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ECDC marks World AIDS Day 2009

ECDC, together with the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, marked World AIDS Day 2009 by organising a series of events. Two scientific seminars brought together the scientific community from across Europe. On 27 November 2009, an event focusing on stigma and discrimination was held in memory of Dr. Jan-Olof Morfeldt, a Swedish HIV/AIDS pioneer and HIV activist. The seminar ended with a red ribbon ceremony at which ECDC Director Zsuzsanna Jakab and Maria Larsson, Swedish Minister for Elderly Care and Public Health, were present (see picture).

On 1 December 2009, a scientific seminar at the European Parliament in Brussels briefed policy makers on the HIV/AIDS situation in Europe and focused on men who have sex with men (MSM), the largest group affected by HIV in the EU. Two special issues of *Eurosurveillance* were released on that occasion and contributed to the scientific debate on increasing trends of HIV and STI in MSM and on STI/HIV related behavioural surveys. It was highlighted that improved and innovative key prevention interventions are needed to reduce the burden of HIV and STI across Member States.

ECDC—Strengthening Europe's defences against infectious diseases conference

On 12–14 October 2009, senior health officials from across Europe gathered in Uppsala, Sweden to discuss how to further strengthen Europe's defences against infectious diseases. The Uppsala meeting brought together senior representatives from the 86 national bodies who were officially nominated as ECDC's counterparts. The participants looked at the EU-wide response to the pandemic H1N1 2009 and the implications of climate change on infectious diseases. ECDC Director Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe, Marc Danzon, European Commission Director of Public Health, Andrzej Ryś, and Maria Larsson, Swedish Minister for Elderly Care and Public Health fostered the discussions with keynote speeches. With participants from 41 countries across Europe, there was a diverse

exchange of experiences and best practices, particularly regarding how ECDC can work more effectively with its national counterparts. Business sessions allowed participants to focus on the specific aspects of collaboration such as communication, scientific advice, training, threat monitoring, preparedness and response. The meeting generated useful feedback and debates that were translated into practical measures with the intent to improve coordination at all levels, simplify procedures and clarify overlaps. ECDC will continue to actualise the lessons learnt at the meeting, and new ways of working will be explored in the coming months. Comments made by the Management Board Members as well as representatives from a number of WHO country offices were particularly beneficial.

Editorial by Director Zsuzsanna Jakab



Farewell to ECDC and reflections on five years of achievement

It is never easy to say goodbye, especially when you have been a part of such an exciting experience as the creation and development of ECDC. When I look back at my first days, setting up my provisional office in Solna, searching for an appropriate building to hold the Centre, the recruitment of the first colleagues who joined and supported me through those years, I am amazed at how much we have achieved in so short a time. I feel extremely privileged to have led the start-up of this new institution.

ECDC now includes more than 250 staff from 26 EU Member States and is well established as a centre of excellence in the battle against communicable diseases. ECDC is

recognised as an international authority and has memorandums of understanding signed with the US CDC, the Canadian Public Health Agency and the Chinese CDC, to name a few. Among other major achievements, I am proud to mention the following: development of The European Surveillance System (TESSy); the evaluation and assessment of all 17 dedicated surveillance networks (DSNs) as well as the transfer of network activities for 11 of them; since 2007, the publication of the *Annual epidemiological report on communicable disease in Europe*, the first ever comprehensive analysis of the threats posed by communicable diseases in the EU; the scientific input provided by ECDC's disease specific programmes; the management of the early warning and response system (EWRS) in ECDC and; the

preparation the Centre undertook to deal with major outbreaks that has proved so useful in dealing with the first pandemic of the 21st century. All of this would not have been possible without the close cooperation and support from all of our colleagues at the national level or without the dedication and passion of colleagues within ECDC and the European Commission. I want to take this unique occasion to warmly thank all of you who contributed to make ECDC a success and to encourage you to carry on this good work as many challenges still lie ahead. I will take my position as new WHO Regional Director for Europe in the coming weeks, but ECDC, and the friends I made over the past five years, will always have a place close to my heart.

ECDC's current work on the pandemic H1N1 2009

Since the onset of the pandemic H1N1 2009, ECDC has actively been working on producing a range of influenza-related documents, all of which are available on the ECDC pandemic H1N1 website.

