

## **ECDC Management Board**

**MB7//Minutes  
12 December 2006**



### **Minutes of the Seventh meeting of the ECDC Management Board Athens, 20-21 June 2006**

*Adopted by the Management Board at its Eighth meeting, 12-13 December 2006*



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## Summary of decisions

### The Management Board:

- approved the draft minutes of the 6th meeting of the Management Board
- re-elected Dr. Marc Sprenger (Netherlands) and Professor Meni Malliori (European Parliament representatives) as, respectively, Chair and Deputy Chair of the Management Board, each for another 2-year term of office from 28 September 2006 to 27 September 2008;
- formulated an opinion on ECDC's final accounts for 2005 and recommended that the Parliament grant the Director discharge for these accounts;
- decided to establish an ad hoc working group to look at the processes and working methods of the Management Board.

### The Management Board also:

- took note of the Director's briefing on progress made by the Centre and thanked the Director and her staff for the extensive and positive progress report;
- took note of the outcome of the fourth meeting of the Audit Committee.
- took note of the "business plan" for the take over by ECDC of *Eurosurveillance*, though without making any commitment in relation to this project, pending presentation of its corresponding budget;
- took note of work underway in ECDC to produce its first Epidemiological Report
- took note of ECDC's publications programme for 2006;
- held an initial discussion on ECDC language policy, including in relation to interpretation available at Management Board meetings;
- welcomed the first outline of the multi-year strategic planning and looked forward to a more in-depth discussion at the December meeting and subsequent meeting in 2007;
- took note of premises requirements in view of the expected growth in ECDC staff and gave mandate to the Director to start discussions with Tomtebodas's owners and the EP and looked forward an updated proposal to be presented to the Board at its meeting in December.

### **Opening and welcome by the chair**

1. The Chair opened the meeting by thanking Professor Hatzakis and his staff at the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention for the very interesting and informative technical briefing they had given earlier in the day
2. The Chair welcomed all participants and extended a special welcome to Dr. Andrzej Rys, who had recently taken up post as Director of Public Health and Risk Assessment at the European Commission and who was attending the Management Board for the first time. On the invitation of the Chair, Dr. Rys introduced himself and gave a brief resume of his career to date.
3. The Chair noted apologies received from the representatives of Finland, Ireland and Italy and from Mr Gouvras of the European Commission. All would be represented by their alternates. Apologies were also received from Iceland who could not be represented at this meeting. Information was received during the meeting that Dr Octavi Quintana Trias was unable to attend the meeting.
4. Before moving on to the agenda the Chair reported that he had attended the Third EU / WHO Joint Workshop on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, which had been hosted by ECDC in Uppsala, Sweden in May. This workshop had been very well organised and added to the credibility of ECDC.

### **Adoption of the agenda** (*document M7B/7/2/1 Rev. 1*)

5. The agenda was adopted without change. At the request of one member, the Board decided however to bring forward the election of its Chair and Deputy Chair, making this the first item of business.
6. The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare an interest if anybody had a particular association with any of the items on the agenda. No declarations of interest were made.

### **Election of the Chair and Deputy-Chair of the Management Board**

*(document MB7/6/5)*

7. ECDC Director chaired this item. After adding her thanks to the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention for their excellent technical briefing, the ECDC Director outlined the rules governing election of the Board's Chair and Deputy-Chair.
8. Dr. Sprenger and Professor Malliori were elected Chair and Deputy-Chair respectively in September 2004 for a period of two years. The current mandate for these posts therefore expires on 27 September 2006. The Chair had written to members of the Board in May to this effect and inviting any members interested in standing for these posts to notify the ECDC secretariat by 14 June 2006 bearing in mind however that nominations could be put forward up to the start of the meeting.

9. The list of candidates standing for Chair and Deputy Chair had been circulated the morning of 19 June. It comprised of Dr. Sprenger and Professor Malliori who were standing for re-election as Chair and Deputy-Chair respectively. As required by the ECDC Founding Regulation, both candidates had submitted statements outlining their motivation in standing for these positions. These statements had been circulated.

10. The ECDC Director drew members' attention to the Management Board's rules of procedure for election of its Chair and Deputy-Chair. In particular, the need for candidates to attain a two thirds majority of all members with the right to vote in order to be elected; two tellers to be appointed to supervise the vote and the count; and voting to be by secret ballot

11. The ECDC Director then asked if there were any questions relating to the procedure for the election. One member asked about the validity of the 14 June deadline for nomination of candidates, given the rules of procedure of the Management Board allow for nominations until the opening of the meeting at which the election is to take place. Another member asked whether, given there was only one candidate for each post, the election could be conducted by a show of hands.

12. The ECDC Director confirmed that, the deadline of 14 June had been indicated for practical reasons, however, had any nominations been received after 14 June but before the opening of the present Management Board meeting, they would of course have been valid. In response to Malta, the ECDC Director stated the Board is obliged to follow its rules of procedure and these require a secret ballot when electing persons.

13. The ECDC Director proposed that the members from Lithuania and Luxembourg be appointed as tellers. This proposal was accepted.

14. Ballot papers were then distributed by the ECDC secretariat. These papers contained the names of the candidates with a box next to them. The ECDC Director stated that members must tick the box if they were in favour of the candidates.

15. One member stated that it would be more democratic to have the options "yes", "no" and "abstain" on the ballot papers. There should also be a round for each post to be filled. The ECDC Director said that she would seek legal advice on how to include this proposal and modify the ballot paper for future elections.

16. Ballot papers were collected and counted under the supervision of the tellers. Papers with a tick on them were counted as votes "in favor", blank ballot papers were counted as "abstentions" and papers on which comments had been written were counted as "spoiled ballot papers". The results of the vote were as follows:

	In favour	Abstentions	Spoiled ballots
Dr. Marc Sprenger	24	3	2
Professor Meni Malliori	26	1	2

17. The total number of Management Board members entitled to vote was 29. Dr. Sprenger and Professor Malliori were therefore re-elected as Chair and Deputy-Chair respectively.

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Their new term in office shall start from 28 September 2006 and will expire on 27 September 2008.

