



ECDC Management Board

Minutes of the Sixtieth Meeting

Stockholm, 13-14 March 2024

Adopted by the ECDC Management Board at its Sixty-first meeting, 12-13 June 2024

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Summary of Proceedings – ECDC Management Board Meeting

The Sixtieth meeting of the ECDC Management Board (MB) convened on 13-14 March 2024 in Stockholm, Sweden. During the meeting, the MB:

- ❖ adopted the programme of the meeting;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Fifty-ninth meeting of the MB;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Sixth Extraordinary meeting of the MB;
- ❖ approved the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2023, including the MB analysis and assessment of the CAAR;
- ❖ approved the Provisional Annual Accounts 2023;
- ❖ endorsed the Internal Audit Service (IAS) 2024 Audit Plan for ECDC;
- ❖ appointed Karin Tegmark Wisell, MB member, Sweden, as Chair of the ECDC Audit Committee (AC);
- ❖ discussed the Chief Scientist's Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Forum in 2023;
- ❖ took note of the summary of discussions held at the Fifty-fourth meeting of the AC;
- ❖ took note of the Budget transfers – fourth quarter 2023;
- ❖ took note of the Progress report – Overview of 2024 budget implementation;
- ❖ took note of and discussed the new approach for monitoring of work programme implementation in ECDC;
- ❖ took note of the update on the assessments of Member States' prevention, preparedness and response plans (Article 8 of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health, SCBTH);
- ❖ took note of the update on the EU Health Task Force;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Commission on EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs);
- ❖ took note of the update from the ECDC Director;
- ❖ took note of the update on the draft ECDC One Health Framework;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Commission;
- ❖ took note of the update from the European Parliament.

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

1. Anni Virolainen-Julkunen, Chair of the ECDC Management Board (MB), welcomed all the participants to the Sixtieth meeting of MB, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden. A special welcome was extended to Carolina Stylianou, newly appointed alternate, Cyprus, and Antonios Vassilogiannakopoulos, newly appointed alternate, Greece.
2. Apologies had been received from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia (proxy to Slovenia), Estonia (proxy to Finland), Lithuania (proxy to Latvia), Norway, Spain (proxy to Portugal), as well as from Isabel de la Mata Barranco, DG SANTE, European Commission. The following countries did not confirm their participation: Iceland and Romania.

Welcome from the Director, ECDC

3. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, warmly welcomed the MB members to the meeting noting that she was looking forward to fruitful discussions.

Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (*Document MB60/01*)

4. The draft programme was adopted without changes. 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 Fifty-ninth meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 13-14 November 2023) (*Document MB60/02*) and the draft minutes of the Sixth Extraordinary meeting of the Management Board (Stockholm, 20-21 February 2024) (*Document MB60/03 CONF*)

5. The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the 59th meeting had been circulated to the MB ahead of the meeting. No request for amendments had been received.
6. One MB member remarked that it was mentioned in the minutes that the MB Rules of Procedure and AC Mandate would be discussed in the present meeting; however, this item was not included in the agenda. The Chair clarified that this topic was suggested to be postponed until a new Chair of the AC had been formally appointed. The MB agreed with this approach and the minutes were adopted without changes.
7. The MB members agreed to review the minutes from the Sixth Extraordinary meeting (devoted to the election of the ECDC Director 2024-2029) during their closed session taking place after the first coffee break. Following the discussion in the closed session, a few minor amendments of editorial nature were proposed in both the public and the restricted version of the minutes.

The Management Board adopted the minutes of the Fifty-ninth meeting of the Management Board. The minutes of the Sixth Extraordinary meeting of the Management Board were adopted with minor changes.

Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023 (*Document MB60/04*)

8. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the ECDC Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2023 noting that her presentation would cover the content part while the analysis and assessment of the

CAAR and the internal control part would be discussed in the afternoon under the reporting back from the AC.

9. During 2023, ECDC developed modalities for the implementation of the reinforced mandate and kept the MB regularly informed of the progress. The Director highlighted in particular the work on One Health and Foresight and the support to Member States for ensuring that lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic are used to inform revisions of pandemic preparedness plans and national action plans. ECDC also revised its own Public Health Emergency (PHE) plan. In terms of internal work related to the Integrated Management Framework (IMF), important steps were taken to bring together planning and monitoring in the organisation, with a new planning and monitoring tool (PRIME) to be launched later in March. ECDC also initiated the implementation of an ambitious transformation programme "ASPIRE".

