Eurosurveillance – fifteen years of serving Europe

A Nicoll (angus.nicoll@ecdc.europa.eu)¹

1. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Stockholm, Sweden

Citation style for this article:

Nicoll A. Eurosurveillance – fifteen years of serving Europe.

Euro Surveill. 2011;16(45):pii=20015. Available online: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=20015>

Article published on 10 November 2011

The *first edition of Eurosurveillance* was published, in print and online, in September 1995 under the editorship of Jean-Baptiste Brunet of the Centre Européen pour la Surveillance Épidémiologique du CIDA in Paris. This pilot was funded by the European Commission and already had an editorial board with members from all countries in the European Union (EU). That single edition was used to test the feasibility of producing a European communicable disease journal and was part of a wider initiative under the informal EU Charter Group [1]. Distributed to 12,000 potential readers accompanied by a questionnaire, the 1995 experiment was greeted enthusiastically by the European infectious disease control community. This justified the launch of two linked projects that took off under a unified editorial board. A monthly journal edited by Brunet was started in Paris from mid-1996 in what became the Institut de Veille Sanitaire (InVS) in 1998, and in May 1997, a weekly journal edited by Noel Gill and Stuart Handysides started at the then Public Health Laboratory Service Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (PHLS-CDSC) in London (Table).

Through a series of project grants from the European Commission and the enduring commitment of INVS and the PHLS-CDSC (later the Health Protection Agency) the monthly and weekly projects continued as separate outputs even after they became funded as a single EU project in 2000. The editorial board that grew as the numbers of countries in the EU and European Economic Area (EEA) increased. The next important step was taken in 2007 when, following the creation of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in May 2005, a permanent home for the journal was established at ECDC in Stockholm. A smooth transfer was made possible by the out-posting of original *Eurosurveillance* staff from London. A crucial point was commitment to the journal's editorial independence granted by ECDC director Zsuzsanna Jakab and her successor in 2010, Marc Sprenger [2].

So what has changed over the decade and a half? In some ways not a lot, as the infectious diseases have remained the same. The first issue of *Eurosurveillance* in September 1995, the first *Eurosurveillance* monthly

in 1996 and the first *Eurosurveillance* weekly 1997 featured topics such as cholera in Albania, a microbiological surveillance network for salmonellosis and shigellosis in Portugal, *E. coli* and haemolytic uraemic syndrome in Sweden and the Canary Islands, tuberculosis in Europe and blood-borne infections. Those remain threats in 2011, and articles on those topics have been published in *Eurosurveillance* this year. Not only diseases remain the same some discussions related to public health never seem to go away: The 1995 edition comments on a lack of standardisation in immunisation schedules in Europe. New threats have appeared, and articles on antimicrobial infections and healthcare-associated infections have become more common, as have reports of emerging and re-emerging infections. However, the most notable change in the period since 2007 has been an extraordinary increase in the number and range of articles submitted and an expansion in the number and geographical distribution of readers and contributors in and outside Europe [3]. In the last three years (2009–2011) ca 600 articles have been published from 29 countries in the EU/EEA grouping and 148 from countries in the rest of the world*.

Four words define what is special about *Eurosurveillance*. Quality both scientific and editorial, speed and flexibility, and its network of people. Peer review is conducted rigorously to maintain the high scientific quality but the editorial staff also improve the article, especially helpful for the majority of authors for whom English is not the first language. However it is the speed and flexibility that make *Eurosurveillance* unique among peer-reviewed journals. Important events and can and have appeared as a scientifically reviewed and edited article a few days after they happen [4], and the editorial team and its network of highly motivated peer-reviewers and authors are ready to accommodate the needs of very different situations. Frequent topical compilations of articles provide additional value, for example in 2011 on the outbreak of haemolytic uraemic syndrome in Germany and the relevance of Chagas disease in Europe.

Being hosted at ECDC, the journal benefits from the epidemic intelligence activities and discussions with

the experts in house. During the 2009 influenza pandemic, the journal published a large number of timely articles on the topic. This was not just an editorial coup but a remarkable contribution to public health and to ECDC's regular pandemic risk assessments

for Europe. Influenza pandemics are variable and the response and countermeasures have to be tailored if they are not to be counterproductive [5]. They are also notorious for changing and evolving over time and as they progress geographically. Rapid peer-reviewed