### **Director's briefing on progress made in the work of ECDC**

18. After having congratulated Dr. Sprenger and Professor Malliori on their re-election and thanked them for their support over the past two years, the ECDC Director briefed the Board on the main activities of the Centre since the last meeting.

19. The conclusions of the Third EU / WHO Workshop on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, hosted by ECDC in Uppsala in May, were distributed to the Management Board. The Director reported that the EU is making good progress on preparedness, but there is absolutely no room for complacency. The Uppsala workshop had come up with a long list of recommendations for strengthening preparedness. ECDC was reviewing these, along with the recommendations from the previous two workshops (many of which had not been followed up) and would produce a consolidated list of actions that need undertaking. One of the key areas of concern was the widening gap in preparedness between the EU Member States and the other countries making up the WHO European Region. Ways needed to be found to support work by WHO Europe to strengthen preparedness in non-EU countries.

20. The report on the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Forum, which took place in Stockholm on 10-11 May, was still being finalised. However, a major subject of discussion at this meeting was the balance between ECDC's horizontal activities and its disease-specific work.

21. ECDC, in collaboration with the European Medicines Agency (EMA) had held an "open day" where the two agencies met the pharmaceutical companies Roche and GSK for scientific and technical discussions. ECDC and EMA plan to have further such structured contacts with the pharmaceutical and vaccine industries.

22. Michel Barnier, the former European Commissioner, visited ECDC to discuss the Centre's role in public health emergencies. Mr. Barnier is writing a report for the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, reviewing the role of the EU in responding to emergencies and security situations of all types.

23. ECDC had played host to the European Commission's Internal Audit Service for a total of 27 days. This supplements the 23 days of audit ECDC has had so far from the Court of Auditors. The results of these audits would be discussed as a separate agenda item.

24. ECDC had the visit from the upcoming German Presidency of the EU and discussed collaboration on the HIV/AIDS conference they are planning for 2007. ECDC was also in contact with Finland, which takes over the Presidency of the EU on 1 July 2006.

25. ECDC had also hosted a WHO conference on polio and a meeting with the European Commission expert working on HIV / AIDS.

26. The ECDC Director then reported on the institutions and individuals ECDC had visited since the last Management Board meeting. These included visits by the Director to the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, to SANCO Director-General Robert Madelin and to

the Health Security Committee (HSC). The meeting with Robert Madelin had included a discussion on how to avoid overlap and duplication of work between bodies, such as the Management Board and Advisory Forum, attached to ECDC and other EU networks and committees such as the ESCON, EWRS and HSC. On the margins of the HSC the ECDC Director had met Dr. Rys, the new Director of Public Health and Risk Assessment at the Commission. ECDC had participated in the Senior Officials Meeting of the Global Initiative on Avian Influenza and Pandemic Influenza held in Vienna in May. ECDC is exploring how regional processes on influenza, such as the EU / WHO process that led to the Uppsala workshop, could feed into this global process. The ECDC Director has also met ambassadors from the Accession Countries and from neighbouring countries and was participating in a WHO/EURO working group on the vision for health in 2020.

27. The Director highlighted an important upcoming meeting at ECDC. On 29 June a delegation from the European Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee will visit ECDC to be briefed on its progress to date and its plans for the future. Professor Malliori and Dr. Scheres, the Parliament's representatives on ECDC's Management Board, will accompany the delegation.

28. The Director reported on work undertaken in her cabinet. Now that the financial perspective for the Centre for the next 7 years has become clearer, ECDC is beginning the process of developing a strategic view of its future development. One of the key projects for helping ECDC define this will be the inventory on country assets, best practices and areas where cooperation and support from ECDC would be welcome. A call for tender has now been launched to find a contractor to undertake the compilation of this inventory. In May ECDC hosted a second meeting of the network of press officers from Member State health authorities, the Commission and EU agencies. This enabled press officers to share best practice on communication about avian influenza and pandemic influenza, following up on the meeting hosted by the Commission in March. The ECDC Director's Annual Report has been published, and copies distributed to the Management Board. The Executive Summary of the Annual Report will be available shortly.

29. Work has advanced in ECDC's Scientific Advice Unit on developing a strategy for cooperation with Europe's laboratories. A first draft of this strategy will be presented to the Advisory Forum in September. A portfolio bringing together ECDC's advice, guidance and risk assessments on avian influenza has been published as an ECDC Technical Report, copies of which were distributed at the meeting. An internal project on knowledge management has been launched. Officials from ECDC participated as speakers in two major scientific conferences: the European Conference on Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (ECCMID) in April and the International Conference on Infectious Disease (ICID) in June.

30. Turning to disease specific projects, the Director reported that the influenza work programme would be updated in light of the conclusions of the Uppsala workshop and that a "tool kit" for the investigation of suspect human cases of H5N1 avian influenza was near to being finalised and would be available shortly on ECDC's website. The opinion of the Scientific Panel on Influenza had been finalised and this too would be put on the website shortly

31. On HIV/AIDS, a first draft strategy had been presented to the Advisory Forum in May. The Advisory Forum had created a working group to help finalise the strategy. A

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“stocktaking meeting” with Member States, the Commission and other partners will be held in early October to help identify good practice and any gaps in current activities on HIV/AIDS. On disease specific activities, ECDC always checks with other partners to avoid duplication of, for example, work already being undertaken by WHO.

