

PRESS INFORMATION



ECDC'S ADVISORY FORUM TO DISCUSS HIV/AIDS, INFLUENZA AND EMERGENCY FACILITIES

Stockholm – 11th September 2006 – Senior scientists and public health experts from EU and EEA/EFTA member states and the European Commission meet in Stockholm on the 14-15 September for the ECDC Advisory Forum. Issues discussed will include HIV/AIDS, influenza, and the development of an emergency operations centre at ECDC. The [Advisory Forum](#) meets four times a year.

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

HIV/AIDS

The Advisory Forum will be updated on ECDC's work on HIV/AIDS, including its preparation for the Conference on HIV Prevention in Europe, which is being hosted by ECDC on 2-3 October. This workshop style conference will bring together public health professionals with responsibilities for HIV prevention at national level, surveillance heads from the EU and EFTA countries, and representatives from civil society.

INFLUENZA

ECDC has focused on both reducing the burden of seasonal influenza and improving pandemic preparedness. The Centre will report on the progress in its programme of country visits to help Member States reinforce their preparedness. It will also present a draft guide on personal non-pharmaceutical public health measures, a draft discussion paper on antivirals and influenza, and proposals for action to improve immunization coverage against seasonal influenza amongst key risk groups, notably people over 65.

EOC

By 2007, the ECDC will start to operate an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). With a total budget of up to 1.5 million Euros for 2006, the Centre is acquiring the appropriate equipment and tools required to establish this facility. It will become the main communication hub for coordination activities with competent national, international or European authorities for detection, assessment, investigation and control of emerging health threats to the EU.

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Opening by the Chair
2. Adoption of the draft agenda and noting declarations of interest (if any)
3. Director's briefing on ECDC's work progress
4. Adoption of the minutes of the sixth meeting of the Advisory Forum held in Stockholm, 10-11 May 2006
5. Feedback from the Advisory Forum's Working Groups
6. Update on the implementation of the Emergency Operation Centre
7. HIV/AIDS
8. Update on norovirus outbreak in cruise ships
9. Update on Influenza
10. Discussion on human H5N1 vaccines
11. Update on surveillance's issues:
 - a) Surveillance databases
 - b) Description of surveillance systems
 - c) Feedback from Network Coordinators' meeting
 - d) Evaluation of surveillance networks
12. Zoonoses report: EFSA contractor's proposal for outbreak data collection
13. Strategy proposal for ECDC cooperation with laboratories and research institutes in the EU
14. Priorities for guidelines development
15. ECDC response to scientific questions: updated procedures
16. International Health Regulations
17. Other matters
 - Country inventory of assets and gaps
 - WHO European Immunization Week

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During a health emergency, coordination with Member State National Surveillance Institutes and other partner organisations such as the European Commission and the WHO will take place in this key facility. Besides being a centre for operations during emergencies, the EOC will be used to perform routine activities related to epidemic intelligence on an ongoing basis.

COLLABORATION WITH LABORATORIES

Background work and a strategy for developing "ECDC Laboratory Network Partnerships" will be presented to the members of the Advisory Forum. Since ECDC does not have and will - for the foreseeable future - not have any microbiological laboratory capacity of its own, but microbiological laboratory service and science are necessary for successful implementation of its duties, ECDC needs to work in close collaboration with laboratories in the Member States. Therefore, the strategy's objective is to identify the relevant laboratories and institutes, set the outlines for the practical collaborative work, and help it to support the development of relevant fields of science.

OTHER ITEMS

Among other topics at the Advisory Forum, the progress on the development of the surveillance system for infectious diseases at European level, as well as the preparations of the ECDC Annual Epidemiological Report, will also be discussed.

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