The *ECDC Daily update* reports on the epidemiological situation of A(H1N1)v influenza in EU and EFTA countries. Every day these updates provide additional information on scientific advances, sentinel surveillance, public health measures, media highlights and recent publications.

ECDC also produces a *Weekly executive update* on the pandemic: a compilation of publications, scientific advances, political developments, media highlights and

upcoming events related to the pandemic. It is posted on our pandemic webpage every Monday. ECDC regularly produces *Risk assessments* on new aspects related to the pandemic, taking into account data from EU Member States and other countries. A number of *scientific/technical reports* and *guidance documents* have been published on a range of influenza-related topics as well.

Scientific Advances are ECDC-authored, rapid reviews of recent scientific developments or publications with commentary normally published on the pandemic website one to two times a week, typically on a Wednesday. *Public Health developments* are

ECDC-authored reviews of recent developments relating to public health measures or non-scientific discussions. They are also published one to two times a week on the website. Both reviews are highlighted in the Daily updates. The press office at ECDC manages media enquiries related to the pandemic, produces "lines to take" and Q&A's, and monitors media on a daily basis.

Eurosurveillance, an open-access, peer-reviewed journal about infectious diseases surveillance prevention and control in Europe, has followed the pandemic from the start with over 60 rapid communications (as of October 2009) on relevant issues related to influenza, authored by experts from

all continents, except Africa. Most of these articles had a turnaround time of less than a week.

Currently, a major part of ECDC work on pandemic H1N1 2009 is related to vaccines and vaccination issues.

ECDC is also part of different technical and communicators' networks, specifically created to respond to the pandemic, that exist at the European and global level.

All pandemic-related material produced by ECDC can be found at the ECDC's dedicated web page ([www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Pages/Influenza_A\(H1N1\)_Outbreak.aspx](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Pages/Influenza_A(H1N1)_Outbreak.aspx)) and at Eurosurveillance's website (www.eurosurveillance.org).

ECDC publishes the *Annual epidemiological report 2009*

On 12 October 2009, ECDC published the third annual report on the epidemiology of 47 communicable diseases and two health issues across the European Union and European Economic Area. The result of a collective effort by 30 countries, it presents a comprehensive overview of the data from 2007 in standard tables and graphs together with an analysis

of the health threats monitored by ECDC during 2008. The special focus of this year's report is on vaccine-preventable diseases, acknowledging the positive impact that vaccination has had on European public health, while highlighting the importance of maintaining vaccination coverage. This is a particular challenge in the case of measles, given the

WHO goal for eradication of measles in Europe by 2010. By collating data from across Europe, the *Annual epidemiological report* provides an annual picture of the state of infectious diseases in Europe. Additionally, it supports public health policymakers in making informed decisions and prioritising action to improve the health of all Europeans.



ESCAIDE: Bringing professionals involved in applied infectious disease epidemiology together



For the third time since its launch in 2007, 500 health experts gathered at the European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (ESCAIDE) in Stockholm on 26–28 October 2009. The conference, sponsored and jointly organised by ECDC, achieved the following goals: strengthening networks of professionals involved in applied infectious disease epidemiology; sharing scientific knowledge and experience in this field in Europe and internationally and; providing a dedicated platform for the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training/Field Epidemiology Training Programme (EPIET/FETP) fellows to present their work. Four keynote plenary sessions addressed topical issues relating to communicable disease prevention and control: ageing and infectious disease, pandemic influenza, genotyping in epidemiological investigations and new methodologies to investigate outbreaks of infectious disease. In addition, 200 submitted abstracts were presented in 22 oral parallel, “late breaker” and poster sessions. The abstracts were selected from over 270 submitted to the conference by a peer review process overseen by the ESCAIDE scientific committee. ‘Training of the trainer’ workshops, open to experts professionally involved in providing training in applied epidemiology in a learn-by-doing context, were held for the first time. Conference materials are available on the ESCAIDE website (www.escaide.eu). Update participants on current developments in international monitoring and evaluation.

