



**2017/2254(INI)**

26.4.2018

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on a European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance  
(AMR)  
(2017/2254(INI))

Rapporteur: Matt Carthy



## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the ‘One Health’ approach aims to maintain the effectiveness of treatments of infections in humans and animals alike, to stem the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to enhance the development and availability of new effective antimicrobials in the Union and the rest of the world;
- B. whereas antimicrobial resistance poses a cross-border health threat, but the AMR situation varies greatly from one Member State to another; whereas the Commission must therefore identify and act on areas of high European added value within the scope of the powers of the Member States, which are responsible for determining their health policies;
- C. whereas the environment can contribute to the emergence and spread of AMR in animals, in particular because of human, animal and manufacturing waste streams;
  - 1. Stresses that AMR is a critical global health issue that requires commitment and willingness on the part of the Member States cooperating within the EU, and at international level, through proactive and coordinated actions; underlines the importance of taking a holistic approach to tackling AMR through the ‘One Health’ approach, by ensuring simultaneous action at global level between human health, animal health and the environment; stresses, therefore, the importance of having harmonised data on the use of antimicrobials in the livestock sector; confirms the need for a broad, factual, science-based debate on the topic;
  - 2. Recalls the recent WHO Guidelines<sup>1</sup> on use of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals, which recommends that farmers and the food industry stop using antibiotics routinely to promote growth and prevent disease in healthy animals to avoid the spread of AMR, and which proposes that the use of antibiotics of last resort be banned altogether in animals;
  - 3. Underlines that the routine use of some of the strongest antibiotics is now a common practice in farming in some developing countries;
  - 4. Considers that our understanding of the spread of AMR from animals in farms to humans is already quite solid and that this has not been properly recognised in the Action Plan; notes that the Action Plan merely calls for further investigation and for closing the knowledge gaps on the issue, which might possibly postpone much-needed action;
  - 5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take an ambitious and proactive approach ensuring that the targets set out in their respective Action Plans are fully and effectively achieved and the results strictly monitored; further calls for measurable

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<sup>1</sup> WHO guidelines on use of medically important antimicrobials in food-producing animals, ISBN 978-92-4-155013-0.

(clearly defined quantitative or qualitative) targets, benchmarks, and effective measures to achieve these goals when drawing up the Action Plans; asks the Commission to support Member States in the development, assessment and implementation of national action plans against AMR, specifically with regard to monitoring and surveillance systems, and including adequate support and incentives;

6. Calls on the Commission and Member States to distinguish between livestock and pets, particularly in the design of arrangements for the monitoring and assessment of the use of antimicrobials and in the design of measures to address their use;
7. Stresses that comprehensive monitoring of antibiotics in farming has been developed in cooperation with veterinarians, which comprehensively documents the use of antibiotics and further improves their application; regrets that there is, as yet, no comparable system in relation to human medicine;
8. Calls for new regulatory solutions (basic legislation, secondary legislation or EU guidelines) that will assist farmers in reducing the use of antibiotics in livestock farming, with the aim of prudent and responsible use of veterinary medicinal products; insists that such legislative solutions, including the ongoing and interrelated work on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the manufacture, placing on the market and use of medicated feed and repealing Council Directive 90/167/EEC (COM(2014)0556), and the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on veterinary medicinal products (COM(2014)0558), must address prophylactic use and ensure that metaphylactic use of antimicrobials is only permitted in very exceptional cases; highlights the need for the administrative burden on farmers to be kept to a minimum;
9. Calls for a reduction in the use of antibiotics to be an objective not only in livestock farming, but also across the whole body of veterinary and human medicine; underlines that, taking into account the scientific advice of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and other relevant EU agencies, one of the targets set out in all Member States' Action Plans should be to reserve critically important antimicrobials, as identified by the WHO, exclusively for human use; is of the opinion, therefore, that the EU should prohibit the veterinary use of antibiotics that are critically important for human medicine; welcomes the initiative of several Member States to ban the use of antibiotics of 'last resort', normally used for human treatments, in farm animals;
10. Recalls that food is one of the possible vehicles for transmission of resistant bacteria from animals to human beings and, furthermore, that drug-resistant bacteria can circulate in populations of human beings and animals through water and the environment; takes note of the risks of infection with resistant organisms by contaminated crops treated with antimicrobial agents or by manure, and farmyard run-offs into groundwater; points out, in this context, that the spread of such bacteria is influenced by trade, travel and both human and animal migration;
11. Believes that, in order to facilitate the responsible use of antimicrobials, there is an imperative need for rapid, reliable and efficacious veterinary diagnostics, both to identify the cause of disease and to perform antibiotic sensitivity testing; is of the opinion that this would facilitate correct diagnosis, allow for a targeted use of antimicrobials, support using critically important antimicrobials as little as possible and,

therefore, inhibit the development of AMR;

