



SUMMARY

For the fourth consecutive year, ESCAIDE was held as a hybrid event, bringing people together in person and continuing to provide online access. Here, we talk you through the sessions and discussions across the three days of the conference, which took place from 19 to 21 November, in Warsaw and online.

ESCAIDE 2025 Highlights Report

A look back on the conference

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ESCAIDE at a glance

The European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (ESCAIDE) is an annual event organised by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), a public health agency of the European Union (EU), headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden. ECDC's mission is to protect the over 500 million people in Europe from infectious diseases.

ECDC organises ESCAIDE every year to be a platform for...

- **sharing** of scientific **knowledge and experience** in all areas applied to infectious disease prevention and control
- discussing and debating **scientific advances** and **current public health challenges**
- **strengthening and expanding** the **human network** of all involved in this field in Europe and globally
- providing opportunities for further **professional development** for fellows and students in this field.

...to strengthen the prevention and control of infectious diseases in the EU/EEA and globally.

ESCAIDE is a conference for the entire community of scientists and professionals dedicated to infectious disease prevention and control, in the EU/EEA and globally, including epidemiologists, microbiologists, clinicians, public health professionals, communication specialists, mathematical modellers, statisticians, social scientists, policymakers and others.

It has been held as an in-person conference since 2007, with rotational hosting between Stockholm and another city in an EU/EEA Member State. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ESCAIDE 2020 and 2021 were held entirely online.

In 2022, 2023 and 2024, ESCAIDE was held as a hybrid event, bringing people back together again in-person, but continuing to provide online access. ESCAIDE 2025, the 19th edition of the conference, similarly took place as a hybrid event, hosted in Warsaw and online.



[Visit the ESCAIDE website](#)



ECDC Director, Pamela Rendi-Wagner, and representing the ESCAIDE 2025 host country, Director General of the Ministry of Health of Poland, Konrad Korbiński, opening ESCAIDE 2025.

ESCAIDE 2025 in numbers

19-21 November, in Warsaw and online

ESCAIDE 2025 had almost 700 participants gathering in-person across the three days at the Hilton Warsaw City Hotel, in Warsaw, Poland, and over 3 400 people registering to join online. ESCAIDE has grown hugely in recent years, with the increased prominence of the field during the COVID-19 pandemic, and accessibility of online events. We were pleased to see that the interest in attending ESCAIDE this year remained high, and that, after the success of ESCAIDE 2022, 2023 and 2024, conducting the conference in a hybrid mode allowed the larger audience that was captured during the online editions to still participate. Continuing to offer online participation means that the conference was still accessible to the audience, presenters and speakers who could not travel to Warsaw due to cost, distance, and other commitments, or be accommodated in the capacity of the venue.

In total, 126 countries were represented at ESCAIDE 2025. In-person participants came from 61 countries (27 EU/EEA countries and 34 outside EU/EEA), and online participants came from 118 countries (30 EU/EEA countries and 88 outside EU/EEA). This is in line with the countries represented in previous hybrid editions of the conference (122 countries in 2024, 127 in 2023 and 123 in 2022).

The programme included 6 Plenaries, 14 Fireside sessions, 23 Poster tours, 5 thematic sessions, multiple side events, info stands and many other activities. For many, this was the chance to reconnect and network with colleagues, to take the time to learn from one another's work, and exchange experiences from the past year. The conference allowed for meaningful discussions to take place on topics directly related to infectious disease epidemiology, but also on the camaraderie and wellbeing of the public health workforce.

Read on to see the highlights of the events and discussions across the three days of ESCAIDE 2025.

Day 1: Wednesday 19 November

The first day of ESCAIDE started with an opening ceremony featuring remarks by ECDC Director Pamela Rendi-Wagner, Director General of the Polish Ministry of Health, Konrad Korbiński, and ECDC Chief Scientist, Piotr Kramarz. In her speech, Dr. Rendi-Wagner emphasised the importance of preparedness for future health threats, which relies on cooperation across sectors and building trust in public health interventions and institutions. These remarks were echoed by Konrad Korbiński, who highlighted how ESCAIDE can serve as a platform for discussions on countering misinformation.

This was followed by the first plenary session of the conference, on Post-Normal Science in public health governance, chaired by ESCAIDE Scientific Committee members Ágnes Hajdu and Henriette de Valk. Keynote speaker Silvio Funtowicz, a philosopher of science, discussed how public health decision-making should address uncertainty, complexity and conflicting values, when conventional scientific approaches reach their limits.



Silvio Funtowicz's presentation in Plenary A generated stimulating questions and discussions among the audience, both during and after the session.