Journalists from across Europe meet ECDC Management Board



On 5 November 2009, ECDC hosted a seminar for health journalists from across Europe. Over 30 journalists from 27 different countries attended a day of briefings about ECDC and its activities, which were held in parallel to the November meeting of ECDC’s Management Board. The highlights of the seminar included a panel discussion with the ECDC Director and members of the Board on ECDC’s achievements over the past five years and its priorities for the future, after which journalists could meet the Board. The event generated over 400 media articles and proved to be enjoyable for the journalists and the Board members.

ECDC disease specific programme strategies 2010–2013

By the end of 2009, ECDC will have successfully strengthened its internal structures, working methods and core public health functions (surveillance, preparedness and response, scientific advice, and communication). From 2010 onwards, the emphasis will be shifted to building up and further strengthening disease-specific work. The ECDC *Disease-specific programmes strategies 2010-2013* is the first concrete step towards defining the way ECDC will develop its disease-specific programmes (DSP) in the future. This document sets out the strategic priorities for all DSPs based on a short description of epidemiological background, context in which ECDC works on that specific disease/disease group and defined gaps that require action at the EU level. The strategic approach for the ECDC disease-specific work is a natural shift from the current vertical and fragmented approach to a truly horizontal and integrated approach, fully integrating all of the core public health functions of the Centre: surveillance, scientific advice, preparedness, response, training and communication. The document was presented to the Management Board meeting in November 2009.

- Programme on tuberculosis
- Programme on food- and waterborne diseases and zoonoses
- Programme on HIV, STI and bloodborne viruses
- Programme on antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated infections
- Programme on vaccine preventable diseases and invasive bacterial infections
- Programme on emerging and vectorborne diseases
- Programme on influenza

European Antibiotic Awareness Day focuses on prudent antibiotic use in primary care

Together with the Swedish Presidency and Swedish public health authorities, ECDC launched the second European Antibiotic Awareness Day on 18 November 2009. The objective of the day was to raise awareness across Europe about the importance of prudent use of antibiotics in the fight against resistant bacteria. In 2009, national campaigns across Europe have featured briefing materials targeting primary care prescribers, as well as TV and web spots targeting the general public with the message: ‘Cold? Flu? Get well without antibiotics’. ECDC Director Zsuzsanna Jakab hosted the event, which took place at ECDC, together with the Swedish National Board for Health and Welfare and with the participation of Maria Larsson, Swedish Minister for Elderly Care and Public Health, as the keynote speaker. Mrs Jakab presented the latest antibiotic resistance data from across Europe and highlighted national campaign activities, while Professor Otto Cars from STRAMA presented information on the Swedish situation.





Programme on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS and bloodborne viruses

ECDC considers the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, STIs (chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis), and hepatitis B and C as key public health challenges.

Objectives of the programme and priorities for 2008–2010

The overall strategy is to build the capacity at ECDC to ensure that it can evolve into a key authority in Europe on HIV/AIDS, STI and hepatitis. Once this capacity has accrued, ECDC will offer expertise in epidemiology, surveillance, risk assessment and communication to guide, monitor, and evaluate prevention and control programmes. In so doing, ECDC will become the reference centre for these activities for all Member States (MS) in the EU. This will be achieved through close collaboration with the MS, the European Commission and relevant international bodies and networks.

The projected outcomes for the medium-term are to have accomplished the following:

- to fully integrate the enhanced surveillance of HIV/AIDS in collaboration with WHO Regional Office for Europe. Furthermore, to implement enhanced surveillance for STIs and hepatitis B and C, producing quality reports on these diseases;
- to develop scientific guidance documents on key prevention strategies including chlamydia control, HIV testing, partner notification

and cost-effectiveness for hepatitis prevention and control;

- to support the MS in developing standardised behavioural surveillance and promote second generation surveillance in Europe;
- to produce country estimates of the true burden of HIV, including the economic and social impact;
- to install a monitoring and evaluation programme to review national HIV prevention and control programmes and to support the EU Commission in the monitoring of the political commitments to fight against HIV/AIDS;
- to review HIV/STI surveillance and prevention programmes through country visits and;
- to establish an informative and updated website with relevant information for the general public, professionals and epidemiologists.