10. ECDC delivered 90% of the planned activities in the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2023. In terms of press and media, the high interest has slowed down since the pandemic, but the figures are still well above the pre-pandemic figures. The total core budget for 2023 amounted to EUR 90.2 million, which is a decrease of 9.7% compared to 2022.

11. In concluding the presentation, the Director informed the MB of an editorial discrepancy in the CAAR 2022 approved in March 2023: in the document, the Annex XI "Negotiated procedures without prior publication of a contract notice conducted in 2022", erroneously referenced information from the previous year (2021). The MB was invited to approve the suggested correction in the CAAR 2022 (replacement of Annex XI to include information from 2022).

12. The MB agreed to get back to the last point on the CAAR 2022 during the reporting back from the AC. Concerning the content of the CAAR 2023, a few comments were made. It was suggested that for future reports, ECDC should consider including some further information on how Member States have contributed to the work. Some further details were requested on the 10% of the activities not fulfilled and the reasons for this. A clarification was also requested on the status of the observation of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) on the final annual accounts 2022 concerning the eligibility of VAT in the HERA grants. As it read now, it was not clear from the text whether the matter had been concluded (*cf.* p. 65 in the CAAR 2023).

13. The Director confirmed that further information could be provided in future reports on how Member States have contributed to ECDC outputs. Concerning the 10% of the activities in the work programme not achieved, she said that most of these had been postponed to 2024 and 4% had been cancelled, delayed, or not implemented. She suggested providing some additional details on the cancelled activities later during the day. With regards to the ECA observation on the 2022 annual accounts, she said that she had participated in a hearing in the European Parliament's Budgetary Control Committee and the rapporteur seemed satisfied with the reply that similar issues will not arise in the future as the HERA grants had been a one-off activity for ECDC. The final discharge vote will take place in April 2024. The Chair mentioned that a similar question had been raised in the AC meeting the day before. It was suggested to add a sentence in the CAAR 2023 to mention that the process is ongoing.

14. Responding to a question on the database for the European Legionnaires' Disease Surveillance Network (ELDSNet) which is currently not available, the Director explained that the transition to a new platform has taken more time than foreseen but should be finalised in the next couple of months. Responding to a question on *Eurosurveillance* (*cf.* p. 21), Mike Catchpole, Chief Scientist, ECDC, explained that the only recommendation the journal was not fully compliant with was on open peer review as this brings more downsides than advantages.

15. As usually, a condensed version of the CAAR will be produced by June 2024 and published on the ECDC website. The Chair concluded the discussion noting that the MB was satisfied with the content of the CAAR 2023.

The Management Board discussed the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023.

Summary of discussions held at the 54th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (Stockholm, 12 March 2024), including its recommendations

16. The Chair noted that the 54th Audit Committee meeting had been chaired by Zofija Mazej Kukovič, Deputy Chair of the MB and member of the AC, European Parliament.

17. Zofija Mazej Kukovič gave a brief summary of the discussions in the AC meeting. With regards to the regular update on audit activities, it was noted that six new observations had been received by ECDC related to the recent IAS audit on information security management. It was also explained that the implementation of one previous observation related to HR matters (internal reclassification system) is delayed and the new target date is set for Q4 2024. For the next meeting, the AC asked ECDC to provide more description in the AC document regarding the ECA observation related to the VAT issue on the HERA grants.

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

a) 2024 IAS Audit Plan for ECDC (Document MB60/05)

18. Stefan Sundbom, Internal Control Coordinator, Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, recalled that the IAS 2022-2024 Strategic Internal Audit Plan (SIAP) had been endorsed by the MB in its 53rd meeting in November 2021. The SIAP proposed three prospective audit topics for the period 2022-2024: 1) Information security management, 2) Grant management for implementing HERA incubator actions, and 3) Preparation, review, and validation of external communication content. The audit on information security management had been performed in 2023.