“Contemporary challenges defy simple solutions. They are practical and political, complex and interconnected, and cannot be reduced to ‘following the science’.”
Silvio Funtowicz, speaking in Plenary A

Before the morning coffee break, the first plenary session was followed by a short presentation, spotlighting the newly established European Union Reference Laboratories (EURLs) for public health, and their role in strengthening laboratory capacity and improving disease surveillance across Europe.



Fireside sessions were composed of 7-minute oral presentations on a specific topic, followed by a Q&A, moderated by an expert in that field.

After the morning coffee break, three Fireside sessions were held in parallel, featuring abstracts in the fields of preparedness, COVID-19 vaccination, and quantitative methods. The moderator of one of these sessions noted that the abstracts presented underscored that vaccination remains essential to mitigate severe outcomes, even during periods of low circulation. During the lunch break, participants could attend the Career Compass, during which several professionals shared the highlights of their careers and practical advice for early-career professionals; and a thematic session on the role of Artificial Intelligence in public health. This latter session presented three use cases and underscored the importance of human oversight of tools using Artificial Intelligence. The ensuing afternoon Fireside sessions covered the topics of respiratory infections and vaccine research and immunisation programmes.

The first set of Poster tours then took place, in which around 50 abstracts were presented to onsite audiences, on topics ranging from sexually transmitted infections to surveillance, preparedness, and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). In parallel, participants could also attend a side session on global epidemic intelligence and strengthening early detection and assessments of public health events. The session explored how Epidemic Intelligence teams operate and the tools they use to detect, validate, and communicate early signals of public health threats. Three speakers from different regions—Europe, Africa, and Canada—shared their experiences and approaches, concluding that building resilient national and international networks and fostering partnerships are essential.



[Browse the ESCAIDE 2025 Abstract book](#)

In the last plenary of the day, speakers discussed science-based leadership in public health. A panel of experts and leaders representing scientific advisors and political decision-makers presented their approaches to navigating uncertainties and improving trust in data and institutions. Using examples for the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, they discussed concrete examples of evidence-based decisions from the countries they represent.

“There is a need to build trust between crises. It’s very difficult to build up trust in a crisis.” – Karin Nygård, Senior advisor at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, speaking in Plenary B



Plenary B was chaired by Scientific Committee members Jacobo Mendioroz and Bruno Ciancio, and brought together speakers from Greece, Croatia, Norway, and the WHO.

The day ended with a networking event for in-person attendees, in which participants could discuss the day’s events and meet field epidemiology fellows and trainees from around the world. In recognition of this year’s host city, Warsaw, the event also featured a performance by a local choir.



[Consult the ESCAIDE 2025 Programme](#)

Day 2: Thursday 20 November

The second day of ESCAIDE centred on the theme of One Health, opening with Plenary C on interactions between environmental health and human health. Speakers outlined practical lessons and policy considerations to support a more coordinated One Health implementation. Drawing on examples from EU Member States, they considered ways to strengthen integrated surveillance and preparedness across human, animal, and environmental sectors. Wastewater monitoring was also highlighted as an environmental surveillance tool with potential for early detection of health threats.

“We need to get out of our silos, we need to connect human health with animal health and environmental health, in order to make sense of what is going on out there.”– Jan Semenza, from Umeå University, speaking in Plenary C on the importance of One Health



Speakers in Plenary C spoke of how environmental systems influence health risks and addressed how integrated surveillance and preparedness planning can help in facing these threats.

After a coffee break, during which participants could visit the variety of information stands onsite and online, the three morning Fireside sessions brought together abstract presentations on the topics of antimicrobial resistance, emerging and vector-borne diseases, and food- and water-borne diseases. These were followed by a lunch break, during which participants could attend a thematic session on the impact of the use of conjugate pneumococcal vaccines on invasive pneumococcal disease. The session underscored the diversity of vaccine recommendations across member states in the EU/EEA and provided perspectives on different vaccination schedules.

The afternoon continued with another Fireside session on One Health, and the *Eurosurveillance* Seminar on vaccines and tomorrow's opportunities for public health. This session saw three expert presentations focusing on antimicrobial resistance, emerging arboviruses and climate-driven vector-borne diseases, and how vaccines play an underrecognised role in addressing these challenges.



The speakers in the *Eurosurveillance* Seminar highlighted the underrecognised role of vaccines in reducing AMR and focused on new vaccine developments addressing vector-borne diseases such as dengue and chikungunya.

“Vaccines are one of the strongest tools we have to reduce antimicrobial resistance. They prevent infections, reduce antibiotic use, and slow the spread of resistance.”—
Mateusz Hasso-Agopsowicz, from WHO, speaking at the *Eurosurveillance* Seminar

The Seminar was followed by another thematic session on Europe's cross-agency One Health Task Force, which discussed how the task force unites five EU agencies (ECDC, ECHA, EEA, EFSA and EMA) to strengthen prevention and response to health threats.

