Public health: combating antimicrobial resistance

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The committee adopted the report by Didier ROD (Greens/EFA, F) on the proposal for a Council recommendation on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine. The committee felt that the draft recommendation was on the right lines but did not go far enough and that a global strategy was needed covering not only public health but also sectors such as veterinary medicine and plant health. It called for a global Community legislative framework for action against antimicrobial resistance, aimed at restricting or prohibiting the use of antimicrobial agents and resistance genes in the veterinary and agri-foodstuffs sectors. It was also concerned at the widespread availability of over-the-counter antibiotics for local use and wanted rules to be set for the use of such medicines. The committee made a number of other recommendations: - the effectiveness of the preventive use of anti-microbial agents should be subject to a comparative and critical assessment; - the effectiveness of certain vaccines and immunisation programmes should be reassessed; - there should be curbs on the influence of the drugs industry over health professionals; - there should be a ban on advertising antibiotics to the general public; - home treatment should be encouraged wherever feasible and attempts should be made to reduce the duration of hospital care without jeopardising the outcome of the treatment. Lastly, the report emphasised the need for international cooperation to deal with the spread of disease and antimicrobial resistance arising from the increase in international trade and travel.