# European One Health action plan against antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

2017/2254(INI) - 13/09/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 589 votes to 12 with 36 abstentions, a resolution on a European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

Members noted that the excessive and incorrect use of antibiotics and poor infection control practices in both human and veterinary medicine have progressively rendered antimicrobial resistance (AMR) a massive threat to human and animal health. The misuse of antibiotics is eroding their efficacy. In terms of human health, 50 % of antibiotic prescriptions written for humans are ineffective.

Stressing that the **correct and prudent use of antimicrobials** is essential to limiting the emergence of AMR, Parliament made the following key observations and recommendations:

**The EU as a best-practice region**: Members stressed that the One Health principle must play a central role in tackling AMR, reflecting the fact that the health of people and animals and the environment are interconnected. They called for **measurable and binding AMR objectives with ambitious targets**, both in the European One Health Action Plan and in national action plans, to enable benchmarking.

Parliament asked the Commission and Member States to **restrict the sale of antibiotics** by the human and animal health professionals who prescribe them and to remove any incentives – financial or otherwise – for the prescription of antibiotics, while continuing to ensure sufficiently rapid access to emergency veterinary medicine.

Some of the many antimicrobials used in both humans and animals are critical for preventing or treating life-threatening infections in humans. Members considered that **the use of these antimicrobials on animals should be banned**. These antimicrobials should be **reserved for the treatment of humans alone** in order to preserve their efficacy.

The Commission should specify which antibiotics are to be reserved for the treatment of certain infections in humans. In addition, Members called for: (i) firm action against the **illegal sale of antimicrobial products** or their sale without a doctor's or veterinarian's prescription in the EU; (ii) the promotion of **public health messages** regarding the responsible use of antibiotics, particularly prophylactic use.

With regard to **animal health**, Parliament called for the phasing out of the routine prophylactic and metaphylactic use of antimicrobials in groups of farm animals and called for the use of last-resort antibiotics to be banned altogether in food-producing animals.

With regard to **prophylactic use in humans**, Parliament called on Member States to review all existing protocols, especially for prophylactic use during surgery. It cited the examples of good practice, such as the PIRASOA programme, and encouraged the development of mechanisms through which to share best practices and protocols.

Members believed that requirements to ensure that **labelling** makes reference to antibiotic use would improve consumer knowledge and enable consumers to make a more informed choice. They called on the Commission to create a harmonised system for labelling based on animal welfare standards and good animal husbandry practices.

**Boosting research**: Members felt that, in order to encourage research into new antimicrobials, **incentives are needed**. They called on the Commission to establish an **EU priority pathogen list** (PPL), taking into account the WHO's global PPL, for both humans and animals, thereby clearly establishing future research and development priorities.

The resolution also called for:

- the launch a **public platform** for publicly funded R&D projects in AMR and for the coordination of all R&D actions;
- a **fast-track procedure** whereby the use antimicrobials approved for industrial or agricultural purposes but suspected of having a severe negative impact on AMR may be temporarily prohibited until further studies have been carried out;
- the development of **non-antibiotic alternatives** for animal health, including growth promoters, and in the development of new molecules for the development of new antibiotics.

**Shaping the global agenda**: Parliament asked for a clear commitment on the part of the EU and the Member States to launching a crosscutting global strategy to combat AMR, covering policy areas such as international trade, development and agriculture. It noted that the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in food-producing animals has been banned in the EU since 2006, but that in countries outside the EU antibiotics can still be used in animal feed as growth promoters. It called on the Commission to include a **clause in all free trade agreements** stipulating that food imported from third countries must not have been produced using antibiotics as growth promoters.

Lastly, Members called on the Commission to implement collaborative research programmes with third countries to reduce the overuse of antibiotics.