 March 2012

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Summary of Proceedings – 23rd Management Board meeting

The Twenty-third ECDC Management Board (MB) meeting convened in Stockholm, Sweden, on 9-10 November 2011.

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

The Chair welcomed all the participants to the Twenty-third meeting of the Management Board. He recalled the ESCAIDE 2011 gala dinner and the EPIET awards ceremony, which took place the previous evening at Berns Salonger in central Stockholm, and gave a special thanks to the colleagues in ECDC for having provided such an opportunity to the Board to be a part of this event.

The Chair then welcomed the newly appointed members and invited experts and noted the apologies.

Introduction from Dr Marc Sprenger, Director, ECDC

Marc Sprenger, Director of ECDC, welcomed the participants to Stockholm. He also recalled the ESCAIDE conference (6-8 November 2011) and the gala dinner for the EPIET fellows. He thereafter introduced Rebecca Trott, the new Senior Legal Adviser and Head of the Legal and Procurement Section, and informed delegates of the upcoming recruitments.

Item 1: Adoption of the draft agenda (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) *(Documents MB23/2 Rev.2, MB23/3 Rev.1)*¹

It was suggested to move the decision on the Work Programme to the second day of the meeting. The draft agenda was accepted with no further changes.

Item 2: Adoption of the draft minutes of the 22nd meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 15-16 June 2011) *(Document MB23/4)*²

With reference to item 12, ECDC WP priorities, the Member of France requested a change of text in paragraph 99. Carmen Amela Heras, Member, Spain, expressed that when the 'Draft Communication of MB on the EU support for traceability of tissues and cells' was adopted by the Management Board, Spain also abstained. Consequently, she requested that such be reflected in the minutes of the 22nd Management Board meeting.

Following the above-noted request, the draft minutes of the Twenty-second meeting were adopted.

Item 3: ECDC Annual Work Programme 2012 *(Document MB23/5 Rev.2)*³

The Management Board unanimously adopted the Annual Work Programme 2012 (document MB23/5 Rev.2).

¹ Item for decision

² Item for decision

³ Item for decision

The Chair concluded that before the June 2012 MB meeting, a preliminary draft of the Work Programme for 2013 could be sent out to the Board in order to facilitate discussions and ease the adoption process at the end of the year.

Item 8: Reflections on outbreak of Shiga toxin producing *E. coli* centred on northern Germany

Item 8a: Dr Gérard Krause, Robert Koch-Institut, Germany

Gérard Krause, Robert Koch-Institut, Germany, gave a presentation on the events in time relating to the recent *E. coli* outbreak.⁴ The presentation was praised by all Members of the Management Board.

Item 8b: Mr John F Ryan, European Commission

John F Ryan, European Commission, highlighted that, in addition to the health impact, the event led to considerable economic losses, including compensation to farmers, and dealing with the ban on vegetables exports from the EU to third countries.⁵ He remarked on the meetings of the health ministers (June 2011) and agriculture ministers (July 2011) in order to draw upon the lessons learnt. Overall, the Commission is in favour of bringing together the public health and the food safety counterparts to draw lessons from this event. He also informed that a meeting between the Health Security Committee/EWRS Contact points and the Chief Veterinary Officers will convene on 18 November 2011 for this purpose.⁶

Item 8c: ECDC

Denis Coulombier, Head of Surveillance and Response Support Unit, presented the reflections of the ECDC.⁷

Item 8d: Discussion

A discussion ensued following the presentations from Germany, the European Commission and ECDC.

Item 10: Introduction from Mrs Marina Yannakoudakis, Member, European Parliament and contact point for ECDC on the Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Marina Yannakoudakis, Member of the European Parliament and the contact point for ECDC on the Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee), presented herself to the MB. She informed the MB of the ENVI Committee visit in the beginning of September 2011 and highlighted the utility and positive outcomes of that event. The priority is to set up a better structure, guidelines, between the ECDC and the Parliament, and also strengthening the relationship between the Members of the Board representing the Parliament and the ENVI Committee. She concluded by stating that the Board Members are very welcome to approach her.

⁴ Item 8a - EHEC outbreak (G Krause)

⁵ Item 8b - E coli outbreak lessons learnt (J F Ryan)

⁶ European Commission meeting on follow up to EHEC outbreak (18 November 2011).

⁷ Item 8c - STEC outbreak in Germany_ECDC reflections (D Coulombier)

Item 4: Summary of discussions held at the 18th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (8 November 2011) including its recommendations

Item 4a: Update from the Audit Committee

Irène Nilsson-Carlsson, Chair of the Audit Committee and Member of the Board, Sweden, briefly informed the MB of the outcomes of the 18th ECDC Audit Committee meeting which had convened on the previous day (8 November 2011). She also remarked upon the low participation in AC meetings and welcomed interested Members of the Board to join the Committee.

Item 4b: Update of the IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2011-2013 Mr Tapani Marttala, European Commission, IAS (Document MB23/6)⁸

Tapani Marttala, IAS, European Commission, presented an overview of the IAS by introducing its structure. He also informed the Board on how the Service works,⁹ and then proceeded to present the IAS Strategic Audit Plan for 2012 and 2013.¹⁰

The MB endorsed the IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2011-2013 (Document MB23/6).

Item 4e: Rules on Contribution of Expenses for Candidates Invited to Attend Selection Procedures or Medical Examinations (Document MB23/9)

The Management Board took note of the changes in the rules on contribution of expenses for candidates invited to attend selection procedures or medical examinations (Document MB23/9).

Item 4c: Budget and Establishment Table 2012 (Document MB23/7)¹¹

The Budget and Establishment Table 2012 was adopted with one abstention from Germany (Document MB23/7). It was noted that once Germany receives further clarifications to the posed questions, unanimous agreement may be achieved.

Item 4d: Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2011 (Document MB23/8 Rev.1)

The Board took note of the second supplementary and amending budget 2012 (Document MB23/8 Rev.1).

Item 9: Director's briefing on the main activities of the ECDC since the last meeting of the Management Board

The Board took note of the main activities of the ECDC since the last meeting in June.

⁸ Item for decision

⁹ Item 4b - IAS Audit of EU Decentralised Agencies (T Marttala)

¹⁰ Item 4b - IAS Meetings in ECDC_Audit topic 2012 (T Marttala)

¹¹ Item for decision

Item 5: External Evaluation of ECDC for 2012

Item 5a: Draft Terms of Reference for the Second Independent External Evaluation of the ECDC (Document MB23/10)¹²

The Management Board agreed to submit further comments on the Terms of Reference of the Second Independent External Evaluation of ECDC via written procedure within two weeks of this meeting. Thereafter, the MEES Committee will strive to incorporate as many of these as feasible and duly approve the final text on behalf of the Management Board. Notwithstanding the impending written procedure, the Board unanimously adopted the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee on the External Evaluation and authorised the Members of the Steering Committee to finalise the detailed work on behalf of the Board based on the comments received during the written procedure.

It was requested that the Steering Committee provide an update on the latest developments of the process during the next Management Board meeting in March 2012.

It was decided that the Second Meeting of the ECDC MB External Evaluation Steering Committee will convene on 13 December in Brussels, Belgium. It was also proposed to seek expressions of interest from the Management Board in order to broaden the membership of the Steering Committee and to ensure that the work is completed in a timely manner. It was agreed that this would be done via written procedure.

Item 5b: Report: Aggregated comments received from Management Board members on questions related to the External Evaluation (Document MB23/11)

The MB took note of the report with the aggregated comments received from the MB Members on questions related to the external evaluation (please refer to item 5a).

Item 6: Public Health Microbiology Update

Item 6a: Update to the position statement of the Commission and ECDC on human pathogen laboratories: a joint vision and strategy for the future (Document MB23/12)¹³

The Management Board took note of the Update to the position statement of the Commission and ECDC on human pathogen laboratories: a joint vision and strategy for the future, with a caveat that the document is not final (document MB23/12). An updated version of the document is expected to be presented in the June 2012 Management Board meeting. It was stressed by some members that coordination of activities with WHO/Euro should be ensured.

Item 6b: Updated ECDC Public Health Microbiology Strategy and Work Plan 2012-2016 (Document MB23/13)

The Management Board took note of the updated ECDC Public Health Microbiology Strategy and Work Plan 2012-2016 (document MB23/13).

¹² Item for decision

¹³ Item for decision

Item 11: Review of ECDC's role in Public Health Events (PHE)

Item 11a: Dr Donato Greco (Istituto Superiore di Sanità) (Document MB23/14)

Donato Greco, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy, presented the evaluation of ECDC's pandemic response 2009-2010.¹⁴

Item 11b: ECDC

Denis Coulombier, Head of Surveillance and Response Support Unit, noted some reflections from ECDC's side.

Item 11c: Discussion

The Management Board took note of the review of ECDC's role in Public Health Events (document MB3/14). It was agreed that ECDC will formulate a response to the evaluation of the pandemic at the forthcoming meeting in March 2012.