Main activities

A range of activities are ongoing as part of the ECDC multiannual working plan:

Surveillance

- As of January 2008, ECDC and WHO have jointly coordinated enhanced HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe to cover all 53 countries in the WHO European region. Data on HIV infections and AIDS diagnoses are collected

in the joint database for HIV/AIDS surveillance. An annual report reviewing the current situation on HIV/AIDS—entitled *HIV/AIDS surveillance in Europe*—is published on World AIDS Day. Recently, a project was launched to develop a framework to study recently acquired HIV infections

- As of January 2009, the coordination of STI surveillance in Europe was taken over by ECDC. The first surveillance report on STI will be published in 2010. An STI microbiology project has been established focusing on the surveillance of resistance in gonococci across countries. This project will launch a survey on STI diagnostics and training needs with the first laboratory training course being planned for 2010.
- In 2010, a new network for the enhanced surveillance of hepatitis B and C will be established and the framework for surveillance of hepatitis B and C will be discussed.
- An in-depth analysis of current behavioural surveillance related to HIV and STI has been carried out and reveals a considerable heterogeneity and impressive existing expertise across the EU. A core set of key indicators was suggested for all sub-populations to ensure comparability over time.

Key prevention interventions

- *Guidance on chlamydia control in Europe* was launched at the International Congress

on STD Research. The guidance focuses on a number of strategies for implementing a comprehensive and effective chlamydia control program including patient management, partner notification, and screening practices. It is suggested to have an overall control strategy in place before any enhanced strategies are implemented.

- The expert meeting, *HIV testing in Europe: from policies to effectiveness* focused on advising the MS on how to improve the access, offer, uptake and effectiveness of HIV testing and counselling to at-risk populations. In 2010, ECDC intends to publish guidance on HIV testing based on a survey on testing policies, practices and barriers in the MS.
- The monitoring of the Dublin Declaration: At the Commission's request, ECDC presented a monitoring framework consisting of indicators linked to the 33 actions set out in

the Dublin Declaration on Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia. In 2010, ECDC intends to publish an indicator-based and country-driven report on the progress made implementing the actions set out in the Dublin Declaration.

Collaboration at European level—Country visits for HIV/STI

Since 2006, the programme has carried out five intensive country visits at the request of the MS. Their objectives are to review the status of HIV/STI surveillance, prevention and control as well as to share country experiences and identify best practices.

Coordinated by Marita J.W. Van de Laar, the programme commissioned several assets from ECDC including experts in public health, epidemiology, surveillance, epidemic intelligence



and communication. Additionally, the program received contributions from external experts and specialized organizations.

For more information on the programme, visit us on www.ecdc.europa.eu, contact us at STIHIV@ecdc.europa.eu

Creation of an expert group on outbreaks detection and response on cruise ships

In recent years, infectious disease outbreaks have been increasingly observed on cruise ships in European waters. To respond to the need of coordinated measures, ECDC invited all parties involved to a meeting in Stockholm on 28–29 September 2009 with the goal of establishing an expert group on outbreak detection and control. The forum aimed at improving the collaboration and structured communication between the different actors in case of outbreak investigations on cruise ships.

The group consolidated specific recommendations to improve the detection and control of infectious disease outbreaks on cruise ships. The focus was on food- and waterborne

diseases along with respiratory diseases, in the light of recent outbreaks of influenza. These recommendations will be summarized and used to define a module on the 'Guiding Principles for Response to Public Health Threats related to Communicable Diseases at EU Level' specifically for cruise ships. Members were included from the European Ship Sanitation Program (SHIPSAN), the European Ship Sanitation Program Training Network (SHIPSAN TRAINET), the European Commission, WHO, national health and port health authorities of EU Member States, the Vessel Sanitation program of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ECDC and



members of the cruise ship industry. ECDC has been collaborating with SHIPSAN and SHIPSAN TRAINET since 2006.