19. Stefan Sundbom explained that, based on the SIAP, the IAS had adopted the Draft 2024 IAS Audit Plan for ECDC and decided to perform the 2024 audit on the preparation, review, and validation of external communication content. The ECDC Director had endorsed the plan, and the engagement had already started. The audit is expected to be finalised in 2024. He clarified that the Final 2024 Audit Plan had been tabled for the MB as it had been received only shortly before the meeting; it was however identical to the Draft Plan shared earlier as part of the meeting documentation (Annex 1).

20. Zofija Mazej Kukovič reported that the AC had taken note of the proposed audit and recommended the MB to endorse the IAS 2024 Audit Plan for ECDC.

The Management Board endorsed the IAS 2024 Audit Plan for ECDC.

b) Budget transfers – fourth quarter 2023 (Document MB60/06)

21. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented the budget transfers carried out in the last quarter of 2023. She clarified that the main budget transfers were mentioned under the Summary part in the document and the details of the budget transfers made within the budget 2023 were listed in Annex I. A budget transfer of EUR 360 000 and EUR 150 000 had been executed within Title 1 (Staff related expenditure) to cover for salary and family allowances needs until year-end. A budget transfer of EUR 364 031 had been executed within Title 3 (operational expenditure) to continue to provide Whole Genome Sequencing support services to the Member States. No transfers between Budget Titles had been made in the concerned period and the topic was presented to the MB for information.

22. Zofija Mazej Kukovič reported that the AC had taken note of the budget transfers made by the Director and the explanations given by ECDC.

The Management Board took note of the Budget transfers – fourth quarter 2023.

c) Provisional Annual Accounts 2023 (Document MB60/07)

23. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented the Provisional Annual Accounts 2023 of the ECDC. She recalled that the Accounts consist of two parts: the financial statements of the Centre and the report on the implementation of the budget of the Centre.

24. The provisional accounts will be audited by an external audit company (Mazars) on 18-22 March 2024 and their report will be issued to the ECA by 1 April 2024. ECA has performed two audits related to the 2023 budget: the first one in November 2023 and the second one in January 2024. ECA issued its first report containing one Preliminary Finding related to procurement and the Centre has submitted its reply to this finding in February 2024. ECDC is expecting to receive the report from the second audit during March 2024.

25. Anja Van Brabant then presented the budget execution in 2023 as compared to 2022 noting that from the total 2023 budget (C1 funds) of EUR 90.2 million, 97,14% had been committed (compared to 98,86% in 2022), and 71,79% had been paid (compared to 73,61% in 2022). From the EUR 25.2 million carried forward from 2022 (C8 funds), EUR 21.1 million or 83,9% had been paid. In terms of the budgetary outturn, she explained that EUR 10.7 million are to be returned to the European Commission in 2024, mainly due to cancellation of C8 from 2022 and C1 under-implementation 2023. As requested by the AC, she presented a breakdown of the budget outturn account 2023, which showed that a large part (almost 50%) of the outturn was still a legacy from the HERA grants.

26. Zofija Mazej Kukovič reported that the AC had discussed the provisional accounts including the budgetary outturn. DG SANTE had confirmed that there is a close collaboration and follow-up on financial matters between ECDC and DG SANTE Finance. The AC recommended the MB to approve the Provisional Annual Accounts 2023.

The Management Board approved the Provisional Annual Accounts 2023, including the report on Budgetary and Financial Management.

d) Progress Report – Overview of 2024 Budget Implementation

27. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, gave an overview of the 2024 budget implementation up until 7 March 2024.

28. She explained that from the total budget of EUR 92.9 million, EUR 56.5 million had been committed, and from the committed amount, EUR 7.5 million (8.1%) had been paid, while EUR 4.6 million were in the workflow to be paid. A total of EUR 22.9 million had been carried forward from 2023; of this amount, EUR 4.5 million (19.7%) had been paid, which was comparable with the figures from the same period in 2023.

