



ECDC Management Board

Minutes of the Fifty-second Meeting 16 June 2021 (videoconference)

Adopted by the ECDC Management Board at its Fifty-third meeting, 24 November 2021

Contents

Opening and welcome from the Chair (and noting the Representatives).....	3
Welcome from the Director, ECDC.....	3
Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (<i>Document MB52/01 Rev. 1</i>).....	3
Adoption of the draft minutes of the 51st meeting of the Management Board (audioconference, 24 March 2021) and the draft minutes of the Fourth Extraordinary Management Board meeting (audioconference, 7 May 2021) (<i>Documents MB52/02, MB52/03</i>)	3
Summary of discussions held at the 46th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (audioconference, 15 June 2021), including its recommendations	4
ECDC Long-term surveillance framework 2021-2027 (<i>Document MB52/07</i>).....	6
Draft ECDC reply to the European Ombudsman report and recommendations on how the ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 pandemic (<i>Document MB52/08</i>).....	7
ECDC Single Programming Document 2023 (<i>Document MB52/09</i>).....	8
Closed session of the Members of the Management Board – Update on the process and next steps for the extension/selection of the ECDC Director	9
Increasing impact, equity and interdisciplinarity of the ECDC Fellowship Programme (EPIET/EUPHEM): Concept note and high-level roadmap (<i>Document MB52/10</i>)	9
Memorandum of Understanding between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Secretariat of Health of the United Mexican States (<i>Document MB52/11</i>).....	10
ECDC Management Board meeting dates 2022 and 2023, and draft MB rolling plan 2021-2023 (<i>Document MB52/12</i>).....	11
Any other business.....	11
Annex: List of Participants	12

Summary of Proceedings – ECDC Management Board Meeting

The Fifty-second meeting of the ECDC Management Board convened on 16 June 2021 as a virtual meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the meeting the Management Board:

- ❖ adopted the programme of the meeting;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Fifty-first meeting of the Management Board;
- ❖ adopted the minutes of the Fourth Extraordinary meeting of the Management Board;
- ❖ approved the Final Annual Accounts 2020, including the Report on Budgetary and Financial Management;
- ❖ approved the third Supplementary and Amending Budget 2021;
- ❖ approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Secretariat of Health of the United Mexican States;
- ❖ approved the ECDC Management Board meeting dates 2022 and took note of the proposed dates for 2023 as well as the draft MB rolling plan 2021-2023;
- ❖ discussed the ECDC long-term surveillance framework 2021-2027;
- ❖ discussed the draft ECDC reply to the European Ombudsman report and recommendations on how the ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 crisis;
- ❖ discussed the priorities of the ECDC Single Programming Document 2023;
- ❖ discussed the concept note and high-level roadmap of the ECDC Fellowship Programme;
- ❖ took note of the summary of discussions held at the 46th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee;
- ❖ took note of the Report on Implementation of the Work Programme 2021 up until present;
- ❖ took note of the update on the process and next steps for the extension/selection of the ECDC Director (closed session).

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-second meeting of the Management Board (MB). The meeting convened via video conference. A special welcome was extended to Pierre Delsaux, newly appointed member, DG SANTE, European Commission, and Nataliya Spiridonova, newly appointed alternate, Bulgaria.
2. Apologies had been received from Czech Republic (proxy given to Austria) and Portugal (part of the meeting).

Welcome from the Director, ECDC

3. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, warmly welcomed the MB members and thanked them for taking the time to participate in the meeting. She mentioned that she had participated in the Health Council meeting the day before and therefore had not been able to attend the Audit Committee (AC) meeting but it had been reported to her that the AC had had interesting discussions, part of which would continue in the MB. She added that the Health Ministers had met in person this time and hoped that the MB would also soon be able to meet face-to-face.