TABLE

Milestones of *Eurosurveillance*

1995	<p>First issue of <i>Eurosurveillance</i> (online and print, the single issue published in 1995) – a pilot issue to assess the feasibility of producing a European communicable diseases bulletin</p> <p>Set up and jointly funded by the European Commission, the Réseau national de santé publique (later, Institut de Veille Sanitaire (InVS)) in Paris, France, and the Public Health Laboratory Service (later, Health Protection Agency (HPA)) in London, United Kingdom</p> <p>Editor-in-chief: Jean-Baptiste Brunet</p>
1996 – 2007	Two complementary projects, <i>Eurosurveillance monthly</i> and <i>Eurosurveillance weekly</i> , with a shared board of national editorial advisors from the European Union countries
1996	<p>First issue of <i>Eurosurveillance monthly</i></p> <p>Project leader and managing editor : Jean-Baptiste Brunet, Centre Européen pour la Surveillance Epidémiologique du Sida (CESES), France</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-reviewed outbreak and surveillance reports, Euroroundups, dispatch reports, short reports • Bilingual (French–English) print edition (6,000 copies distributed throughout Europe) and online multilingual bulletin (English, Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese) available on the CESES website
1997	<p>First issue of <i>Eurosurveillance weekly</i></p> <p>Project leader: Noël Gill, Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS), United Kingdom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short, timely and fast-tracked peer-reviewed articles (rapid communications) • Available in English on the PHLS website
1999	Enlargement of the <i>Eurosurveillance</i> editorial board with Norway
2000	<p>Enlargement of the <i>Eurosurveillance</i> editorial board with Estonia</p> <p>Official recognition of <i>Eurosurveillance monthly</i> as a scientific peer-reviewed journal: indexation in Medline and Scopus</p> <p><i>Eurosurveillance</i> becomes a single project combining timely and in-depth peer-reviewed reports on one website (www.eurosurveillance.org) and with two editorial offices in Paris and London that publish the monthly and weekly edition, respectively</p> <p>Appointment of new Managing Editor: Jacques Drucker</p>
2002	Appointment of new Managing Editor: Gilles Brückner
2004	<p>New quarterly print compilation, including a selection of weekly articles (English only); end of the print issue of the monthly release</p> <p>Enlargement of the <i>Eurosurveillance</i> editorial board, following the European Union enlargement, to include representatives from Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia</p>
2005	<p>Formal agreement with the newly established European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) – which was mandated to publish a weekly epidemiological bulletin – on a special working relationship: a member of the editorial team in London seconded to the ECDC offices in Stockholm, Sweden, and an ECDC Associate editor appointed (Karl Ekdahl)</p> <p>The monthly edition continues to be produced by the team at InVS in Paris</p>
2006	Establishment of the editorial office at ECDC in Stockholm
2007	<p>Officially transferred to and published by ECDC</p> <p>The publisher grants editorial independence to the editorial team</p> <p>Appointment of new Editor-in-chief: Karl Ekdahl</p> <p>Appointment of new Managing Editor: Ines Steffens</p>
2008	<p>Merging the two editions (weekly and monthly) into one weekly edition that includes both rapid communications (formerly in the weekly edition) and regular articles (formerly in the monthly edition)</p> <p>Beginning of the collaboration with EpiNorth and signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding</p>
2009	<p>The journal was selected for coverage by Thomson Reuters and is indexed and abstracted in the Science Citation Index Expanded (also known as SciSearch) and in the Journal Citation Reports/Science Edition, beginning with Volume 14(1) 2009</p> <p>Major role played by <i>Eurosurveillance</i> during the influenza pandemic in disseminating scientific information rapidly, so as to enable public health action where needed</p>
2010	<p><i>Eurosurveillance</i> was accredited by the Health on the Net (HON) Foundation as adhering to the HON code of conduct</p> <p>The quarterly print compilations are replaced by printed special issues and topical compilations of selected material from the online issues</p> <p>Indexed in Embase</p>
2011	<p>A trademark for <i>Eurosurveillance</i> was recorded in the register of the Community Trade Marks by the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market</p> <p>Appointment of new Editor-in-chief: Ines Steffens</p>
2011	Seminar to mark 15 years of <i>Eurosurveillance</i> to be held during the 2011 ESCAIDE conference
2012	The journal's first impact factor, for 2011, is expected to be allocated

publication of analyses was thus of paramount importance. The rapid turnover became known globally and by 10 August 2010, the official end of pandemic, over 120 papers had been published, mostly rapid communications peer-reviewed by two experts. However influenza is but one infection, and in 2010 and 2011 the focus moved on, especially in this year to *E. coli* O104 and emerging resistance to antimicrobial drugs as well as re-emerging diseases in Europe such as West Nile virus infections and malaria.

So what would *Eurosurveillance* and its readers and authors deserve for a 15th birthday present, and what should happen next? An impact factor would be nice. The good news is that there will be one in 2012 [5]. This should help the journal to attract the best articles within its scope, increase the readership further, have an impact on public health and thus become the leading European journal of infectious disease epidemiology, prevention and control.

* On 13 December 2011 the sentence 'In the last three years (2009–2011) ca 600 articles have been published from 32 countries in the EU/EEA grouping and 148 countries in the rest of the world.' was corrected to read '[...] from 29 countries in the EU/EEA grouping and 148 from countries in the rest of the world'.

References

1. Giesecke J, Weinberg J. A European Centre for Infectious Disease? *Lancet*. 1998;352(1308):1308.
2. Sprenger M. Visions for the next five years: ECDC as a sustainable and service-oriented organisation. *Euro Surveill*. 2010;15(19):pii=19564. Available from: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19564>
3. Steffens I, Ekdahl K. Eurosurveillance – keeping an eye on infectious diseases. *Euro Surveill*. 2010;15(1):pii=19452. Available from: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19452>
4. Scheutz F, Møller Nielsen E, Frimodt-Møller J, Boisen N, Morabito S, Tozzoli R, et al. Characteristics of the enteroaggregative Shiga toxin/verotoxin-producing *Escherichia coli* O104:H4 strain causing the outbreak of haemolytic uraemic syndrome in Germany, May to June 2011. *Euro Surveill*. 2011;16(24):pii=19889. Available from: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19889>
5. Nicoll A, Ammon A, Amato Gauci A, Ciancio B, Zucs P, Devaux I, et al. Experience and lessons from surveillance and studies of the 2009 pandemic in Europe. *Public Health*. 2010;124(1):14-23.