



AMR One Health Network meeting of 21 September 2023

MINUTES

1st session: Member States and stakeholders

1. Welcome by Sandra Gallina - Director General DG SANTE

In a video message, Director General Sandra Gallina welcomed the AMR One Health Network for the first time in the new configuration opened to relevant stakeholders. She underlined the importance of tackling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in a One Health approach, interlinking public and private sectors and experts to fight against the no longer silent pandemic. Director General Gallina highlighted the commitments set out in the new Council Recommendation adopted in June 2023 and stressed the importance of ensuring that AMR features as a high priority at the international level. The EU is stepping up cooperation in international fora, such as the G7, G20, the Transatlantic Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance, and the Quadripartite. Director General Gallina invited the Members of the Network to the One Health Conference on 13 November 2023 in Luxembourg, which aims to discuss on the future of 'One Health' in Europe.

2. Adoption of the rules of procedure for the AMR One Health Network

The Commission presented the rules of procedure for the AMR One Health Network as an informal group of experts. It was explained that the rules of procedure follow the standard for Commission informal expert groups and that the adoption is a necessity following the formalisation of the Network. The rules of procedure were adopted by tacit agreement.

3. Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach – presentation by DG SANTE & discussion

The Commission presented the Council Recommendation and outlined the Commission actions taken to start implementing the recommendations. The Commission explained that it will continue to support the implementation of national One Health action plans through joint Commission and ECDC visits to Member States upon request. Regarding the surveillance and monitoring of AMR and antimicrobial consumption (AMC), the Commission lists AMR pathogen(s) under Regulation (EU) 2016/426 when deemed necessary based on scientific advice from EFSA and will ask EFSA to scrutinise potential bacteria when new evidence becomes available (from international organizations, Member States, or stakeholders). To support Member States, the Commission will launch a study on the feasibility of integrated surveillance in 2024. Furthermore, the Commission is reflecting on the best way forward to develop two EU guidelines on infection prevention and

control guidelines in human health and for the treatment of major common infections in humans and for perioperative prophylaxis in humans. The Commission will assess the EU agencies' opinion on the development of resistance to human and veterinary antimicrobials from the use of plant protection products expected for July 2024. Regarding the targets for AMR on the veterinary side, the Commission informed that all mandatory AMR-related legal acts are now adopted and published. Grants to support Member States for the implementation of the collection and reporting of data on sales and use of antimicrobials in animals will be given to Member States which applied successfully. On the aquaculture side, there are also a number of actions which are on-going and will be developed. To support and complement Member States' awareness-raising activities on AMR, the Commission will launch a campaign in 2023/2024, to raise awareness about AMR among teenagers (12-18 years old). DG SANTE is currently developing the campaign concept and is in the process of identifying possible focus countries for the campaign. The Commission also informed that the Better Training for Safer Food initiative will continue. Regarding research and development, the Commission informed about the implementation of Horizon Europe programme with grants/fellowships addressing One Health AMR R&D. It is also working with Member States on the development of the multi-country pull incentive scheme, which should be seen as complementary to the dedicated measures on incentives proposed for the review of the pharmaceutical legislation. Moreover, the Commission is in the process of launching a study to set up indicators to assess the implementation of the 2017 AMR Action Plan as well as of the Council Recommendation. Finally, at global level, the Commission is determined to continue working with all partners.

4. AMR and One Health: several perspectives

Stakeholders from the human, animal and environmental sectors presented their perspectives on AMR taking into account the One Health approach.

Presentations by the European Patient Forum (EPF) & Standing Committee of Medical Doctors (CPME) & discussion

EPF highlighted that the fight against AMR is vital for patients with chronic conditions and that health literacy is a key aspect in tackling AMR as it is the cornerstone for patient empowerment and patient safety. EPF presented how patient organisations contribute to the fight against AMR by informing and educating the community, promoting the prudent use of antimicrobials, and improving patient safety.

CPME underlined the importance of focusing on appropriate prescribing and public health interventions, such as stewardship programmes, infection prevention and control programmes, and hygiene practices. They also stressed the need for increased data collection and data sharing for surveillance to identify patterns in the rise of AMR in different countries and sectors.

During the discussion, the members of the network agreed about the importance of early education in the general population to raise awareness on AMR in a OH approach. Members also exchanged about problems in the development and access to antibiotics, notably antibiotic shortages and lack of meaningful innovation.

Presentations by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe & COPA - European Farmers & discussion

FVE presented the future European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) project for data collection on the sale and use of all antibiotics in food-producing animals. They also informed about training workshops for veterinarians and farmers that will be organised in all EU Member States to combat AMR. FSV highlighted further actions that are needed to promote prudent use and combat AMR, including increasing the availability of narrow-spectrum antimicrobials in all Member States, promoting the availability of alternatives to antimicrobials to prevent shortages and fast, reliable and affordable diagnostic tests. For the animal sector, prevention through the implementation of regular Animal Health visits, trainings, regulatory flexibility for personalised medicine and import conditions are also important.