Adoption of the draft programme (and noting the declarations of interest and proxy voting, if any) (*Document MB52/01 Rev. 1*)

4. The draft programme was adopted without changes.
5. Following the adoption of the programme, 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 51st meeting of the Management Board (audioconference, 24 March 2021) and the draft minutes of the Fourth Extraordinary Management Board meeting (audioconference, 7 May 2021) (*Documents MB52/02, MB52/03*)

6. The Chair noted that the draft minutes of the 51st meeting had been circulated to the MB ahead of the meeting. With regards to the item on the action plan to address the recommendations of the third external evaluation and the strategic and performance review of the ECDC response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MB Alternate for France requested an amendment in point 26 of the minutes to clarify that her comment had been made in her capacity of Chair of the MB External Evaluation Recommendations Drafting Group. The minutes were then adopted.
7. With regards to the minutes of the Fourth Extraordinary MB meeting, the European Commission requested a minor correction in point 8 of the minutes. The minutes were then adopted.

The Management Board adopted the minutes of the Fifty-first meeting of the Management Board and the minutes of the Fourth Extraordinary Management Board meeting.

Summary of discussions held at the 46th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee (videoconference, 15 June 2021), including its recommendations

8. Johan Carlson, Chair of the Audit Committee, gave a summary of the discussions from the 46th Audit Committee (AC) meeting, which took place on 15 June 2021. Concerning the regular update on audit activities, he noted that no new observations had been received, while one observation had been closed. Four observations were currently open, three of which had target dates in Q4 2021 and one in Q1 2022. The AC was pleased with this favourable situation. The AC had also received a progress report on the implementation of the 2021 budget. The AC was aware of the heavy burden posed on the ECDC due to the large additional budget transferred to the Centre in the framework of the HERA Incubator, but had taken note of ECDC's increased efforts to monitor the procurements and budget implementation in 2021.

The Management Board took note of the summary of discussions held at the 46th meeting of the ECDC Audit Committee.

a) Final Annual Accounts 2020, including the Report on Budgetary and Financial Management (Document MB52/04)

9. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented the Final Annual Accounts 2020. She recalled that the Provisional Accounts had been presented to the MB in March 2021. The accounts had been audited by an external audit firm (Baker Tilly) during 25-31 March 2021. As a result, one correction was made to the accounts for approx. EUR 58 000; the relevant changes were highlighted in yellow in the final version of the 2020 accounts. The report from the Court of Auditors on the annual accounts 2020 had been received on 31 May 2021 without any preliminary observations. In addition, a follow-up observation from 2018 had now been marked as completed.

10. Johan Carlson mentioned that the AC had taken note of the clean opinion from the European Court of Auditors on the annual accounts 2020. In conclusion, the AC recommended the MB to approve the Final Annual Accounts 2020.

The Management Board approved the Final Annual Accounts 2020, including the Report on Budgetary and Financial Management.

b) Third Supplementary and Amending Budget 2021 (Document MB52/05)

11. Anja Van Brabant, Accounting Officer and Head of Section, Finance and Accounting, Resource Management Services, ECDC, presented the Third Supplementary and Amending Budget (SAB) 2021. With this, the Agency was seeking MB approval for inscribing an additional EUR 85 million to the ECDC budget, of which EUR 83 million were proposed to be allocated for activities aimed at enhancing the Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) and Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) national infrastructures and capacities under the HERA Incubator project, and EUR 2 million to cover mostly staff expenditure (Title 1) but also some administrative expenditure (Title 2) and operational costs (Title 3), in particular for activities in the area of foresight. These EUR 2 million had previously been transferred from the ECDC core budget (DTS) for the Whole Genome Sequencing, which was lacking funding in April 2021, given the pending MB approval of the Second Supplementary and Amending budget 2021. The total budget 2021 hereby increased to EUR 188 115 000, of which EUR 141 466 000 for operational expenditure. She clarified that the details of the proposed distribution of the supplementary budget and the budget transfers made within the budget 2021 (since the Second SAB from 23 April 2021) were listed in Annex I under the 3rd SAB column.