The Management Board took note of the Progress Report - Overview of 2023 Budget Implementation.

e) New approach for the monitoring of the work programme implementation

29. Maarit Kokki, Head of Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, presented a new approach for the monitoring of work programme implementation in ECDC. She first described the overall context by recalling that the Annual Work Programme is an integral part of the Single Programming Document (SPD) approved by the MB in November each year (year N-1). The activities for the year N and their resources are structured along the Strategic Objectives (SO) and Action Areas of the amended ECDC Strategy 2021-2027. The activities are mainly implemented through projects and processes.

30. Maarit Kokki then presented the high-level principles for corporate monitoring agreed by the Director and Heads of Unit in February 2024. According to these, work programme and resource implementation are to be monitored jointly as a system and the monitoring on each level (Unit and corporate level) shall be streamlined and strengthened, building on the robust operational management at the level of each process and project. A new planning and monitoring tool, PRIME, will be the main tool supporting monitoring and reporting practices at Unit and corporate level.

31. With the PRIME launch scheduled later in March, it is foreseen that the new monitoring and reporting approach will be piloted at the next MB meeting in June. Maarit Kokki showed an example of a real-time dashboard that could be presented to the MB. She added that the reporting can be adjusted based on the needs and requests of the MB members.

32. Zofija Mazej Kukovič mentioned that the AC had welcomed the new proposed monitoring approach and had asked for some further details on the PRIME tool and its value at different levels within ECDC and for the MB. The AC was looking forward to seeing the pilot monitoring dashboard in the June MB meeting.

33. The MB members congratulated the ECDC for the work done noting that the new approach looked promising and should be able to provide useful information on how resources are used and allow for different roadmaps to be drawn up. It was mentioned that while the dashboard is meant as support for understanding the information, it would still be helpful for the MB to receive a document to guide through the main elements.

34. Maarit Kokki confirmed that the intention is to provide a document in addition to the dashboard and suggested continuing the dialogue with the MB going forward to agree on the best way to present the information. Concerning the use of the tool in-house, she stressed that it was meant for planning and monitoring of the work programme and not for measuring the performance of single staff members. At a later stage, elements such as risk management might be included, with the aim of building an integrated system.

35. The Director mentioned that the development of PRIME had been a true collaboration between the Executive Office, the Resource Management Services (RMS) Unit and the Digital Transformation Services (DTS) Unit to ensure interfaces with all relevant internal tools. She added that the tool will naturally not solve all challenges immediately and further developments will be needed. Input from the MB members will be much welcome in this process.

The Management Board took note of the new approach for monitoring of work programme implementation in ECDC.

f) Draft Assessment of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023 (Document MB60/08)

36. Maarit Kokki, Head of Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, presented the draft text of the analysis and assessment of the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR) 2023, which had also been discussed in the AC meeting the day before.

37. Zofija Mazej Kukovič noted that the policy achievements (part 1 one of the CAAR) had not been discussed in the AC. ECDC had clarified that the assessment consists of two separate parts: the MB assessment of the CAAR and the Director's Declaration of Assurance. The AC endorsed the MB assessment and analysis of the CAAR 2023 and raised no objection regarding the Director's Declaration of Assurance, which was substantiated by the information provided by ECDC.

38. Following the presentation, the Chair asked whether there were any objections on the proposed text of the MB assessment; no objections were raised, and the text was thus approved.

39. Responding to the earlier question on the cancelled activities in 2023, the Director clarified that these concerned for instance the IRIS exercise, which was not carried out in 2023, work related to the European Federation Gateway Service (EFGS) due to the fact that the system has been put on hold, training on Whole Genome Sequencing due to failed procurement and delays in the development of specific elements of EpiPulse.

40. The MB also approved the suggested correction in the CAAR 2022 as described by the Director during her presentation earlier during the day.

The Management Board approved the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2023 including the MB analysis and assessment of the CAAR. The Management Board also approved the suggested correction in the Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2022 (replacement of Annex XI to include information from 2022).

g) Appointment of Audit Committee Chair

41. Zofija Mazej Kukovič mentioned that the AC had discussed the selection of a new AC Chair and proposed Karin Tegmark Wisell, MB and AC Member, Sweden, for this function. Karin Tegmark Wisell had accepted the nomination under the assumption that it would be authorised by the Swedish Ministry of Health.