COPA presented the Disseminating Innovation Solutions for Antibiotic Resistance Management (DISARM) project which brings together researchers, industry, and farmers to share tools and practices that promote animal health. The need to harmonise data collection and monitoring systems among Member States was highlighted to make data reliable and comparable across the EU. COPA also showed the importance for farmers to work together with veterinaries and highlighted the key role of preventive measures.

The members of the network discussed about the availability of antimicrobials in the veterinary sector and agreed on the importance of promoting the use of hygiene measures and vaccines for animal health to help prevent certain diseases and reduce the spread of AMR.

Presentation by Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) & discussion

HCWC considered that while the environment is key to antibiotic resistance, it has not always been a determinant at policy level. HCWC presented the three main contributors to AMR in the environment (pharmaceutical manufacturing, healthcare delivery and food production) and highlighted recommendations on how to raise awareness and reduce the environmental impact of antimicrobial consumption and production. The recommendations include improving transparency in the supply chain (green procurement) for pharmaceutical manufacturing, establishing strong protocols for the management of waste and wastewater in hospital settings, and focusing on animal welfare to reduce the need for antibiotics in food production.

The members of the network exchanged on responsible manufacturing of antibiotics and the need to raise awareness on environmentally friendly disposal of antibiotics in hospitals. They agreed that the environmental aspects need to be further strengthened in the One Health approach against AMR, as the complex connections between AMR accruing in humans, animals and the environment need to be further elucidated.

5. Latest scientific developments on AMR – EFSA/ECDC/EMA

EFSA, ECDC and EMA presented the latest scientific developments on AMR, notably the mandate and timeline for the JIACRA (Joint Inter-Agency Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance Analysis) IV report (December 2023), and the Joint EC Mandate on the Impact of the use of azole fungicides, other than as human medicines, on the development of azole-resistant *Aspergillus* spp. (July 2024). The agencies also presented their work on surveillance of AMR and AMC in humans

and animals, including the outputs of the European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network (EARS-Net), the European Antimicrobial Resistance Genes Surveillance Network (EURGen-Net), and the CarbaCamp project (EFSA GP/EFSA/BIOHAW/2023/04). Regarding the implementation of Regulation EU 2019/6, EMA presented its scientific recommendations on the identification of antimicrobials to be reserved for certain infections in humans, as well as the collection of sales and use data for veterinary antimicrobials. EFSA presented the scientific opinion on the role played by the environment in the emergence and spread of AMR through the food chain. Finally, the agencies presented other AMR related activities, including links to animal welfare and antibiotics and plant pathogenic bacteria.

6. Report from the subgroup established under the AMR One Health Network to formulate suggestions for AMR actions

Three representatives of the sub-group presented their suggestions to strengthen EU and Member States action against AMR. The mandate of the subgroup was to provide technical expertise and opinions from the 27 EU Member States to the Commission on needed concrete objectives and activities addressing unmet needs at EU level to strengthen EU and Member State actions against AMR, in the area of public health, animal health, plant health and the environment. The conclusions, which were adopted in August 2022, highlight four key categories of priorities: strengthening data collection and AMR surveillance systems; ensuring the availability and accessibility of antimicrobials; developing guidelines, biosecurity measures and tools to help prevent the development and spread of infectious diseases in animals and to support farmers in improving animal welfare as well as access diagnostic tools; and developing EU guidelines and regulations to control (through a harmonised surveillance) and manage environmental pollution.

The Commission clarified that this report was duly considered when making its proposal for the Council recommendation on stepping up EU actions on the fight against AMR, adopted by the Council on 13 June 2023. This report will also be used for the implementation of the Recommendation.

7. AMR Multi-Stakeholders Partnership Platform – FAO

On behalf of the Quadripartite, FAO introduced to the members of the network the AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform launched in November 2022 and explained its aim, structure and forthcoming steps/events. The Platform brings together relevant actors across the One Health spectrum and aims to preserve antimicrobials as lifesaving medicines and ensure their responsible use under a One Health approach.

Conclusion

The Commission thanked the participants for the positive interactions and recognised the synergies between the different sectors. The Commission considered that the collaboration can be taken a step further to deliver One health results and invited participants to send suggestions for practical, interdisciplinary One Health projects on AMR for the next meeting. The Commission announced that the next meeting of the One Health Network is planned for March 2024 and encouraged members to register for the upcoming One Health Conference in Luxembourg on 13 November 2023.