12. Johan Carlson reported that the AC had discussed a number of issues related to the SAB: the need for additional human resources; ECDC's ability to spend the additional funds; the implementation method for the HERA grants; the absorption capacity in the EU Member States; and the possibility of reducing the number of pre-financings to reduce the administrative burden. ECDC had explained that 15 new posts for 2022 had been made available already in 2021 for early recruitment together with some interim resources,

and that the additional funds were to be spent through large grants, which should make it easier to handle. The grants were to be paid based on actual costs. It would certainly be a challenge for the Member States to submit proposals within six weeks, but the interest was considered to be high. Currently, a first pre-financing of 60%, a second pre-financing of 30% and a final payment of 10% were planned, with no obligation to ask for the second pre-financing. Allowing the Member States to have access to the funds in advance was prioritised over the administrative burden of making an additional payment. In conclusion, the AC recommended the MB to approve the Third Supplementary and Amending Budget 2021, but asked ECDC to reflect on the possibility to increase the initial pre-financing for the HERA incubator grants.

13. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, thanked the Chair of the Audit Committee for the summary and mentioned that she appreciated the concern MB members had with regards to how ECDC would manage the administrative burden. She noted, however, that the prefinancing arrangement was based on a risk analysis and served as a monitoring tool in the sense that the second pre-financing would be paid only when a sufficiently large portion of the first pre-financing had been consumed. There would also be mandatory reports to demonstrate progress. At the same time, the first pre-financing of 60% was big enough for Member States to get started. For these reasons, ECDC would prefer to stick to the proposed two-step pre-financing mechanism.

14. One of the MB members representing the European Commission thanked for the explanations and added that he was personally favourable to this set-up. Another MB member mentioned that having examined the options in more detail and considering the potential implementation issues at Member State level, it seemed preferable to follow ECDC's initial proposal on two pre-financings given that the implementation would most likely be done by a consortium making it rather challenging to follow up. The Deputy Chair and representative of the European Parliament pointed out that the new total budget was three times bigger than the regular ECDC budget. She added that bringing forward 15 staff but not providing additional posts for a project with such a substantial budget seemed very little and asked how this was going to be managed. Another MB member expressed a similar concern and inquired about the timeline for recruiting the 15 staff.

15. The Director explained that ECDC had initially estimated a need for an additional 15 posts on top of the 73 foreseen in the legal proposal on the ECDC mandate, but this had not been granted. Instead, ECDC was allowed to advance the recruitment of 15 of the 73 posts to 2021. She stressed that these 15 FTEs would serve for the HERA project but would also need to contribute to the whole legal proposal later on. For now, the recruitment process had been initiated to support the microbiology team first of all, but also the area of procurement, finance and legal services. Each recruitment required three staff members to take part in the selection panel, so this was of course also an additional burden. She said that ECDC aimed to complete the recruitment of the 15 staff by the end of the year. In conclusion she noted that the deadline for Member States to submit their proposals was 12 July and after this date it would be easier to estimate the amount of money that will finally be spent depending on the quality and volume of the proposals.

16. The Chair thanked the Director for the explanations and recalled that the HERA Incubator and its impact on the ECDC work plan had been discussed during the extraordinary MB meeting in May and had also been the subject of subsequent written procedures to the MB.

The Management Board approved the Third Supplementary and Amending Budget 2021.

c) Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme 2021 (Document MB52/06)

17. Maarit Kokki, Head of Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, briefed the MB on the implementation of the work programme 2021 as of 25 May 2021. 69% of the activities were on schedule, 10% were delayed, 3% postponed to 2022 and 17% had not started. No activities were proposed to be cancelled and no new activities were proposed at this stage.

18. Johan Carlson summarised the discussions in the AC noting that under this agenda point the same concerns had been raised with regards to how ECDC will be able to handle the new funds. ECDC had explained that the implementation would be monitored carefully and had suggested keeping the Management Board informed at a regular basis.

19. The Director clarified that the intention was in any case to provide the MB with a quarterly overview of ongoing activities and the format of this overview was currently being finalised. Internally, the budget implementation and procurements were looked at monthly and in case any issues arose, these could be flagged up.

20. Referring to the list of prioritised procurements circulated to the MB after the extraordinary meeting held in May, one MB member mentioned that there were some activities marked as not started and an update on these would be useful. She also asked whether the activities covered in the second SAB approved by the MB via written procedure at the end of April were included in the current implementation report.

21. Maarit Kokki responded that those activities were not part of the report yet as it showed the situation as of May 2021, but they would be included in subsequent reports.