12. Supports, as a minimum, the Council's response to the draft Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice to Minimise and Contain Antimicrobial Resistance, and its principles 18 and 19 on the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials;
13. Recalls that the poor quality of medical and veterinary products with low concentrations of active ingredients and/or their long-term use, encourages the emergence of resistant microbes; calls, therefore, on the Commission and Member States to improve and design laws that ensure that medicines are of assured quality, safe and effective, and that their use will follow strict principles;
14. Calls for further research and development into new antimicrobials or new alternatives to strengthen natural defences at an early stage and during critical farming phases; stresses the importance of global coordination and cooperation with all stakeholders to encourage research into new antibiotics and related alternatives; further encourages other alternatives, including cost-effective alternatives, to be investigated, based on the development of more sustainable and animal friendly farming; notes that significant volumes of antibiotics are used where animals are kept in confined and poor conditions; points out that research shows that animals in less intensive farming models experience less stress, meaning that their immune systems are less compromised as a result;
15. Highlights that the spread of antimicrobials and consequent AMR in the environment is also a growing concern, requiring further research; stresses in particular the urgent need for in-depth research into the impact of antimicrobial substances in food crops and animal feed on microbial communities in the soil and in aquatic ecosystems, as well as into the disposal of slurry and wastewater;
16. Believes that, in order to encourage research into new antimicrobials, incentives are needed, including longer periods of protection for technical documentation on new medicines, commercial protection of innovative active substances, and protection for significant investments in data generated to improve an existing antimicrobial product or to keep it on the market;
17. Stresses, therefore, that the current innovation framework does not effectively encourage R&D into AMR, and calls for the adjustment and harmonisation of the intellectual property regime at European level, in particular in order to better match the duration of protection with the period requested for the innovative medicine in question;
18. Highlights the role that farm advisory services can play in promoting sustainable farm management practices;
19. Stresses the importance of effective environmental risk assessment in the approvals process for new and existing veterinary medicines with antimicrobial properties, particularly as concerns the end-points of antimicrobial substances in the wider environment;
20. Highlights the value of preventative solutions, such as vaccines, in combating AMR; notes that the European One Health Action Plan against AMR observes that immunisation by means of vaccination is a cost-effective health intervention in efforts

to combat AMR; recommends the integration of targets for life-long vaccination as an element to be included in veterinary national action plans on AMR;

21. Points out that, in light of the reduced effectiveness of certain antibiotics, rapid diagnostic tests can assist health professionals in providing targeted and effective treatment options as a viable alternative to antibiotic use in humans;
22. Believes that requirements to ensure that labelling makes reference to antibiotic use would improve consumer knowledge and help enable consumers to make a more informed choice; notes that having products labelled as ‘antibiotic-free’ might also encourage farmers to withhold antibiotic treatment when an animal might need it, for fear of the economic cost of not being able to sell the meat;
23. Stresses that disease prevention must be the first step for legislation and other proposals in tackling AMR in agriculture, both to ensure a high standard of animal welfare and reduce the need to resort to antibiotics; stresses that the livestock farming sector should further focus on disease prevention and animal welfare through good hygiene, housing, animal husbandry and strict biosecurity measures; demands that antibiotics should never be used as compensation for poor hygiene or inadequate animal husbandry; underlines the importance of exchanges of best practice between Member States and the coordination of such exchanges by the Commission;
24. Recalls the preventative measures to be used before resorting to antimicrobial treatment of entire groups (metaphylaxis) of food-producing animals:
  - using good, healthy breeding stock that grows naturally, with suitable genetic diversity,
  - conditions that respect the behavioural needs of the species, including social interactions and hierarchies,
  - stocking densities that do not increase the risk of disease transmission,
  - isolation of sick animals away from the rest of the group,
  - (for chickens and smaller animals) subdivision of flocks into smaller, physically separated groups,
  - implementation of existing rules on animal welfare already in cross compliance as set out in statutory management requirements (SMRs) 11, 12, 13 of Annex II to Regulation 1306/2013<sup>1</sup>;
25. Believes that adequate funding for on-farm investments, such as in quality housing,

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p.549), applying rules laid down in Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes (OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23); Council Directive 91/630/EEC of 19 November 1991 laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs (OJ L 340, 11.12.1991, p. 33); Council Directive 91/629/EEC of 19 November 1991 laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves (OJ L 340, 11.12.1991, p. 28).

ventilation, cleaning, disinfection, vaccination and bio-security must be encouraged and should not be undermined in the future CAP; highlights that effective sanitation, hygiene and infection prevention measures help to reduce the incidence of infection; recognises, in that respect, the importance of awareness among members of the farming community of animal welfare, animal health and food safety; notes the importance of promoting and applying good practices at all stages of the production and processing of food products;