32. In the area of surveillance, the call for tender launched by ECDC had not enabled it to find a sufficient number of senior experts to lead the evaluation and assessment of the Dedicated Surveillance Networks (DSNs). Advisory Forum members have therefore volunteered to take on the role as team leaders for this process. A steering group has been established to oversee the evaluation and assessments of the DSNs. Its members are: Andrew Amato-Gauci (Donato Greco as his alternate) from ECDC’s Management Board, Mark White (US CDC), Stefan Schreck (DG Sanco, C3), Heikki Väänänen (DG Sanco Unit for Audit and Evaluation). A member from WHO and the EP/ENVI is still pending. A meeting will be held 10-11 July in Stockholm with the DSN coordinators. The review of the case definitions for diseases notifyable at EU level is advancing well. A draft of the new case definitions was presented to the Advisory Forum on 10-11 May. Following their comments, the case definitions were circulated by ECDC to Member States and the DSNs for review, and in July ECDC will formally submit the new case definitions to DG SANCO for it to take forward in the procedure laid down in Decision 2119/98/EC. The EU Zoonosis Report, currently jointly undertaken by ECDC and EFSA, will be published in November. ECDC has been providing joint supervision (WHO, EPIET, ECDC) for field teams investigating measles outbreaks in Ukraine and Romania. Work is advancing on the surveillance database project, with a pilot database due to be ready this autumn and a fully operational database for routine surveillance online by 1 January 2007. ECDC staff participated in surveillance related meetings with WHO, the Commission and various of the DSNs. Finally, work is underway to enable ECDC to take over the Basic Surveillance Network (BSN) as from 1 January 2007. The other DSN’s, where contracts will expire at the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007 a grant agreement will be put in place in analogy with the Commission’s grant agreements to bridge the gap until the evaluations are completed and the new specifications developed. This will be an interim arrangement for a year to avoid a collapse of these networks.

33. In the area of Preparedness and Response, ECDC has completed a risk assessment on chikungunya. This concluded that there is a risk of this virus becoming established in parts of Europe this Summer, given the suitability of some European mosquitoes as potential vectors. There had been a series of outbreaks of norovirus on cruise ships in the North Sea. The ships came from several different Member States and ECDC is working with the national authorities concerned to see if there is a common link between these outbreaks. ECDC is holding a daily teleconference to exchange medical intelligence with the German public health authorities during the football World Cup. A meeting to discuss public health implications of mass gatherings is planned for late 2006. Work is underway on the transfer of the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) from the Commission to ECDC. A proposal on this has been discussed with the Advisory Forum and, following discussions in Brussels, SANCO Director-General Robert Madelin has sent ECDC a handover file for EWRS. Meetings of the EWRS Committee are now jointly hosted by ECDC and the Commission but held in Stockholm. ECDC is planning a user requirements survey for EWRS to guide decisions on the hosting, operation, and further development of EWRS. An expert consultation was held to help define ECDC role in outbreak response. A consultant has been appointed and terms of reference finalised for preparatory work on the creation of ECDC’s

Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). User requirements for the EOC will be defined in August and, based on these, a technical specification will be drawn up in September. This will open the way for a call for tender to be launched in October. Standard operating procedures will be defined during October – December 2006. The selection of a new cohort of EPIET fellows has been completed. 14 fellows were selected and a grant agreement with the Swedish infectious disease control agency, SMI, for the running of EPIET has been put in place: this extends the grant on the same terms and conditions applied by DG SANCO in previous years. A discussion is being initiated on the role EPIET fellows will play in Europe after completion of their training. Two short courses on outbreak leadership are planned for later this year and a call for tender will soon be launched for the running of outbreak investigation courses. A major action arising from the Uppsala workshop is the organisation of two sub-regional meetings of EU Member States not yet visited by ECDC on pandemic preparedness. These meetings will enable ECDC to complete an initial review of the pandemic preparedness situation across the EU before the start of the next influenza season.

34. On administration issues, the Director noted that ECDC staff had completed their move into a new wing of the Tomtebodan, as part of the next phase of the renovation of the building. A board room for holding future meetings of the Management Board would be ready this autumn. The information and communication technology (ICT) team at ECDC has been reinforced and this will help with the development of ECDC's ICT systems.

35. The Board thanked the Director and her staff for the extensive and positive progress report.

36. Dr. Rys of the Commission praised the work done by ECDC and also by his colleagues in DG SANCO to ensure the smooth transfer of all activities, including EWRS and EPIET. The Commission would continue to take an active interest in future of both EWRS and EPIET, given the importance of both, and collaborate on them with ECDC and other organisations.

37. The Director responded to Dr. Rys that ECDC would involve the Commission in the future development of EPIET and EWRS and consult the Commission on any major changes.

38. In response to the questions raised, the Director clarified that the opinion of the Scientific Panel on Influenza had been sent to the Advisory Forum for information in advance of it being published on ECDC's website. This was the process defined in the rules of procedure for ECDC Scientific Panels.

39. The Director also stated that she had not yet received any feedback from former Commissioner Barnier on the results of his review of the EU's role in emergencies. She however undertook to pass on such feedback, should she receive it.

40. On the issue of DSNs, the Director stated that those whose contracts with DG SANCO expire in 2006 and early 2007 will have their contracts extended by ECDC for a 12 month period (with the exception of BSN whose activities will be taken over by ECDC after their contract finishes end of December 2006). The new contracts would apply the terms and conditions currently being applied by DG SANCO. These contracts are being extended so that EU surveillance activities can continue while the evaluation and assessment of DSNs takes place.

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41. Responding to queries and comments about scientific questions being examined by ECDC and the decisions being made by ECDC on the future of the DSNs, the Director signalled that how to inform and involve the Management Board was an issue of key importance. This was why under item 14 there would be a discussion on whether and how the agenda of Management Board meetings could be broadened to include strategic policy issues, as well as the administrative tasks laid down in the Founding Regulation. The discussion of ECDC's multi-annual plan under item 7 in the agenda would provide a good opportunity to involve the Management Board in strategy.

### **Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Management Board, Stockholm, 20-21 March 2006** (*document MB7/4/3*)

42. The minutes and list of decisions of the Board's 6<sup>th</sup> meeting had already been circulated to the members through written procedure. No further comments were made at the meeting, so the minutes were adopted unchanged.

43. The representative of the European Parliament asked the Chair what follow-up there had been to point 2 of the minutes, concerning the duration of the period for which the Director can be re-appointed. The Chair replied that he has written to the European Parliament and the Commission on this subject, and that discussions within these Institutions are ongoing.