The Management Board took note of the Report on the Implementation of the Work Programme 2021 up until present.

ECDC Long-term surveillance framework 2021-2027 (*Document MB52/07*)

22. Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit Public Health Functions, ECDC, presented the ECDC long-term surveillance framework 2021-2027. The new surveillance framework will replace the former long-term surveillance strategy 2014-2020. The framework will cover the period 2021-2027, in line with the overall ECDC Strategy. The framework takes into account the surveillance shortcomings revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the Commission legal proposal on the strengthened ECDC mandate and the proposed new regulation on cross-border health threats. In terms of resources, it is expected that several of the additional posts stemming from the legal proposal will be allocated to the implementation of the surveillance framework. The framework focuses on four main objectives: 1) improving prioritisation, standardisation and efficiency of EU/EEA surveillance; 2) unlocking the data sources needed for effective disease prevention and control; 3) increasing its public health and scientific impact; and 4) contributing to surveillance capacity building within Europe and beyond.

23. The document received input from the National Focal Points for Surveillance as well as from the Advisory Forum (AF 63 and AF written consultation). The feedback from the AF was largely positive but some concerns were raised regarding a possible increased workload for Member States. In response to this concern, section 2.5 was added to emphasise the need for stricter prioritisation of diseases under EU/EEA routine surveillance and more efficient, automated processes to avoid overburdening the Member States. Where new EU/EEA systems are to be set up, they should as much as possible build on national systems already in place and collect minimum data at minimum frequency required to meet the public health objectives. Member States with limited capacity would be able to benefit from targeted external support including EU funding (e.g. EU4Health and other Union programmes). Some concern was also raised that new surveillance systems (e.g. e-health, weekly lab reporting for outbreak-prone diseases) would bypass the Coordinating Competent Bodies (CCB). In response to this, an explicit confirmation was added in Action 2.4 to underline the active CCB involvement in all new systems. A digital surveillance Blueprint for the EU surveillance system would be developed to accompany the framework. In addition, proof-of-concept studies would be carried out.

24. In the discussion that followed, one MB member raised some concern regarding the use of automated epidemic intelligence (AI) and asked whether ECDC had considered the ethical and accountability aspects as it could create the risk of taking the wrong decision or not being able to explain how a specific decision was made. Concerning the list of diseases under surveillance he asked whether the idea was to revise the list or to develop a method for having a flexible list. One of the MB members representing the European Commission stressed the need to include the final elements of the strengthened ECDC mandate currently under discussion. He added that the proposal on the EU Health Data Space was expected to be presented in the second half of 2021. The cooperation with other organisations, such as WHO, was also important to avoid duplication in the data collection. He further informed the MB members that a global tracking system was foreseen to be in place by the end of the year and suggested leaving space for including this in the document. The Deputy Chair and representative of the European Parliament noted that more data was surely needed but it was necessary to also think about the ethical and data

protection aspects as citizens in the EU were concerned about how their data was being used. It was therefore necessary to carefully consider the communication on these topics. Another MB member noted that it was crucial to strengthen the surveillance systems and therefore her country supported the objectives of the framework. It was important to recognise though that data collection mainly lies at national level; a huge work is done in the Member States to not only collect data but also ensure that the data collected are of sufficient quality and relevance for public health to support decision making and information to citizens. There was a balance to be found between collecting even more data and providing time to contribute to standardisation of indicators and joint analysis to progress collectively at all steps of the process.

25. Vicky Lefevre responded that she understood the concerns expressed on the AI but stressed that the automated processes were to be used for signal surveillance and the analysis would always be done by a person. Concerning the list of diseases under EU surveillance, ECDC was currently working with the Commission to revise the list. With regards to the EU Health Data Space and the concerns regarding data protection she clarified that ECDC was only going to use aggregated anonymised data and not case-based data.

26. The Director thanked the MB members for their feedback. She acknowledged that there were technical as well as ethical challenges related to the digitalisation and ECDC's intention was to proceed step by step and to conduct pilot and feasibility studies to see how to best overcome these challenges. This would be done in cooperation with the CCBs. Concerning linkages between different data systems, there was a need to determine which standard was to be followed when new systems were put in place. In general, the intention was to use data from different sources whenever it was available and only collect those data that were not available elsewhere. With regards to the list of diseases, she said that, ideally, the objective would be to both revise the list and find a method for having a flexible list, but it remained to be seen how this would evolve.

