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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Joint action on antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated
infections (JAMRAI) and state of play on antimicrobial resistance
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Commission services on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 28-29 June 2021.

Joint action on antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated infections (JAMRAI) and state of play on antimicrobial resistance

Medical achievements due to the discovery of antibiotics are at risk mainly because of their excessive or inappropriate use. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) threatens global health security, with resistant infections accounting for over 33 000 deaths per year in the European Union. The 2017 EU Action Plan on AMR contains over 70 specific actions to address AMR; a key one has been the European Joint Action on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections (EU-JAMRAI)¹.

1. EU-JAMRAI - MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Co-funded by the 3rd Health Programme (EU contribution of EUR 4 million), EU-JAMRAI brought together 44 partners from 26 Member States, EU Agencies and organisations such as ECDC, EFSA, OECD and WHO, and 45 other stakeholders. Its mission has been to foster synergies among EU Member States and propose concrete steps to strengthen the implementation of efficient and evidence-based One Health policies to tackle AMR and reduce Healthcare-Associated Infections. Over 3.5 years (September 2017 - February 2021), EU-JAMRAI partners have delivered concrete outcomes as well as operational proposals² for further action. The following are the main achievements in the public health domain:

Strengthening networks and sharing best practices between Member States

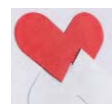
Through country-to-country visits aiming at sharing best practices, EU-JAMRAI underlined how essential networking and One Health collaboration are to addressing AMR. EU-JAMRAI enabled the establishment of a network of supervisory bodies responsible for overseeing activities related to AMR, e.g. monitoring the level of implementation of national policies, the level of compliance with legislation and the adherence to guidelines and recommendations. EU-JAMRAI also highlighted that there is an urgent need to establish common EU indicators and targets to monitor the progress of the implementation of each National Action Plan. These are crucial to ensure that all EU Member States reach the same level of achievements.

¹ <https://eu-jamrai.eu/>

² https://eu-jamrai.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EUjamrai_D2.2_LaymanReport_WP2_AEMPS_03.2021.pdf

Raising awareness and promoting behaviour change

Communication is a cornerstone of the One Health National Action Plans on AMR and promoting behavioural change is the biggest challenge in the fight against AMR. Besides major campaigns in social media, the EU-JAMRAI has published a Social Behaviour Change Communication Strategy and reports which evaluated impact of all activities, and a toolkit for awareness raising and behaviour-change communication to guide countries and partners in their efforts to raise awareness on AMR. The EU-JAMRAI also organised a contest which allowed to identify the first global Antibiotic Resistance Symbol, similar to the AIDS red ribbon, which anyone can associate with AMR.



Core elements on antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention and control

Despite existing plans and guidelines, EU Member States do not have the same high levels of standards when it comes to antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) and infection prevention and control (IPC). Through country visits, surveys, and workshops with experts, EU-JAMRAI identified that EU Member States and stakeholders consider that having standards at the European level is a priority for effective implementation of AMS and IPC programmes. In animal health, EU-JAMRAI identified core components that can form part of a white book on the implementation of AMS in animal health, to be developed by Member States. Moreover, EU-JAMRAI has developed a list of IPC research priorities and urges policymakers, research funders, academics, and industry to adopt them.

Incentivising antibiotic access and innovation

New antibiotics are unable to generate enough revenues to sustain the interest of multinational players and even small developers are failing to cover their costs, resulting in bankruptcies of small antibiotic innovators. Simultaneously, shortages of older antibiotics are increasing. EU-JAMRAI's analysis on alternative business models showed that the Member States generally support the implementation of pull incentives, i.e. reimbursement schemes or other forms of post-market financial support that could make antibiotic development attractive to pharmaceutical companies, for essential antibiotics (old and new) and would prefer multinational collaboration. The EU-JAMRAI recommends a pan-European pull incentive through joint tenders.

2. EU ACTION ON AMR – STATE OF PLAY AND NEXT STEPS

Tackling the AMR – the silent pandemic – continues to be a high priority for the Commission. The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to several initiatives, which are to be harnessed to boost action on AMR. The latest developments include:

- revision of the cross-border health threats legislation and revised mandates of ECDC and EMA, which aim to strengthen surveillance and monitoring;
- the EU4Health Programme – with a significantly increased overall budget, allows for more investment; actions of EUR 8.5 million on AMR are planned for 2021, notably on boosting infection prevention and control (EUR 7 million) and on exploring barriers to effective implementation of national action plans;
- the new Health Emergency and Response Authority (HERA), also through preparatory action on AMR envisaged in the build-up to the establishment and full operationalisation of HERA, in view of ensuring preparedness for health emergencies and access to crucial antibiotics;
- the EU Pharmaceutical Strategy – different interventions and pull incentives models are being examined, and pilots launched, to (1) incentivise innovation, (2) keep existing and new antibiotics on the market, and (3) maintain manufacturing capacities and stockpiles in the EU. In addition, measures to restrict and optimise the use of antimicrobial medicines will be considered in the review of the pharmaceutical legislation;
- a planned documentary desk-based review of national action plans, carried out by DG SANTE's Audit and Analysis Directorate;
- exploring the possibility of creating an AMR network of EU agencies (such as EFSA, EMA, ECDC, EEA, ECHA, etc.), to strengthen the technical collaboration across the One Health spectrum;

- the new EU Regulations on veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed, to apply as of 2022, which will be instrumental in achieving the target under the EU Farm to Fork Strategy to reduce by 50% the overall EU sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and aquaculture by 2030, in order to develop sustainable food systems while curbing AMR;
- the Commission will examine – based on the outcome of an on-going EFSA mandate – the need to list, categorise and introduce regulatory measures (e.g. notification, surveillance, etc.) under the Animal Health Law for certain animal diseases caused by bacteria resistant to antimicrobials.

The Commission is also reflecting on next steps to reinforce actions against AMR in a One Health approach and will mainstream the results of JAMRAI and its recommendations in this process.

On the international level, the Commission is working closely with international partners under different fora such as the Transatlantic Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance, G7, G20, and in bilateral cooperation with international organisations such as the World Health Organisation, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to call for stronger global action on AMR. More concretely, the Commission proposes a revised global action plan, building on the new developments since the inception of the current Global Action Plan of 2015 and the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.