Item 18: Update regarding the EU Presidency

Item 18b: Update from Denmark

Else Smith, Member, Denmark, informed the MB of the overall priorities and important events during the Danish EU Presidency.¹⁵

Item 7: Policy on data submission, access, and use of data within TESSy (2011 revision) (Document MB23/17)¹⁶

The Management Board approved the changes (document MB23/17).
A questionnaire in respect to the fee-for-service study will be sent out to all Members of the Management Board and the matter will further be discussed at the next MB meeting.

Item 14: Update on matters concerning the Seat Agreement

Item 14a: Update from ECDC Staff Committee

Hakim Khenniche, Logistic Coordinator, Emergency Operations Centre, ECDC, and Member of the Staff Committee, presented an update on the latest developments in the area of the staff situation in ECDC and in Sweden.¹⁷ Various changes since the Seat Agreement discussions in 2010 were highlighted and five out of six of the following issues have since been resolved: (1) healthcare access; (2) status of ECDC family members; (3) Personal Number; (4) Voting rights; (5) No income registered in Tax Department database.¹⁸ Staff accommodation issues were also mentioned.¹⁹

¹⁴ Item 11a - PHE evaluation (D Greco)

¹⁵ Item 18b - Danish EU Presidency (E Smith)

¹⁶ Item for decision

¹⁷ Item 14a - ECDC Staff Committee (H Khenniche)

¹⁸ The remaining unresolved matter concerns the focal points for staff issues in the Swedish Government.

¹⁹ Please refer to the letter by the ECDC Staff Committee to the ECDC Director, 12 October 2011 and the reply from the Director to the Staff Committee, dated 8 November (handed out at the meeting)

Item 14b: Update from Sweden and ECDC

Irène Nilsson-Carlsson, Member, Sweden, reflected on the Staff Committee presentation and presented the main issues raised from Sweden's perspective.

ECDC Director activated the Management Board Working Group established to work on the ECDC Building Project²⁰ and will continue to keep the MB posted on any new developments.

Item 16: Sustainable development and implementation of the EPIET: Multi-annual Strategic vision (Document MB23/18)

The Management Board took note of the document and offered their guidance and support on facilitation of transition to Host Institute Grants in 2012 and the promotion of EPIET Associated Programme at Member State levels. Concern was expressed by some members regarding return for Member States if trainees do not return to work in home administrations. (document MB23/18)

A report on the follow-up of fellowship training will be presented to the Management Board at a forthcoming meeting in 2012.

Item 12: Update on EU support for vigilance and traceability of tissues and cells

Due to time constraints, John F Ryan, European Commission, noted that it will be sufficient to include a reference to his PowerPoint presentation in the minutes.²¹

Item 19: Any other business

There was no other business.

Closing comments from the Chair

The Chair summarised the meeting and thanked everyone for the fruitful discussions. He extended special thank you to the staff of ECDC and also to the interpreters. He then took the opportunity to wish everyone a joyful holiday season and much success for the New Year.

²⁰ See letter from ECDC Director to ECDC Management Board dated 14 December 2010. Members of the MB Working Group on the building project include Germany, the European Parliament, Sweden, the European Commission and the Chair of the Management Board. The Director of ECDC shall also participate in the Working Group, including additional staff members who shall be invited to join the Group in due course.

²¹ Please refer to John F Ryan's PowerPoint presentation entitled, "EU support for tissues and cells – preparatory meeting to the Steering Group", which can be accessed via the password protected MB (Extranet) Workspace.

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

1. The Chair welcomed all the participants to the Twenty-third meeting of the Management Board. He recalled the ESCAIDE 2011 gala dinner and the EPIET awards ceremony, which took place the previous evening at Berns Salonger in central Stockholm, and gave a special thanks to the colleagues in ECDC for having provided such an opportunity to the Board to be a part of this event.
2. The Chair then welcomed Jozef Dlhý from the Czech Republic, newly appointed Alternate, Hanna Páva from Hungary, newly appointed Member, Donato Greco from Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy, Gérard Krause from the Robert Koch-Institut, Germany, Tapani Marttala, Internal Audit Service, European Commission, Michel Pletschette, European Commission, and Marina Yannakoudakis from the European Parliament.
3. Apologies were received from Martin Seychell, European Commission (proxy given to John F Ryan, European Commission), Line Matthiessen-Guyader, European Commission, Liechtenstein and Romania (proxy given to Portugal).

Introduction from Dr Marc Sprenger, Director, ECDC

4. Marc Sprenger, Director of ECDC, welcomed the participants to Stockholm. He also recalled the ESCAIDE conference (6-8 November 2011) and the gala dinner for the EPIET fellows. Rebecca Trott, the new Senior Legal Adviser and Head of the Legal and Procurement Section, was introduced to the Board. The Director also informed delegates of the upcoming recruitments: Head of ICT Section, Deputy Head of Resource Management and Coordination Unit, including the new Head of the TB Disease Programme.

Item 1: Adoption of the draft agenda (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) *(Documents MB23/2 Rev.2, MB23/3 Rev.1)*²²

5. In referring to the adoption of the draft agenda, Françoise Weber, Member, France, remarked on the difficulty of addressing the Work Programme without initially discussing some other items. It was then suggested to move the decision on the Work Programme to the second day of the meeting. The Chair acknowledged this while expressing his concerns of the time constraints. The Director proposed to start discussing the Work Programme as scheduled and subsequently agreed that a decision be made by the Board on the second day of the meeting. The Chair accepted this proposal.
6. The draft agenda was thereafter accepted with no further changes.
7. The following declarations of interest were noted: John F Ryan, Member, European Commission, stated, in relation to item 3 (ECDC Annual Work Programme 2012) and all other items in the agenda related to the Work Programme, that he is the Head of Communicable Disease Unit at the European Commission and sub-delegated authorising officer for public health budget line. He also declared same in reference to the item 4, Summary of discussions held at the 18th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (8 November 2011) including its recommendations. For the item 5, External evaluation of ECDC for 2012, John F Ryan noted that he is the member of the external evaluation Steering Committee. Same was indicated by Helen Shirley-Quirk, Member, United Kingdom. Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson, Member, Sweden, as well as Anita Janelm, Alternate, Sweden, noted that they are the representatives of Sweden (in relation to item 14, Update on matters concerning the Seat Agreement). For item 16, Sustainable development and implementaton of the EPIET: Multi-annual strategic vision, both Françoise Weber, Member, and Anne-Catherine Viso, Alternate, France, declared that the InVS is one of the EPIET Scientific Coordinators. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen, Alternate, Finland, noted that she is participating in the work of the Disease Specific Networks/Disease Specific Programmes IBD, IPD and *C. Difficile* (in reference to items 3, ECDC

²² Item for decision

Annual Work Programme 2012, and 7, Policy on data submission, access, and use of data within TESSy). In reference to item 6 on Public Health Microbiology update, she stated that she is the NMFP for Finland.

Item 2: Adoption of the draft minutes of the 22nd meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 15-16 June 2011) (Document MB23/4)²³

8. With reference to item 12, ECDC WP priorities, the Member of France requested a change of text in paragraph 99. Carmen Amela Heras, Member, Spain, expressed that when the 'Draft Communication of MB on the EU support for traceability of tissues and cells' was adopted by the Management Board, Spain also abstained. Consequently, she requested that such be reflected in the minutes of the 22nd Management Board meeting.

9. Following the above-noted request, the draft minutes of the Twenty-second meeting were adopted.

Item 3: ECDC Annual Work Programme 2012 (Document MB23/5 Rev.2)²⁴

10. Following an overview of the ECDC Annual Work Programme for 2012,²⁵ the Director noted that this Work Programme has been the result of an interactive process, and further efforts have been made to accommodate input from the Advisory Forum, suggestions made by the Management Board, comments from the Commission, as well as recommendations received from the Internal Audit Service (IAS). He also highlighted that this is the first Work Programme prepared after the reorganisation. Negotiations were needed in the new matrix since the Disease Programmes are now responsible for their own programmes, but obtain their resources from the Units. The objectives and indicators have been developed for each of the targets and more emphasis has been placed on the disease specific work. In 2012, ECDC will start preparing its new Multi-annual Work Programme (2014-2020).

11. In reference to the "wish list" received from the MB members during the written consultation, ECDC noted the new and most important items as a first step, for instance, measles elimination, reference laboratories, an assessment tool for candidate countries, etc. Following the consultation, all of the Heads of Units and Disease Programmes were also consulted in order to ascertain which specific activities should be developed. The Director expressed his satisfaction for setting very clear priorities, as well as for the inclusion of the activity based budget (ABB) as part of the planning, for the first time. He also extended a special thanks of appreciation to Philippe Harant, Head of Section, Quality Management, Resource Management and Coordination Unit, for steering the entire process and making it a success. The Director also thanked the Senior Management Team (SMT), staff from the Disease Programmes, including all staff working in managerial capacities in the Centre.

