



# AMR: Eroding the Foundations of Health Systems Across the EU and Around the World

The impact of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) today is devastating and will only grow.

Bacteria and other microbes are becoming increasingly resistant to our existing drugs, and we lack the new drugs needed to replace them. As a result, more people are becoming sick, disabled, or even dying from drug-resistant infections.

## AMR's Threat to EU

# >30,000\*

PEOPLE A YEAR DIE AS A  
RESULT OF THE AMR

As of 2019, the effects of AMR annually killed over 30,000 and cost €1.1 billion in the EU.<sup>1</sup>

The human toll is equivalent to 20 Titanics sinking each year.



\*The true figure is likely substantially more than this estimate, but an exact figure cannot be calculated based on the publicly available data. In January 2022, a report published in The Lancet estimated 283,000 deaths associated with resistance in Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia.<sup>2</sup>

# European health systems are being strained by AMR

The current burden of bacterial drug-resistant infections in EU and EEA countries is equal to that of influenza, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS combined.<sup>3</sup>

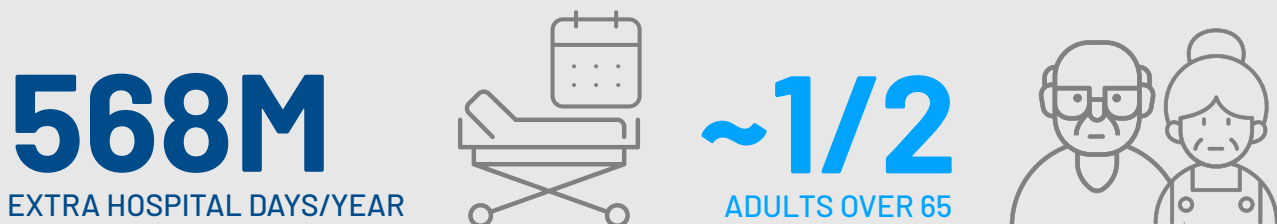
## Burden of AMR in EU and EEA Countries



The burden of these infections is also shouldered by the most vulnerable groups: infants and older adults over 65.<sup>4</sup>

## AMR Stresses European Health Systems

AMR puts huge stresses on health systems, causing over 568 million extra hospital days (EHDs) across the EU/EEA per year.<sup>5</sup> Adults over 65 account for roughly half of these EHDs.<sup>6</sup>



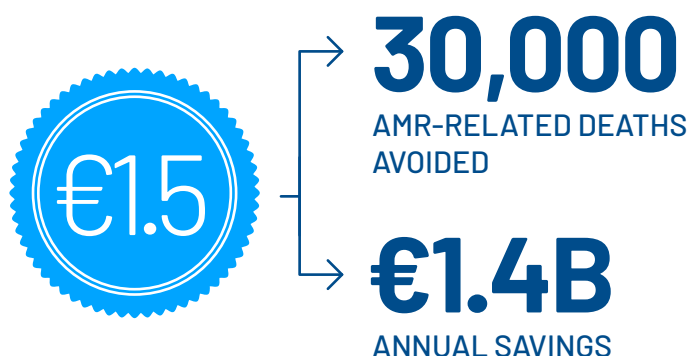
## AMR drives economic instability

Between 2015 and 2050, AMR will incur a \$60 billion (PPP) cost on EU/EEA healthcare systems,<sup>7</sup> a sum comparable to Greece's annual EU contributions.<sup>8</sup>

By 2050 the impact of AMR on GDP will be equal to that of the 2008 financial crisis... every single year.<sup>9</sup>

### AMR Solutions: Low Cost, High ROI

Experts estimate that it would cost as little as €1.5 per capita annually to invest in a mix of solutions that would prevent almost 30,000 AMR-related deaths per year and lead to an annual savings of €1.4 billion in the EU/EEA.<sup>10</sup>



## Human longevity is under threat from AMR

As resistance grows, current antibiotics will stop working. If we fail to develop and make new antibiotics available, we risk returning to an era where even routine operations like joint replacements and cesarean sections are life-threatening events due to common infections.<sup>11</sup>

