

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001995/23  
to the Commission  
Joanna Kopcińska (ECR)  
(21 June 2023)**

**Subject:** Recurrence of drug-resistant tuberculosis cases

The latest joint ECDC/WHO report on tuberculosis dates from 2022 and shows a significant decrease (about 24%) in reported cases and recurrences between 2019 and 2020. However, the decrease in reported cases does not seem to indicate an improvement in the disease situation, but rather evidence of lower tuberculosis case detection, a consequence of less accurate reporting in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic response.

More recently, the increase in reported tuberculosis cases is clearly confirmed by many countries reporting an increasing threat and a significantly higher proportion of drug-resistant tuberculosis cases.

1. Although epidemiological patterns and trends vary considerably among EU/EEA countries, which are approaching a low incidence of less than 10 cases per 100 000 population, the WHO European Region as a whole is home to nine of the 30 countries facing the highest burden of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in the world. What early prevention measures is the Commission considering to improve this situation?
2. Given the genuine problems of under-diagnosis and under-reporting of tuberculosis cases in previous years, what measures and early intervention tools does the Commission envisage proposing to support Member States in their efforts to prevent tuberculosis from becoming the world's most deadly infectious disease again?

Submitted: 21.6.2023

**Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission  
(11 September 2023)**

The Commission is aware that tuberculosis remains a public health challenge in Europe and that the burden of drug-resistant tuberculosis is increasing.

The Commission coordinates EU Member States' efforts to prevent and control serious cross-border threats to health in the Health Security Committee <sup>(1)</sup>, including by supporting countries in reaching target 3.3 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals at European level <sup>(2)</sup>.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control <sup>(3)</sup> is a key partner for the Commission in this respect and provides the scientific basis for its coordinative and supportive work.

On 13 June 2023, the Council adopted the recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach <sup>(4)</sup>. In addition, under the EU4Health programme <sup>(5)</sup>, EUR 50 million have been set aside for a new joint action on Antimicrobial resistance.

A new Expert Group on Public Health was established by Commission Decision <sup>(6)</sup> in 2022. It has a broader mandate than its predecessor, the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases <sup>(7)</sup>, and, dependent on the priority-setting of the group, it can also advise on how to tackle infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, including by facilitating the sharing of best and promising practices in the field.

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<sup>(1)</sup> [https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-security-and-infectious-diseases/crisis-management/list-authorities-represented-health-security-committee\\_fr](https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-security-and-infectious-diseases/crisis-management/list-authorities-represented-health-security-committee_fr)

<sup>(2)</sup> By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases. See for example report from Health Security meeting on 30 November 2022: [https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/security\\_ev\\_20221130\\_sr\\_en.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/security_ev_20221130_sr_en.pdf)

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en>

<sup>(4)</sup> Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach [https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/council-recommendation-stepping-up-eu-actions-combat-antimicrobial-resistance-one-health-approach\\_en](https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/council-recommendation-stepping-up-eu-actions-combat-antimicrobial-resistance-one-health-approach_en)

<sup>(5)</sup> [https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-04/amended\\_wp2022\\_en.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-04/amended_wp2022_en.pdf)

<sup>(6)</sup> [https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/c\\_2022\\_8816\\_en.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/c_2022_8816_en.pdf)

<sup>(7)</sup> [https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-07/c2018\\_4492\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2018-07/c2018_4492_en_0.pdf)