



ECDC Management Board

**Minutes of the Fifty-sixth Meeting  
Stockholm, 15-16 November 2022**

*Adopted by the ECDC Management Board at its Fifty-seventh meeting, 21-22 March 2023*

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## Summary of Proceedings – ECDC Management Board Meeting

The Fifty-sixth meeting of the ECDC Management Board (MB) convened on 15-16 November 2022 in Stockholm, Sweden. During the meeting the MB:

- ❖ adopted the programme of the meeting;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Fifty-fifth meeting of the MB;
- ❖ re-elected Anni Virolainen Julkunen as Chair and Zofija Mazej Kukovič as Deputy Chair of the MB;
- ❖ approved the ECDC Single Programming Document 2023-2025;
- ❖ approved the Budget and Establishment Table 2023;
- ❖ discussed the proposed structure and content of the revised ECDC Strategy 2023-2027 and agreed to set up a Working Group to ensure common understanding among MB members as well as alignment of the legal texts with the ECDC Strategy and related documents;
- ❖ discussed the proposed roadmap for implementation of the amended ECDC mandate;
- ❖ discussed the timeline and process for selection of the ECDC Director 2024-2029 in a closed session;
- ❖ discussed the ECDC Transformation Programme: organisational changes at ECDC to implement the amended mandate;
- ❖ discussed the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between ECDC and EASA and agreed that additional time be provided for MB members to review the text and consult internally as needed. The final MoU will then be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure;
- ❖ took note of the summary of discussions held at the 50<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee;
- ❖ took note of the Progress report – Overview of 2022 budget implementation;
- ❖ took note of the update from the ECDC Director;
- ❖ took note of the Second Supplementary and Amending Budget 2022;
- ❖ took note of the annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee to the Management Board;
- ❖ took note of the update on ECDC Compliance;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Commission;
- ❖ took note of the update from the Czech Presidency of the European Council;
- ❖ took note of the update from the Swedish Presidency of the European Council.

## Opening and welcome from the Chair (and noting the Representatives)

1. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen, Chair of the ECDC Management Board, welcomed all the participants to the Fifty-sixth meeting of the Management Board (MB), which took place in Stockholm, Sweden. A special welcome was extended to Pavla Svrčinová, newly appointed member, Czech Republic. The Chair informed the Board that Ms Miriam Schmidt from Germany would be participating in the meeting as an adviser.
2. Apologies had been received from Bulgaria (proxy to Slovak Republic), Croatia, Denmark, Estonia (proxy to Finland), Iceland, Poland, Romania (proxy to Italy), Slovenia (proxy to Cyprus), the Netherlands (proxy to Belgium), and Maria Eleni Koppa, European Parliament (proxy to Zofija Mazej Kukovič, European Parliament).

## Welcome from the Director, ECDC

3. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, warmly welcomed the MB members to the meeting noting that there were many important items on the agenda, and she was looking forward to fruitful discussions on these matters.

## Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (Document MB56/01)

4. The Draft Programme was adopted without change. The Chair asked each member whether s/he wished to add any oral declaration(s) of interest to her/his Annual Declaration of Interest (ADoI) submitted previously. None were declared.

The Management Board adopted the draft programme.

## Adoption of the draft minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Management Board (Paris, 29-30 June 2022) (Document MB56/02)

5. The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting had been circulated to the MB ahead of the meeting. No requests for amendments had been received. There were no comments on the minutes.

The Management Board adopted the minutes of the Fifty-fifth meeting of the Management Board.

## Election of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Management Board (Document MB56/03)

6. The Chair invited Audrius Ščeponavičius, Member, Lithuania, to chair the session as the longest serving member of the Board as both herself and the current Deputy Chair were standing as candidates. She asked Taneli Puumalainen, MB Alternate, Finland, to vote on behalf of Finland.
7. Audrius Ščeponavičius briefly recalled the procedure for the elections. He noted that there was one candidate, Anni Virolainen-Julkunen, MB Member, Finland, running for the position of Chair, and two candidates, Zofija Mazej-Kukovič, MB Member, European Parliament, and Theoklis Zaoutis, MB Member, Greece, running for the position of Deputy Chair. In accordance with Article 2(2c) of the MB Rules of Procedure, the candidates gave a short presentation of themselves prior to the voting. Øystein Riise, Member, Norway, and Marie-Amélie Ekström, Legal Officer, ECDC, were appointed as tellers.
8. Following the voting, the election results were announced: Anni-Virolainen Julkunen was re-elected as Chair with 28 positive votes (zero abstentions), and Zofija Mazej Kukovič was re-elected as Deputy Chair with 23 positive votes (five positive votes in favour of Theoklis Zaoutis and zero abstentions).

9. The re-elected Chair and Deputy Chair thanked the Board members for their continued trust and support.

The Management Board re-elected Anni Virolainen-Julkunen as Chair and Zofija Mazek Kukovič as Deputy Chair of the Management Board.