Further abstract presentations then took place on Day 2 during poster tours on social determinants of infectious diseases, surveillance of respiratory infections and healthcare-associated diseases, One Health and antimicrobial resistance, among others. Several of these sessions featured abstract presentations by the eleven recipients of the ESCAIDE Funding Initiative, who were invited to Warsaw to present their accepted abstracts. These presenters represented countries that are usually less represented in ESCAIDE, such as Eastern and Southern Europe, and early career researchers who wouldn't otherwise have had the opportunity to attend the conference in person.



[Read more about the Funding Initiative](#)



Alice Fusaro spoke in Plenary D about how genomic data can be used to monitor the spread of zoonotic viruses and act as early warnings.

The second day concluded with a second plenary session on the topic of One Health, specifically on the collaboration between veterinary and human health. A panel of experts, as well as the two chairs from the Scientific Committee, discussed how close coordination between these sectors is vital for effective responses to outbreaks of zoonotic diseases, such as avian influenza. They highlighted the existing gaps in communication, surveillance systems and response protocols, and used real-world case studies to illustrate successes and challenges that they face.

“[Tools for outbreak investigation of zoonotic influenza outbreaks] should be developed in collaboration and shared with all stakeholders and tested in simulation exercises.”—

Andrea Gervelmeyer, from EFSA, speaking in Plenary D

For those participants present in Warsaw, the day closed with a lively and engaging BarCamp. This was an opportunity to network and exchange ideas in a relaxed setting. Participants submitted topics in advance and voted for their favourites. The topics discussed included potential budget cuts to applied epidemiology, whether field epidemiology is losing its “field” component, and how to remain passionate as public health professionals in a post-pandemic era of mistrust in science.



[See the ESCAIDE 2025 side events](#)

Day 3: Friday 21 November

Day 3 of the conference opened with a final set of Poster sessions on the topics of vaccination, social and behavioral perspectives, health equity, international health, tools for advances in public health, and respiratory diseases.

The morning plenary explored equity challenges in accessing essential health services. Speakers highlighted how, despite progress in public health, many communities continue to face barriers rooted in stigma, inconsistent policies, financial hardship, and structural obstacles. These challenges result in systematic exclusion from vital services, undermining the principle of health for all. The panel presented evidence from data, research, and practice to illustrate how inequities manifest in different contexts, such as HIV prevention and access to vaccination, and highlighted the essential role of participatory research to better understand vulnerable populations and create more effective interventions.

“The reality is that groups that need preventative services the most, are often the ones that access it the least.” – Susan Hahné, from RIVM, speaking in Plenary E on reducing health inequalities



The speakers and moderators of Plenary E explored persistent inequities in access to preventive and essential healthcare across Europe.

Following the coffee break, three Fireside sessions shined the spotlight on research on strengthening epidemic intelligence and surveillance, blood-borne and sexually transmitted infections, and healthcare-associated infections.

During the lunch break, participants could attend a final thematic session on diagnosing barriers to vaccination, in which speakers explored how to close immunisation gaps and improve sub-optimal vaccination

coverage using a comprehensive approach that integrates both epidemiological and behavioural data. Onsite participants were also invited to attend a session on science communication, lead by two science communicators and podcasters from 'This Podcast Will Kill You'.

“Positive stories [about vaccination] work as a protective factor.” – Bolette Søborg, from SSI, speaking in the thematic session on vaccine hesitancy.



Throughout the conference, 23 Poster tours brought together a series of short oral presentations on a specific topic, followed by a moderated Q&A session.

The afternoon Fireside sessions covered the topics of health inequalities – in keeping with the daily theme of health for all – and late breakers, which presented recent findings from the months leading up to the conference. In the latter session, abstracts covered outbreaks of Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC) and out-of-season influenza, as well as recent research on preventing and treating respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in infants.

The final plenary session of the conference was titled “Beyond numbers: humanising public health to address health inequalities” and sought to move beyond traditional approaches in public health to include the voices and lived experiences of communities. The speakers invited the audience to reflect on how to recognise and communicate the intangible elements of their work, and to continue this discussion with colleagues beyond ESCAIDE.

“I want to encourage reflection, hope, and empathy to build solidarity as a core of inclusive and equitable public health.” –
Grazia Caleo, speaking in Plenary F on the importance of intangible elements in public health



The speakers and moderators of Plenary E explored persistent inequities in access to preventive and essential healthcare across Europe.