26. Notes that some plant protection products may also have antimicrobial properties, which would affect the spread of AMR; calls for further research on the possible link between exposure to commercial formulations of pesticides and developed antimicrobial resistance;
27. Stresses that studies suggest<sup>1</sup> that exposure to herbicides and their commercial formulations at concentrations comparable to those associated with typical application rates in agricultural fields can develop tolerance to antibiotics in offending bacteria;
28. Recognises that herbicides are routinely tested for toxicity but not for sublethal effects on microbes, and stresses, for the reasons cited above, the relevance of giving consideration to conducting such tests routinely;
29. Proposes that any authorisation of a herbicide-resistant genetically modified crop (supposedly treated with a herbicide to which it is tolerant) take the precautionary principle fully into account with respect to the indication of the existing link between the use of herbicides and antimicrobial resistance, and that for any such authorisation to be granted there be conclusive scientific evidence that such risk can be excluded;
30. Calls on the Commission to put in place restrictions on live animal transport from zones where antimicrobial-resistant strains of bacteria have been identified by the current monitoring system;
31. Stresses that AMR is a multifactorial problem, and calls on the Commission and on Member States to foster cooperation between veterinarians, agricultural sector stakeholders and other health professionals in the fight against AMR; emphasises the crucial role of education, training programmes and public awareness campaigns based on the latest scientific developments in alerting farmers, veterinarians, professionals, pet keepers, and all those involved in livestock farming to the dangers of AMR; calls for funding to be made available to raise awareness about AMR and the prudent use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine for farmers and other stakeholders involved in livestock farming so that they are able to use antimicrobials only where necessary and not systematically in a preventive manner; highlights the important expertise that veterinary practitioners have, which contributes to raising awareness about AMR;
32. Notes that the existence of a correlation between resistance to antibiotics found among food-producing animals (e.g. broiler chickens) and a large proportion of bacterial infections in humans, which comes from the handling, preparation and consumption of

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<sup>1</sup> Kurenbach, B. at al., *mBio*, Vol. 6, No 2, 2015: Sublethal Exposure to Commercial Formulations of the Herbicides Dicamba, 2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid, and Glyphosate Cause Changes in Antibiotic Susceptibility in *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhimurium.

the meat of these animals, has also been confirmed by EU Agencies<sup>1</sup>;

33. Stresses that research shows that interventions that restrict antibiotic use in food-producing animals are associated with a reduction in the presence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in these animals<sup>2</sup>;
34. Underlines the need to change the business culture employed by some veterinary medicine producers and to engage fully with all stakeholders, including veterinary medicine producers, in order to encourage and promote responsible use of antibiotics or alternatives to antimicrobials (such as probiotics or vaccines) in livestock farming; stresses also that veterinary practitioners should not receive incentives to prescribe, promote and supply certain medication; emphasises that the prescription-only status for antibiotics and the accountability of professionals in the various sectors, as well as cooperation between veterinarians and livestock farmers, are key factors for success;
35. Calls, in particular, on the Commission to develop rules for the harmonised monitoring of veterinary antimicrobial sales and consumption in all domesticated animals, obliging Member States to report relevant and comparable data on sales and consumption of antimicrobial veterinary medicines, to the European Medicines Agency (EMA), to allow for cross-country comparisons and identification of best practices at national level; considers that regular reviews to check efficacy should be carried out; highlights the need to consider addressing the illegal sale of antimicrobials and to increase awareness of the implications of this issue for public health;
36. Stresses the necessary synergy between the ‘One Health’ approach and data from existing environmental monitoring, in particular Watch List monitoring under the Water Framework Directive, in order to improve knowledge of the occurrence and spread of antimicrobials in the environment;
37. Emphasises that the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in food-producing animals has been banned in the EU since 2006; calls on the Commission to enforce this ban as a conditionality to all food imports from third countries through Free Trade Agreements with a view to ensuring a level playing field; calls also for this prohibition to be extended and transposed in the whole body of international law that may concern the use of antibiotics in animals (within the Codex Alimentarius, the WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), etc.); further calls on the Commission to encourage partners to align their AMR objectives and adopt best practice solutions used in the EU on their territories, including through the use of reciprocity clauses in trade agreements;
38. Calls on health authorities to carry out comprehensive checks to avoid their illegal use in the European Union;
39. Stipulates that in any future trade deal with the post-Brexit UK, this issue must be addressed and it must be made into a condition of the deal that any further

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<sup>1</sup> The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, and the European Food Safety Authority: <https://ecdc.europa.eu/sites/portal/files/media/en/publications/Publications/antimicrobial-resistance-zoonotic-bacteria-humans-animals-food-EU-summary-report-2014.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanplh/PIIS2542-5196\(17\)30141-9pdf](http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanplh/PIIS2542-5196(17)30141-9pdf)



advancements in EU action tackling AMR be followed up by the UK in order to protect consumers and workers both in the EU and the UK;