## **Revised ECDC Strategy 2021-2027 (Document MB56/04)**

10. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented a proposal for a revised structure and content of the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027 to reflect the amended ECDC mandate. She explained that the mission of ECDC has been slightly amended in the new regulation (cf. Art. 3) and there is more focus on hands-on support to Member States and the need to ensure that scientific information is presented in an easily accessible way. Examples of new tasks include developing common indicators for standardised data collection, monitoring of Member States' health system capacity and supporting the data collection, organising on-site visits in Member States to provide additional support to prevention and preparedness and response planning activities, supporting national monitoring of response to major communicable diseases, and supporting epidemic and outbreak response, e.g., through the EU Health Task Force (EUHTF). The ECDC vision remains unchanged.

11. The Director then described the foreseen changes in the Strategic Objectives (SO) and Action Areas of the Strategy. The objective is to present the full text of the revised Strategy to the MB in March 2023. In parallel, an amended Strategy implementation roadmap will be elaborated during Q1-Q2 2023 and will support the development of the Single Programming Documents (SPDs). Monitoring of the implementation will happen through regular reports (quarterly to the MB) and related Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

12. Following the presentation, several points were raised by the MB. One of the MB members representing the European Commission stressed the importance of looking at all parts of the EU Health Union legal package (i.e., the amended ECDC mandate, the regulation on HERA, the new regulation on serious cross-border threats to health (SCBTHR) and the strengthened EMA mandate) and their interlinkages. He added that the Commission would be happy to organise a seminar for the MB to go through the texts and clarify any points as necessary. With regards to ECDC's amended mandate, he emphasised the need for ECDC to focus on science-based recommendations to support Member States; these will also reach the Health Security Committee and the Council's Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) and may have a global impact as well. He also stressed ECDC's role in the networking of knowledge and noted that ECDC may need to enforce its modelling and foresight tools. Another important area will be the strengthening of integrated surveillance systems. There are many elements to consider, and the implementation will have to happen step by step. He suggested providing some additional time to MB members to look at the document before providing feedback.

13. Several MB members felt that there were aspects that needed further clarification, such as roles and responsibilities (in particular with respect to the EUHTF and HERA), prioritisation, and distribution of work as well as the interlinkage between the Strategy, the implementation roadmap, and the SPD. It was suggested to set up an MB working group to look at the documents in more detail to ensure coherence between the different parts. One MB member noted that from his country's perspective, ECDC had been too silent in the media and on the European stage during the pandemic and there was an expectation for increased visibility. He added that ECDC's strengthened role in providing independent recommendations and advice should be expressed more explicitly in the document. Another MB member commented that while the strong scientific base of ECDC's advice was highly appreciated, it was also appreciated that ECDC left the media narrative to the Member States in respect of the MS sovereignty in this area. One MB member said that the coordination of research seemed to be somewhat missing in the document. Some MB members questioned why the document referred to the need to "fundamentally change" the way in which ECDC works with MS.

14. The Director thanked the MB members for their input which signalled that there were still many aspects to sort out. She added that the legal text provides a frame but does not explain everything and the implementation will have to be discussed together with the main stakeholders. As the Strategy is meant

to be high level, she recommended keeping the discussion on the implementation a bit apart. Concerning the mentioning of the “fundamental change” to the way in which ECDC works with countries, she said that the amended mandate requires ECDC to have a different mindset, not only to listen to Member States’ needs, but also to be more proactive in offering support while taking into account local conditions. This approach had been followed during the pandemic when providing support to those Member States that had a lower COVID-19 vaccination coverage and more recently in the context of the targeted support provided to the countries neighbouring Ukraine. This way of differentiating the support implied in fact a fundamental change for ECDC. In terms of the Strategy text, she said that further references to the EU Health Union package could be made. She concluded that there were some opposite opinions as to how outspoken ECDC should be. Concerning the coordination of research, ECDC was interacting with DG RTD and JRC, but this was work in progress and rather complex.

The Management Board discussed the proposed structure and content for the revised ECDC Strategy 2021-2027. The Management Board agreed to set up a Working Group to ensure common understanding among MB members and alignment of the legal texts with the ECDC Strategy and related documents.

## **Proposed roadmap for implementation of the amended ECDC mandate (*Document MB56/05*)**

15. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the proposed high-level roadmap for implementation of the amended ECDC mandate noting that this was based on a first analysis of the legal texts. The roadmap shows the main milestones until 2027 in selected areas. In 2023, this roadmap will be merged with an amended version of the overall ECDC Strategy implementation roadmap. Two evaluations will take place: in 2024 based on the new regulation on serious cross-border threats to health (SCBTHR) and in 2025 based on the amended ECDC Founding Regulation. The Director then presented the main milestones per Strategic Objective (SO). She highlighted the work to be done in the area of foresight and development of scenarios for future trends in key infectious diseases in the EU (SO1), the implementation of the EU reference labs (EURLs), delivery of a pilot project on AMR to test the suitability of the European Health Data Space (EHDS) for surveillance and other activities linked to e-Health as well as molecular surveillance (SO2), the establishment of the EU Health Task Force (EUHTF), delivery of After-Action reviews on COVID-19 and the development of a methodology for monitoring Member States’ health systems’ capacities as well as assessment of the implementation of national preparedness plans (SO3). Concerning the strengthening of ECDC’s international role (SO4), she highlighted the renewal of the MoU with WHO foreseen during 2023, the development of a framework for cooperation with the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence based in Berlin and strengthened collaboration with other CDCs. Lastly, in terms of ECDC’s internal organisation and processes (SO5), she highlighted the need for rebranding and review of the ECDC values given that the Agency had evolved considerably since it was established in 2005.