European expert networks in the field of preparedness and response

The 'emerging and vectorborne diseases' programme in the Preparedness and Response Unit has established collaboration with three European Networks:

- Outbreak assistance laboratories: With 47 partners from 22 countries, the European Network for Imported Viral Diseases-Collaborative Laboratory Response Network (ENIVD-CLRN) aims at supporting detection, investigation and response to emerging threats in the EU and strengthening diagnostic capacity for rare, imported, emerging and re-emerging outbreak-prone infectious diseases that are not currently covered through other networks;
- Travel medicine: With 32 members from 20 countries, the scope of the European travel

Medicine Network (EuroTravNet) is to support detection, verification, assessment and communication of communicable diseases associated with travelling; specifically tropical diseases. It will also provide ad hoc responses to specific queries regarding potential outbreaks or trends in travel-related infections;

- Public health entomology: Built on a consortium of medical entomologist and public health experts, the goal of the European Network for Arthropod Vector Surveillance for Public Health (VBornNet) is to address the vector surveillance activities for the following priority diseases in the EU: mosquito-borne diseases (chikungunya, dengue, West Nile), tickborne diseases (tickborne

encephalitis, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, Lyme disease, tularemia, rickettsiosis) and phlebotomine-borne diseases (Leishmaniasis, sandfly fevers).

Ways to efficiently use the networks have been discussed at the Competent Bodies meeting on 12–14 October (see page 1) such as sharing of information (science watch, newsletters), linking to other networks (surveillance networks, databases, etc), direct use by Member States through request for assistance and expansion of the networks, e.g. to include veterinarians.

To read more, visit the following webpages:

Collaborative Laboratory Response Network (ENIVD-CLRN): www.enivd.de/ECDC/fs_ecdc.htm

European travel Medicine Network (EuroTravNet): www.istm.org/eurotravnet/main.html



Climate change and communicable diseases in Europe

In the wake of the International Panel on Climate Change's recent series of reports, it is now nearly universally acknowledged that global climate change poses a substantial challenge to humanity. Climate change and its potential impact on communicable diseases are increasingly recognized as an important public health issue. At ECDC a dedicated team, composed of Jan Semenza and Jonathan Suk, is taking the lead on this issue. Their work focuses on several aspects of climate change such as food- and waterborne diseases, supporting Member States in vulnerability and adaptation assessments, assessing the potential for the introduction of dengue into the EU and developing the European Environment and Epidemiology (E3) network to link environmental with epidemiologic data.

Assessing the impact of climate change on food- and waterborne (FWB) diseases in Europe

Many associations between food- and waterborne diseases and climate change have been documented. The research conducted as part of this ECDC funded project, in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication, will play a role in assisting ECDC and Member States in identifying and assessing the anticipated impact of climate change on the transmission patterns of FWB diseases. An extensive knowledge base has been established for this project with published links and associations between climate and food- and waterborne diseases. The project findings are scheduled to be released in 2010.

Supporting Member States in assessing their adaptation options to climate change

Adaptation to climate change is analogous to prevention in public health practice. The purpose of conducting a vulnerability and adaptation assessment is to identify the possible risks and interventions needed to reduce exposure to climate-related hazards and/or to decrease vulnerabilities. Current national and international programs and measures that aim to reduce the burden of climate-sensitive health determinants and outcomes may need to be revised, reoriented and, in some regions, expanded to address the additional pressures of climate change (IPCC 2007). All interventions need to take into account the social, economic and political context within which they will be implemented. The degree to which programs will need to be augmented will depend on the following factors:

- the current burden of climate-sensitive health outcomes;
- the effectiveness of current interventions;
- projections of where, when and how the burden could alter with changes in climate and climate variability and;
- access to the human and financial resources needed to implement activities.

To support Member States assessing their vulnerabilities and adaptation options related to climate change, ECDC is developing a climate change handbook. The work on this project is being undertaken by two prominent researchers in the field: Kristie L. Ebi and Elisabeth Lindgren. To support the development of this handbook and to obtain feedback from across the EU, ECDC hosted the first meeting of the ECDC Expert Group on Climate Change in September 2009. The handbook is scheduled

to be launched in 2010. If requested by national authorities, ECDC may also conduct country visits to elicit further assistance.

Developing the European Environment and Epidemiology (E3) network

The capacity for European countries to analyse, predict and respond to changing communicable disease patterns due to global change is currently underdeveloped. Despite the abundance of environmental and epidemiologic data they are often not linked, thereby preventing public health and environmental agencies and scientists from gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the multi-causal pathways that drive environmental and epidemiological change.