12. While welcoming improvements to the document, providing more transparency on the allocation of resources, John F Ryan, European Commission, expressed some reservations with respect to Partnerships, and informed that a number of remarks had been sent to ECDC via email the preceding day.²⁶ He expressly recalled that ECDC's international work is clearly limited by its mandate, notwithstanding the need to flag up the issue of enlargement countries. He also suggested the inclusion of an overall assessment of how the crises in Haiti and/or the Dominican Republic were integrated into the Work Programme. He then noted that the focus of ECDC needs to be reinforced in respect to its legal basis within the EU.

13. In agreeing with the Commission's previous remarks, the representative of the European Parliament, Jacques Scheres, also extended his gratitude to those who had worked diligently on the

²³ Item for decision

²⁴ Item for decision

²⁵ Item 3 - ECDC Annual Work Programme 2012 (M Sprenger)

²⁶ Annex 1

Work Programme. He then inquired whether there is much difference between the priorities of the Advisory Forum and the Management Board per se.

14. The Member of Germany also praised the Work Programme 2012, and extended his appreciation to Philippe Harant, including those who had worked on this key document. While considering the importance of the Work Programme, the German Member insisted that such a document be provided to the MB in sufficient time in order to fully examine and digest the information properly. He then suggested that the Board also be provided with the list of comments from the Commission in sufficient time in the future. In reference to the previous comments on the role of Advisory Forum, he asked that the MB be informed of discussions carried out during AF meetings.

15. The Member of Denmark joined in complimenting ECDC staff and others involved with the development of the presented Work Programme. She also concurred that it would be more constructive to receive the document well in advance of the Board meeting.

16. The Dutch Member favoured the readability of the document, coupled with the clear connection between staff, indicators and processes/activities. In line with the previous comment from the Commission regarding Partnerships, he conveyed that the division between the activities of WHO and the ECDC should be clear in order to avoid potential overlapping of activities.

17. The Italian Member supported the Work Programme. While highlighting risk assessment and risk management issues, he noted that Member States need to work closely together with the Commission. ECDC run some activities to support Commission work and some to support the Member States. Above all, transparency is a key factor, and as such, all procedures must be very clear.

18. The French Member also expressed her compliments for the highly satisfactory work carried out on the document. She also noted the importance of understanding the logic behind each activity. Due to the possible difficulty in discussing the connection between the role of the Commission, Member States and ECDC, it was proposed to consider separately presenting these relationships. France would also like to better understand the rationale of each programme, and consequently, who is requesting it (ECDC, the Member States, partners, etc.).

19. The Swedish Member of the Board stated that the Member States need to possess the capacities in order to follow up on the initiatives of ECDC.

20. The Director agreed that the Board be informed of the activities of the Advisory Forum and suggested that the minutes of AF meetings be disseminated to the Board for information.²⁷ In terms of the Work Programme, the feedback received from the Advisory Forum was based on a more technical level. In reference to the comments on cooperation with WHO, the ECDC Director informed that key discussions will be held with WHO/Euro in a few weeks' time in order to clearly identify the activities of both parties. With regards to an earlier comment from Italy, the Director recalled that ECDC can only assist the Member States if the activity has already been listed in the Work Programme.

21. Jacques Scheres, Member, European Parliament, welcomed the idea of receiving more information on the work of the Advisory Forum. He also highlighted the need for good collaboration between WHO and ECDC in order to minimise any overlapping of activities.

22. John F Ryan affirmed that the Commission fully supports transparency, and informed that the majority of joint meetings were arranged with ECDC during the developmental stage of the Work Programme in order to discuss indicators, international cooperation and partnerships. Complementarity between ECDC and IHR was also discussed. In conclusion, he stated that the comments of the Commission on the draft work plan could for the future be shared with the Board without any hesitation. In relation to the risk management function, it will be more clear after the legislative procedure has been changed and the Commission can gladly present this draft Council and Parliament Decision on serious cross border health threats to the Board for their information.

23. The Finnish Alternate welcomed the upcoming meeting between WHO and ECDC. It was also noted that ECDC should avoid allocating resources for double work; however, this is difficult to achieve if discussions with WHO are not conducted at an earlier stage, during the document's

²⁷ The Minutes of the Advisory Forum can be made available to the Management Board via the Workspace (Extranet).

preparation. Thus, ECDC is responsible for ensuring that all parties are involved at the start of the process.

24. A question was raised in relation to ECDC's mandate and particularly who decides whether a request for scientific advice is within or outside the mandate. Johan Giesecke, Chief Scientist, ECDC, responded that following receipt of a request for scientific advice, the remit is initially verified. Thereafter, the question is further defined and the answer is subsequently developed, with or without the assistance of external experts, depending on the nature of the topic. The timeline of the process also depends further on the content of the request.

25. There was some confusion with regards to the earlier comments of the Director in respect to cooperation with WHO. Since ECDC has an Administrative Agreement with WHO/Europe, it should be possible for the former to ascertain whether WHO should have a similar programme. It was noted by the Director of ECDC that the issue of overlapping work shall always prevail and thus the Member States should coordinate this in their home countries. It was proposed to have a project where the ECDC demonstrates work conducted on all levels, while specifically underscoring which activities are conducted by WHO and ECDC.

26. In referring to the second round of discussions, the Chair proposed that the Management Board address their concerns by discussing the Work Programme from chapter to chapter.

27. In reference to the overlapping of activities, the Director informed that ECDC reacts to the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) in anticipation of no duplication of work or activities. The Chair added that while overlapping of activities should be avoided, synchronisation between the two Bodies should occur.

28. Under measles elimination, the Member from Germany requested further information on the ECDC multilingual website on vaccination. It was noted that it would be useful to be aware of what WHO has planned for measles in order to avoid overlapping and/or potential differences in the priorities. Spain also agreed that it would be useful to be familiar with the programme of WHO in advance to assess whether the former's activities can serve to complement the work of ECDC.

29. In the light of discussions on measles and overlapping of activities, the Member of Belgium pointed out the existing problems of data sharing of personal identifiers of measles cases between ECDC and WHO/Euro. He noted that Belgium has always tried to provide data for both organisations. However, in the meeting between WHO/Euro and ECDC, it could be further clarified how cooperation between the two organisations works in reality.

30. The Director noted that the priority area, measles elimination, was strongly suggested by the Advisory Forum and in the comments received from Board Members. Karl Ekdahl, Head, Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit, ECDC, added that many of the issues related to measles elimination in the Work Programme are related to communication. In response to a question from the German Board Member on the development of a multilingual website on measles vaccination, it was stated that the target groups of this website will be experts and professionals. ECDC is trying to ensure no overlapping of work with WHO/Euro and thus ECDC is involved in several working groups with the former. It is foreseen to initiate preparations for the multilingual website on this issue during 2012 (to go live in 2013). The end result in 2012 should include an inventory of all arguments pro and against vaccination.

31. Denis Coulombier, Head of Surveillance and Response Support Unit, ECDC, recalled the data protection directive and the efforts to ensure implementation by the Member States. Ten days prior to the MB meeting, a letter from WHO/Euro was received describing the data restrictions according to their system. This will be discussed in depth at the imminent WHO/Euro - ECDC Meeting.

32. Denmark raised concerns over ECDC's multilingual website on vaccination, and underlined the possibility that variations may exist in terms of information contained on websites at the national level versus ECDC's website.

33. The Chair adjourned this plenary session and announced that discussions on the Work Programme would resume later during the meeting.

Item 8: Reflections on outbreak of Shiga toxin producing *E. coli* centred on northern Germany

Item 8a: Dr Gérard Krause, Robert Koch-Institut, Germany

34. Gérard Krause, Robert Koch-Institut, Germany, gave a presentation on the events in time relating to the recent *E. coli* outbreak.²⁸ In his conclusions, he pointed to the issue of communication, among one of the lessons learned, and cited alarming experiences in which he received many requests based on press releases stemming from reports he himself had not submitted. The presentation was praised by all Members of the Management Board.

Item 8b: Mr John F Ryan, European Commission

35. John F Ryan, European Commission, highlighted that, in addition to the health impact, the event led to considerable economic losses, including compensation to farmers, and dealing with the ban on vegetables exports from the EU to third countries.²⁹ He remarked on the meetings of the health ministers (June 2011) and agriculture ministers (July 2011) in order to draw upon the lessons learnt. Overall, the Commission is in favour of bringing together the public health and the food safety counterparts to draw lessons from this event. He also informed that a meeting between the Health Security Committee/EWRS Contact points and the Chief Veterinary Officers will convene on 18 November 2011 for this purpose.³⁰

Item 8c: ECDC

36. Denis Coulombier, Head of Surveillance and Response Support Unit, presented the reflections of the ECDC.³¹

Item 8d: Discussion

37. The Member of Austria took the opportunity to thank Germany for the excellent work carried out during the outbreak. Two important points were raised, namely, cooperation between the Member States, and secondly, the timeliness of receiving information via the monitoring systems; thus the importance of learning to react immediately, in real time.