16. The Chair thanked for the presentation and opened the floor for comments. The MB members generally welcomed the roadmap noting that it was an ambitious plan. One of the MB members representing the European Commission mentioned that forecasting should ideally come earlier as there was a high potential for policy making. Similarly, the After-Action Reviews on COVID-19 would benefit from being conducted earlier in the process. With regards to the use of electronic health records for surveillance, it was noted that Member States interpreted the data protection rules slightly differently, which could be a challenge. The strengthening of ECDC’s international role through MoUs with CDCs and other partners was welcomed but it was felt that the Centre had more to offer in this area. MB members also asked for clarifications on the EURLs and the role of ECDC with respect to the European Health Data Space. It was also inquired how the work under SO3 will support the already existing WHO processes for evaluating Member States’ capacities through Joint External Evaluations (JEE). Concerning training, it was inquired whether ECDC was in contact with the WHO Academy that was being set up.

17. The Director thanked the MB members for their comments and questions. Concerning the timing of the After-Action reviews she said that this would depend on the willingness of Member States as ECDC would conduct the reviews based on Member States’ request. Responding to the questions on the European Health Data Space, she clarified that the Commission proposal was currently under discussion in the European Parliament and the Council, and data protection is at the core of these discussions. ECDC is looking at how it can become a node in the EHDS and supply and get data. The pilot project on AMR is

explorational as it will look at existing hurdles, which can be both technical and data protection related. With regards to collaboration with WHO, she said that there was joint planning between ECDC and WHO/EURO; in the past year the collaboration had been very intense on COVID-19, hepatitis, monkeypox and refugees from Ukraine. ECDC was also having discussions with the WHO Pandemic Hub and representatives from the Hub had visited ECDC during the summer. As for the EURLs, she said that the legal text was clear with regards to their role; however, the prioritisation of the set-up was still to be determined. ECDC's role will be to coordinate the network of reference labs; once fully set up, the EURLs should be able to carry out many tasks previously performed by the Member States themselves and will thereby provide substantial support to countries. Concerning preparedness planning, she said that ECDC will take into account already existing data such as data from JEEs when available. The intention is to identify together with the Member State where improvements are needed and provide support accordingly. Lastly, she said that ECDC was not collaborating with the WHO Academy at present, but it was certainly something that could be looked at.

The Management Board discussed the proposed roadmap for implementation of the amended ECDC mandate.

## **Timeline and process for selection of ECDC Director 2024-2029**

18. This item was discussed in a closed session (Members of the Management Board only).

## **Summary of discussions held at the 50<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (Stockholm, 15 November 2022), including its recommendations**

19. Daniel Shine, Chair of the Audit Committee, gave a summary of the discussions from the 50<sup>th</sup> Audit Committee (AC) meeting, which took place in the morning of 15 November 2022. He informed the MB that the Internal Audit Service (IAS) had provided an update on the limited review on Cross-Border Health Emergencies to be performed in 2022-2023. The IAS had confirmed that the limited review had been selected through the risk assessment exercise performed in the European Commission and not in the ECDC. The preliminary survey was currently ongoing, and the aim was to finalise the review in March 2023. The AC had expressed some concern regarding the manner in which the audit had been proposed and provided views on what could be included in the scope of the review. The IAS had confirmed that the planned audit on the IT Security Management had been postponed to 2023 due to a lack of IT auditor resources in the IAS, but that it would be performed as soon as possible in 2023. In conclusion, the AC had agreed to issue a letter to the IAS outlining its concerns and its suggestions regarding the scope of the limited review.

20. The AC had also taken note of the changes made in the Internal Control Framework (ICF) indicators. The AC endorsed the revised ICF but suggested that the format should be improved in the future to make comparisons of targets and baselines easier. Concerning the regular update on audit activities, the AC Chair mentioned that one new observation had been received and one had been closed by the ECDC. Five observations were currently open, all with target dates set for Q4 2022. The AC proposed that the document on audit activities and observations should be presented for endorsement in the future and that the MB should be informed about any key observations.

21. The AC had also discussed the format of future AC meetings. The AC Chair proposed that AC meeting should be held the day before the MB meetings, and last approx. 3-4 hours, to be able to fully discuss the issues on the agenda. The AC Chair also proposed calling a separate online meeting, possibly in Q1, to discuss the work of the AC more in depth (including items such as the AC Mandate, IAS Mission Charter and the IAS Mutual Expectations Paper etc.)

The Management Board took note of the summary of the AC discussions.