### **Outcome of Fourth Meeting of ECDC Audit Committee and Final Accounts of ECDC for 2005** (*document MB7/5/4*)

44. The Committee studied in depth the 2005 ECDC accounts and the observations of the Court of Auditors and:

- formulated guidance to the Director and to the Accountant on the accounts and the reply of the Director to the observations of the Court
- was assured by the accounts and the replies of the Centre to the Court of Auditors, and drafted an opinion that is submitted to the Board
- recommended, on the basis of a proposal of the Commission, the form for a declaration of assurance by the Director
- concluded that the Director will draw up action plans to implement recommendations of audits and that the Committee will follow up on them

45. The Audit Committee also mentioned that the post of an internal auditor should be prioritized in the establishment table for 2007. The tasks of the internal auditor could be combined with other functions, e.g. an external control function or a role in the evaluation of the Centre

46. The Director then presented the text of the opinion that the Audit Committee recommended the Management Board adopt, on the basis of article 83.2 of the ECDC's Financial Regulation:

47. On the basis of the review of the accounts and the observations of the Court the Audit Committee proposes the following opinion to the Board: ' *The Management Board is assured and confident that the final accounts for the year 2005 as presented by the Director form a correct basis for requesting the discharge of the Director from the European Parliament.*'

48. Tapani Piha of DG SANCO stated the Commission is convinced the administration of ECDC is being well carried out. Some of the Court of Auditors' remarks are understandable given ECDC is in its start up phase, while others are standard remarks the Court makes about all EU agencies. The Commission welcomed the ECDC Director's proposal for action plan and asked that the Management Board be kept informed of progress.

49. The statement of assurance was adopted by the Management Board unchanged.

**“Business plan” for Eurosurveillance** (document MB7/9/8)

50. Karl Ekdahl, Strategic Adviser to the Director, presented ECDC's “business plan” to prepare for the full transfer of *Eurosurveillance* to ECDC. At present the editorial team is split between the Institute de Veille Sanitaire (INvS) in France and the Health Protection Agency in the UK, with an antenna in Stockholm. ECDC is planning to recruit staff so that, from March 2007 when the current funding arrangement runs out, *Eurosurveillance* can be produced within ECDC. The Editorial Board of *Eurosurveillance*, with at least one representative from each Member State plus DG SANCO, will continue in its current form and act as a point of contact with national institutes. A new graphical profile for *Eurosurveillance* will be developed and a launch event held to mark the handover to ECDC in March 2007.

51. Some members noted that the “business plan” had been presented without any budget attached to it, that financial cost of producing and distributing a journal were considerable and stated that on-line publishing is a preferable route for dissemination. It was felt that the Management Board needed to know the cost of an initiative before it could give a meaningful opinion.

52. The importance of the upcoming meeting of the *Eurosurveillance* Editorial Board in Berlin in October had already been noted by France, in the context of assuring a smooth handover from INvS and HPA to ECDC. One member further stated that a business plan complete with a budget should be ready in time for that meeting.

53. The Deputy Chair stated that the European Parliament should be represented on the *Eurosurveillance* Editorial Board to which Karl Ekdahl undertook to make this proposal to the Editorial Board.

54. Denmark expressed concern that there maybe a potential for conflict between the Managing Editor and the Editor in Chief. There should be clarity about the roles and profiles of these two positions.

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55. In his response, Karl Ekdahl stated that recruitment of the Managing Editor was currently underway. The possibility of having a scientist in ECDC to take on the role of Editor in Chief is, being kept open in case the person recruited as Managing Editor does not have the necessary academic background to take on the role as lead scientific editor. However, it may be possible to find a candidate who fulfils both the scientific and management roles foreseen in the business plan and combine the posts of Editor in Chief and Managing Editor.

56. He also agreed with the comment made that paper-based publication is becoming less important in the world of scientific journals. In five years or so paper editions of journals may no longer exist. For the immediate future, though, the paper edition remains important for some subscribers.

57. Responding on the budget issue, Karl Ekdahl stated that a budget for *Eurosurveillance* will be presented as part of the overall budget for ECDC for 2007. However, ECDC did not envisage its financial commitment to *Eurosurveillance* being any more than the current level of commitment of DG SANCO.

58. Germany asked for it to be recorded in the minutes that it can make no commitment to support the *Eurosurveillance* project until it has information about the financial impact

59. The Chair concluded that the Management Board is not committed to any decision concerning the future of *Eurosurveillance*. The Board will come back to this topic in December when it debates ECDC's budget for 2007.

### First ECDC Epidemiological report (document MB7/10/9)

60. The ECDC's Work Programme for 2005 to 2006 requires it to "produce an annual epidemiological report that summarises the trends in communicable diseases and the outcome of investigations for outbreaks of EU concern". ECDC's Founding Regulation requires it to produce such a report. Such a report will also be necessary to give the epidemiological evidence base for ECDC's multi-annual planning and priority setting.

61. Andrea Ammon of ECDC explained the methodology and the data sources that ECDC would use to produce the report. Since ECDC started only in May 2005, the report in 2006 will be exceptional in the way that a description and analysis of the baseline for the years up to 2004 will be included. This was necessary in order to be able to observe trends in data and to give a baseline for ECDC's multi-annual planning.

62. ECDC has created an online questionnaire to enable Member State public health institutes to give ECDC a description of their surveillance systems in place for all diseases. There was some uncertainty as to when national surveillance data for 2005 would be available from some Member States.

63. The report in 2006 will point out where data are already available in the desired quality, but also demonstrate the currently existing gaps that should be worked on. Its content and the methodology for producing it have been discussed already with the Advisory Forum in November 2005 and in February and May this year.

64. A final text of the Epidemiological Report will be presented to the Advisory Forum in November and to the Management Board in December.

65. Arun Nanda of ECDC presented examples of Europe wide data on Hepatitis A and Hepatitis C to demonstrate how the ECDC Epidemiological Report could highlight trends and divergences in the spread of communicable diseases.

66. He also presented some work on quantifying the burden of disease attributable to communicable disease in general and to specific infections. Identifying the cost per case, and the overall cost of diseases, could be a powerful tool in arguing for resources to be allocated to prevention, as well as for setting priorities.

67. Management Board members recognized the importance of the ECDC Epidemiological Report and its potential value as a tool for setting priorities and developing strategy.

68. Some concern was expressed about making comparisons between Member States on the basis of data that is not necessarily comparable. The Deputy Chair stated that the report should either state clearly from page one that data is not comparable or it should refrain from making comparisons. Alternatively, ECDC should insist on getting comparable data from Member States. The European Commission pointed out that it has power to adopt standard data collection methods for diseases notifiable at EU level.