38. The Danish Board Member inquired about whether any other outbreaks of the same bacteria is known. She also expressed that she does not fully support the idea of a liaison officer, even though it is understood that there should at least be an option. In the event that a liaison officer is actually used, this matter should be clarified during the time of 'peace' as opposed to an actual crisis.

39. One Member asked whether it would be possible to place more emphasis on the cultivation of the seeds which, in this case, resulted in the outbreak.

40. The Member of France expressed immense admiration for the work that Germany had carried out during the outbreak. She remarked, "while an epidemic cannot be stopped, it can certainly be managed by Member States." She added that "everyone can learn from the lessons of this crisis and improve upon communication and set up clear procedures." She also maintained that cooperation between the countries is crucial and should be done in a manner where information is shared in a timely manner, without interfering in the process. She also requested to obtain more information regarding the liaison officer.

41. The Member of Spain also thanked Gérard Krause for his comprehensive presentation. She also highlighted two issues, firstly, i) Communication: The past crisis demonstrated how information emanating from one country can have a significant impact on the other country(ies). Thus it would be wise to have protocols in place. Secondly, risk assessments: These could take a long time and it is

²⁸ Item 8a - EHEC outbreak (G Krause)

²⁹ Item 8b - E coli outbreak lessons learnt (J F Ryan)

³⁰ European Commission meeting on follow up to EHEC outbreak (18 November 2011).

³¹ Item 8c - STEC outbreak in Germany_ECDC reflections (D Coulombier)

necessary to find a format which would work best. Risk management tied to a crisis can be very difficult. It is important to present a common approach during a crisis when time is of the essence. In the case of EHEC, non-validated information was released.

42. In referring to all the issues raised by the previous speakers, the Member of Italy remarked that at the end of the day, the decisions are political, notwithstanding financial considerations. He recalled a university study conducted a few years ago, in cooperation with EFSA, to strive for a more predictive approach to an outbreak. In the end, however, no predictive mechanism was in place prior to the EHEC crisis.

43. The German Member stated that, in general, cooperation between the health and the food agencies needs to be improved, not just in his country, but also in Europe. He also stressed the importance of training on how to deal with the press and media. With regards to the liaison officer, while it is a good idea, his/her role and responsibilities during a given crisis need to be very clear. A political decision needs to be taken on whether a warning on public health is to be issued or not. In the case of E.coli, a message was sent out without proper verification, and as a result, significant damage was done to the cucumber industry in Spain. The Member of Germany also expressed his dismay that he had not been informed in sufficient time in regard to a meeting³² noted earlier by the Commission. He then suggested that in the future, all such invitations be sent out to Member States well in advance of the meeting.

44. In concurring with the Member of Italy regarding inherent challenges posed by politicians, the Member of the United Kingdom signalled the importance of their education and also training that needs to be done each time with new governments. It was proposed to examine how the scientific community can be trained to best communicate with the media. In relation to cooperation within the United Kingdom, there is a need to enhance the joint work of the involved sectors, such as hospitals, etc. It was requested to obtain more information on the clinical assistance provided by ECDC.

45. A Member inquired whether any of the lessons learnt from the outbreak could have been applied to the Work Programme and also to the Health Security Initiative of the Commission.

46. Gérard Krause thanked the MB for their support and praise. In reference to previous questions, he underlined the extraordinary nature of the bacteria in the outbreak and the lack of knowledge of other outbreaks within this particular strain. He also noted the global dimension in respect to the growing conditions of food. In referring to the timeliness of information, he remarked that "to detect an outbreak in time is not so much related to information flow from point A to point B, but rather to detect the bacteria from the beginning." He added that, due to budgetary constraints, only the most superficial tests are usually carried out. In times of crises, he highlighted the importance of having strong national institutes with skilled staff in place, but crucially to have locally qualified personnel on site. In reference to cooperation with clinicians, there should be no interference in their work at the national level. In Germany, the clinical society is strong and independent; thus there is no need for moderating their activities. An exchange of information is always welcome. He also mentioned that cooperation between the food safety and public health authorities works very well in Germany. Lastly, Gérard Krause considered that a liaison officer is meant to facilitate the information flow between the two agencies, which is useful. As a caveat, however, the liaison officer should be fluent in the language of the place he/she has been assigned to, otherwise unnecessary additional problems may incur as a result. It was noted that the requirement for a liaison officer should perhaps be decided upon on a case-by-case basis.

47. The Director in turn thanked Gérard Krause and the RKI for their excellent work. While noting that the liaison officer could also be a critical reviewer, he suggested discussing this further at the next Board meeting.

³² See footnote 36 above.

Item 10: Introduction from Mrs Marina Yannakoudakis, Member, European Parliament and contact point for ECDC on the Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

48. Marina Yannakoudakis, Member of the European Parliament and the contact point for ECDC on the Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee), presented herself to the MB. Her assignment started in October 2009. She informed the MB of the ENVI Committee visit in the beginning of September 2011 and highlighted the utility and positive outcomes of that event. The priority is to set up a better structure, guidelines, between the ECDC and the Parliament, and also strengthening the relationship between the Members of the Board representing the Parliament and the ENVI Committee. She highlighted the challenging times the Parliament is enduring as the rest of Europe, and noted that the Parliament is seeking better value for money from all of the EU Agencies. Thus it is vital that the Parliament representatives at the Board are fully informed about the expectations from the Parliament. The ENVI Committee from their side will help to deliver the programme of the ECDC. She concluded by stating that the Board Members are very welcome to approach her.

49. Denmark took the opportunity to thank Marina Yannakoudakis for her introduction and noted the highly impressive extent to which ECDC has evolved considering the short time in which the Centre has been in existence.

50. The Member of Sweden questioned what is meant by better value for money in the case of ECDC. In her reply, Ms Marina Yannakoudakis responded that the added value rests with the fact that the Centre is functioning properly, as witnessed in the case of H1N1, and more recently, E.coli outbreaks.

51. Following a question from the Chair, Marina Yannakoudakis responded that she is aiming for a more structured relationship between herself and the Parliament representatives on the MB, in particular, she would like to be informed in advance of what is on the agenda of the MB, and to have contact with the Parliament representatives before and after Board meetings.

52. The Director made reference to meetings held at the European Parliament on behalf of ECDC, such as the World AIDS Day seminars. He underlined the importance of the Parliament in seeking technical expertise from ECDC. He thereafter asked about the reputation of ECDC in the ENVI Committee. Marina Yannakoudakis remarked that, given the agenda for the Parliament is very full, Agencies do not always have a high profile within Parliament. Nonetheless, because the ECDC Director is a frequent visitor to Parliament, it is building up a profile. Marc Sprenger happened to be speaking to the ENVI Committee in May when the outbreak of Shiga toxin producing E. coli started in Germany. The MEPs had found his briefing on this outbreak very useful. In Marina Yannakoudakis's opinion, "ECDC happens to be strong in the Parliament at the moment." She expressed her intention to promote ECDC as much as possible at the Parliament.

53. Jacques Scheres, European Parliament, thanked Marina Yannakoudakis for her engaging introduction.

54. The Chair informed the Members of the Board that the representative of Luxembourg had to depart suddenly due to unforeseen circumstances. He also announced that the Member of the Netherlands brought with him copies of DVDs entitled, "Legionella, 10 years since the last outbreak of the disease in the Netherlands" in order to share them with the Board.

Item 3: ECDC Annual Work Programme 2012 (Document MB23/5 Rev.2) (Continued)

55. In reference to the microbiology capacity strengthening, Denmark and the United Kingdom both questioned whether ECDC can be certain that all staff who receive training are really adding value to the end result. It was also suggested to examine the overall balance of the programme prior to delving into the Disease Programmes (DPs). Generally, in the budget, the funding of the DPs has been decreased. It was noted that the budget should be discussed jointly with the Work Programme.

56. The Member of France pointed out that clarity is needed to show the link between the laboratory network (WHO, ECDC and the Member States) and the role of the Commission. A comment was also made in respect to the SoHO issue wherein there are legal concerns and thus there is remit to accept this part of the project. It was also questioned why SoHO is included in the priorities as it should not be covered by ECDC. With regards to the Competent Bodies, it should not be forgotten that there are in some cases more than one competent body in a Member State. Therefore, the appropriate wording should be the "one Coordinating Competent Body" approach in all documents.

57. In acknowledging the previous comments made by the Members, the Director agreed that it is highly important to balance the EPIET programme with other activities and that this has been discussed in the Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings. He also recalled the positive outcome of the official evaluation of the EPIET programme. With regards to the budget for the DPs, the Director stated while it is always preferable to increase the budget for the DPs and to decrease the budget for administration, this is difficult to achieve in reality.