## ***a) Progress Report – Overview of 2022 budget implementation***

22. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, gave an overview of the 2022 budget implementation up until 10 November 2022. This item had not been discussed in the AC due to time constraints.

23. She explained that from the total budget of EUR 99.9 Million, EUR 93.5 Million had been committed (93.6%), and from the committed amount, EUR 59.7 Million (59.8%) had been paid, while EUR 0.4 Million was in the workflow to be paid. A total of EUR 59.3 Million had been carried forward from 2021; of this amount, EUR 33.9 Million (57.3%) had been paid. Final payments for the HERA grants would be executed before year-end 2022.

The Management Board took note of the Progress Report – Overview of 2022 budget implementation.

### ***b) Third Supplementary and Amending Budget 2022 (Document MB56/06)***

24. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented the Third Supplementary and Amending Budget (SAB) 2022, consisting of the budget transfers approved by the Director since the Second SAB that had been shared with the MB for approval in October 2022. The transfers were executed from several budget lines within Title 1 (staff expenditure), Title 2 (infrastructure and administrative expenditure) and Title 3 (operational expenditure). As for transfers between Titles, a budget transfer of EUR 88 058 had been executed from Title 2 to Title 1 to further support staff-related expenditure needs.

25. Anja Van Brabant noted that, due to time constraints, this item had not been discussed in the AC. The Third SAB was presented to the MB for information only.

The Management Board took note of the Third Supplementary and Amending Budget 2022.

### ***c) Progress Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme 2022 (Document MB56/07)***

26. Maarit Kokki, Head of Executive Office, ECDC, briefed the MB on the current level of implementation of the work programme 2022. She presented the implementation status per Strategic Objective as of November 2022 compared to March and June 2022. Concerning ECDC response to emergency situations, she recalled that the ECDC Ukraine Task Force (UTF) had been put in place in March 2022. The focus of the UTF had now shifted from operational response to more medium-/longer term and strategic response actions. The ongoing PHE for monkeypox had been downgraded to recovery phase on 1 November. The PHE for COVID-19 had been downgraded to maintenance phase in June 2022. She then presented the changes to the Financing Decision noting that these were due to revision of the budget of planned contracts, i.e., possibility to procure for a lower cost, savings due to organisation of hybrid meetings instead of face-to-face, delays due to unsuccessful outcomes of the procurement (lack of suitable contractors), and cancellation of planned contracts because of work being performed in-house.

27. The AC Chair reported that the AC had taken note of the implementation of the work programme and the proposed changes to the Financing Decision. The AC recommended the MB to approve the changes to the Financing Decision.

The Management Board took note of the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme 2022 and approved the proposed changes in the Financing Decision 2022.

### ***d) ECDC Single Programming Document 2023-2025***

#### ***i) ECDC Single Programming Document 2023 (Document MB56/08)***

28. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2023. The SPD 2023 follows the current ECDC Strategy 2023-2027 given that the negotiations on ECDC's amended mandate were still ongoing at the time of drafting the document. A number of activities which are part of the implementation of the amended ECDC mandate have however already been incorporated in the work programme for 2023.

29. The priorities follow the amended mandate and include scaling up the support to the European Commission and Member States to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response to cross-border health threats, digitalisation of surveillance at EU and national level, increasing the ECDC knowledge and understanding of Member States' needs to better target its interventions, and supporting the EU in the negotiations for an international agreement on pandemic preparedness and response as well as complementary amendments to the International Health Regulation (IHR). ECDC will also continue addressing priority conditions at EU level (AMR, monitoring of vaccine effectiveness, support to countries to improve the vaccine coverage in the EU, support to the European Commission and Member States in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the area of HIV, TB and hepatitis). Another priority is to assess and integrate innovations for communicable diseases in the area of environment, technological and scientific advances. The budget for 2023 amounts to EUR 90 182 000 and the envisaged staff to 348 statutory staff and five Seconded National Experts (SNE). Additional resources amounting to EUR 6 668 767 and 23 FTEs are foreseen for externally funded projects.

30. Following the usual process, ECDC received comments on the SPD 2023 from the European Commission in July 2022; all comments including ECDC replies are listed in the repository of comments shared on the MB Extranet.

31. After the presentation, a few points were raised. One of the MB members representing the European Commission noted that DG Research (DG RTD) was not mentioned in the section about EU and international partners (p. 57). Another member representing the European Commission said that, from the Commission perspective, he wished to emphasise the importance of gender balance in leadership (currently 30% female representation in the senior management team). On the operational part, he highlighted the importance of foresight and modelling. Referring to the indicators for the multiannual programme 2023-2025, one MB member representing the Member States asked for a clarification regarding the percentage of ECDC staff engagement (p. 17). She also inquired about the distribution of resources for the EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs) and the EU Health Task Force (EUHTF). The Deputy Chair and MB member representing the European Parliament asked in which way the strengthened international role of ECDC would be manifested. The AC Chair noted that specific parts of the SPD 2023 were closely linked to the previous discussions in the AC and the IAS limited review to be performed in the coming months; the SPD document demonstrated that ECDC was scaling up in the areas covered by the IAS review and it would be important to communicate on this to the IAS.

