


[◀ Back to Table of Contents](#)
[Next ▶](#)

Eurosurveillance, Volume 8, Issue 40, 30 September 2004

Articles

Citation style for this article: ECDC management board elects chair and deputy following international startup event in Stockholm. Euro Surveill. 2004;8(40):pii=2557. Available online: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=2557>

ECDC management board elects chair and deputy following international startup event in Stockholm

Editorial team (eurosurveillance.weekly@hpa.org.uk), Eurosurveillance editorial office.

A startup event was held for the new European Union agency, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), in Stockholm on 27 September [1], in preparation for the operational start date of May 2005. This was followed the next day by the first meeting of the ECDC's management board, members of which are listed in reference 1.

The event was attended by senior health officials and politicians from Europe, North America and Asia, and in his speech, the European commissioner for health and consumer protection emphasised the international nature of the centre. Unlike national centres for disease control, such as the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Hong Kong's new Centre for Health Protection, the ECDC is being built to be the small hub of the many existing networks of experts and laboratories in European countries both inside and outside of the European Union. It is hoped that the ECDC will provide stability for core funding of these networks, and a focal point for expertise and training.

The speech also looked to the future of the ECDC. The regulation [4] which establishes the ECDC requires regular independent and external evaluation of the centre's scope, and it is possible that this scope may be widened at a later date to include other threats to physical and mental health than just infectious disease.

The board elected Marc Sprenger, director general of the Netherlands' National Institute for Health and the Environment (RIVM), as chair, and Meni Malliori, assistant professor in psychiatry at the University of Athens, as deputy chair. The board has responsibility for the ECDC's work programme, budget and management, and will work closely with the director. The next board meeting will take place on 13-14 December, when the director will be appointed.

The European Commission's page for the ECDC is at http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_overview/strategy/ecdc/ecdc_en.htm.

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4. Regulation (EC) No 851/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 establishing a European Centre for disease prevention and control. *Official Journal of the European Union* 2004; **L 142/1**: 30.4.2004. (http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2004/L_142/L_14220040430en00010011.pdf)

[back to top](#)
[◀ Back to Table of Contents](#)
[Next ▶](#)

[↑ To top](#) | [▶ Recommend this page](#)

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