

PRESS RELEASE

Dr Marc Sprenger appointed to lead ECDC

Stockholm, 28 April 2010

Dr Marc Sprenger has been appointed to lead the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Dr Sprenger is currently Director-General of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) in the Netherlands. He takes up his post as Director of the Stockholm based EU agency on 1 May for a period of 5 years. Dr Sprenger's appointment was made following his election by the Centre's Management Board, and after Dr Sprenger's appearance yesterday before the European Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee.

Professor Hrabcik, Chairman of ECDC's Management Board, said:

"Marc Sprenger is an innovator who has played a leading role in strengthening EU public health cooperation, and who help start up ECDC. He has the combination of drive, vision and experience needed to lead ECDC during the next crucial years of its development. I look forward to working with him."

Dr Sprenger on 27 April told members of the European Parliament's Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee that, as ECDC Director, he would focus on three main challenges. Firstly, ensuring the scientific excellence of the analysis, guidance and technical support provided by ECDC. Secondly, to continue building collaboration and partnerships with ECDC's national counterparts, the EU Institutions and key international players such as the World Health Organization. Thirdly, to ensure that ECDC operates efficiently and provides value for money to the EU.

Commenting on his appointment, Dr Sprenger said:

"I am deeply honoured to have been chosen to lead ECDC. I am lucky to inherit a Centre with excellent, highly motivated, staff and an excellent scientific reputation. The challenge now is to consolidate what has already been achieved, and see where we can improve still further."

Background

Dr Marc Sprenger has been Director-General of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) in Bilthoven, the Netherlands since 2003. Prior to that he was Director of Health at the Netherlands Healthcare Insurance Board (CVZ) (1999-2003), and Head of the Centre for Infectious Disease Epidemiology at RIVM (1993-1999).

Key international posts held by Dr. Sprenger include being the ECDC Management Board's founding Chairman (2004 – 2008), and being a member of the Executive Board of the International Association of Public Health Institutes (IAPHI) (2008 – present).

Dr Sprenger is a medical microbiologist with a degree in medicine from the University of Maastricht (1988) and a PhD from Erasmus University, Rotterdam (1990). The subject of his PhD was the epidemiology of influenza. Marc Sprenger is married and has four children.

About the appointment process

The post of Director of ECDC was publicly advertised in 2009. The European Commission received around 160 applications for the job, and drew up a shortlist of three candidates for consideration by the ECDC Management Board. After these three candidates had appeared before them, the Board selected Dr Marc Sprenger to be the next ECDC Director. Dr Sprenger was formally appointed the evening of 27 April, following his appearance before the European Parliament's Environment and Public Health Committee.

About ECDC

ECDC is an EU agency with a mission to identify, assess and communicate threats to human health from infectious diseases. The Founding Regulation that created ECDC was passed by the European Parliament and Council in April 2004. The ECDC Management Board met for the first time in September 2004 and elected Marc Sprenger as its Chairman. The Centre became operational in May 2005 under the leadership of the Centre's founding Director, Zsuzsanna Jakab. Mrs. Jakab left ECDC in February 2010 to become the World Health Organization's Regional Director for Europe. Since 1 February Professor Karl Ekdahl, Head of ECDC's Health Communication Unit, has been Acting Director.

For further information about ECDC see: www.ecdc.europa.eu

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The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is an EU agency tasked with identifying assessing and communicating threats to human health posed by infectious diseases. It supports the work of public health authorities in the EU and EEA/EFTA Member States.