32. The Director thanked the MB members for their input. She confirmed that the reference to DG RTD would be added. She agreed that gender equality was important, but the quality of candidates naturally had to be considered as well. She clarified that the staff engagement percentage target corresponded to the overall average positive score given by staff in the ECDC staff engagement survey, which is conducted every second year. With regards to the resources for specific activities, she said that 3 FTEs were estimated for the coordination and secretariat of the EUHTF in 2023 and any deployments will come on top as needed. The EURLs will be funded through the European Commission. ECDC has however recruited several microbiologists since the start of the pandemic and now has a strong group in this area. Concerning global health security and the Centre's role on the international arena, the focus was on areas where ECDC was not yet covered. Consequently, ECDC had approached Brazil and was planning to approach India. Brazil was an important potential partner considering the size of the country but also the fact that it was close to the Caribbeans and thereby some of the EU overseas territories. She added that an evaluation of ECDC's work with other CDCs had recently been conducted and the recommendations arising from this evaluation would be taken on board in the future work.

33. With reference to the EU reference laboratories, one of the MB members representing the European Commission clarified that EUR 8.2 million had been allocated in the EU4Health 2023 work programme to support the set-up and operation of the EURLs. Concerning the international work, he mentioned that the Commission was going to adopt a new EU Global Health Strategy at the end of the month.

34. Following the discussion, the Management Board approved the ECDC Single Programming Document 2023-2025.

#### ***ii) Budget and Establishment Table 2023 (Document MB56/09)***

35. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, then presented the Budget and Establishment Table 2023. She recalled that

the Draft Budget 2023 had been approved by the MB in January 2022 through written procedure as part of the SPD 2023 (Annex II and III). The initial total amount requested was EUR 89 million. Following the reinforcement with EUR 1 million due to the high inflation rate and its impact on the salaries, the ECDC budget for the financial year 2023 amounts to EUR 90 million. The Establishment Plan 2023 foresees 222 Temporary Agents and 126 Contract Agent posts. In addition, the Centre will have 23 Contract Agents to support international projects funded by EU grants (EU Initiative on Health Security, Africa CDC, IPA VI, EVIP-EU4Health).

36. The 2023 budget evolution by title compared to the initial 2022 budget will be as follows: 7.3% increase in title 1 (staff expenditure), 4.1% increase in title 2 (infrastructure & administrative expenditure), and 2.9 % increase in title 3 excluding the additional EUR 10 million received in 2022 for Whole Genome Sequencing (operational expenditure). The ratio between administrative expenditure (title 1 & 2) and operational expenditure (title 3) will be 57% versus 43%, compared to 50% versus 50% in 2022 and 63% versus 37% in 2021.

37. The AC Chair briefed the MB about the discussions that had taken place in the AC and noted that ECDC had clarified the reasons for the increased costs of the software purchases and the security and reception services. ECDC had also explained that the salaries increase automatically with the method applied by the European Commission and that they are also impacted by the exchange rate between the SEK and the EURO. ECDC had also clarified that the staff turnover had decreased during the pandemic from 4% to 3%. The AC recommended the MB to approve the Budget and Establishment Table 2023.

The Management Board approved the Single Programming Document 2023 and the Budget and Establishment Table 2023.

## **ECDC Single Programming Document 2024-2026 (*Document MB56/10*)**

38. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the draft Single Programming Document 2024-2026 noting that it was based on the revised ECDC mandate and followed the proposed amended structure of the ECDC Strategy. The 2024 priorities reflect the biggest chunks of work from the amended mandate: preparedness and response planning, reinforced surveillance and monitoring, building profound knowledge of Member States to better target ECDC interventions, and strengthened strategic partnerships at the EU and international level. ECDC will also continue to address priority issues at European level (AMR, SDGs in the area of HIV, TB and hepatitis, monitoring of vaccine effectiveness, support to countries to improve the vaccine coverage in the EU). The budget is in line with the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027: EUR 91,336,000, of which EUR 42,306,000 for operational expenditure, and 358 FTEs (225 TA, 128 CA, and 5 SNE). Additional resources (budget and staff) are foreseen for projects based on contribution agreements.

39. The Director then explained the timeline noting that the document would be sent to the MB for written comments with deadline set for 16 December 2022. In January 2023, the final draft SPD including annexes will be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure and subsequently shared with the EU institutions following the usual procedure.

The Management Board took note of the draft ECDC Single Programming Document 2024-2026. Following the meeting, the document will be sent to the MB for written comments with deadline 16 December 2022.

