



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008

Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008

La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

## **Conclusions of the Joint Meeting of Chief Medical Officers and National Focal Points on Antimicrobial Resistance Brdo, Slovenia, 14 March 2008**

### **Introduction**

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is, without any doubt, a serious health risk in the fight against infectious diseases in Europe and globally which requires political attention.

The problem has been addressed at the EU level:

- In 2001: Communication from the Commission on a Community Strategy against antimicrobial resistance
- In 2001 Council Recommendation on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine was adopted. These recommendations asked:
  - Member States to put in place specific strategies on prudent use of antimicrobial agents aiming to contain antimicrobial resistance and
  - Commission to facilitate mutual information, consultation, coordination, and to keep matters covered under review and to submit report on the basis of member states reports.

But since 2001 there have been some important developments. For example: new Member States entered EU; new countries have the status of candidate countries; ECDC was established and has already provided an added value for Member States in the area of communicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance as well.

In the light of these facts the Slovenian Presidency decided to highlight the issue of AMR and address it at the highest political level.

The joint meeting of the national representatives for the field of AMR and Chief Medical Officers from Member states was organised with the aim to exchange opinions and views between experts and policymakers.

### **Highlights from the discussions and conclusions**

According to the data from European Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (EARSS), in most Member States an increase of the burden of antimicrobial resistance can be observed in the period from 2001 to 2005.

There are significant differences in the use of Antibiotics (AB) between EU countries and in the types of AB that are used. Consistent link between the level of use of certain AB and resistance to these AB has been reported, confirming the suspected relationship between AB use and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in EU countries.

All Member states – “old” and “new”, and the Commission have taken a variety of actions to fight the problem of AMR in the last decade.

There have been some success stories but a lot of work still remains to be done.

Key areas for future actions can be summarized as follows:

At the Member States level:

- Developing national strategy with translation to action plan;
- Setting up inter-sectorial mechanism, e.g. a national committee, involving all relevant stakeholders with the clear mandate and political support;
- Strengthening surveillance systems and data quality on antimicrobial resistance, use of antimicrobial agents and healthcare-associated infections;
- Promoting good hygiene practices for the control of the transmission of multidrug resistance bacteria;
- Promoting prudent use of antibiotics through awareness campaigns with credible, scientifically based messages and actions including the information on the risk of self-medication, aimed at practitioners/health professionals and general public.

At the EU level:

- Follow – up on the implementation of Council Recommendations;
- Continue with “Health in all policies approach” in this area through EU initiatives;
- Continue with activities within the ECDC in this area (country visits, recommendations, scientific work, surveillance);
- Exchange of best practices among MS;
- Antibiotic Awareness Day.

The cooperation with WHO in this area is also welcome. The question of the development of new medicines was also pointed out in the context of the problem.

The above conclusions are the result of the joint meeting and were presented to its participants at the end. There was a general positive response that these are the most relevant points. They will be also presented to Ministers of Health during the Informal Ministerial meeting in April.

The Slovenian Presidency intends to prepare draft Council Conclusions to be adopted during the Council of Health Ministers in June.