To address this shortcoming, ECDC is pursuing the development of the European Environment and Epidemiology Network (E3) that could link climatic/environmental and infectious disease data in order to strengthen European capacity in forecasting, monitoring and responding to the threats posed by new and emerging diseases.

The E3 network would connect epidemic intelligence and infectious disease surveillance data (currently housed at ECDC) with meteorological variables, entomological data, water quality records, air quality measures, remote sensing information, geology, population density and many other information sources. Through integrating and synthesizing these data sets, disease surveillance systems would be able to incorporate and analyse environmental precursors to disease pandemics, thus preparing public health authorities for the challenges to come.

For more information, www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Pages/Climate_Change.aspx

Exercise Purple Octagon—getting ready in the time of a pandemic

In order to better deal with the current and future pandemics, a simulated exercise was organised on 16–17 September 2009. The aim was to test ECDC's capacity to respond to two public health events (PHE) at the same time. An additional goal included testing recommendations incorporated in the Public Health Event Operation Plan (PHEOP) following the alert and acute phase of the PHE pandemic H1N1 2009 in April 2009, and the external evaluation of ECDC's response to the pandemic in July 2009. As a matter of course, the exercise aspired to 'test the internal and external communications between ECDC's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and the equivalent structures of emergency rooms in participating countries and organisations through tools, communications systems and equipment'. At the national level it was also an opportunity to test an algorithm to assess the risk of communicable diseases at a



mass gathering. To this purpose, the exercise was designed to first test the mass gathering tool in the Netherlands, and second, ECDC's readiness to raise its PHE level from 1 to 2. Evaluators lauded ECDC's capacity to early-detect the event, its appropriate use of the tools to communicate abroad and its highly dedicated staff. ECDC would like to take this opportunity to warmly thank all players, particularly the Commission (SANCO C3), WHO, the European Surveillance Scheme for Travel Associated Legionnaires' Disease (EWGLINET), China, Canada, South Africa, the Netherlands, Portugal, Greece and the UK (especially the Public Health Agency, who planned the exercise).

Eurosurveillance now with impact factor

Eurosurveillance, the European scientific journal devoted to the epidemiology, surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases, has been selected for coverage by Thomson Reuters and is indexed and abstracted in the Science Citation Index Expanded (also known as SciSearch) and the Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition beginning with Volume 14 (1) 2009. The first official impact factor is expected to be allocated in 2011, after the two-year evaluation period. The ECDC Library (ECDC Library) actively collaborated by finding unique characteristics about *Eurosurveillance* and fitting these into Thomson Scientific's requirements. The successful collaboration was, in no small part, due to both parties maximizing their expertise in journal market and citation analysis. The resulting article



written from this experience was awarded the Best First-Timer Oral Presentation at the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL) Workshop in Dublin in June 2009.

The full text of this article is available at: www.eahil.net/journal/journal_2009_vol5_n3.pdf

European experts on food- and waterborne diseases met in Malta

Public health and laboratory experts on food- and waterborne diseases gathered in San Anton, Malta, on 24–25 September 2009. The second annual meeting of the European Food- and Waterborne Diseases Surveillance Network focused on six priority diseases: salmonellosis, campylobacteriosis, STEC/VTEC infection, listeriosis, shigellosis, and yersiniosis. For each disease, working groups discussed questions regarding disease-specific surveillance objectives, the harmonisation of variables, publication of quarterly and annual reports and improving the information exchange to detect multinational clusters and outbreaks. A new web-based communication platform (Epidemic Intelligence Information System (EPIS)) was presented to the participants inspiring a lively discussion on how to ensure that information on food-related threats reaches the right experts and national authorities.



The session dedicated to country presentations included reports on laboratory method developments, disease trends and recent outbreak investigations and highlighted emerging problems, such as the spread of drug-resistant pathogens. Using molecular typing techniques, the network's collaboration has discovered the emergence of monophasic *Salmonella typhimurium* strain DT 193 in several countries since 2005.

For the food- and waterborne diseases programme at the ECDC, the annual meetings are an invaluable opportunity to meet with public health professionals and receive feedback on current work as well as taking suggestions and inspiration for future activities.