## **Update from the Director**

40. The Director gave an update on ECDC activities focusing on ongoing international projects. The work with Western Balkans and Turkey would focus on AMR and SARI surveillance until 2023 and was financed through a grant from DG NEAR. The purpose of the work was to integrate and prepare these countries for EU accession. In this context, experts from Western Balkans and Turkey had been invited as observers to ECDC network meetings and seminars on different topics (e.g., COVID-19 and preparedness). ECDC was also working with European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries through the EU Initiative on Health Security. The start of the cooperation with the Africa CDC had been difficult due to the pandemic but now there was frequent interaction. The activities covered preparedness, surveillance and epidemic

intelligence and workforce and capacity building. She also referred to the recent evaluation of ECDC's work with the network of CDCs noting that the preliminary results showed a positive outcome of ECDC's coordination of the network. ECDC was currently looking at ways to approach India to establish cooperation at least in the area of AMR. ECDC currently had one colleague deployed to Uganda together with DG ECHO and ECDC's Rapid Risk Assessments on Ebola had been greatly appreciated. The PHEs on hepatitis and monkeypox had been recently de-escalated; COVID-19 was now running on PHE Level 1 as it was important to remain cautious over the winter period. Responding to a question whether there was a specific date set when the PHE level for COVID will be changed, she said that there was no specific date determined at this stage as it was important to follow the evolution also in relation to influenza and it was easier to escalate from level 1 in case this became necessary.

The Management Board took note of the update from the Director.

## Preliminary results of the ECDC Stakeholder Survey 2022

41. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the preliminary results of the 2022 Stakeholder Satisfaction Consultation. The purpose of the consultation was to measure the satisfaction and engagement of different stakeholder groups and to obtain feedback on the performance of the ECDC networks. It was also meant to give information on the level of satisfaction and use of key ECDC outputs and to identify strengths and areas of improvement. The consultation was carried out through surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and desk research. Some of the limitations were the low response rate to the survey, lack of response to interviews and low number of focus group attendees. Other challenges were the survey length and many survey respondents having multiple roles in more than one network and thus potentially answering the survey questions only for one of those roles. The overall survey response rate was 22%, and 39% for MB and AF members combined. The overall satisfaction with the work of the ECDC scored high in general (50% satisfied and 36% very satisfied) and even higher among the MB respondents (47.6% satisfied and very satisfied respectively), as well as the conception that ECDC supports the Member States to take informed decisions (general score: 58% agree, 35% strongly agree, MB score: 71% agree, 29% strongly agree).

42. The Director then presented the identified strengths and areas for improvement noting that the final report was foreseen to be delivered in December 2022. The recommendations specifically targeting the work with the MB include: provide more training to support the role of the MB members, explore possibility to have workshops to discuss priority areas, distribute background documents in advance for all agenda points to allow for better preparation and more productive discussion, explore options to coordinate more frequently with Operational Contact Points and National Focal Points (if relevant for the Member State), and potential for more collaboration between MB and AF members.

43. In the discussion that followed, a few comments and questions were raised regarding the follow-up of the survey results and the usefulness of the exercise. The Director responded that on one hand there was an audit recommendation stating that stakeholder feedback must be collected; on the other hand, it was crucial for the Centre itself to measure the impact of its work. To further improve it was also necessary to tackle those issues that had already come up in previous surveys, such as the searchability of the website and the need for better consultation with and involvement of the Member States. She said that the final report would probably include a longer set of recommendations that would need to be prioritised for further action.

The Management Board took note of the preliminary results of the ECDC Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey 2022.

## ECDC Transformation Programme: organisational changes at ECDC to implement the amended mandate

44. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the ECDC Transformation Programme "ASPIRE" (Anticipate, Support, Prepare, Inform, Respond and Empower), planned to be formally launched early 2023. The purpose of the programme is to make the organisation aware of the changes arising from the amended ECDC mandate and the new SCBTH regulation and how these impact the Centre's ways of

working, to establish a smooth and sound implementation of the amended mandate and to ensure sufficient resources with the required capabilities are assigned to the different functions. The ASPIRE programme will be supported by an internal communication campaign with the aim of engaging ECDC staff in the different actions and enhancing their understanding of the strengthened ECDC mandate and the revised ECDC Strategy. The campaign will use different channels such as a dedicated page on the ECDC internal Information Centre, news items, videos featuring “ambassadors” to explain how the amended mandate affects their work, staff events, branded items, etc. The progress will be continuously monitored.

45. The ASPIRE programme brings together different projects and actions, some of which have already started and others that will be initiated in 2023. The already ongoing actions include a competencies and capabilities gap analysis, an ecosystem analysis, the work on the revised ECDC Strategy, and the development of a stakeholder engagement framework to be finalised in 2024. A kick-off event for external ECDC stakeholders is planned to take place early 2023. The planned actions include developing the revised Strategy implementation roadmap, key outputs, processes and KPIs. The ECDC values will also be reviewed. The programme is planned to end in 2024. As a last step, the organisational structure will be revisited. If only small adjustments are needed then these can be made with the current Director in place; in case of bigger changes, these will be left for the next ECDC Director.

46. Following the presentation, several MB members congratulated the Director for the ambitious programme and noted that it would be interesting to report back on the initiative in their own institutions. Responding to a question from the Chair about the kick-off meeting for external stakeholders, the Director clarified that it will be a virtual event targeting all main ECDC stakeholders: MB, AF, CCB Directors and National Coordinators, National Focal Points, and representatives of the European Commission, WHO, relevant EU agencies, other CDCs, etc. More information will follow closer to the event.