27. The Chair thanked the ECDC for presenting this important document. As pointed out by the European Commission, she encouraged ECDC colleagues to follow the negotiations on the ECDC mandate to make sure any relevant elements were incorporated in the framework.

The Management Board discussed the ECDC long-term surveillance framework 2021-2027.

Draft ECDC reply to the European Ombudsman report and recommendations on how the ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 pandemic (*Document MB52/08*)

28. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, recalled that some elements of the report of the European Ombudsman on how ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 pandemic had been discussed in the previous MB meeting in March. ECDC had now prepared a draft reply to address the six recommendations issued by the Ombudsman. With regards to recommendation 5, she noted that an updated ECDC communication policy would be presented to the MB in the November meeting. However, in view of the reply to the Ombudsman, which was due by 31 July, it was necessary to agree on the modalities of ECDC's communication activities towards the general public so that this recommendation would not come back again. From the Founding Regulation it was clear that ECDC communicates also with the general public but taking into account the concerns raised by Member States in the past she felt the need to find a common approach to this. She added that the relevant article in the Founding Regulation was unchanged in the legal proposal on the new mandate. She asked the MB members whether they thought that formulating some specific terms of reference in this domain would be helpful. It was obvious that ECDC's outputs were looked at also by the general public through the Centre's various communication channels. At the same time, ECDC did not have the intention to address the citizens in the Member States directly with communication campaigns or similar activities. Concerning recommendation 6 on ECDC's language policy, ECDC's approach was to translate key documents and reports to all EU languages provided that these were sufficiently stable as to make the translation useful.

29. The Chair thanked the ECDC Director for the presentation. Concerning the reply on recommendation 5 she suggested referring to the ongoing negotiations on the ECDC mandate so as not to

be too specific on any aspects that could change as a result of the legal proposal. Another MB member agreed with the proposal to refer to the ongoing negotiations and suggested including also a reference to the relevant recommendations of the third external evaluation, where the MB Drafting Group had also tried to find a balance between the responsibility of the Member States versus ECDC's responsibility in the area of communication. One of the MB members representing the European Parliament said that it was obvious that citizens were looking for information on ECDC's website and other channels, and increasingly so during the pandemic. She found the response given by the Director to be balanced and was not concerned that ECDC would go into the domain of the Member States. Another MB member commented that dealing with any information gap was important as there was the risk that this gap was otherwise filled by "infodemics" and misinformation.

30. The Chair concluded that based on the comments provided, ECDC should have sufficient elements for providing a balanced reply. The Director thanked for the input and confirmed that ECDC would indicate in the reply that this was an ongoing matter due to the current negotiations on the ECDC mandate.

The Management Board discussed the draft ECDC reply to the European Ombudsman report and recommendations on how ECDC gathered and communicated information during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ECDC Single Programming Document 2023 (*Document MB52/09*)

31. Andrea Ammon, Director, ECDC, presented the priorities of the ECDC Single Programming Document 2023-2025. She mentioned that 2023 would be the third year of implementation of the ECDC Strategy 2021-2023 and hopefully the COVID-19 pandemic would be over by then. It was foreseen, however, that the year 2023 would be dedicated to implementing the results of after-action reviews and lessons learned from the pandemic. She noted that the priorities for 2023 had not changed from 2022, but the implementation of the strengthened ECDC mandate could slightly change the focus within these broad priorities. In brief, ECDC will contribute to a greater level of health security in Europe, with particular focus on the following areas: 1) Scale up the support to the European Commission and Member States to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response to cross-border health threats including the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic; 2) Digitalisation of surveillance systems at EU and national levels based on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic; 3) Increase ECDC knowledge and understanding of the Member States, to better target its interventions; 4) Address priority conditions and issues at European level (AMR, vaccine effectiveness monitoring (with specific focus on COVID-19 vaccines) and vaccine coverage, support to the Commission and Member States in addressing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for HIV TB and Hepatitis); and 5) Assess and integrate innovations for communicable diseases in the area of environment, technological and scientific advances. As previously, the draft SPD 2023 will be sent to the MB and other ECDC stakeholders for written consultation with deadline for comments at the end of July.

