

PRESS INFORMATION



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Progress in the fight against communicable diseases in Europe

At an international meeting of European health experts, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) today launched the third annual report on epidemiology showing that Europe is making progress in the fight against communicable diseases.

Launching the report on the epidemiology of 47 communicable diseases and two health issues across the European Union and European Economic Area, at the ECDC Competent Bodies meeting in Uppsala, Sweden, ECDC Director Zsuzsanna Jakab said – “Our report illustrates that by working together across Europe we can achieve a great deal. This year our special focus in the report is on vaccine-preventable diseases and the impact that vaccination has had on European public health, which is illustrated in the eradication of Polio in the EU and its neighbourhood”

“Nonetheless, the report also warns that there is no room for complacency in the fight against infectious diseases. Resistance of bacteria to many antibiotics, in particular to those used to treat healthcare-associated infections (HCAI), continues to rise, whilst tens of thousands of Europeans are diagnosed with serious infections such as HIV and TB each year. We have also seen some cross-border measles outbreaks in the EU. Considering the WHO goal for eradication of measles in Europe by 2010, this shows why we must continue to work together.

ECDC Director, Zsuzsanna Jakab continued - If we can apply this same spirit of mutual support and cooperation to these and some of the other threats that we face – such as the health consequences of climate change – I believe we can make major gains for public health in Europe ”

About Annual Epidemiological Report

The annual report on the epidemiology of 47 communicable diseases and two health issues across the European Union and European Economic Area shows the result of a collective effort by 30 countries. It presents a comprehensive

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overview of the data from 2007 in standard tables and graphs, together with an analysis of the health threats monitored by ECDC during 2008.

By collating data from across Europe, the Annual Epidemiological Report provides an annual picture of the state of infectious diseases in Europe on which public health policymakers can make informed decisions and prioritise action to improve the health of all Europeans.

About the Competent bodies meeting

On 12-14 October senior health officials from across Europe will gather in Uppsala, Sweden to discuss how to further strengthen Europe's defences against infectious diseases. They will look at the EU-wide response to the Pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza pandemic and the implications of climate change for infectious diseases. However, they will also look more broadly at how the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) can work more effectively with its national counterparts.

The Uppsala meeting brings together senior representatives of the 86 national bodies that have been officially nominated as ECDC's counterparts. You can see a listing of these bodies at:

http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/aboutus/organisation/Pages/AboutUs_CompententBodies.aspx

Background information on ECDC

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is an EU agency tasked with identifying assessing and communicating threats to human health posed by infectious diseases. It supports the work of public health authorities in the EU and EEA/EFTA Member States.

Further information

The full report is available on our website: <http://ecdc.europa.eu>

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