The Management Board discussed the ECDC Transformation Programme: organisational changes at ECDC to implement the amended mandate.

## **Memorandum of Understanding between ECDC and EASA (Document MB56/11)**

47. Antonis Lanaras, Head of Section, European and International Affairs, Director’s Unit, ECDC, presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) negotiated between ECDC and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). During the pandemic, the two agencies intensified their collaboration, in particular with the cooperation on the joint EASA-ECDC Aviation Health Safety Protocol published in 2020 and an update in 2022. Based on this experience, the parties agreed to replace the EASA-ECDC Framework Agreement concluded in 2011 with an updated set of arrangements.

48. The objective of the MoU is to protect the safety and health of EU citizens travelling by air within the EU and worldwide. The MoU ensures a holistic, harmonised and evidence-based prevention and response to sanitary threats and outbreaks. The areas of collaboration include regular exchange of information, experience, and good practices, sharing relevant ECDC outputs, access to EpiPulse for nominated EASA users to access the daily Communicable Disease Threat Reports (CDTR) and specific items, discussions and documents related to issues falling within the scope of the EASA mandate. EASA will also collaborate with ECDC in the framework of the EU digital Passenger Locator Form (dPLF) platform and similar activities. The two agencies will provide each other with technical advice and support on specific materials or activities falling within the scope of the MoU. Specific focal points for the collaboration will be appointed within EASA and ECDC respectively.

49. In the discussion that followed, one of the MB members representing the European Commission welcomed the MoU noting that it was important to exchange experience and expertise with other EU agencies. He encouraged ECDC to approach also other relevant agencies, such as the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA). He asked for the possibility to get back in written about the text of the MoU as he needed to consult with colleagues. Some MB members representing the Member States noted that their country had been critical to the joint EASA-ECDC reports during the pandemic as it was felt that the public health message did not come across strong enough. It was requested that some

additional time be provided to look at the text in more detail to make sure that the independency and public health competence of ECDC was safeguarded.

50. The Chair concluded that the decision on the MoU would have to wait as there were some reserves. While the capitals were looking at the document, ECDC could insert the necessary references to the new legal texts. The formal approval would then need to be taken via written procedure.

The Management Board discussed the Memorandum of Understanding between ECDC and EASA and agreed that additional time be provided for MB members to review the text and consult internally as needed. The final MoU will then be sent to the MB for approval via written procedure.

## Annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee

51. Lars Söderblom, Member of the ECDC Staff Committee, thanked the MB for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the ECDC Staff Committee (SC) and bring forward the staff's concerns with respect to the high workload. There was a general sentiment among ECDC colleagues that the current staff resources were not sufficient to carry out the work expected by the Centre, and even more so considering the new tasks arising from the amended ECDC mandate. Since the start of the COVID pandemic, staff had been working in PHE mode (and recently with three PHEs running in parallel) which meant that many staff had not had any possibility to recuperate. He added that many agencies were facing issues to attract and retain staff and it was crucial to look at these issues now for ECDC not to end up in the same situation. He asked the MB members to reflect on whether ECDC will be able to carry out the work in a sustainable way with the foreseen resources.

52. The Chair thanked Lars Söderblom for the address noting that staff was the most valuable resource an organisation had, and staff well-being was therefore crucial.

53. Karl Ekdahl, Head of Unit, Disease Programmes Unit, ECDC, said that the situation described by Lars Söderblom was in line with the message he received from his staff on a daily basis. There were staff members who had been working in PHE mode for three years with the outbreaks of monkeypox and hepatitis in children adding to the already strained situation. There was an expectation on ECDC to deliver and to act quickly. At the same time, the organisation needed some time to recover from the pandemic and get back to a more sustainable working mode.

54. The MB members thanked the ECDC colleagues for bringing this matter to their attention. A similar situation was observed in many Member States as a result of the pandemic. It was mentioned that the MB did not have much impact on the number of staff allocated to the Agency, but it could and should look at what was feasible to achieve with the available staff; the prioritisation of activities was very important in this context. Pontus Molin, Head of Unit, Resource Management Services, ECDC, recalled that ECDC had been granted a 26% staff increase by the Budgetary Authority as a result of the pandemic. It was important to look at real data and managers were actively following up the figures on for instance working hours, sick leave, annual leave, etc. The data showed that staff members were generally taking their leaves but there were of course pockets of staff who might not have taken all their leave due to a high workload.

55. The Chair agreed that numbers were important but also the experience of staff. She added that the staff turn-over was less than in previous years which showed that the ECDC staff were dedicated to their work.

The Management Board took note of the annual address of the ECDC Staff Committee.