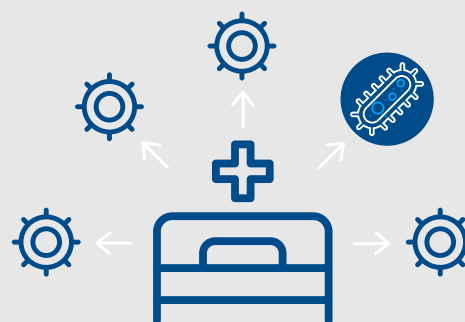
Left unaddressed, AMR threatens the very promise of human longevity.<sup>12,13</sup>

Without effective antimicrobials, the 11 most common surgical and leukemia

chemotherapy procedures alone would result in an additional 439,000 postoperative infections and almost 310,000 post-intervention deaths in the EU.<sup>16</sup>

### The Scale of AMR Challenge

In Europe, almost 1 in 5 hospital-acquired infections (HAI) is a result of resistant bacteria;<sup>14</sup> estimates suggest that there were over 425,000 drug resistant HAIs across Europe in 2019.<sup>15</sup>

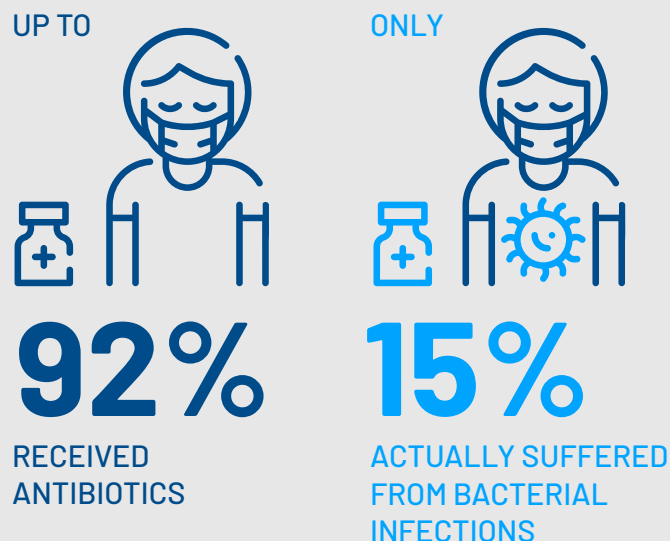


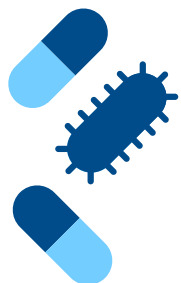
## COVID-19 has disrupted attempts to slow AMR

COVID-19 has accelerated the pace of growing drug-resistance.<sup>17</sup>

### Antibiotics Mismanagement

Researchers estimate that 56–92% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients received antibiotics, while only 6–15% actually suffered from a bacterial coinfection.<sup>18</sup>





## Calls to Action:

Policy is the main lever for effective action on AMR. By putting in place mechanisms that can slow resistance and spur needed innovation, the EU can make measured progress against this borderless threat while facilitating needed action at the country level. This necessary progress is a continuation of commitments already made by the EU and EU member states through the WHO's Global Action Plan on AMR, the UN General Assembly's high-level meeting on AMR, and G7 level commitments.

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1.

The EU must follow through on promises made in the 2020 Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe, especially the development of pull incentives for novel antimicrobials, to ensure that we have the drugs we need to fight AMR and maintain the functionality of European health systems.<sup>19</sup>

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2.

The EU Health Emergency Response Authority (HERA) must work to facilitate R&D coordination and collaboration to help drive new antimicrobial development.<sup>20</sup>

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3.

In line with the EU One Health Action Plan against AMR, the European Commission should develop a set of actionable best practices and policy recommendations, then assess member state implementation of these AMR initiatives.<sup>21</sup>

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4.

The European Commission must implement an independent oversight compliance mechanism associated with the EU Guidelines on the prudent use of antimicrobials in human health to prevent inappropriate use or develop more harmonized binding guidelines for across the EU.<sup>22</sup>

# Endnotes

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