The conference concluded with the closing ceremony, in which the winners of the EAN Photo Contest and best oral presentation were announced. The Master of Ceremonies, Martin Watson, who had guided the audience through the conference from the start, acknowledged the contributions of participants in the discussions, innovations and exchanges that happened during ESCAIDE. ECDC Chief Scientist and Chair of the ESCAIDE Scientific Committee, Piotr Kramarz, thanked all participants, speakers and organisers, and briefly summarised the conference, recounting the narrative of the three daily themes of the plenary sessions. The dates and location of the next edition of the conference were also announced: 18-20 November 2026, in Stockholm and online.



[Read more about ESCAIDE future hosting sites](#)



ECDC Chief Scientist, Piotr Kramarz, also chairs the ESCAIDE Scientific Committee, and delivered the closing statement, in which he announced the dates of ESCAIDE 2026.



Throughout the conference, participants could visit onsite (and online) info stands to learn more about different projects and initiatives.

Engagement and social media

From early on Day 1 through to the end of Day 3, there was a brilliant atmosphere at the conference, with packed audiences at sessions and participants noticeably pleased to be meeting in-person. The attendance and participation online were also high throughout. Many questions and comments were sent by participants during sessions through the app.

Networking took place in-person, during the coffee breaks, at the end of sessions, at lunch, and in events such as the networking cocktail. Online participants took part in discussions through the conference platform, both during and between sessions, with several hundreds of connections made between participants' profiles and thousands of messages exchanged.

There was a lot of activity on social media around ESCAIDE, showcased on the Social Media Wall both at the venue and online. It was wonderful to see participants sharing their personal highlights, promoting their presentations, and connecting with others across various platforms.



[Explore the ESCAIDE 2025 Social Media Wall](#)

Sustainability at ESCAIDE

This year, the ESCAIDE team reflected on sustainability at ESCAIDE and published a report on the conference's alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to continuing with the sustainability efforts of previous years, new initiatives were included in line with SDGs 4 and 10 to ensure quality education and reduce inequalities. These initiatives ranged from live transcripts in different languages for online participants, to sessions such as "Meet the Expert" which aimed to bring senior public health professionals closer to early career researchers.

Furthermore, we pursued initiatives to strengthen SDGs 11 and 12 on sustainable cities and communities and responsible consumption and production, such as providing onsite participants with tickets for free use of public transportation in Warsaw, catering with diverse vegan and vegetarian options, limited numbers of printed items, and promotional materials that included biodegradable plant pots.



[Explore the ESCAIDE and Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) report](#)

Feedback survey

The feedback survey closed on 7 December. Thank you to all who contributed; we have reviewed your responses and appreciate the time taken to give specific feedback. This has helped us to understand the experience of ESCAIDE 2025 speakers, presenters, moderators and organisers, and online and in-person attendees.

Over 1 130 responses were submitted, with overwhelmingly positive feedback – over 95% of respondents indicated they were 'extremely' or 'very much' satisfied with the event, which is in line with results from previous hybrid editions. Respondents appreciated the hybrid nature of the conference – which made it possible for many participants to attend remotely – as well as the wide variety and high quality of presentations and speakers. However, several respondents noted that the programme felt quite packed, making it difficult to choose between parallel sessions. However, as most of the sessions were recorded and remain available on the online conference platform until early 2026, we hope that participants will be able to catch up on any content they missed. We also recognise the particular challenges that were posed by the

hosting venue, which will be taken into account when selecting future venues. Finally, we very much appreciate the constructive feedback on how to encourage the involvement of the online audience and facilitate networking opportunities and refine the functionalities of the conference app and platform, as well as the ideas for future topics to be explored. The full analysis of the feedback survey results will be available in the evaluation report on the ESCAIDE website in January 2026.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the ESCAIDE 2025 reporters and summary writers who worked hard throughout the conference to capture the content of sessions and lively discussions, which enabled us to produce this Highlights Report. We offer huge thanks to the session speakers, abstract presenters, moderators, Scientific Committee members, side event organisers, and info stand support, for your contributions to the conference programme.



[Find out more about the ESCAIDE Scientific Committee](#)

Last but not least, ESCAIDE is what it is because of the engagement of the audience – the many questions and comments submitted by both the in-person and online audiences helped shape many fruitful discussions throughout the conference. Thank you for your participation!

Stay tuned and get involved in ESCAIDE 2026!

Follow [@ESCAIDE](#) and [@ECDC](#) on social media ([LinkedIn](#), [Bluesky](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#)) and check out the website to stay up to date with news and announcements throughout the year.

Subscribe to the ESCAIDE newsletter [here](#) to receive monthly updates about the conference.

Submissions for abstracts to ESCAIDE 2026 will open again in the spring.

See you at ESCAIDE 2026! In Stockholm and online, 18-20 November.



Registered participants can access [the online platform and view all session recordings](#)



[Visit the ESCAIDE 2025 archive](#)



[View ESCAIDE 2025 photos](#)