32. In the discussion that followed, the Deputy Chair and representative of the European Parliament thanked the ECDC for the innovative SPD document and welcomed the focus on the lessons learned from the pandemic, the targeted country interventions, and the SDGs. One MB member stressed the importance of the One Health approach and suggested sharing a coming report about the approach on zoonoses; this report would be available in English translation. Another MB member asked whether the projects for systematic and scoping reviews would be shared in advance. She added that it was necessary to be very ambitious in the development of national capacities in the area of preparedness and response and asked how the concrete implementation and contribution of national experts were envisaged.

33. The Director agreed that the One Health approach was indeed important and welcomed the suggestion to share the report with the MB. Regarding the systematic reviews, she stressed that the implementation of the work programme was a joint effort between ECDC and the Member States. There needed to be consensus on which areas were relevant at EU level and which at national level. Similarly, it was necessary to reach consensus on which indicators to use and how to get these.

The Management Board discussed the priorities of the ECDC Single Programming Document 2023. Following the June MB, the document will be submitted to the MB for written consultation with deadline for comments towards end of July 2021.

Closed session of the Members of the Management Board – Update on the process and next steps for the extension/selection of the ECDC Director

34. This item was conducted in a closed session.

Increasing impact, equity and interdisciplinarity of the ECDC Fellowship Programme (EPIET/EUPHEM): Concept note and high-level roadmap (*Document MB52/10*)

35. Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit Public Health Functions, ECDC, introduced the topic mentioning that the concept note and roadmap of the ECDC Fellowship Programme reflected the results of the external evaluation of the Programme carried out in 2019. The concept note had also undergone a broad consultation with concerned stakeholders, such as the NFPs for training, the Training Site Forum and the Advisory Forum during their last meeting in May.

36. Adam Roth, Head of Fellowship Programme, Public Health Functions, ECDC, presented the main features of the concept note and roadmap. He explained that the Fellowship Programme will continue to provide a core set of skills and competencies within the two paths EPIET and EUPHEM, but processes of continuous improvement and further flexibility will be used and introduced to enhance programme effectiveness, interdisciplinarity and equity. There will also be increased possibilities for international assignments and exchange (EU and MediPIET). The selection process will be designed so that it contributes to reducing inequity, with clearer criteria for overqualification. A process for regular update of the curriculum will be introduced through systematic continuous improvement, medium revisions (making use of in/after action review of COVID-19 and other PH challenges to scope the needs), and major revisions every five years and this will also determine the core versus flexible aspects of the programme. The first review will build on the current review of the core competencies of applied epidemiology. Actions will also be taken to address under-representation of some Member States in the programme. The question of academic accreditation will be further looked into by a specific working group and based on its input, ECDC may choose to conduct a feasibility study. Furthermore, the ECDC Fellowship Task Force has progressed in the administrative aspects (simplified cost options for hosting fellows). In addition, ECDC intends to develop a broader strategy for the scientific coordination to enhance continuity, reduce the administrative burden, and allow for better focus on underrepresented Member States.

37. Following the presentation, a few points were raised. One MB member stressed the importance of interdisciplinarity and noted that there was a need for closer links between surveillance and research, as well as between epidemiology and biology. She also highlighted the need for new competences at the intersection of epidemiology and biology, biostatistics (modelling and social sciences), and social sciences (psychology, communication, economics) respectively. Concerning the accreditation, it was inquired what route ECDC was going to pursue (e.g. through APHEA, TEPHINET or by national academic accreditation). In relation to the international dimension and the new mandate of ECDC, it was recommended to build on the MediPIET programme and the collaboration with Africa CDC to include relevant items in the curricula to facilitate international deployment, and to also consider possibilities related to the EU Health Task Force mentioned in the legal proposal. One of the MB members representing the European Commission agreed that it was important to further reflect on the international aspects. The concept note should also align with the revised ECDC mandate and the EU4Health programme as these contained items on training and capacity building.

