

Public health: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control ECDC

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The Council held an extensive policy debate on a proposal for a Regulation establishing a European Centre for disease prevention and control (ECDC), and reached a common general approach on the main content of the proposal. The Italian Presidency took note of the general agreement of delegations regarding the need for such an ECDC and urged the Council to adopt the proposal during the first semester 2004. The Opinion of the European Parliament in first reading, pursuant to the co-decision procedure, is expected in February 2004 so that amendments could be taken into account by the Council with a view to adopt the proposal in first reading during the first semester 2004. The Regulation is expected to apply from early 2005. The Council agreed in particular that the mission and tasks of the Centre would be limited to communicable diseases and health threats whose origin are as yet unknown, and that the need for a possible extension would have to be envisaged in the context of a later review. Some changes were brought to the text with a view to ensure that the European Centre would not be entitled to regulatory powers. Other issues discussed among the delegations concerned the voting rules and the composition of the management board as well as the translation facilities and the budget of the Centre.