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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: **Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council**
meeting on 8 December 2016
Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)
– *Information from the Commission*
(Any Other Business item)

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission services on the above mentioned subject.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

AMR: a threat to the health and the wealth of our nations

AMR is the ability of microorganisms to resist antimicrobial treatments, especially antibiotics. It not only has a direct impact on human and animal health - due to the failure in the treatment of infectious diseases - but also carries a heavy economic cost. It is a natural phenomenon but excessive and inappropriate use of antimicrobial medicines in humans and animals and poor infection control practices are the major drivers for increased resistance. AMR is now a serious threat to public health in the EU and worldwide. At a conservative estimate, AMR causes at least 25,000 deaths a year in the EU and results in over EUR 1.5 billion of additional costs to healthcare systems and lost productivity. If present trends in AMR continue, these figures are predicted to rise considerably in the years to come.

Recent Council Conclusions on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)¹ call upon the Commission and Member States to develop together, while respecting Member States competencies, a new and comprehensive EU action plan on AMR based on the One-Health approach.

The Commission published on 24 October 2016 a roadmap² for a Communication on a One-Health Action Plan to support Member States in the fight against AMR. This roadmap confirms the political commitment from the Commission to present a new EU AMR Action Plan in 2017.

This new Action Plan will focus on the added value the EU can bring to the fight against AMR, by supporting Member States, particularly in establishing, implementing and monitoring their National Action Plans; by bringing together EU funds and instruments in order to promote innovation and research against AMR; and by strengthening its leading role in global fora, notably with international organisations and with major trade partners.

¹ Council conclusions on the next steps under a One Health approach to combat antimicrobial resistance, 17 June 2016, ST 10278/16

² http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2016_sante_176_action_plan_against_amr_en.pdf

Globally, the highest level of political commitment has recently been mobilised within the EU, G7, G20, UN and international organisations, including the World Health Organisation, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. On 21 September 2016 at UN General Assembly, Heads of States committed, in a common declaration, to taking a broad, coordinated approach to address the root causes of AMR across multiple sectors, especially human health, animal health and agriculture.

The 2011 'Action Plan against the rising threats from AMR' contained actions for implementation within EU Member States and identified areas for EU action where measures are most needed. An evaluation of this Action Plan published on 24 October 2016 shows that it had a clear EU added value acting as a symbol of political commitment, stimulating several actions within Member States, and has served to strengthen international cooperation.

The evaluation points to a clear need to support Member States in developing and implementing national action plans to reduce differences between them in the use of antimicrobials and prevalence of infections, to foster collaboration across sectors, to improve knowledge of citizens and to strengthen monitoring and surveillance systems by developing expertise on methodologies, solid indicators and instruments. The evaluation also demonstrates the need for continued coordination and collaboration on AMR research on developing new antimicrobials, rapid diagnostic tests, vaccines and alternative treatments, as well as new business models to sustain investment and increase the knowledge on the transmission of AMR for a better understanding of the mechanisms causing resistance. Furthermore, given the cross-border nature of AMR, a strong EU voice at international level remains necessary, to raise awareness, to encourage countries to consider their own measures against AMR and to take global measures such as World Health Organisation implementing policies and the development of standards in the World Organisation for Animal Health.

In line with the Council Conclusions on antimicrobial resistance, the Commission will organise the first meeting of the "One-Health" network to take place in early 2017. This network will gather Member States' experts on AMR from the human and the veterinary sectors but will not create a new governance structure or additional administrative burden for Member States.