69. Other issues discussed included the use of data collected through DRGs, analysis of the impact of diseases on specific groups of the population, the inclusion of information on emerging threats in the report and whether the report should talk about “infectious diseases” or “communicable diseases” (some members expressed the view that the term infectious diseases is more understandable and easier to translate from English into other languages). One member pointed out that the ECDC terminology should be in accordance with the WHO terminology.

70. Responding to a point raised by Malta, Andrea Ammon promised to make Malta (and other small countries) more visible in the maps used in the final version of the Epidemiological Report. This might be done by showing them in a box to a larger scale than the rest of the map.

71. Responding to a another question, Andrea Ammon said that vector-borne diseases are not yet recognized as a group in the EU level notification system and so the report does not contain a chapter on them. ECDC has proposed vector-borne diseases be considered for EU-level surveillance, but this proposal is still under discussion with the Advisory Forum.

72. Denis Coulombier of ECDC confirmed that the report will contain a section on emerging threats. The EWRS annual report, compiled by DG SANCO, and ongoing information from EWRS would be a source for this section of the report. Stefan Schreck of the Commission pointed out, in this regard, that some Member States had not sent SANCO the information it needed in order to produce the EWRS annual report for 2005.

73. Responding to the discussion on terminology, the ECDC Director undertook to look into whether infectious or communicable disease was the appropriate term.

**Towards a multi-annual planning** (*document MB7/7/6*)

74. Director ECDC introduced this agenda item by emphasizing that although this was a first discussion, she would give a detailed and extensive briefing since this was an important and crucial topic upon which the auditors had also commented on in their report. It was also important to note that in order to discharge its mission and functions as set out in the Founding Regulation, ECDC will need to develop a longer term focus on the likely/possible future developments that may influence its priorities and that in accordance with Article 14.5 (d) of Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 the Management Board “*shall adopt, before 31 January each year, the Centre’s programme of work for the coming year. It shall also adopt a revisable multi-annual programme*”.

75. Therefore, to initiate a first discussion and to seek the views of the Board at an early stage, Director ECDC presented a proposal for a multi-year strategic planning framework – adjusted to coincide with the 7 year Financial Perspective that was agreed by the Community Institutions – together with an improved basis for the Centre’s annual Activity based Work plans. She emphasized that in addition there were three main reasons for multi-year planning within a seven year strategic focus:

76. To keep track of developments that could affect ECDC priorities and evidence base and hence ECDC’s mandate to be a “centre of excellence”;

77. To position and decide where ECDC should be in 7 year time including how the 2007 external evaluation to “assess the possible need to extend the scope of the centre’s mission” would feed into the process;

78. To develop a managerial process and system to link short, medium and long term objectives to deliverables and resource allocations and to regularly monitor and evaluate ECDC’s work programme.

79. In concluding the presentation Director ECDC sought the Management Board’s views and guidance on the framework presented and in particular on whether:

- The ECDC’s future priorities should be based on the 4 “pillars” outlined which are based on the Founding Regulations and Decision 2119/98 (ie Core functions; Disease specific activities; Country technical cooperation and partnerships; and ECDC activities in a global perspective);
- The future planning should be based on two mutually supportive and closely interlinked processes, covering (a) a 7 year strategic framework and (b) an annual work plan with a medium term “rolling time horizon”;
- The process and timeframe for finalizing these processes over the next 12 months were acceptable, including the proposal to submit a draft final 7 year strategic framework to the Management Board meeting in June 2007.
- There were any specific requests or views on the final product which would be agreed in December, 2006.

80. There was an extensive discussion and exchange of views on all the issues raised with the Management Board giving overall endorsement to the ECDC proposals. Specifically full support was given to the proposed 4 pillars upon which future ECDC priorities would be based, as well as for the proposal on the planning process and its two main documents. There was also general support for a number of suggestions on how these pillars could be further strengthened, especially the core functions which were seen as crucial for the Member States and essential “building blocks” for the ECDC (with resources being directed appropriately to expand and strengthen relevant capacities). These suggestions included:

81. Rapid but measured build-up of disease specific activities in line with the core functions which would in the end come together and create additional synergy. However, the ECDC needed to be prepared for “lobbying” from disease specific pressure groups;

82. Strengthening ECDC relationships with other Commission services and further clarification of the roles of the ECDC and the Health Security Committee;

83. Two additional elements; one to cover trends and developments of determinants on the patterns of disease observed in and between countries; and the other being communication. The former was important since the recent “call for proposals” under the EU Public Health Programme did not contain many communicable diseases related proposals from Member State Institutions. The latter was important given the public and media interest generated by major outbreaks, and the importance of effective communications as an element of outbreak response.

84. Linking the scientific component also to universities and laboratories;

85. In congratulating the ECDC on the excellent progress made to date, some members cautioned that too rapid an expansion may potentially result in a loss of focus on communicable disease. This remained the main mandate of the ECDC and it was clear that future challenges were coming and requirements would grow, for which ECDC needed to be prepared with appropriate staff and budgets. Given the uncertainty of the exact nature of future challenges it was also important that the budget setting and planning was flexible enough (perhaps with a separate identified budget for “emergencies”) to enable the shifts in priorities that could well be required. Budget cycles of 2 years (or longer) rather than the current one year would also help to give flexibility if current rules allow. Given the importance of the issue there was a need to enable a written consultation for the Board’s members on the proposals.

86. The external evaluation (to be commissioned by 20 May 2007) to consider all the issues concerning whether ECDC’s mandate should be extended to non-communicable diseases also elicited a number of comments and opinions. There was clear agreement that the focus in the first period should remain on communicable diseases which would also help to show the cost-effectiveness of what ECDC had already achieved, laying the basis for possible extension of its mandate. It was pointed out that in the case of those diseases having both communicable and non-communicable disease determinants (e.g. liver cirrhosis) the separation was not so clear. Also the importance of prevention and the fact that the founding regulations refer to human disease in general should not be forgotten. Given the legal requirement for the external evaluation, it was important that the 7 year perspective takes into account the possibility of the extension of the ECDC’s mandate after 2007.

