

## PRESS RELEASE

# Antimicrobial resistance and consumption remains high in the EU/EEA and the UK, according to new ECDC data

Stockholm, 18 November 2020

**New data released today by ECDC show that levels of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial consumption in the EU/EEA and the UK are still of concern, particularly in the southern and eastern parts of Europe. ECDC is today launching its 2020 digital campaign to further raise awareness among health professionals and the public of the importance of continuing the fight against antimicrobial resistance to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobials.**

According to European Commissioner for Health, Stella Kyriakides: 'Antimicrobial resistance is a global challenge and a top priority for the European Union. As the world continues to fight COVID-19, it is essential that we remain vigilant and committed in this fight. Antibiotics must be used prudently, with strict prevention and control measures. Both COVID-19 and antimicrobial resistance call for a united approach across policies, countries and all levels of society. We must take steps to prevent the spread of resistance worldwide and to support the right environment to develop new antimicrobials. We must all work together to ensure that antimicrobial resistance does not become the next global health catastrophe.'

ECDC Director, Andrea Ammon, said: 'Regrettably, antimicrobial resistance remains one of the biggest threats to public health today, and a challenge for Europe. We need to keep up our efforts to further reduce unnecessary antibiotic use and to improve infection prevention and control practices to significantly reduce antimicrobial resistance. The digital campaign that ECDC is launching today is one of many steps needed to further raise awareness of these issues among health professionals and all Europeans in general. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must not give up on our efforts to prevent and control antimicrobial resistance and must stay united to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobials.'

The new antimicrobial resistance data for 2019 show that antimicrobial resistance is still a challenge for the EU/EEA. The percentages of resistance to vancomycin – a last-line antibiotic – in *Enterococcus faecium* bloodstream infections almost doubled between 2015 and 2019. Resistance to carbapenems – another group of last-line antibiotics – remains a concern. Several countries reported carbapenem resistance percentages above 10% for *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, and carbapenem resistance was also common in *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Acinetobacter* species, and at much higher percentages than in *K. pneumoniae*. As highlighted in a recent article in *Eurosurveillance*, national capacities for the surveillance and containment of carbapenem-resistant *Acinetobacter baumannii* in Europe vary considerably among countries.

For antimicrobial consumption, new data covering 2019 confirm the large variation among countries, both in the community and the hospital sector, and for different groups of antimicrobials. In general, no significant trends were observed in the EU/EEA overall, with the notable exception of polymyxin consumption (mainly colistin) in the hospital sector, which increased between 2010 and 2019. When considered individually, many countries showed an increase or decrease in antimicrobial consumption during the period 2010–2019, both overall and for specific groups, which may reflect different policy initiatives and interventions at national level.

The European Antibiotics Awareness Day (EAAD) digital campaign consists of a series of filmed statements by high-level stakeholders from the European Commission and the German presidency of the Council of the European Union, as well as experts. Each video addresses a number of key issues in relation to antimicrobial resistance. The videos will be released and promoted on social media in connection with EAAD on 18 November under the hashtags **#EAAD** and **#KeepAntibioticsWorking**.

For this first EAAD digital campaign, ECDC has reached out to influencers from EU Member States who will disseminate key EAAD messages in their respective languages and adapt them to suit their audiences.

Finally, ECDC is releasing an animation on what healthcare professionals can do to keep antibiotics working. This animation is targeting professionals in hospitals and other health care settings.

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### EARS-Net and ESAC-Net data

The Annual Epidemiological Reports for EARS-Net (European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network) and ESAC-Net (European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption Network) are available here:

[EARS-Net report](#)

[ESAC-Net report](#)

### European Antibiotic Awareness Day

European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD) is a European health initiative coordinated by ECDC, which provides a platform and support for national campaigns on the prudent use of antibiotics. Each year, EAAD is marked by national campaigns during the week of 18 November. Prudent use means only using antibiotics when they are needed, with the correct dose, dosage intervals and duration of the course <http://antibiotic.ecdc.europa.eu>.

### World Antibiotic Awareness Week

In 2020, WHO is organising World Antimicrobial Awareness Week between 18 and 24 November. Follow the hashtags #WAAW and #AntibioticResistance, and see <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2020/11/18/default-calendar/world-antimicrobial-awareness-week-2020> for more information.

### Other links:

[ECDC Surveillance Atlas of Infectious Diseases \(select health topic: 'Antimicrobial resistance'\)](#)

[European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance Network \(EARS-Net\)](#)

[Eurosurveillance: "Epidemiological situation, laboratory capacity and preparedness for carbapenem-resistant \*Acinetobacter baumannii\* in Europe, 2019"](#)

[Eurosurveillance: "Will coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) have an impact on antimicrobial resistance?"](#)

[European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption Network \(ESAC-Net\) interactive database](#)

[European Surveillance of Antimicrobial Consumption Network \(ESAC-Net\)](#)

[ECDC Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-associated Infections Programme](#)

[European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance \(AMR\)](#)

[EU Guidelines for the prudent use of antimicrobials in human health](#)

[European Commission, AMR](#)

[WHO Regional Office for Europe, AMR](#)

[WHO Headquarters, AMR](#)

### Social media

Follow EAAD social media activities through the hashtags: **#EAAD** and **#KeepAntibioticsWorking**

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### Social media:

Twitter: [http://www.twitter.com/eaad\\_eu](http://www.twitter.com/eaad_eu)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EAAD.EU>

Instagram: [http://www.instagram.com/eaad\\_eu](http://www.instagram.com/eaad_eu)

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is an EU agency tasked with identifying, assessing and communicating threats to human health posed by infectious diseases. It supports the work of public health authorities in the EU and EEA Member States.