58. In referring to health inequalities and migrant health, the Member of Italy questioned the relevance of ECDC working with chronic diseases. The Director replied that while ECDC is definitely not responsible for curing alcoholism, for example, it relates to other diseases which fall under its remit. Johan Giesecke, Chief Scientist, recalled that acting on determinants of non communicable diseases might also have an impact on communicable diseases, i.e. the joint report with the EMCDDA described how methadone, which represents the best cure for drug abusers, has also an indirect impact on reducing the burden of communicable diseases in this population.

59. Following a comment from Lithuania, the Director agreed that health inequalities should be mentioned in all of the DPs. He added that ECDC will look into how this could be incorporated into the Programme.

60. John F Ryan recalled the minutes of the last MB meeting in June 2011, in which it was clearly decided that some of the proposed activities shall be taken forward and included in the Work Programme. He also referred to the paragraph in the Work Programme where the tasks for SoHO are listed. He noted that the issue was who does what between the two Agencies, ECDC and the EMA, and it is not a problem to discuss this further. There will be bilateral meetings held in order to clarify the last outstanding issues. With regards to the legal basis, the Commission can review this to ensure legal clarity and inform the Management Board accordingly. However, it is not preferred to put the activities on hold until the regulations are changed. Again, the activities listed in the Work Programme have been previously discussed at the Board meetings and should therefore be included in the Programme as is.

61. The German Member stated that the Centre's activities within the framework of the ECDC mandate should be summed up. He then suggested to delete the first paragraph on page seven³³. He also expressed his discontent in the drafting of the topic in the Work Programme and was not satisfied about the IT building up of the platform.

62. France recalled that a draft communication on SoHO had been adopted at the previous meeting of the Management Board. Accordingly, ECDC can issue scientific opinions within its scope of work. She also suggested to delete the paragraph from the Work Programme or to put it on hold. It was proposed to re-work this part into the Programme prior to making a decision on the second day.

63. John F Ryan did not see the necessity to delete the paragraph in question from the Programme. He explained that the exchange platform relates to the rapid risk assessment and that the Commission endeavours that this one task will be taken.³⁴ He also informed that the Commission intends to ensure that sufficient funds remain in the budget for the activities/tasks agreed upon at the last MB meeting.

64. Denis Coulombier, Head of Surveillance and Response Support Unit, noted that within the 2012 budget, no funds have been allocated for developing the IT platform.

³³ "The Management Board decided to ask the ECDC in cooperation with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to develop actions to improve EU action supporting Member States in the vigilance and traceability of tissues and cells of human origin."

³⁴ He also agreed that the wording concerning this matter could be modified.

65. The Member of Germany summarised that the Board should revisit and decide upon this matter tomorrow. He also proposed that the Working Group, consisting of France, Germany and the Commission, create new wording for the paragraph in question.
66. The Chair continued the discussion by targets.
67. Jacques Scheres sought further clarification on the term "country mission" and also the main cost of this kind of a mission. The Director indicated that the costs depend on how many people are involved and whether internal and/or external experts are included.
68. In reference to target 6, Health Communication, the number of staff was questioned by the German Member of the Management Board. Karl Ekdahl, Head of Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit, clarified that the staff extends across the entire area: a) Eurosurveillance – 5 staff members; b) Press, media, info services – 4 staff members; c) Audiovisual and design – 2 staff members; d) Publications (editors, layouters, etc.) – 6 staff members; e) Web services, including extranets – 6 staff members; f) Communication evidence/Member State support – 5 staff members; g) Internal communication – 3 staff members. Further FTEs listed under target 6 (Health Communication) include the unit management plus 6 secretaries serving the full Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit plus 8.5 staff members supporting the whole ECDC with ICT application services.
69. A further comment was made on the same target, noting that the multilingual page has been decreased due to reducing costs. ECDC communications to the general public should be translated into all languages, and therefore this should be reconsidered in the Programme. Karl Ekdahl responded that the ECDC is focusing more on the primary target group, i.e. the scientific audience, and not the general public. He added that the technical platform for the ECDC webportal will be upgraded in 2012, which will greatly facilitate publishing of multilingual content. Pending this upgrade and not to duplicate work in two environments, some of the more static information to the general public has been postponed.
70. The Commission requested further clarifications on health consultants recruited from outside of the EU. ECDC responded that all eligible applicants are required to possess EU citizenship.
71. The Board Member of Sweden inquired how ECDC's network would work in relation to the Commission's existing network. John F Ryan informed that the Commission has recently been discussing some major staff cuts and endeavour to initiate discussions with ECDC in order to ascertain how synergies will be maintained and how to ensure complementary processes. He then referred to his previous question relating to third countries and noted that his question was "How relevant would the experience of third country consultants be given the particular situation in the EU?"
72. The Member of Bulgaria remarked that in the field of communication vis-à-vis support for working with the Roma population, it would not be possible to eliminate measles or other communicable diseases per se without focusing on the Roma population. He noted that it would be peculiar to receive more support from other organisations, such as CDC or WHO, instead of ECDC, the latter of which should be specialised in this matter. The Chair recalled a meeting in Vienna regarding the Roma population, and noted that it might result in new steps on how to proceed with this issue.
73. Following a request in relation to target 9, Administration, Andrea Ammon, Head of Resource Management and Coordination Unit, replied that while there is currently no plan to extend the premises, it will at least be necessary to rent additional mobile offices.
74. The Chair concluded discussions on the Work Programme for the first meeting day and recalled that the Board should make a decision the following day.³⁵ He also recalled the requested change in paragraph 1 (SoHO) and further requests from France.

³⁵ He also recalled the requested change in paragraph 1 (SoHO) and further requests from France.

Item 4: Summary of discussions held at the 18th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (8 November 2011) including its recommendations

Item 4a: Update from the Audit Committee

75. Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson, Chair of the Audit Committee and Member of the Board, Sweden, briefly informed the MB of the outcomes of the 18th ECDC Audit Committee meeting which had convened on the previous day (8 November 2011). She informed that the Audit Committee (AC) was pleased to welcome Michel Pletschette from the European Commission as the newly appointed Member of the AC and also Tapani Marttala from the Internal Audit Service (IAS) of the Commission.

76. The Chair of the AC also remarked upon the low participation in AC meetings and welcomed interested Members of the Board to join the Committee.

Item 4b: Update of the IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2011-2013 Mr Tapani Marttala, European Commission, IAS (Document MB23/6)³⁶

77. Tapani Marttala, IAS, European Commission, thanked the MB for the kind invitation and then presented an overview of the IAS by introducing its structure. He also informed the Board on how the Service works,³⁷ and then proceeded to present the IAS Strategic Audit Plan for 2012 and 2013.³⁸

78. One Member questioned the rationale behind classifying ECDC as a regulatory agency. Tapani Marttala noted responded that this is how the IAS classifies the agencies regardless of the fact that ECDC does not have any level of regulatory power.

79. Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson noted that the Audit Committee focused especially on the IAS proposal for 2012, involving the HR audit which is very relevant, notwithstanding the reorganisation.

80. In reference to the proposed audit topic for 2012, John F Ryan highlighted how the Seat Agreement was reached, and how this affects the filling of vacant posts, etc. Thus it is relevant to consider how other issues, such as the Seat Agreement, affect ECDC and its staff. Secondly, the IAS should also consider the external evaluation of the ECDC and not cover the same ground.

The MB endorsed the IAS Strategic Audit Plan 2011-2013 (Document MB23/6).

Item 4e: Rules on Contribution of Expenses for Candidates Invited to Attend Selection Procedures or Medical Examinations (Document MB23/9)

81. Andrea Ammon presented the revised rules on contribution of expenses for candidates invited to attend selection procedures or medical examinations.³⁹

82. Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson, Chair of the Audit Committee and Member of the Board, Sweden, informed the Board that the AC had agreed to the changes during its meeting the day before.

The Management Board took note of the changes in the rules on contribution of expenses for candidates invited to attend selection procedures or medical examinations (Document MB23/9).

³⁶ Item for decision

³⁷ Item 4b - IAS Audit of EU Decentralised Agencies (T Marttala)

³⁸ Item 4b - IAS Meetings in ECDC_Audit topic 2012 (T Marttala)

³⁹ Item 4e - Reimbursements for Interviewees (A Ammon)

Item 4c: Budget and Establishment Table 2012 (Document MB23/7)⁴⁰

83. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section Finance and Accounting, Resource Management and Coordination Unit, presented the Budget and Establishment Table for 2012.⁴¹ The Chair of the AC added that the Audit Committee advises the MB to adopt the budget, having noted the reduction of title III expenditure. She also informed the Board that the AC also received a presentation on the flexibility of staffing, in relation to the budget and establishment table.

84. The representative of the Commission requested further clarification in respect to the budget line, 'social contact staff' requesting further clarifications. He also noted that the costs for the canteen have increased significantly and sought an explanation. He also sought further clarification regarding the decrease in the budget for business continuity.

85. Denmark's representative queried whether the rate between administrative and operation costs is comparable to any other Agencies. She also inquired whether ECDC has any difficulties with the recruitment of experts.