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87. In responding, Director ECDC welcomed the thoughtful and considered discussion, suggestions and comments that had been made by members. She clarified that the proposals before the Board (and indeed the full focus of the ECDC) was on its current mandate of communicable diseases only. Also, as had been mentioned the core functions were indeed the current priority and the disease specific activities would be built up taking into account developing and emerging priorities and needs. The evidence for priority setting in a broad perspective (eg from the Epidemiological Report) was imperative for this process and also for responding to requests from special interest groups. As priorities and needs could (and probably would) change the need for flexibility was indeed paramount and hence the proposals for both a strategic 7 year perspective and annual work plans with a “rolling planning horizon” as it would give the flexibility to adapt and change as required by “unexpected events”. The Commission’s overall rules did not allow any change from a yearly to a biennial funding cycle. The points regarding synergy with Universities and laboratories were well taken and ECDC had already started to make contact with selected competent bodies and other public health institutions in Member States including research and scientific institutions which has to continue. Proposals regarding the determinants and communication were indeed very good ones and would be incorporated.

88. Director ECDC also agreed with the importance of the external evaluation. As had been pointed out, this was a legal obligation and the Management Board needed to discuss how this evaluation should be done and to formulate terms of reference which could be used to cover some of the concerns expressed by members. The Director would make a proposal to the Board at its meeting in December.

89. Relationships with other DGs of the Commission continue to be strengthened (e.g. with DG RESEARCH) with the support and help of DG SANCO. A dialogue had also started with DG RELEX and it was important to get this right especially for the longer term when in the future ECDC had developed its capacity to work outside the EU in order to protect the interests of the Community in the area of communicable diseases. In-depth discussions would continue to avoid overlapping. She expressed disappointment that very few communicable disease proposals had been made for funding under the Public Health Programme. It was important to identify whether this was due to the call for proposals not being well advertised or because of a lack of interest on the part of Member State institutions. The Commission was best placed to judge and the Management Board could advise on how best to advertise, if indeed this was the reason for the low response. Recent meetings of the Health Security Committee and with Director General DG SANCO had helped to clarify some of the overlapping terms of reference and roles of some networks and working groups (eg EWRS). However, some issues were still unclear and discussions were continuing.

90. Director ECDC summarised the Management Board responses to the four questions posed as follows:

- Agreement on the 4 main pillars including the 2 proposed elements on determinants and communication;
- Planning would be based on a 7-year strategic framework and an annual management plan with a medium term rolling perspective;

- December 2006 and March 2007 Management Board meetings would be used to review further drafts with the final version being presented in June 2007 for final approval;
- A first draft Terms of Reference for the 2007 Evaluation would be put to the Board at its December 2006 meeting.

91. The Chair thanked the Director for her proposal and the members for their comments. He concluded this agenda item by suggesting that an updated version of the document, reflecting the main outcome of the discussions, be sent electronically to all MB members before September for written consultation

### **ECDC premises during the next financial period** (*document MB7/8/7*)

92. The Head of the Administration Unit introduced this topic by explaining that the expected growth in ECDC staff need to be matched to adequate and sufficient office facilities. Based on current approved growth in staff, the full capacity of the current premises will be reached by early 2008. In addition, the ECDC needs a large conference facility, a crisis operation centre and a canteen for staff which cannot be accommodated in the present building. Since it would take time to build up the required premises to match the forecast need it was important to already bring this to the attention of the Board and seek their guidance on the possible options.

93. The present premises in the Tomtebodavägen building were selected after an in-depth market study and comparison of 35 options and have been leased till 2015. Renovation work has started and on completion the premises will accommodate 180 desks. The financial perspectives presented to the Board described the 2006 to 2010 “desk requirements” based on the core budget and staffing establishment table. There was a gradual and incremental increase in the total desk requirement from 170 in 2007 rising to 230 in 2008 and 330 in 2010, when the core budget was projected to stabilise at €56.4m. This meant that already in 2008 the current premises would not meet the needs of the ECDC in terms of staffing and would fall some 45% short of the stable requirement of 330 desks.

94. The results of a preliminary (“volume”) study conducted by the landlord on a number of possible options to extend the current facilities in two additional stages (buildings 2 and 3 of the plan), with timetables (1 to 4 years) and budgets (€2.7m to €3.1m representing 5% of the total budget which was in line with that spent by other agencies), which would allow the ECDC to meet its requirements from 2008 to 2010 on its present site, were then presented to the Board. The possibilities for a third stage was also presented (but not elaborated at this stage) to show the viability of the overall concept in case the 2007 external evaluation was to recommend an extension of the ECDC’s current mandate. The Board was requested for guidance and in particular to give Director ECDC the mandate to begin negotiations with Akademiska Hus, the landlord owning and managing the Karolinska campus and to discuss with the European Parliament delegation coming to visit ECDC in July 2006 who had already put this issue on the agenda.

95. There was an extensive debate on this issue with some members seeking clarification on a number of issues:

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- The urgency and whether it was too early to consider additional needs given ECDC's current mandate. Also confirmation that the need for 330 desks was in line with the current budget;
- Better use of the existing facilities on the Karolinska campus (eg other cafeterias, libraries etc);
- Better use of "desks" so that one desk could be used by more than one person since at any point in time experience showed only some 60% were occupied (as staff were on missions and on leave);
- If the external evaluation resulted in an extension of the ECDC's mandate would this result in a change of perspective;
- If there was currently a canteen where ECDC staff could socialise;
- If new construction was envisaged then had it been considered to abandon the existing site and to look for completely new premises on another site perhaps from the short list previously prepared by the Commission (which had also included the present site).

96. A number of the members along with seeking the above clarifications also pointed out that the ECDC should have its own premises and should not spread itself too thinly across the campus. A long term perspective was as important as the medium term (ie 2010) and realistic consideration should also be given to the period beyond the current lease (ie beyond 2015) to be cost effective as otherwise if ECDC was to be extended then this problem would re-emerge. There was a need to act urgently as staff needed space to work and it was also important to have a common room for staff and perhaps the canteen could also serve this purpose. Due consideration should be taken of the fact that rents were expensive in Stockholm and of any EC limits.