38. Adam Roth agreed that the interdisciplinarity was indeed broader than only epi/lab. Biostatistics and social sciences had already been included in the selection process and could also be introduced in the curriculum pending the curricular revision. Concerning accreditation, he mentioned that many FETPs already applied for this. The modalities for academic accreditation needed to be further looked at in more detail but, such accreditation could be provided by a specific body or academic institution. The feasibility study would provide more elements but, as highlighted in previous discussions, it was crucial that the central approach of practical on-site training would be kept. He acknowledged that it would be necessary to align the activities with the revised mandate and that this should be done in the context of other training

and capacity building activities. He also agreed that linkages with the MediPIET and EU Health Task Force provided great opportunities for international assignments and exchange.

The Management Board discussed the concept note and high-level roadmap of the ECDC Fellowship Programme.

Memorandum of Understanding between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Secretariat of Health of the United Mexican States (*Document MB52/11*)

39. Antonis Lanaras, Head of Section European and International Cooperation, Director's Office, ECDC, presented the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) negotiated between ECDC and the Secretariat of Health of the United Mexican States. He first explained the legal basis for this cooperation noting that Article 3(2)(e) of ECDC's Founding Regulation required the Centre to exchange information, expertise and best practices and facilitate the development and implementation of joint actions. One means of doing this was via conclusion of agreements with third parties, such as MoUs. In 2007, ECDC signed MoUs with the US CDC, China CDC and the Public Health Agency of Canada. In 2012, an administrative agreement was signed with the Ministry of Health of Israel/Israel Center for Disease Control. He added that strengthened international cooperation was also in line with the ECDC Strategy 2021-2027 (Goal 4).

40. The negotiations with Mexico started in 2020 following an expression of interest from Mexico to establish collaboration with ECDC. After several meetings and exchanges, the current draft MoU was finalised. Subject to strategic priorities and available resources, the parties intend to collaborate in the areas of communicable disease, epidemiological emergencies, infectious diseases prevention and control, and any other cooperation area agreed. The modalities of cooperation include exchange of information and consultation, exchange of personnel and training materials, and participation in meetings, conferences and other events. Both parties will designate liaison officers to ensure a smooth implementation of the MoU. It is explicitly mentioned in the MoU that the parties understand the need to coordinate the content and communication procedures prior to any external communication on joint activities.

41. Following the presentation a few points were raised. One of the MB members representing the European Commission welcomed the MoU mentioning that it was a useful addition to the MoUs already in place. He asked why the MoU was sometimes signed with the Ministry of Health and sometimes with the technical CDC. One MB member agreed that international cooperation was indeed very important, which had been seen during the current pandemic. She asked whether there was a difference in workload between the different MoUs. Another MB member asked whether any other MoUs were planned.

42. Responding to the question from the European Commission, Antonis Lanaras explained that the party signing the MoU varied from one country to another depending on how the public health authorities were structured. In the case of Mexico, the Ministry of Health was the legal entity authorised to sign international agreements while the centre for disease prevention and control was an entity of the Ministry. The workload varied quite significantly depending on the nature of the collaboration. During the pandemic, ECDC had numerous bilateral meetings with the US CDC on different topics, such as face masks and SARS-Cov-2 variants. With China CDC there was intense communication at the beginning of the pandemic. In general, there was a willingness from China to learn and to exchange information. With Africa CDC, ECDC had a partnership agreement with financial support involved. The collaboration took place on a weekly basis to build capacity, strengthen surveillance, and support the public health work force development, etc. With regards to future collaboration, he mentioned that a draft MoU with the South Korean CDC was being finalised and negotiations were ongoing with the United Kingdom (UK Health Security Agency to be operational in October 2021) since January 2021. A draft MoU had been shared with the Commission and ECDC was awaiting the EC reply on the matter.

43. The Director clarified that the collaboration with the CDCs was of a technical nature. Having said this, it was of course also important to align messages at global level. She had recently met virtually with the new director of the US CDC to discuss how to align some specific guidance to minimise discrepancies. WHO was naturally an important international partner as well.