## Update on ECDC Compliance: Implementation of the ECDC Independence Policy

56. Elizabeth Sinclair, Legal Advisor, Resource Management Services, ECDC, recalled the main steps of the process for submitting Annual Declarations of Interest (ADoI) noting that AF and MB members/alternates/observers are requested to submit their ADoI and Annual Declaration of Commitment

(ADoC) for the following calendar year no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of each calendar year. By end of September 2022, the compliance rate was 97% for the MB and the AF respectively. Concerning potential conflicts of interests (CoI), for the MB, no such interests were identified in 2022. For Rapid Risk Assessments, the compliance rate was 100% and for meetings with external experts 99%; this figure however only covers meetings that the compliance officer was informed about. Virtual meetings made the CoI check more challenging and there were a few occasions where the meeting link had been shared with other colleagues. In 2023, continuous update of the electronic DoI (eDoI) app was foreseen as well as improvement of the IT support related to eDoI.

57. One of the MB members representing the European Commission said that some experts linked to EU agencies had been subject to threats, possibly due to personal data being accessible through CVs or compliance documents published on Agencies' websites. He asked how ECDC ensured a sufficient level of anonymisation of documents published on its website.

58. Elizabeth Sinclair responded that the ECDC compliance officer had informed her of this matter and added that there was a need to align practices between agencies. There was a balance between data protection and transparency; the interpretation of the transparency requirements posed by the European Ombudsman and the European Court of Auditors has been that the compliance documents have to be published on the website, but she agreed that this issue should be looked at as a matter of priority.

The Management Board took note of the update on ECDC Compliance.

## Update from the European Commission

59. John F Ryan, MB member, DG SANTE, European Commission, briefed the MB about ongoing activities in the area of health. He reported that the budget of the EU4Health 2023 work programme had been voted the day before (total budget of EUR 745 million). The Commission is finalising the legal proposals for the revision of the EU pharmaceutical legislation and the new legislation on SoHo is foreseen to be adopted soon. The European Commission is also working on a mental health strategy to be launched during the first half of 2023.

60. Barbara Kerstiens, MB Member, DG RTD, European Commission, gave a brief update on ongoing research initiatives noting that the Horizon Europe work programme 2023 included several public health topics, for instance related to pandemic preparedness and response. Funds were also being mobilised for clinical trials and cohort studies on monkeypox.

The Management Board took note of the update from the European Commission.

## Update from the Czech Presidency of the European Council

61. Pavla Svrčinová, MB Member, Czech Republic, updated the MB on the Czech EU Presidency. She mentioned that the Council Conclusions on Vaccination were foreseen to be approved in the next EPSCO meeting as well as Council Conclusions on the Special Report of the European Court of Auditors on the joint COVID-19 vaccine procurement. The last informal meeting of Ministers of Health had taken place on 6-7 September; the agenda had included a discussion with the Ukrainian Minister on support to Ukraine and debates on the future of vaccination, conclusions from the Presidency conference on oncology and exchanges with COVID-19 vaccine producers. Several other health events had also taken place under the auspices of the Czech Presidency.

The Management Board took note of the update on the Czech Presidency of the European Council.

## Update from the Swedish Presidency of the European Council

62. Karin Tegmark Wisell, MB Member, Sweden, briefed the MB on the Swedish EU Presidency starting on 1 January 2023. The preparations were well under way but given the recent change of government, the health priorities would not be communicated before the end of 2022. Several major legislative files

were on the table, such as the Regulation on the European Health Data Space, the revised pharmaceutical legislation, and the regulation on substances of human origin. The Ministry of Health was planning for an Informal EPSCO Health meeting in May, a High-Level Meeting focused on AMR in March, and two presidency expert conferences on health.

The Management Board took note of the update on the Swedish Presidency of the European Council.

### **Any other business**

63. The Chair thanked all the MB members for their active participation during the meeting. The next regular Management Board is scheduled to take place in Stockholm on 21-22 March 2023.

## Annex: List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Austria	Sigrid Kiermayr	Member
Belgium	Lieven De Raedt	Member
Cyprus	Irene Cotter	Member
Czech Republic	Pavla Svrčinová	Member
Finland	Anni Virolainen-Julkunen ( <i>Chair</i> )	Member
	Taneli Puumalainen	Alternate
France	Anne-Catherine Viso	Alternate
Germany	Gesa Lücking	Alternate
	Miriam Schmidt	Advisor
Greece	Theoklis Zaoutis	Member
Hungary	Ágnes Dánielisz	Member
Ireland	Colette Bonner	Member
	Daniel Shine	Alternate
Italy	Francesco Maraglino	Member
Latvia	Jana Feldmane	Member
Lithuania	Audrius Ščeponavičius	Member
Luxembourg	Thomas Dentzer	Alternate
Malta	Patricia Vella Bonanno	Member
Portugal	Rui Portugal	Member
Slovakia	Ján Mikas	Member

Spain	Pilar Aparicio Azcárraga	Member
Sweden	Karin Tegmark Wisell	Member
	Dariosh Bidar	Alternate
<b>European Parliament</b>		
	Zofija Mazej Kukovič	Member
<b>European Commission</b>		
DG SANTE	John F. Ryan	Member
DG SANTE	Isabel de la Mata Barranco	Member
DG RTD	Barbara Kerstiens	Member
<b>EEA Countries</b>		
Norway	Øystein Riise	Member