86. The Member of Germany noted that he would be unable to approve the budget due to increases in costs in a number of budget lines questioned by the German Ministry of Finance. Regarding these requests, a written procedure for the approval was agreed upon. He also referred to the request of the Commission to reduce staff costs in all Agencies up until 2018. It was requested for the Director to comment on the staff and premises at the next meeting in March 2012.

87. The Member of Belgium requested further clarification on the balance between surveillance and ICT.

88. Anja Van Brabant responded to the questions presented by the Commission by stating that the increase of the 'social contact of staff' is due to the increase of staff and it includes various events, such as the Christmas party. With regards to the increase of the budget for the canteen, it was noted that the ECDC endeavours to respect the annuality (while the commitment was in place for 2011, additional funding was needed this time in order to guarantee annuality). Andrea Ammon declared that the funds indicated under business continuity have not been used due to the vacancy of the post of the Legal Advisor.

89. Following a previous query raised about recruitment and experts' availability, the Director informed that there are usually no issues with securing experts, however, several factors play a part in the recruitment process, such as the local weather conditions in Sweden, accommodation issues and relocating family members. In reference to the comment from Germany with regards to the expected savings from 2018, the Director affirmed that ECDC is willing and prepared to take the next steps.

90. Denis Coulombier noted that while training in surveillance does not appear in the Budget and Establishment Table, the general training is covered with the general training function. For justifications for the ICT money for surveillance, it was noted that maintenance consumes a lot of resources and the systems are still developing and thus additional funding is needed.

The Budget and Establishment Table 2012 was adopted with one abstention from Germany (Document MB23/7). It was noted that once Germany receives further clarifications to the posed questions, unanimous agreement may be achieved.

Item 4d: Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2011 (Document MB23/8 Rev.1)

91. Anja Van Brabant presented the Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2011 for the Board's information.⁴² Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson summarised the opinion of the Audit Committee.

⁴⁰ Item for decision

⁴¹ Item 4c - Budget and Establishment Table 2012 (A Van Brabant)

⁴² Item 4d - 2nd supplementary amending budget 2011 (A Van Brabant)

92. John F Ryan questioned the budget for overtime and specifically who is allowed to receive compensation. Andrea Ammon responded that the ECDC staff are entitled to request overtime during weekends in respect to Public Health Events, and that Line Managers are authorised to approve such requests. The representative from the Commission noted that the question was raised considering the Staff Regulations, which do not allow overtime. Andrea Ammon clarified that this matter emanates from the internal rules and it is unfortunately not uncommon for staff to be required to work long hours and also during holidays. John F Ryan recalled the special rules on compensation for overtime and asked whether they are already in place in the Centre. In a follow-up on the next day, she explained to John F Ryan that her comment was incorrect. ECDC only pays overtime for requested work for staff categories entitled to this, in accordance with provisions in the Staff Regulations. ECDC does not pay overtime for requested work in respect to Public Health Events for experts. What is part of this budget line is the standby duties for the 24/7 Duty system, ICT and Security.

The Board took note of the Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2012 (Document MB23/8 Rev.1).

Item 9: Director's briefing on the main activities of the ECDC since the last meeting of the Management Board

93. The ECDC Director updated the Management Board on the main activities since the last meeting in June 2011, followed by updates from each of the Heads of Units.⁴³

94. The Management Board from Germany expressed his frustration that the updates from the ECDC Units are rather compressed and do not receive due recognition. It was suggested to find ways to enable better presentation of the main activities in future meetings.

95. The Chair suggested to adopt a similar approach and to send an update to the Board in advance of each meeting in order to have a more in-depth discussion.

The Board took note of the main activities of the ECDC since the last meeting in June.

Item 5: External Evaluation of ECDC for 2012

Item 5a: Draft Terms of Reference for the Second Independent External Evaluation of the ECDC (Document MB23/10)⁴⁴

96. Daniel Reynders, Member, Belgium, and Chair of the MB External Evaluation Steering Committee (MEES), briefed the Board on the recent activities and of the first meeting of the MEES which convened on 21 October 2011.⁴⁵ He noted that the meeting should have convened much earlier and that the participation rate was very low.

97. The Board was informed that, apart from the MEES Committee, there is also a Technical Committee, comprised of ECDC staff and individuals from the Commission (also present at the first meeting of MEES Committee on 21 October 2011).⁴⁶ The timeline for the evaluation was introduced to the MB. The MB was requested to approve the Terms of Reference and was asked for a decision on when the whole MB wished to be consulted or where the MEES Committee can proceed without further consultation.

98. The Chair noted that the Board needs to decide on the draft Terms of Reference core tasks, the questions selected and the timeline.

99. Due to the low turnout of representatives from Member States at the first meeting of the MEES, it was requested by the Chair of the Steering Committee to set the date for the next meeting

⁴³ Item 9 - ECDC briefing on its main activities

⁴⁴ Item for decision

⁴⁵ Item 5a - Draft ToR External Evaluation (D Reynders)

⁴⁶ Joint ECDC/DG SANCO Technical Committee for the Second Independent External Evaluation: Magdalena Horodyska and Michel Pletschette (01), Frank Van Loock (C3), Andrew Amato, Jan Mos and Maarit Kokki.

during the upcoming coffee break in order to be better prepared and send the invitation in time. It was also suggested to include more Member State participants in the Steering Committee.

100. The Member of France noted that the timeline for the process is too short. It was proposed to approve the ToR via written procedure in order to allow more time for comments. The issue of Conflict of Interest was raised and there is a need to ensure that if the contractor is performing other work for the Commission or ECDC per se, that this is made very clear for transparency purposes. Moreover, that neither ECDC nor the Commission overly influence the evaluation process. The role of the MB is to monitor the entire process closely and not only approve the ToR. Following approval of the assessment, the MB will make its own recommendations to the Commission regarding issues arising, for example, options for changing ECDC's mandate.

101. The Chair commented that the tender should include these issues, i.e. the preferred contractor should demonstrate his/her experience within the field of public health and must have no or limited Conflict of Interest, which might be difficult to achieve. The final decision on selection of the contractor rests with ECDC and the Commission.

102. The Chair of the Steering Committee noted that one of the reasons for preparing the two documents presented to the Board under this item is to learn from the lessons of the first evaluation and thus focus better on the second evaluation. It is of course expected to find the best evaluators, which implies great care is needed during the selection stage. Also, as this is an external evaluation, the MB should only make recommendations based on the report of the evaluation and should not try to influence unduly the process.

103. John F Ryan remarked that the proposed timeline is feasible, albeit tight. While pointing out that a part of the timeline includes the summer period, the Commission proposed to keep the timeline as is. With regards to the Conflict of Interest, it is important to ensure transparency, notwithstanding the fact that some of the contractors might have been previously linked to the Public Health Programme at some point of time. Both the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee are tasked with investigating the background of a potential contractor. In reference to an earlier presentation from the IAS and the proposal for the HR audit in 2012, it would be beneficial for the Steering Committee to establish contact with the IAS in order to keep both parties informed, as the latter has indicated that a full assessment of the HR shall be conducted. The Chair agreed to the last remark and echoed the importance for the IAS and External Evaluation Steering Committee to work in synergy.

104. The Swedish Board Member remarked that this issue can be discussed as a standing item in future Audit Committee meetings.

105. Andrea Ammon stated that any overlap between the activities of the IAS and the external evaluation should be avoided, if possible. She cautioned that it would not be beneficial to swap the 2012 and 2013 audit plan topics as the ICT will experience changes in 2012.

106. The Member of Germany noted that the document was submitted to the Board rather late. The scope of the evaluation should be complementary, particularly in respect to future developments, including the perspectives for an extension of ECDC's mandate. He also expressed his willingness to join the Steering Committee, should the Committee wish to include additional members.

107. The French Member of the Board proposed a change in the text, referring to the necessary experience of the consultant/tenderer, and added that crisis management and surveillance should also be included. The Chair informed that the comments from the Member States would be taken into consideration via a written procedure as this would better ensure their being integrated into the final Terms of Reference.

108. In reflecting on the earlier comments on the possible expansion for the next years, and in acknowledging the uncertain financial situation throughout Europe, John Ryan observed that the second external evaluation might be a valuable tool with which to prioritise activities and/or inform difficult choices on future strategy.

109. In citing the tools and techniques to be used in the second evaluation Malliori Minerva-Melpomeni, European Parliament, recalled the first external evaluation in which the questionnaire had been presented primarily to ECDC staff or others closely linked to the Agency. She highlighted that the current document stipulates that a minimum of two hundred respondents will be used; however,

it does not clarify who will actually receive the questionnaires. With that in mind, she suggested limiting the number of ECDC staff in the equation, otherwise, the evaluation process may be questioned. She also proposed to encourage the chosen consultants to arrange country visits and/or focus on external parties as much as possible.