42. Karin Tegmark Wisell confirmed that she had received the authorisation from the Ministry of Health following the AC meeting and was thereby available for the position.

The Management Board appointed Karin Tegmark Wisell, MB Member, Sweden, as Chair of the Audit Committee.

Implementation of the amended ECDC mandate and the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health (SCBTH)

a) Update on the Article 8 assessments: methodology, planning processes and timelines

43. Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit, Public Health Functions, ECDC, gave an update on the assessment of Member States' prevention, preparedness, and response plans to be performed in accordance with Article 8 of the SCBTH Regulation. She described the overall assessment process and the tentative timeline for the first cycle of assessments 2024-2026. The assessments will cover 16 capacities altogether; five of these are proposed to be assessed in depth in each cycle (four pre-defined and one to be selected by the country). The assessments will be carried out following a two-step approach. The first step is a validation process to validate all questions that are part of the self-assessment report under the SCBTH Article 7 questionnaire and SPAR questions. The second step is the in-depth assessment of the five capacities where the assessment team experts will conduct semi-structured interviews with relevant national counterparts following an assessment tool developed by ECDC. To avoid duplication of work, the results and outputs of previously conducted assessments of one or several capacities will inform the Article 8 assessments. When requested by the country and subject to feasibility, ECDC will work to align the Article 8 assessment processes with other processes having a similar objective and methodology (e.g. the Joint External Evaluation, JEE).

44. In the discussion that followed, the MB members appreciated the efforts to align with other similar processes. It was noted that, where available, results of the WHO Universal Health Preparedness Review (UHPR), should also be taken into account. Some questions were raised on the qualifications of the assessors and how they will be prepared for their assignment, how ECDC will handle issues with internal policy constraints and confidential information, whether ECDC or the Member State will be in charge of the practical arrangements of the assessment visits, and whether the assessments will follow relevant ISO standards.

45. Vicky Lefevre clarified that results from JEE and UHPR would be considered in the assessments provided that these were reasonably recent. Concerning the qualification of the assessors, she said that these will be senior experts with preparedness capacity as well as experts in specific areas such as surveillance, HAI, microbiology, etc. Specific training will be provided during the spring. ECDC also has previous experience of carrying out assessment visits in accession countries as well as on TB. The assessments are not ISO certified as such, but she agreed that keeping with general inspection standards was an important point.

46. The assessments will be a learning experience and it is likely that the methodology will be updated going forward. During 2024, the aim is to keep the assessment teams as stable as possible. Concerning possible security constraints, she did not foresee major issues based on the type of information that was to be collected but the first assessment visits will give a clearer picture in this regard. The assessments will mainly target the technical level but for the cross-sectorial aspects (resources for instance), meetings at higher level could be envisaged. Concerning the organisational aspects, this will need to be agreed between ECDC and the Member State. Responding to a question on the deadline for choosing the fifth capacity, Vicky Lefevre said that for the assessments to take place in 2025, ECDC will send out the letters six months ahead and would expect a reply within a few weeks' time.

The Management Board took note of the update on the Article 8 assessments: methodology, planning processes and timelines.

b) Update on the EU Health Task Force

47. Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit, Public Health Functions, ECDC, provided an update on the EU Health Task Force (EUHTF) established in accordance with the amended ECDC mandate to provide effective operational response and crisis preparedness support to EU/EEA Member States and wider global health security. The EUHTF is composed by a permanent ECDC Coordination Team and EUHTF Expert Pools from which ECDC experts, EU/EEA Member State experts and ECDC Fellows can be mobilised for specific assignments. The EUHTF can provide both remote support and rapid in-country field deployment. The EUHTF also includes an "Enhanced Emergency Capacity", which means large mobilisations of the EUHTF in the event of an EU declared public health emergency.

48. Vicky Lefevre then presented the scope of activities supported by the EUHTF in preparedness and response and the process for requesting and mobilising EUHTF support and expertise. In terms of governance, the ECDC Coordination Team is assisted by the EUHTF Advisory Board on operational, technical and administrative decisions as well as work plan priorities and opportunities for international collaboration. The Advisory Board consists of the ECDC Coordination Team as well as members from selected Member States, relevant Commission DGs and international partners (EMA, WHO-EURO, GOARN, MSF, EUPHA). The EUHTF will report annually to the ECDC Advisory Forum on scientific work and to the MB on EUHTF activities (workplan and budget).