97. The Head of the Administration Unit confirmed that the 330 desks represented the staffing needs for the stable budget of €56.4m (2010 to 2013) and that by end 2007 the desk requirements would reach the limit that the current site could offer. The third stage (building 4) was of a modular design and could be extended to some 500 "desks" which would under present assumptions be sufficient to also cover the needs of an extended ECDC. He was grateful for the suggestions to look at the Commission short list and also the use of "hot" desks (ie the same desk for use of more than one person). Time permitting perhaps the short list could be updated in the new perspective and taking into account the points made regarding greater integration of the ECDC into the existing cafeteria and library facilities available on the Karolinska campus. If any members had experience of the use of "hot" desks these would be very welcome. He also confirmed that currently there was no space for staff to meet and socialise. As time was needed to plan for the additional requirements this was why this issue was being brought already before the Board as otherwise it would be difficult to meet the requirements beyond 180 desks.

98. Director ECDC thanked the members for their comments and clarified that she had been personally and very heavily involved in looking at the EC short list and had personally visited all 11 premises on the short list. Most were one floor in modern buildings where

ECDC would be sharing the buildings with commercial companies. Therefore the choice of the Board in May 2005 to pick the Tomtebodas site was an excellent cost-effective decision taking into account the price (well below Swedish market levels) and the forging of links and synergy for ECDC's work with Karolinska Institute and the SMI which came from being on the Karolinska campus. In addition the potential for expansion on the Tomtebodas site had been another added positive factor. Given that the market survey was done only 2 years ago during which period it was unlikely that much had changed in the Stockholm market in terms of choice, Director ECDC was of the opinion that it would not be possible to find another similar building. Under these circumstances, she advised against another market survey and that instead the current facilities should be extended, taking into account the comments of the Board on greater links and integration with the SMI and KI and their facilities.

99. Director ECDC also pointed out that significant progress had been already made in this respect and ECDC staff had been and continued to use the SMI and KI facilities (library, conference facilities, café etc) especially as the ECDC had no alternative. However, as had been pointed out by the Board, staff (especially in a multi-cultural organisation) also needed their own space to socialise and meet and an ECDC canteen would be a very cost-effective solution. The current ECDC conference facilities were of sufficient size for the MB and AF and other medium sized meetings and larger facilities were needed for the regular ECDC technical meetings. For bigger meetings (such as the Uppsala conference) it was very difficult to find conference facilities in Stockholm where most meetings were planned well in advance (2-3 years).

100. The ECDC was sharing the use of the KI and SMI Libraries and were very grateful for the access and help received. This exchange and use would continue but the ECDC also needed to build up its own library. Also, in the EMEA each Member State had their own dedicated room for use of country representatives and attendees to EMEA meetings. At the minimum the Management Board and the AF (even if not country specific) should have one room which members could use when they come to ECDC for meetings and visits. Director ECDC also re-confirmed that the 330 desks were only for the current ECDC mandate and not for any extended mandate which can only become clearer in 2008 (hence also the reason for already indicating that the proposals for 330 desks also showed the possibility that there was room for an extension if needed ie stage 3 (building 4) of the plan presented to the Board). She also confirmed that discussions had taken place with the Director General DG SANCO regarding the fact that the 2010 onwards stable budget of €56.4m was specifically for the current mandate only and if the mandate would be extended then additional budget would be negotiated. This has been subsequently confirmed in a letter from the Commissioner. Director ECDC concluded by pointing out that the only decision needed immediately was to give her the mandate to speak to the European Parliament delegation that was coming in June to ECDC and to be able to give them the same information that had been given to the Board, since the EP had put this item on the agenda for the meeting.

101. In summing this extensive discussion the Chair concluded that attention should be paid to the needs of staff and he proposed that the Board should give Director ECDC the mandate to discuss the issue with the European Parliament delegation and with the owners of the current premises and then to come back to the Board meeting in December with an updated proposal that took into account the discussions of the Board. These conclusions were immediately supported by a Board member who also emphasised that this issue should be tackled and solved rapidly and efficiently using work already done by the EC and ECDC.

**ECDC publication programme for 2006 / First steps towards a language policy** (*document MB7/11/10*)

102. Ben Duncan, ECDC Press and Media Officer, presented the Centre's publication programme for 2006, describing the two main types of publications envisaged (ie Flagship and Technical Publications) and their main characteristics (languages, layouts and costs). In the former category the Director's Annual Report (including its executive summary) and a first edition of the ECDC corporate brochure had already been published in English only, and work was underway on a second edition of the brochure, which would be multilingual. The Annual Epidemiological Report (including the executive summary and multi-lingual citizen's version) would be the next main publication in this category. In 2006, amongst the Technical Publications, 10 reports each were foreseen in both the Meeting Report and Technical Report series, whereas 5 reports were foreseen in the Policy series.

103. The first steps towards a language policy for the ECDC were then presented to the Board. In general all Technical Publications would be in the original languages only whereas Flagship Publications would be multi-lingual when aimed at a wider audience. The most common linguistic regimes provided at other EU agencies for their Management Boards were either 3 or 5 active languages. The costs and logistics of providing more than 5 active languages are prohibitive. Given that the Tomtebodav Boardroom only has space for three language booths (and one booth is needed for each active language), it is proposed to have only 3 active languages (EN, FR and DE). This is in line with several major EU agencies. A further 3 passive languages could be provided, and this might be done on the basis of need. Similar issues of cost and logistics arise regarding Management Board documents with the added complication that translations would result in information always being at least 1 month old. Therefore it was proposed to continue with current practice of providing Management Board documents in English only as was done by nearly all EU agencies. However, the Board was requested for guidance on whether the minutes of the Management Board should be translated.

104. The publication programme was generally accepted and it was pointed out that there should be consistency for example in use of terminology for example when it came to use of terms such as "infectious" or "communicable" diseases. Also the use of the World Wide Web (www) should be a part of the publication programme. Ben Duncan thanked the members for their suggestions and agreed that terminology should be consistent, although it sometimes needed to be adapted for different (technical or lay) audiences. The use of the www is indeed an integral part of the publication plan, with reports being disseminated via the web as well as on paper. ECDC website strategy is currently being developed by an internal task force and should be ready to present to the Management Board in December.