110. The Finnish Alternate asked whether it would be possible to require knowledge by the contractor in the microbiology field, and not just access to such knowledge under the professional capacities of the consultant. The Chair of the Steering Committee responded that it was not desirable to specify in too much detail this point and access to laboratory knowledge was considered to be adequate. He also recalled the role of the Steering Committee, which is to receive and approve the proposed method from the contractor in the Inception Report. The Steering Committee can then ascertain that the proposed methodology is suitable for the evaluation. The scene must be explicitly set, but ECDC cannot predefine in too much detail how the contractor performs his/her work.

111. The Chair of the External Evaluation Steering Committee proposed that the Board adopt the proposed Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee (listed in the cover page of document MB23/10) and clearly state in which stages the Board needs to be concerned. The Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee were adopted unanimously. A clear mandate was given to the Steering Committee to work on behalf of the Board. At the next meeting in March 2012, the Steering Committee will update the Board on the latest developments.

The Management Board agreed to submit further comments on the Terms of Reference of the Second Independent External Evaluation of ECDC via written procedure within two weeks of this meeting. Thereafter, the MEES Committee will strive to incorporate as many of these as feasible and duly approve the final text on behalf of the Management Board. Notwithstanding the impending written procedure, the Board unanimously adopted the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee on the External Evaluation and authorised the Members of the Steering Committee to finalise the detailed work on behalf of the Board based on the comments received during the written procedure.

It was requested that the Steering Committee provide an update on the latest developments of the process during the next Management Board meeting in March 2012.

It was decided that the Second Meeting of the ECDC MB External Evaluation Steering Committee will convene on 13 December in Brussels, Belgium. It was also proposed to seek expressions of interest from the Management Board in order to broaden the membership of the Steering Committee and to ensure that the work is completed in a timely manner. It was agreed that this would be done via written procedure.

Item 5b: Report: Aggregated comments received from Management Board Members on questions related to the External Evaluation (Document MB23/11)

The MB took note of the report with the aggregated comments received from the MB Members on questions related to the external evaluation (please refer to item 5a).

Item 6: Public Health Microbiology Update

Item 6a: Update to the position statement of the Commission and ECDC on human pathogen laboratories: a joint vision and strategy for the future (Document MB23/12)⁴⁷

112. Marc Struelens, Head of Section, Microbiology Coordination, Resource Management and Coordination Unit, ECDC, presented a joint update on the position statement of the Commission and ECDC on human pathogen laboratories.⁴⁸ He noted the two documents prepared and submitted to the Board. John F Ryan added that the aim of the paper is to respond to the questions that have been raised at previous MB meetings. The paper states what ECDC and the Commission are working on in terms of the laboratories, jointly as well as separately.

113. The German Member of the Board pointed out the progress made to date and noted that the overall picture has become clearer. However, he highlighted several issues, i.e. that cooperation between laboratories cannot be formalised by the Commission, since the latter can only support such cooperation. An assessment of gaps and needs is still missing. With regards to the next steps, notwithstanding the importance of molecular typing, various options still need to be set up. Germany could not provide the data at this stage. In referring to document MB23/13, there is a need to examine further the areas where work is required and this could be further clarified.

114. France emphasised the need for a clearer link with regards to the WHO laboratories. Some of the Member States might possess only one laboratory, which serves as the reference laboratory for all networks, which may lead to complications.

115. The Member of Sweden expressed slight confusion with regards to the requested action for document MB23/12, and questioned the position of the Board to adopt the document. The same question was echoed by Denmark, the latter of which expressed the importance of not constructing a system that is not needed.

116. In pointing out the need to strengthen collaboration between the laboratories, the Member of the United Kingdom noted that this activity needs resources and thus funding is an issue.

117. The Spanish Member of the Board expressed concern with regards to the conciliation of different visions and actors participating in the development of an EU network of laboratories. She pointed out that constructing the best system will take time. Therefore, workable solutions should be in place in order to ensure a response for the events and crises that will take place in the meantime.

118. It was stressed by some members that coordination of activities with WHO/Euro should be ensured.

119. Following concerns raised by several Board Members, the Chair clarified the necessity for the MB to take note of the document in order that the work can continue. He also pointed out that MB23/12 is a living document. Germany agreed to this approach and proposed that the MB receives a further update in the June 2012 meeting.

120. John Ryan explained that the Commission does not insist on any further financing from the Member States for new activities. The goal of the document is to clarify the respective roles of the Commission and ECDC, what has been done to date, and also to ensure this is duly reflected in the document. He further emphasised that the paper is a living document due to continuing discussions with other networks, including WHO, for instance.

The Management Board took note of the Update to the position statement of the Commission and ECDC on human pathogen laboratories: a joint vision and strategy for the future, with a caveat that the document is not final (document MB23/12). An updated version of the document is expected to be presented in the June 2012 Management Board meeting. It was stressed by some members that coordination of activities with WHO/Euro should be ensured.

⁴⁷ Item for decision

⁴⁸ Item 6a - Updated EU ref Lab Joint Position (M Struelens)

Item 6b: Updated ECDC Public Health Microbiology Strategy and Work Plan 2012-2016 (Document MB23/13)

The Management Board took note of the updated ECDC Public Health Microbiology Strategy and Work Plan 2012-2016 (document MB23/13).

Item 3: ECDC Annual Work Programme 2012 (Document MB23/5 Rev.2) (Continued)

121. In referring to the tabled document,⁴⁹ the Director noted that the wording had been further changed, as requested by the Board during the first day of the meeting. In referring to SoHO, the Director suggested to move the revised first paragraph under Target 3 where SoHO is mentioned as it is neither a major priority nor a cross-cutting issue.

122. The changes were duly noted by the Chair. The Board was then asked to come to a decision.

123. The Member of France expressed her satisfaction with the revised text. She also recalled that a budget will be available to carry out work on SoHO, and that ECDC has the responsibility to provide advice on tissues and cells for communicable diseases within its mandate.

124. Further to the changes introduced in the proposed revised document, the Member of the United Kingdom requested further clarity on the budget for the microbiology laboratories, in particular, whether it remains the same or is reduced. The Director replied that after the reorganisation, a small unit was created for the microbiology issues and 360.000 € was allocated to that unit.

125. It was proposed by the Member of Germany to reconsider the current procedure for adopting the Annual Work Programme. He suggested that ECDC issue a draft version of the Programme at a much earlier stage so that Board Members may adequately digest it and ask for technical clarifications in advance. These comments could thereafter be integrated into the final document (which would include budget and staff allocation figures) and subsequently sent to the Board at least ten working days before the meeting.⁵⁰ In this way, the Board would be able to address the more essential parts of the Programme. The Chair acknowledged this request and affirmed that a draft version of the Work Programme would be sent to the Board during the early stages in the future.

126. The idea of receiving a draft version of the Programme was also supported by several members.

127. The Chair concluded that the MB has adopted the Annual Work Programme for 2012, based upon all requested edits.

The Management Board unanimously adopted the Annual Work Programme 2012 (document MB23/5 Rev.2).

The Chair concluded that before the June 2012 MB meeting, a preliminary draft of the Work Programme for 2013 could be sent out to the Board in order to facilitate discussions and ease the adoption process at the end of the year.

⁴⁹ Handout - MB23-5 Rev 2 ECDC Annual Work Programme 2012

⁵⁰ In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Management Board.

Item 11: Review of ECDC's role in Public Health Events (PHE)

Item 11a: Dr Donato Greco (Istituto Superiore di Sanità) (Document MB23/14)

128. Donato Greco, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, Italy, presented the evaluation of ECDC's pandemic response 2009-2010.⁵¹

Item 11b: ECDC

129. Denis Coulombier, Head of Surveillance and Response Support Unit, noted some reflections from ECDC's side. The PHE plan was revised after the influenza pandemic, but during the recent EHEC crisis, it appeared that the level of preparedness was lower than in the H1N1 case. It was also mentioned that after the pandemic, no simulation exercises have ensued. Denis Coulombier extended his compliments to Donato Greco for his expert assistance in evaluating ECDC's pandemic response.

Item 11c: Discussion

130. The Member of Germany requested ECDC to present conclusions based on the report during the next meeting. Lessons learned from the recent STEC outbreak should be taken into account in these conclusions in order to further develop ECDC's response to outbreaks and critical events. It was also noted that such an evaluation is very interesting for the Member States and that the final report is highly anticipated.

131. The Member of the United Kingdom pointed out that as some of the points in the evaluation impact upon the Member States, it would be useful for ECDC to develop a paper on the results to be distributed to the Member States.

132. The representative of the Commission questioned the independence of the PHE evaluation, considering that the conclusions were drawn largely from interviews with ECDC staff. With regards to the issue of staff management, the conclusions of the evaluation will be invaluable for the external evaluation of the ECDC, as well as to the Internal Audit Service, as the conclusions reflect real-life experiences. It was also noted that it is vital for ECDC to carry out exercises in the future, in a horizontal manner --- both internally within ECDC --- and also on the international level with other EU Agencies, WHO, etc.