49. In the discussion that followed, one MB member mentioned that her country requested the support of the EUHTF for epidemic intelligence activities during two mass gathering events (Rugby World Cup 2023 and Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024). This had been a useful experience for her country and mutually beneficial as it also allows ECDC colleagues to get a deeper knowledge of the national public health system. Responding to a question on the legal basis for the regular activity of the EUHTF versus the Enhanced Emergency Capacity, Vicky Lefevre clarified that the EUHTF operates according to the existing legal basis (amended ECDC mandate). As for the activation and mobilisation of the EUHTF in large emergencies, the European Commission will further define the procedures by means of implementing acts.

The Management Board took note of the update on the EU Health Task Force.

c) Update on EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs)

50. Philippe Roux, MB Member, DG SANTE, European Commission, provided an update on the ongoing establishment of EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs) for public health. Following the call for applications with deadline beginning of January 2024, the nomination process had now been finalised for EURLs covering six separate disease or health areas. The implementing act was foreseen to be adopted towards the end of March. A call for applications will be launched for the financing of operational activities. Philippe Roux invited the MB members to liaise with their national HSC representative for further information.

51. The Chair thanked for the update and stressed the importance that the EURLs communicate with the research laboratories connected to the DURABLE network managed by DG HERA to avoid duplication. Another MB member stressed the need for cooperation between the new and old networks and the importance of looking at public health in a holistic way and considering also other aspects such as biological toxins and chemical attacks.

52. Wolfgang Philipp, MB Alternate, DG HERA, European Commission, stressed that the laboratories under the DURABLE network look at pathogens in relation to medical countermeasures, the functioning of antivirals, newly developed products, diagnostic tests, etc. The EURLs have different tasks related to their specific function to fill and there is therefore no overlap or competition in the work as such.

53. Vicky Lefevre confirmed that the mandate of the EURLs is clearly defined, and the focus is on capacity building and outbreak support. The Member States are naturally consulted when deciding which pathogens should be covered by the EURLs.

The Management Board took note of the update on the EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs).

Chief Scientist Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Forum (Document MB60/09)

54. Mike Catchpole, Chief Scientist, ECDC, summarised some of the main highlights of the work of the Advisory Forum (AF) in 2023. During the year, the AF had discussed and been consulted on a wide range of topics (e.g. COVID-19, avian influenza) and held discussions on a number of new initiatives such as Foresight, lessons from implementation science, and the use of Artificial Intelligence for public health benefit. Based on the proposal from one AF member to look at the public health work force capacity in Member States, an AF working group had been set up and a survey would soon be launched to collect information from the countries. In conclusion, he said that he was greatly thankful for the expertise and engagement of the AF members and added that the discussions helped shape ECDC's scientific outputs.

55. The Director commented that the role of the AF was to advise the Director and she had delegated the chairing of the meetings to the Chief Scientist to be able to fully concentrate on the discussions and the advice provided by the AF members. Each meeting was a true pleasure due to the rich and engaged discussions and she asked the MB members to convey this message to their respective AF member.

56. In the discussion that followed, one MB member asked whether it was envisaged that the AF would look at pandemic stockpiling and minimum requirements for vaccines and antivirals. Such guidance would be useful as Member States were currently updating their preparedness plans. Concerning the survey on work force capacity, one MB member asked whether administrative jobs would also be included as these were sometimes overlooked. Concerning ECDC's guidance related to avian influenza, it was noted that the precautionary approach was difficult to handle in the Member States and it was important to consider whether the recommendations were feasible at national level. Other topics brought up by the MB as possible topics for discussion in the AF were vaccine fatigue, vaccine effectiveness, impact of microplastics and follow-up on the Foresight survey.

