

24 October 2017

A call for concrete and effective measures against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on veterinary medicinal products (VMPs)

Antimicrobial resistance is a growing threat against both human and animal health. It leads to a decrease in the effectiveness of antibiotics, and a lack of treatment options causes both human and animal suffering. Antimicrobial resistance does not respect Member State or human-animal borders, which makes it a global, and a mutual concern.

The Commission has declared that one of the main goals of the proposed Veterinary Medicines Products Regulation is to address the public health risk of antimicrobial resistance. Measures to tackle this increasing challenge should be based on solid facts on the consumption of antibiotics. The European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) reports show that antimicrobial consumption differs between Member States. In the EU 90 % of veterinary medicinal products containing antibiotics sold for use in food producing animals consist of oral pharmaceutical forms. It means that the vast majority of antibiotics used for food producing animals are given in the form of mass medication. Measures to reduce antibiotic consumption in animals should be directed against this. The link between oral antimicrobial treatment, the impact on the microbiota and the development of AMR is clear. The public health risk of AMR may effectively be addressed by reducing the use of oral antimicrobials.

A framework of harmonised rules for the use of antibiotics in animals is a natural next step in the fight against AMR in the EU and should be taken on board in the proposal for the veterinary medicinal products Regulation.

There is a large consensus and understanding by players in the field that preventive mass medication with antibiotics should be phased out. Preventive antibiotics should only be allowed in certain, particular instances where they have been scientifically proven valid both in human and animal medicine. Such situations are always based on a benefit-risk assessment of the individual animal's condition.

The undersigned support the proposal by the Presidency, which states that antibiotics shall not be used for prophylaxis unless in exceptional circumstances for individual animals. Adopting a clear approach to the use of antibiotics in animals in the Regulation will contribute towards the global goal of reducing the development of AMR.

We urge our colleagues to unite in the work against AMR and support the proposal by the Presidency.

Kind regards,



Pamela Rendi-Wagner
Minister of Health and Women's Affairs, Austria



Ellen Trane Nørby
Minister of Health, Denmark



Esben Lunde Larsen
Minister for Environment and Food, Denmark



Pirkko Mattila
Minister of Social Affairs and Health, Finland



Jari Leppä
Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland



Edith Schippers
Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport
The Netherlands



Henk Kamp
Minister of Economic Affairs
The Netherlands



Annika Strandhäll, Minister for Health and Social Affairs,
Sweden



Sven-Erik Bucht, Minister for Rural Affairs,
Sweden