133. The Member of Belgium highlighted the issue of communication and noted that it is important that ECDC examines internal communication as well as crisis communication. It was also urged that ECDC define the respective area of competence with regards to crisis communication.

134. Following a query from the Chair, John Ryan remarked upon the challenging task of training spokespersons due to their affiliation with the ministers and thus, following a change in the ministry, the spokesperson changes as well. He also noted the difficulties in persuading the spokespersons to agree to be trained. He concluded that crisis communication and health communication represents part of the health security package.

135. Denis Coulombier conceded that it would be possible to prepare a report for the next meeting in March 2012. With regards to the evaluation being based on influenza, he clarified that ECDC is working fundamentally on crisis management. In reference to the way in which the PHE evaluation was carried out, he conveyed that, in retrospect, having chosen solely an external team would have resulted in unnecessary complications in the process. He then announced that ECDC has scheduled a simulation exercise in Spring 2012 and observers are most welcome.

The Management Board took note of the review of ECDC's role in Public Health Events (document MB3/14). It was agreed that ECDC will formulate a response to the evaluation of the pandemic at the forthcoming meeting in March 2012.

⁵¹ Item 11a - PHE evaluation (D Greco)

Item 18: Update regarding the EU Presidency

Item 18b: Update from Denmark

136. Else Smith, Member, Denmark, informed the MB of the overall priorities and important events during the Danish EU Presidency.⁵²

Item 7: Policy on data submission, access, and use of data within TESSy (2011 revision) (Document MB23/17)⁵³

137. Sergio Brusin, Senior Expert, General Surveillance, Surveillance and Response Support Unit, ECDC, presented the changes made into the policy on data submission, access, and use of data within TESSy.⁵⁴

138. The Alternate from Austria welcomed the changes and inquired how many publications have been drafted based on TESSy data, and whether any complaints have been received from the Member States.

139. With regards to the proposal for the fee-for-service study, the Member of France questioned whether further research should not be done prior to spending any money on the study itself, to ensure that it will be worth it. In reference to data use, it should be ensured that it is used as it is meant to be used, in order to avoid any instances where TESSy data is used for example to market some products, for instance. She also suggested that an Ethics Committee be formed in order to work on these issues.

140. The Member of the United Kingdom inquired whether a project/publication would always be upheld in case non-published data is used and the Member State(s) object. She also asked about the balance between freedom of information requests versus non-dissemination of the data.

141. With regards to the fee-for-service study, it would not be possible for the Board to make its decision at this point as more background information is required. It was proposed that ECDC issue a questionnaire to all Members of the Board and to discuss the issue further during the next meeting.

The Management Board approved the changes (document MB23/17).

A questionnaire in respect to the fee-for-service study will be sent out to all Members of the Management Board and the matter will further be discussed at the next MB meeting.

Item 14: Update on matters concerning the Seat Agreement

Item 14a: Update from ECDC Staff Committee

142. Hakim Khenniche, Logistic Coordinator, Emergency Operations Centre, ECDC, and Member of the Staff Committee, presented an update on the latest developments in the area of the staff situation in ECDC and in Sweden.⁵⁵ Various changes since the Seat Agreement discussions in 2010 were highlighted, and five out of six of the following issues have since been resolved: (1) healthcare access; (2) status of ECDC family members; (3) Personal Number; (4) voting rights; (5) no income registered in Tax Department database.⁵⁶ Staff accommodation issues were also mentioned.⁵⁷

⁵² Item 18b - Danish EU Presidency (E Smith)

⁵³ Item for decision

⁵⁴ Item 7 - TESSy data access policy 2011 (S Brusin)

⁵⁵ Item 14a - ECDC Staff Committee (H Khenniche)

⁵⁶ The remaining unresolved matter concerns the focal points for staff issues in the Swedish Government.

⁵⁷ Please refer to the letter by the ECDC Staff Committee to the ECDC Director, 12 October 2011 and the reply from the Director to the Staff Committee, dated 8 November (handed out at the meeting)

Item 14b: Update from Sweden and ECDC

143. Iréne Nilsson-Carlsson, Member, Sweden, was positive about the progress made so far. She noted that access to healthcare is free to everyone in Sweden who possesses the personal number. On the focal point issue raised by the ECDC Staff Committee, she pointed out that her Alternate, Anita Janelm, has been heavily involved throughout the entire process of the Seat Agreement and she has also been a very active focal point for ECDC's relations with Sweden. She also expressed that the main focal point for personnel should be nominated from within ECDC.

144. The Swedish Board Member agreed that finding accommodation in Stockholm can be problematic. She referred to the letter by ECDC's Director to the Staff Committee and opined that it provides a very good overall picture of the situation. She added that the majority of people relocating to Sweden often settle for second-hand contracts in the beginning, since first-hand contracts can often be situated further away from the city centre. There is, however, a good functioning market for buying apartments and/or houses.

145. The Chair agreed that this is an issue which can only be solved on a case-by-case basis as there are no possibilities of altering the modus operandi of the Swedish housing market. The Director also brought up the office space issue, which remains unresolved. He then requested to activate the MB Working Group established to work on the ECDC Building Project.⁵⁸

ECDC Director activated the Management Board Working Group established to work on the ECDC Building Project and will continue to keep the MB posted on any new developments.

Item 16: Sustainable development and implementation of the EPIET: Multi-annual Strategic vision (Document MB23/18)

146. Arnold Bosman, Head of Section, Public Health Training, Public Health Capacity and Communication Unit, ECDC, updated the MB on the latest developments on EPIET since the last meeting. In accordance to its Founding Regulation, ECDC's role is to support the Member States to ensure a sufficient number of specialists to improve epidemiology in Europe. ECDC is striving to ensure that the capacity of the Member States remains strong and well maintained. EPIET represents an added value to this equation. Arnold Bosman also informed that ECDC is not only trying to train the fellows, but is also aiming to bring together the expert teachers. ECDC intends to accommodate those Member States that prefer to have their own training via a coordination function,⁵⁹ for instance, in Portugal, training is based on ECDC core competencies in field epidemiology.

147. ECDC had to move away from the Contract Agent method and the individual grant system. It was highlighted that the individual grant system often had negative consequences for the EPIET fellows due to their (employment) status in the host country. Some fellows received neither pension funds nor have access to healthcare. The proposed solution is to return the grants to the host site institutes. Thus the salary and related expenditures will be reimbursed by ECDC. He added that it would be very helpful if members of the Management Board would find opportunities to support this initiative in their respective countries.

148. In 2011, a clear arrangement will have been reached with countries having their own FTP, in which case the funding shall emanate from the Member State and there is no additional burden on ECDC's budget. The MB was informed that the total cohort size is aimed to be kept at 40 in 2012: 12 in EU-track, 12 in MS-track, 4 EUPHEM and the rest for independent FTPs.

149. The Chair lauded the EPIET programme as a definite success story in ECDC's history. It is important for the future of public health to have competent experts and therefore the working conditions of the fellows should be very high up on the agenda of all MB Members. He suggested that

⁵⁸ See letter from ECDC Director to ECDC Management Board dated 14 December 2010. Members of the MB Working Group on the building project include Germany, the European Parliament, Sweden, the European Commission and the Chair of the Management Board. The Director of ECDC shall also participate in the Working Group, including additional staff members who shall be invited to join the Group in due course.

⁵⁹ For instance, in Portugal, training is based on ECDC core competencies in field epidemiology.

regular updates on the progress of EPIET could be presented and discussed at a future meeting of the Management Board in 2012.

150. Concern was expressed by some members regarding return for Member States if trainees do not return to work in home administrations. The Member of Spain remarked on the necessity to assess the different cohorts and determine their professional situation in order to ascertain who is financed and improve upon the future of epidemiology in the EU. The Chair agreed with the comment from Spain and proposed that ECDC obtain some figures on the cohorts for a forthcoming meeting in 2012.

The Management Board took note of the document and offered their guidance and support on facilitation of transition to Host Institute Grants in 2012 and the promotion of EPIET Associated Programme at Member State levels. Concern was expressed by some members regarding return for Member States if trainees do not return to work in home administrations. (document MB23/18)

A report on the follow-up of fellowship training will be presented to the Management Board at a forthcoming meeting in 2012.

Item 12: Update on EU support for vigilance and traceability of tissues and cells

Item 12a: Mr John F Ryan, European Commission

151. Due to time constraints, John F Ryan, European Commission, noted that it will be sufficient to include a reference to his PowerPoint presentation in the minutes.⁶⁰

Item 19: Any other business

152. There was no other business.

Closing comments from the Chair

153. The Chair summarised the meeting and thanked everyone for the fruitful discussions. He extended special thank you to the staff of ECDC and also to the interpreters. He then took the opportunity to wish everyone a joyful holiday season and much success for the New Year.

⁶⁰ Please refer to John F Ryan's PowerPoint presentation entitled, "EU support for tissues and cells – preparatory meeting to the Steering Group", which can be accessed via the password protected MB (Extranet) Workspace.