57. Mike Catchpole thanked the MB members for their feedback. Concerning stockpiling, he stressed the need to work in synergy with DG HERA. ECDC could certainly contribute by providing scenarios based on existing baseline data. With regards to the survey on work force capacity, he agreed that administrative support functions were also important to consider, and he would feed this back to the team. Responding to the comment on the feasibility of ECDC's recommendations, he agreed that this was an important point which had also been discussed in the AF and one of the lessons from the pandemic was the importance of looking at the effects on the whole society. ECDC was also striving for greater involvement of Member States when developing guidance. As regards vaccine fatigue, this was a topic that the VPD programme was looking at as well as the colleagues working with behavioural science. He commented that the effects of microplastics was surely an important issue for the future, but it was somewhat outside ECDC's remit.

The Management Board discussed the Chief Scientist Annual Report on the work of the Advisory Forum in 2023.

Update of the ECDC Director

58. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, gave an update on ongoing activities. She briefed the MB on the ongoing work to review the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECDC and HERA signed in February 2023 as well as the MoUs with WHO/Europe and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) respectively. Discussions were also taking place for establishing MoUs with the Africa CDC, the Gulf CDC, and the Japanese CDC. Responding to a question on the content of the MoU with Africa CDC, the Director said that this was not completely determined yet but some of the elements covered were surveillance, risk ranking and training. Areas where ECDC could benefit from the African experience are community engagement, which is embedded in the practice, and information sharing with stakeholders. Responding to a question on whether ECDC was considering collaboration with the Caribbean Public Health Authority, she mentioned that this authority is part of the ECDC network of CDCs but due to its limited resources it has not been considered to establish an MoU at this stage.

59. Concerning the upcoming changes in ECDC's senior management, she recalled that the hearing of the Director-elect in front of the ENVI Committee was scheduled on 19 March. After this, several handover sessions with the new Director are foreseen. As for the two Head of Unit positions falling vacant, the interviews will be finalised in the coming week, after which the candidates are invited to the Assessment Centre of the European Commission. The shortlists are expected to be available beginning of April and the

further steps will be discussed with the new Director. In the meantime, the acting arrangements have been announced internally. The recruitment of a new Head of Section for HR is ongoing, while the decision concerning the position of Head of Executive Office will be left to the new Director.

60. In terms of her remaining priorities until June, the Director highlighted the work to support the new candidate countries Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Another important piece of work is the development of an internal procedure on country support to ensure internal coordination given that there are several channels through which support is provided (Targeted Country Support, Article 8 assessments, country support on HIV, TB, etc.).

61. The Chair thanked the Director for her presentation and said that changes in the leadership always posed some challenges but there seemed to be clear plans for the handover. She mentioned that the MB will be informed of the outcome of the Director's hearing in writing. As the final step, the Chair will sign the contract at the beginning of the Director's term starting mid-June. She asked whether there were any objections to inviting the new Director to the next MB meeting in June as an observer. No objections were raised.

The Management Board took note of the update by the ECDC Director.

Draft ECDC One Health Framework

62. Ole Heuer, Head of Section, Epidemic-Prone Diseases, Disease Programmes Unit, ECDC, briefed the MB members on the draft ECDC One Health Framework noting that the document had also been presented to the AF at their last meeting in March.

63. In terms of background, he described how One Health has become a high priority topic at both international and European level in the last couple of years. The amended ECDC mandate and the SCBTH Regulation also emphasise the importance of the One Health approach in addressing current and emerging crisis. This requires increased collaboration and coordination across the Centre and in particular between the operational units. To address this, the ECDC One Health Task Force was recently established and tasked to develop a Framework on One Health.

64. The Framework is a high-level document which describes how ECDC will strengthen, further develop and implement the One Health approach in its activities on prevention and control of communicable diseases. It also describes the enablers and the strategic objectives to be achieved within the Centre and in collaboration with the Member States and other EU agencies as well as the means to achieve these. While ECDC already has established collaboration with EFSA and EMA and have published several joint reports, challenges remain due to differences in mandate and sector-specific legislation, procedures and data collection processes. Until now, the environmental part has also been missing. To address these challenges, work will be done to map the mandates and to better understand sector-specific settings to thereafter reach agreement on roles and responsibilities and define a common set of principles guiding the joint activities. He then presented the proposed strategic One Health objectives for ECDC.