The Management Board approved the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the Secretariat of Health of the United Mexican States.

ECDC Management Board meeting dates 2022 and 2023, and draft MB rolling plan 2021-2023 (Document MB52/12)

44. Maarit Kokki, Head of Executive Office, Director's Office, ECDC, presented the suggested Management Board meeting dates for 2022 and 2023. The MB agreed with the proposed schedule of meetings in 2022 as below:

- MB54: 22-23 March 2022
- MB55: 14 -15 June 2022
- MB56: 15-16 November 2022

In addition, the Management Board took note of the following meeting dates proposed for 2023:

- MB57: 21-22 March 2023
- MB58: 13-14 June 2023
- MB59: 14-15 November 2023

45. Lastly, Maarit Kokki presented briefly the MB rolling plan 2021-2023, i.e. a table listing the standing items and other already known items to be discussed in the MB and AC meetings in the next couple of years. The table is a living document and will be available for consultation on the MB extranet.

46. Geneviève Chêne, MB Member, France, informed the Board that France was willing to host an MB meeting during the French Presidency taking place in the first semester of 2022, provided that the COVID-19 situation allowed for a face-to-face meeting. This would provide the opportunity to demonstrate the value of the close cooperation between the Member States and ECDC and to show the achievements of ECDC in 2021.

47. The Chair thanked the MB Member for France for the proposal and encouraged the Member and Alternate to continue the discussions with ECDC to clarify the financial aspects and practicalities so that the MB could take an informed decision. Concerning the timing, she hoped that the MB could first meet face-to-face in Stockholm and, in this regard, June was perhaps preferable for a meeting outside Sweden.

48. The Director welcomed the proposal and confirmed that ECDC would look into the practical aspects, while keeping in mind the current uncertainties around how the pandemic will evolve. Maarit Kokki confirmed that colleagues in the Executive Office would compile a table with the requirements and share it with the colleagues from France.

The Management Board approved the Management Board meeting dates for 2022 and took note of the proposed meeting dates for 2023 as well as the MB rolling plan 2021-2023.

Any other business

49. The Chair thanked all the Board Members for their active participation and valuable contributions, and the ECDC staff for their support.

50. The next regular Management Board is scheduled to take place on 23-24 November 2021.

Annex: List of Participants

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Austria	Bernhard Benka	Member
Belgium	Lieven De Raedt	Member
Bulgaria	Nataliya Spiridonova	Alternate
Denmark	Bolette Søborg	Member
Finland	Anni Virolainen-Julkunen (<i>Chair</i>)	Member
	Taneli Puumalainen	Alternate
France	Geneviève Chene	Member
	Anne-Catherine Viso	Alternate
Germany	Gesa Lücking	Alternate
Greece	Panagiotis Arkoumanas	Member
Hungary	Ágnes Dánielisz	Member
Ireland	Colette Bonner	Member
Italy	Francesco Maraglino	Member
	Sandro Bonfigli	Alternate
Latvia	Jana Feldmane	Member
Lithuania	Audrius Ščeponavičius	Member
Luxemburg	Thomas Dentzer	Alternate
Malta	Patricia Vella Bonanno	Member
	Mariella Borg Buontempo	Alternate
The Netherlands	Ciska Scheidel	Member
Poland	Dariusz Poznański	Member
Portugal	Rui Portugal	Member
Romania	Paul Daniel Iordache	Alternate
Slovakia	Peter Zsapka	Alternate

Country/Organisation	Representative	Status
Slovenia	Mojca Gobec	Member
	Mario Fafangel	Alternate
Spain	Manuel Cuenca Estrella	Alternate
Sweden	Johan Carlson	Member
	Andreas Johansson	Alternate
European Parliament		
	Zofija Mazej Kukovič	Member
	Maria Eleni Koppa	Member
European Commission		
DG SANTE	John F. Ryan	Member
DG SANTE	Pierre Delsaux	Member
DG RTD	Barbara Kerstiens	Member
EEA Countries		
Iceland	Ásthildur Knútsdóttir	Member
Liechtenstein	Silvia Dehler	Member
Norway	Øystein Riise	Member