

Strengthening the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

On 11 November 2020, the European Commission adopted a proposal to bolster the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), with a view to improving the EU's capacity to anticipate, prepare for and manage future cross-border health threats. The European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted its report on 29 June 2021. This is due to be voted during the September plenary session, thus setting Parliament's negotiating position and opening the way for interinstitutional negotiations.

Background

The Commission [proposal](#) on extending the ECDC's mandate is part of a three-pronged [European health union](#) legislative [package](#), put forward to strengthen the EU's health security framework. The package comprises a [communication](#), a proposal for a new regulation on [serious cross-border threats to health](#), and proposals for regulations to extend the mandates of the ECDC and the European Medicines Agency ([EMA](#)), respectively. As the Commission points out, both agencies have been at the forefront of the EU's work to address the coronavirus pandemic, but need stronger mandates to better protect EU citizens and address cross-border health threats. Both the ECDC and cross-border health threats proposals are among the Commission, Council and Parliament [Joint Declaration](#) 2021 legislative priority files.

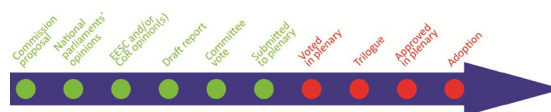
European Commission proposal

The proposal [aims](#) to better equip the ECDC to support the Commission and the Member States in several areas: prevention of communicable diseases, and specific health issues (such as antimicrobial resistance, vaccination and biosecurity); preparedness and response planning, reporting and auditing; epidemiological surveillance through integrated systems enabling real-time surveillance; provision of non-binding recommendations for risk management; a robust system for automated contact tracing; and coordination of new networks, including EU reference laboratories. Among other things, the proposal would create an ECDC-hosted EU Health Task Force to assist local responses to disease outbreaks in Member States and third countries, and establish a framework for mobilising the task force.

European Parliament position

While health is a national competence, Parliament has consistently promoted a coherent EU [health policy](#). The draft report on the proposal was discussed in Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) on 23 March 2021. The final committee vote took place on [29 June 2021](#). The [report](#) proposes, among other things, that the ECDC's mandate should also cover major non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, cancer, diabetes, and mental illness. It also supports the development of a permanent EU Health Task Force. Once Parliament formally adopts its position, interinstitutional negotiations could begin. The Council agreed its [position](#) on 23 July 2021.

First-reading report: [2020/0320\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: ENVI; Rapporteur: Joanna Kopcińska (ECR, Poland). For further information see our see our EP 'Legislative Train Schedule' fiches on the European health union package files: [Cross-border health threats](#); [ECDC mandate extension](#); and [EMA mandate extension](#).



EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Nicole Scholz, Members' Research Service
PE 696.199 – September 2021

This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament. Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy. © European Union, 2021.

eprs@ep.europa.eu (contact) <http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu> (intranet) <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet) <http://eptthinktank.eu> (blog)