ECDC's contribution to the WHO field mission in Ukraine

In the few days following the start of an outbreak of severe respiratory illness in Ukraine, a WHO team, including an ECDC medical epidemiologist, was sent to the field to investigate the outbreak. The team arrived in Kiev on Monday 2 November 2009. An epidemiological investigation was started in one of the most affected cities in the west of the country, during which both clinical and laboratory data were collected. In addition, support was provided in the clinical management of cases and for the laboratory capacity at the national level. ECDC also facilitated the participation of more human resources from European Member States for the initial team's replacement. Another team from ECDC conducted a mission in



Bulgaria in November to support the Bulgarian authorities with regard to the pandemic H1N1 2009.

New publications

Pandemic H1N1 2009: Current pandemic risk assessment

This interim ECDC risk assessment for Europe, revised 25 September 2009, is based on data and analyses available in mid-September 2009. It draws on the experience in the affected European Countries, North America and more recent data from the Southern Hemisphere's temperate countries, which have passed through a winter with the new virus.

ECDC/EMEA joint technical report: The bacterial challenge—time to react

There is a gap between the burden of infections due to multidrug-resistant (MDR) bacteria and the development of new antibiotics to tackle the problem. This report gives an account of facts and figures that would allow reasonable predictions of the extent of this gap in the coming years and calls for a European and global strategy to address the problem urgently.

One of the conclusions of the report is that there is a lack of new antibiotics with new targets or mechanisms of action against MDR Gram-negative bacteria. Only two such agents with new or possibly new targets and documented activity were identified and both are in the early phases of development.

Technical report: Mapping of HIV/STI behavioural surveillance in Europe

This report is an in-depth analysis of the current situation regarding behavioural surveillance programmes related to HIV and STIs in EU and EFTA countries. Surveillance is examined in the following groups: general population; youth; injecting drug users (IDU); men who have sex with men (MSM); people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA); sex workers; STI clinic clients; migrants and; ethnic minorities.

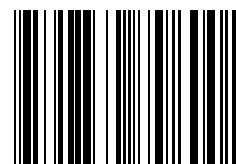
Resulting from the overall analysis, core indicators—common to all populations—are proposed. These core indicators include the following: number of sexual partners, use of a condom at last intercourse, having had an HIV test, having paid for sex, and HIV knowledge.

Meeting Report: Expert consultation on West Nile virus infection

In April 2009, ECDC organised an expert consultation on West Nile Virus (WNV) infection. The main objectives of the meeting were to provide an overview of the current situation regarding WNV and to address the gaps in the current knowledge. Further objectives included identifying the role of the ECDC in order to strengthen preparedness and response at the European level. The meeting brought together a multidisciplinary group of experts from Europe and around the world and this report summarises the presentations and discussions held over the course of the two day consultation.

For more information: publications@ecdc.europa.eu

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Upcoming events

1.12.2009

ECDC marks World AIDS Day, Brussels and Stockholm, ECDC

3–4.12.2009

Swedish presidency, Zoonosis and Climate conference, Jönköping

7–11.12.2009

EPIET module 'Computer Tools for Outbreak Investigation', location to be confirmed

8–9.12.2009

Twentieth Advisory Forum meeting, ECDC, Stockholm

9–10.12.2009

Annual meeting STI surveillance network, ECDC, Stockholm

10–11.12.2009

Annual meeting HIV surveillance network, ECDC, Stockholm

11.12.2009

EuroVaccine Conference, Hilton, Stockholm,

18–19.01.2010

First meeting ECDC European network of modellers, ECDC, Stockholm

22.01.2010

Extraordinary meeting of the Management Board, ECDC, Stockholm

17–18.02.2010

Twenty-first Advisory Forum meeting, ECDC, Stockholm

17–18.03.2010

Eighteenth Management Board meeting, ECDC, Stockholm

5–6.05.2010

Twenty-second Advisory Forum meeting, ECDC, Stockholm

17–18.06.2010

Nineteenth Management Board meeting, Lazareto, Spain

29–30.09.2010

Twenty-third Advisory Forum meeting, ECDC, Stockholm

9–10.11.2010

Twentieth Management Board meeting, ECDC, Stockholm

8–9.12.2010

Twenty-fourth Advisory Forum meeting, ECDC, Stockholm

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