65. In the discussion that followed, the ECDC Director also raised the fact that there are different validation processes in ECDC and EFSA for joint reports; while in ECDC, the Director validates these reports, in EFSA such reports require validation by DG SANTE.

66. The MB members thanked Ole Heuer for the comprehensive presentation and welcomed that ECDC was putting focus on One Health. Several MB members commented that the collaboration across sectors posed similar challenges also at national level. The MB also discussed that there are competing interests and there is a tendency that the health aspects lose out against commercial interests. The Director commented that in such situations it was important to define the red line that cannot be crossed, and this approach had been helpful in the discussions with the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) during the pandemic.

The Management Board took note of the update on the draft ECDC One Health Framework.

Update from the European Commission

67. Philippe Roux, DG SANTE, European Commission, briefed the MB about ongoing activities in the area of health. The update focused on the implementation of the Regulation on serious cross-border threats to health (SCBTH). He mentioned that the Commission is currently compiling the report based on the Article 7 surveys and the preliminary report will be presented to the HSC in April. The work on the Commission implementing act on the list of reportable diseases is also ongoing. He thanked ECDC for its support in the implementation of the SCBTH as well as in other areas including Joint Actions and work on AMR. Concerning the Advisory Committee on Public Health Emergencies, he mentioned that the call for experts was now closed, and the evaluation was ongoing with the aim to have the Committee set up by end of June 2024.

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

Update from the European Parliament

68. Zofija Mazej Kukovič, Deputy Chair and MB Member, European Parliament, gave a brief update noting that the hearing of the ECDC Director-elect Pamela Rendi Wagner in front of the Parliament's ENVI Committee was taking place the following week (19 March). She also mentioned the vote on the discharge of the Director scheduled in April and the European elections taking place on 6-9 June 2024. Some of the topics high on the agenda and with relevance also for health are the European Green Deal, the EU Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence.

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

Any other business

69. The Chair informed the MB members that the German Society for Hygiene and Microbiology (DGHM) wished to award the Ferdinand Cohn Medal to Andrea Ammon for her outstanding achievements in microbiology, especially in the areas of prevention of infection and surveillance. They wished to honour her for her long work as ECDC Director and her commitment to the fight against infectious diseases in Europe. The Chair clarified that there was no monetary compensation involved but according to the Staff Regulations, the Director needed the permission to accept the medal. As the acceptance of the medal did not lead to any conflict of interest, the Chair suggested granting the permission and asked the MB members whether there were any objections to this proposal. No objections were raised, and the MB members congratulated Andrea Ammon for the well merited award.

70. The Chair thanked all the MB members for their active participation during the meeting. She also thanked the interpreters and the MB Secretariat for their support.

71. The following MB meetings are scheduled to take place in Stockholm on 12-13 June and 26-27 November 2024 respectively.

Annex: List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Austria	Sigrid Kiermayr	Member
Cyprus	Carolina Stylianou	Alternate
Czech Republic	Pavla Svrčinová	Member
Denmark	Kirstine Moll Harboe	Member
Finland	Anni Virolainen-Julkunen (<i>Chair</i>)	Member
	Taneli Puumalainen	Alternate
France	Anne-Catherine Viso	Alternate
Germany	Gesa Lücking	Member
Greece	Antonios Vassilogiannakopoulos	Alternate
Hungary	Ágnes Dánielisz	Member
Ireland	Colette Bonner	Member
Italy	Sandro Bonfigli	Alternate
Latvia	Jana Feldmane	Member
Luxembourg	Jean-Claude Schmit	Member
Malta	Patricia Vella Bonanno	Member
The Netherlands	Florien van der Windt	Member
Poland	Michał Ilnicki	Alternate
Portugal	Rita Sá Machado	Member
Slovakia	Lucia Paulíková	Alternate
Slovenia	Mario Fafangel	Member
Sweden	Karin Tegmark Wisell	Member
	Camilla Wallander	Alternate
European Parliament		
	Zofija Mazej Kukovič	Member
	Maria Eleni Koppa	Member

European Commission		
DG SANTE	Philippe Roux	Member
DG HERA	Wolfgang Philipp	Alternate
DG RTD	Barbara Kerstiens	Member
EEA Countries		
Liechtenstein	Silvia Dehler	Member