

## Open letter to the Members of the European Parliament on the importance to sustain EU progress in fighting against antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

Brussels, 12 September 2019

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a major and complex public health threat that requires concerted efforts, involving all stakeholders. AMR is estimated to be responsible for 33,000 deaths per year in the EU alone<sup>i</sup> and 700,000 deaths per year globally, including 230,000 deaths from multidrug-resistant tuberculosis<sup>ii</sup>. It has been calculated that the extra healthcare costs and productivity losses due to multidrug-resistant bacteria in the EU total €1.5 billion each year.<sup>iii</sup> AMR is also a threat to animals, as it can cause health and welfare problems.

The EU has recognised the importance of tackling AMR through a One Health approach, which supports joint working between the human, animal, environment and food sectors. Recent EU initiatives on AMR include the June 2017 European Commission's *One Health Action Plan against AMR*<sup>iv</sup>, the September 2018 European Parliament's own-initiative report on a *European One Health Action Plan against AMR*<sup>v</sup> and the June 2019 Council of the EU's *Conclusions on the next steps towards making the EU a best practice region in combatting AMR*<sup>vi</sup>.

Despite these efforts, high levels of resistance remain in patients across the EU.<sup>vii</sup> In certain third countries, the situation is even worse, notwithstanding initiatives undertaken by the World Health Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Animal Health Organisation, and the G7 and G20. The EU must play its part in sustaining global momentum to halting the rise of AMR, as no region of the world can isolate itself from this health and socio-economic threat.

**We, the undersigned civil society organisations and stakeholders, believe in the need for continued and targeted EU action and coordination to address AMR. EU measures should reflect the priorities laid down in the Commission's *One Health Action Plan against AMR*, as was successfully done with the adoption, in 2018, of new EU rules on veterinary medicinal products. The *Action Plan* contains concrete measures with EU added value, which span from promoting better infection prevention and control in hospitals, surveillance, and prudent use of antimicrobials, to improving awareness and understanding of AMR. The *Action Plan* calls also for policies aimed at ensuring availability and equitable access to established antimicrobials, and effective use of vaccines, as well as at supporting R&D of new antimicrobials, vaccines, rapid diagnostics and alternatives, for use in humans and / or animals.**

**The European Parliament has an important role to play in ensuring that the EU remains on the front line of the global battle against AMR. To make this happen, we call on you to:**

1. **Bring AMR to the forefront of EU interinstitutional discussions**, e.g. during the hearings of the Commissioners-designate, and stress the importance of the One Health approach.
2. **Support the establishment of a dedicated, holistic AMR parliamentary group**, in the form of an inter-group or an interest group, in partnership with civil society and stakeholders.

The signatories of this letter stand ready to support you in these endeavours and are looking forward to working with you to sustain EU progress in fighting against AMR.

## Signing organisations



<sup>i</sup> <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/33000-people-die-every-year-due-infections-antibiotic-resistant-bacteria>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/interagency-coordination-group/IACG\\_final\\_summary\\_EN.pdf?ua=1](https://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/interagency-coordination-group/IACG_final_summary_EN.pdf?ua=1)

<sup>iii</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/health/amr/sites/amr/files/amr\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/amr/sites/amr/files/amr_factsheet_en.pdf)

<sup>iv</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/health/amr/sites/amr/files/amr\\_action\\_plan\\_2017\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/amr/sites/amr/files/amr_action_plan_2017_en.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0257\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2018-0257_EN.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0625\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0625(01)&from=EN)

<sup>vii</sup> <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/surveillance-antimicrobial-resistance-europe-2017>