105. The discussion on language policy reflected differing views. The view was expressed that policy should not be based only on the availability of space for language booths. Some members argued for fewer than three active languages: either just one working language or, alternatively, one constant working language with a second language being provided on the basis of rotation. Others argued for more working languages, while others supported the proposed regime of 3 active languages (simultaneous interpretation to and from EN, FR, DE) together with up to three passive languages on basis of need. The issue of costs was important and if the Member States nominees had language skills this could in the end save money else

additional budget allocations would always be needed to cover the translation and interpretation costs. Members also requested that when presenting such proposals to the Board it was important to also present the budget consequences.

106. The Chair summed up by reminding the Board that this was a first discussion for views and guidance and no decision was needed at this stage. It was requested that for the December meeting a paper be prepared that discussed at least three distinct options covering the proposal made by ECDC; one language regime and rotation of languages. Each option should be clearly costed as had been requested by members.

### **Update on ECDC Country Strategy** *(no document, for information)*

107. The Strategic Adviser to the Director presented the ECDC's ongoing and planned activities to develop its country strategy. He described the internal progress that had been made in the development of a contact database on competent authorities and country contact points (near completion with country inputs needed on a case by case basis), recruitment of a staff member and the very useful experience that had been gained from missions to countries (eg for pandemic flu preparedness and official visits). Considerable progress had also been made on the "Inventory of country resources and gaps", which was building on the work done by IRIDE, which would be ready mid 2007.

108. The next main task was to develop the methodology for country work and the ECDC planned to take a measured approach that would enable a shared understanding of the needs, requirements and how best to work with Member States. To do this it was important to visit selected countries (Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, The Netherlands and Poland had been identified based on a number of objective and specific criteria) to explore in detail how ECDC could bring added value prior to developing an EU wide strategy. The developed methodology would be used in future country work eventually including all Member States.

109. The strategy to reach out beyond the EU is to work with the appropriate Commission funded networks (EpiNorth and EpiSouth) and the ECDC was exploring ways to become involved and for EpiNorth to also consider how to cover EC funding beyond 2006. This would also help with regard to support to Accession and Candidate countries (who were all important from a communicable disease perspective) as they were all part of EpiSouth. In order to better protect Europe from global problems (eg SARS, pandemic flu, MDR TB etc) ECDC needs to be strong also in the global arena. Therefore ECDC has built partnerships with the CDC's of major countries (eg USA, China, Russia, Canada etc) and contributed to global initiatives with partners such as the WHO and the World Bank.

110. The Management Board welcomed the update and requested further information on what was meant by gaps at the national level and how these would be identified. It was explained that there was no intention to do any kind of "audit" but rather to identify areas that could be strengthened across the EU through the exchange of experience between countries.

**Participation of acceding and candidate countries in ECDC's technical and scientific meetings** *(for discussion)*

111. Director ECDC introduced this item for discussion because she wanted to seek the Board's support to invite the acceding and candidate countries for participation in ECDC's technical and scientific meetings. The participation of other neighboring countries to the EU is also envisaged. A number of reasons for this proposal were mentioned including that the EC also already invited these countries to the Informal Council Meetings, that strengthening the capacities in these countries would also help the Community, relationships with these countries needed to be gradually built up and that, as mentioned by the Commission, it was important that these countries shared information openly in same way as was done by EU countries.

112. All the members that took the floor supported the suggestion which they said could only be viewed as positive. However, a documented and agreed policy was needed to ensure that it was clear who would be invited to which meetings and the associated budget. The status of the invitees also needed to be clarified, for example the candidate and accession countries come as Observers to the Public Health Programme meetings. The document should also cover whether invitations should be only for technical level meetings and not the Management Board meetings.

113. The Chair concluded that there was agreement for the proposal but a document setting out the policy should be presented to the next Management Board meeting in December 2006.

**Other matters**

114. There were two main items for discussion under Other matters. The new rules for reimbursement (*document MB6/10/11 Rev.1*) and an initial discussion on the role of the Management Board.

115. The Head of the Administration Unit introduced the first item and pointed out that the proposal for new rules for reimbursement of expenses for experts, delegates and interviewees coming to Stockholm to attend ECDC meetings was discussed with the Board at its 6th meeting in March 2006. At that meeting it was agreed that a final decision would be made once the budget negotiations had been concluded. The new rules for reimbursement were subsequently circulated to the members through written procedure on 22 May 2006 and were therefore now ready for formal adoption. The Chair requested members to formally adopt the new rules and it was so done.

116. Director ECDC in introducing the second item pointed out that the intention here was to have an open discussion with the Board on how it sees its role and involvement in the work of ECDC, in particular if there are any areas – other than those stipulated in the Regulation – where the Board would also like to be involved. The functions of the Management Board had been discussed in December 2005 when it had been agreed that there would be two formal meetings and one informal meeting (to give opportunity for brainstorming and more informal discussion on selected issues). It was also important that there was feedback from members on whether the procedural and technical issues and information being brought to the Board were

the right ones and at the right level. One way forward could be the setting up of a small Working Group of Board members to clarify the above and any other relevant issues.

117. The principles of the proposals were welcomed by those members that took the floor. However, it was essential that the Board had sufficient time to discuss important issues in depth and therefore the agenda should be in line with the time available. There should also be a clear procedure for how and who should raise which issues. There was also a request to ensure that information from the Advisory Forum meetings was made available to the Management Board in a timely manner.

118. In summing up the Chair pointed out that there were probably many different scenarios possible and members should provide their proposals with respect to the Working Group via email.

## **Closure**

119. The Chair thanked the ECDC Director and her staff for the preparation of the very extensive and important agenda items and their presentation to the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. This had greatly facilitated the discussions which had been excellent, with good participation of all Members. On behalf of himself and the Vice-Chair, he thanked the whole Board for their confidence in re-electing them for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair.

120. The Chair closed the meeting by once again thanking Greece and Minister Dimitris Avramopoulos personally for the warm hospitality, the inspiring dinner in the unique and wonderful location of the Ithaki restaurant that he was sure everyone would remember.

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