40. Notes that the livestock raised for food in the US is dosed with five times as much antibiotic medicine as farm animals in the UK; underlines, therefore, the importance of controls of meat imports into the EU;
41. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to raise issues related to AMR at the highest political level, including in all relevant UN and other international fora, aiming for ambitious results; emphasises that international cooperation involving sharing information, knowledge and best practices in tackling AMR is crucial in the context of the 'One Health' approach for the benefit of human and animal health globally, and that decisive action and comprehensive legislation must ensure the balance between human and animal health and the environment; welcomes the setting up of the AMR One Health Network which aims to facilitate the cross-border exchange of good practices between Member States' human and veterinary health sectors, enabling the sharing of innovative ideas and the stepping up of national efforts to tackle AMR;
42. Refers to the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, endorsed by the World Health Assembly at the 68th World Health Assembly in May 2015, to tackle antimicrobial resistance, including antibiotic resistance (WHA68/2015/REC/1, Annex 3);
43. Calls for comprehensive checks to be carried out on producers of antibiotics so that withdrawal periods are adapted to reality, in order to ensure that no antibiotics are present in food products;
44. Notes that globally, antibiotic resistant genes are found in the environment – in soils, water and sediments; highlights that wastewater treatment plants are a leading source of antibiotic resistant genes in the environment, with antibiotics discharged by households, hospitals and industry; calls for the systematic monitoring of antibiotics and antibiotic resistant genes in wastewater treatment plants, and for more investment in filtering systems;
45. Stresses that high-density farming may involve antibiotics being improperly and routinely fed to livestock and poultry on farms to promote faster growth, and are also widely used for prophylactic purposes, to prevent disease spreading as a result of the cramped, confined and stressful conditions in which the animals are kept, and which inhibit their immune systems, and to compensate for the unsanitary conditions in which they are raised;
46. Underlines that referring to the European medicines Agency (EMA) and EFSA Joint Scientific Opinion on measures to reduce the need to use antimicrobial agents in animal husbandry in the European Union, and the resulting impacts on food safety (RONAFA)<sup>1</sup>, safe and nutritionally balanced feed are effective preventive measures to help animals to cope with pathogens by enhancing overall animal health and welfare status through specific feeding strategies, feed composition, feed formulations or feed

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/efsajournal/pub/4666>

processing;

47. Calls for the promotion and enhancement of, and the transition to, a mode of production based on agroecology;
48. Underlines that, without harmonised and immediate action on a global scale, the world is heading towards a post-antibiotic era in which common infections could once again kill.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	24.4.2018
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 40 -: 0 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Eric Andrieu, Daniel Buda, Nicola Caputo, Matt Carthy, Jacques Colombier, Michel Dantin, Paolo De Castro, Jean-Paul Denanot, Albert Deß, Jørn Dohrmann, Herbert Dorfmann, Norbert Erdős, Luke Ming Flanagan, Martin Häusling, Esther Herranz García, Ivan Jakovčić, Jarosław Kalinowski, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Norbert Lins, Philippe Loiseau, Mairead McGuinness, Giulia Moi, Ulrike Müller, Maria Noichl, Stanisław Ożóg, Laurențiu Rebegea, Bronis Ropé, Maria Lidia Senra Rodríguez, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Tibor Szanyi, Marc Tarabella, Maria Gabriela Zoană, Marco Zullo
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Bas Belder, Franc Bogovič, Jens Gieseke, Karin Kadenbach, Elsi Katainen, Momchil Nekov, Ivari Padar, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Thomas Waitz

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>40</b>	<b>+</b>
ALDE	Ivan Jakovčić, Elsi Katainen, Ulrike Müller
ECR	Jørn Dohrmann, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Stanisław Ożóg, Laurențiu Rebeca
EFDD	Giulia Moi, Marco Zullo
ENF	Jacques Colombier, Philippe Loiseau
GUE/NGL	Matt Carthy, Luke Ming Flanagan, Maria Lidia Senra Rodríguez
PPE	Franc Bogovič, Daniel Buda, Michel Dantin, Albert Deß, Herbert Dorfmann, Norbert Erdős, Jens Gieseke, Esther Herranz García, Jarosław Kalinowski, Norbert Lins, Mairead McGuinness, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Tom Vandenkendelaere
S&D	Eric Andrieu, Nicola Caputo, Paolo De Castro, Karin Kadenbach, Momchil Nekov, Maria Noichl, Ivari Padar, Tibor Szanyi, Marc Tarabella, Maria Gabriela Zonă
VERTS/ALE	Martin Häusling, Bronis Ropè, Thomas Waitz

<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>
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<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
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Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention