



*The launching of the new Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) interest group on antimicrobial resistance (AMR), ‘MEPs fight AMR’, the publication of conclusions regarding AMR by the Council and the presentation by the European Commission of a positive progress report of the European One Health Action Plan against AMR illustrate the important motivation coming from all EU institutions in the fight against AMR.*

*The UEVP welcomes the privileged place of this issue in the ninth European legislative term’s political agenda and calls the European institutions to keep fighting against AMR. Our association and its members are ready to participate in this campaign along with the European institutions.*

**Piotr KWIECIŃSKI, UEVP President**

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## PRIORITY ISSUES

### Latest news about Brexit

On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom (UK) left the European Union (EU). The EU is now entering a vast withdrawal negotiation phase with the UK.

On 3 February 2020, the European Commission released a [draft negotiating mandate](#) aiming at open the EU-UK new partnership negotiations. The text has been inspected by the European Parliament (EP).

This institution adopted, on 12 February 2020, a [resolution](#) giving its comments on the text.

A point stressing *“the importance of level playing field in animal welfare”* can be found in the resolution; this statement means that if products from the UK wants full access to the EU market, these products should respect all EU animal welfare standards.

The resolution goes even further by calling the European Commission to *“excludes the possibility of EU imports of live animals, meat and eggs that are not compliant with EU animal welfare standards”*.

On 25 February 2020, EU Member-States approved, in a [Council decision](#) (+ [annexe](#)) an amended negotiation mandate. The adopted text does not contain an explicit mention of animal welfare in the “Level Playing Field” section but supposedly leave space for it when asserting that, in addition to the stated areas (State aid, competition, state-owned enterprises, social and employment standards, environmental standards, climate change, and relevant tax matters), *“the governing body [of the Trade Agreement] should be empowered to modify the level playing field commitments in order to include additional areas or to lay down higher standards over time”*.

The Brexit will have important impacts on the movements of animals between the EU and the UK.

Concerning the rules for pets traveling, the UK Government issued [new rules](#) about it, that will be applicable in the beginning of 2021, at the end of the transition period.

European horse breeders are also concerned about compulsory health checks between EU and the UK in the sense that a large number of these professionals often bring horses to the UK and Ireland in order to breed them.

### Latest news on antimicrobial resistance at EU level

#### **Publication of a progress report on the implementation of the European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance by the European Commission**

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On 12 February 2020, the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SAFE) of the European Commission presented its 4<sup>th</sup> [progress report](#) on the implementation of the European One Health Action Plan against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

As a reminder, the plan was adopted in June 2017. The 24 pages comparative infographic report shows important progress since the last report that came out mid-2019. The next progress report will be published by the end of the year 2020.

## Launching of a new European Parliament platform on antimicrobial resistance

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On 19 February 2020, a new Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) interest group on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) called '[MEPs fight AMR](#)' was launched in Brussels through an event entitled '*AMR: Setting the agenda for change*'.

The event was hosted by **Sara WIENER** (Greens - Austria), **Tiemo Wölken** (S&D – Germany) and **Nicolae Ștefănuță**, (RE – Romania); the group brings together a total of 16 MEPs from different political groups.

The objectives of this platform gravitate around the promotion of AMR on the EU policy agenda, the development of a multi-sectoral (human, animal and environmental) One Health approach and the monitoring of the EU and Member States regarding their commitments and effective implementation actions on AMR. The group published a [work program](#) for this legislative term (2019-2024).

The secretariat of the interest group is ensured by **Ann-Marie Borg** from the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) and by **Jean-Yves Stenuick** from Health Care Without Harm Europe (HCWH).

## The Council of the European Union publishes two documents on antimicrobial resistance in the EU

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On 28 February 2020, the Council of the European Union (EU) published two documents related to the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

- **The outcome of a questionnaire by the Finnish presidency.**

This [document](#) is a summary of the responses received by the Council from the 25 Member-states (MS) that answered the questionnaire issued by the Finnish presidency during the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVO) meeting of July 2019.

Key findings include good MS progress with AMR National action plans (NAPs), good data collection of volumes of antimicrobials used (AMU) by MS and active publication by MS of these data.

Concerning future measures, the most important of them consisted in proposed measures aiming at improving cattle, porcine and poultry health; in the ability to report, on a voluntary basis, results on national monitoring programmes on resistance in clinical non-zoonotic animal disease to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA); and in the development of harmonised monitoring of animal pathogens isolated from food-production and companion animals.

Finally, EU measures that should be taken into account for extra use are the using of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to help farmers reduce AMU, the implementation of European targets in the use of antimicrobials and (highly) critically important antimicrobials in different animal species.

- **Conclusions regarding the AMR Special Report of the European Court of Auditors.**

This [document](#) confirms the adoption by the Working Party of Public Health and the Working Party of Agriculture Counsellors/Attachés (Agri -Veterinary matters) of conclusions on the European Court of Auditors' [Special Report](#) No 21/2019: "Addressing antimicrobial resistance: progress in the animal sector, but this health threat remains a challenge for the EU".

These conclusions mainly acknowledge the seriousness of AMR and positively agree with the Commission's plan to tackle this issue.

## Compulsory European system for the identification and registration of cats and dogs news

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have debated in plenary session on 11 February 2020 on the subject of protecting dogs and cats from trafficking and have, on February 12, approved with 607 votes in favour, 3 against and 19 abstentions, a [resolution](#) calling for action against the illegal pet trade.

As a reminder, this document is the result of a joint proposal by six MEPs, member of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (COM ENVI): **Stanislav Polčák** (EPP-Czech Republic), **Sylwia Spurek** (S & D- Poland), **Martin Hojsík** (RE-Slovakia), **Jadwiga Wiśniewska** (CRE-Poland), **Anja Hazekamp** (GUE / NGL - Netherlands) and **Eleonora Evi** (NI - Italy).

This document includes a series of requests from the European Parliament (EP) including:

- The establishment of a harmonized European system of compulsory identification and registration of cats and dogs,
- The development of a European action plan to combat pet trafficking,
- The establishment of a uniform definition, at European level, of large-scale commercial breeding operations, known as puppy mills,
- More effective application of the European regulations in force and more stringent sanctions,
- The establishment of a compulsory register of farms and approved traders of pets,
- Encouraging the adoption - rather than the purchase - of pets

As a reminder, a European Parliament resolution is a non-legislative text allowing the EP to publicly express its opinion on a targeted subject and / or to direct a European institution, member states or both to act in a particular field.

At the end of the debate on 11 February 2020, the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety **Stella Kyriakides** reiterated her motivation and her commitment to making progress on the files relating to this subject. The latter has notably argued that the new [animal health legislation](#), which will come into force in April 2021, will address some of these concerns and provides, more specifically, for the compulsory registration of all dog and cat breeding establishments and of all carriers moving dogs and cats between member states and improving shelters before transport to other member states. Finally, the Commissioner recalled that the new [regulation](#) on official controls provides for much more severe sanctions and more tools to manage online sales.

## Update on the EMA activities

### Decisions of the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP)

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The Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP) held a [meeting](#) from 18 to 20 February 2020.

The Committee adopted by consensus a positive opinion for an initial marketing authorisation application for Vectormune FP ILT + AE as well as for Tulissin and for Tulaven.

The Committee also adopted by consensus positive opinions for type II variation applications for Evicto, for Imrestor and for Panacur AquaSol concerning quality-related changes. The Committee adopted a report giving scientific advices concerning issues for a new veterinary medicinal product for horses.

**Elisabeth Begon** was re-elected Vice-Chair of the Pharmacovigilance Working Party for a 3-year mandate.

The Committee noted that the 3rd EMA International Awareness Session on science and regulation for animal health and welfare, public health and the environment will be held on 2-3 April 2020.

## **European Medicine Agency reports on suspected side effects of veterinary medicines publicly accessible**

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Since 12 February 2020, the European Medicine Agency (EMA) gives public access to suspected side effect reports of veterinary medicines authorised in the European Union (EU).

These reports contain information relating to (suspected) side effects and medical events observed by veterinarians and pet owners following the use of approximately 250 centrally authorised veterinary medicines. It is important to note that the suspected side effects and medical events present in the reports are not automatically related to the medicines.

These reports are accessible on the [adrreports](#) website and come directly from the [Eudravigilance Veterinary \(EVVet\)](#) database.

The data present in the reports can be looked into by filtering different categories (species, breed, geographic origin, reaction groups,...); data on individual cases reported for each medicine is also available.

### **Overview on delegated and implementing acts of the directive on official controls**

The European Commission published an [infographic overview](#) on delegated and implementing acts adopted under Regulation (EU) 2017/625 on official controls.

The 6-page document recalls the name of all 33 delegated acts, their main objectives and gives an internet link to consult the acts.

## OTHER ISSUES

### Latest news on animal disease at EU level

#### African Swine Fever outbreak in Greece

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On 5 February 2020 the relevant Greek authorities notified the European Commission that an outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) appeared in the region of Serres. This information confirms the warning by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) of a movement of the disease in the south-west of Europe.

Regional measures were adapted by the European Commission in Greece and the Greek ministry of agriculture already took measures in order to deal with this issue. These measures include a ban on the movement of pork meat and live pigs from the region. The European Commission remains in contact with the Greek national veterinary authorities.

### Latest updates on animal welfare at EU level

#### Call from the European Parliament for Vietnam and the European Union to work on animal welfare

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On 12 February 2020, the European Parliament (EP) approved the free trade agreement (FTA) between the European Union (EU) and Vietnam. This FTA was signed by the two latter parties on 30 June 2019.

In this context, the EP called the EU and Vietnam to make full use of the provision on animal welfare cooperation present in the FTA. This provision foresees technical assistance and capacity building to develop higher animal welfare standards.

#### Agricultural Commissioner campaigns against intensive pig farming

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The European agricultural Commissioner and former chairman of the Animal Welfare Intergroup in the European Parliament **Janusz Wojciechowski** express himself on Twitter by affirming that intensive pig farming is not in accordance with the Green Deal bid for sustainability.

In the European Parliament (EP), the reactions were mixed.

Member of the European Parliament (MEP) **Sylwia Spurek** (S&D, Poland) greeted the Polish Commissioner and affirmed that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should help the EU to achieve the Green Deal goals.

Cattle breeder MEP **Jérémy Decerle** (RE, France), declared that the issue was complex and that it “*deserves more explanation and an opportunity to discuss these figures openly with actors in the sector*”.

Reactions from the civil society were also diverse.

While the animal protection associations welcomed the statement of Commissioner Wojciechowski, other stakeholders did not agree with it.

**Pekka Pesonen**, Secretary-general of Copa-Cogeca expressed his concerns by saying that “*Agriculture production is complex and reflects many different local, national and historical aspects. It cannot be summarised or judged in a few tweets*”.

AnimalhealthEurope Secretary-General **Roxane Feller** talked in favour of intensive livestock farming by stating that the standards applied by farmers were already high concerning animal health and welfare and that “*We*

*need to move away from this misconception that large-scale, modern farming will not contribute positively to a sustainable Europe”.*

### **European Parliament asks for the creation of an investigative committee on animal welfare in transport**

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The Animal Welfare Intergroup of the European Parliament (EP) issued a special request to *“investigate alleged contraventions and maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to animal welfare during transport within and outside the EU”*. The legal text that will be at the centre of this investigation is the [regulation \(EC\) No 1/2005](#) on the protection of animals during transport and related operations.

The requested minimum threshold of 177 signatory Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) was attained, the investigative committee can thus legally be established. The Parliament will now assess the veracity of the signatures.

The demand will then be transmitted to the Conference of the Presidents of the EP and will, after that, be submitted to a vote in plenary sitting where the final decision will be taken.

### **EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy**

On 3 March 2020, the European Commission launched a global coalition for biodiversity. This action is set ahead of the CoP15 meeting of the convention on biological diversity of October 2020 and the publication, **on 25 March 2020**, of the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.

The Commission calls all European national parks, aquariums, botanic gardens, zoos, science and natural history museums to *“join forces and boost public awareness about the nature crisis”*.

The 2030 Biodiversity Strategy will probably tackle the protection of a percentage of all European terrestrial and maritime zones, the reduction in the use of pesticides, sustainable fishing and the protection of European forests. It will also probably reinforce the implementation by the Member-States of the [Birds](#) and [Habitat](#) directives as well as the [water-framework](#) directive.

### **Evaluation of the Polish food safety control system in place governing the production and placing on the market of bovine meat**

The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the European Union (EU) published, on 20 February 2020, an [audit report](#) on the evaluation of the food safety control system in place governing the production and placing on the market of bovine meat, including animal traceability.

The main findings and conclusions of the report state that the general situation has improved. Nevertheless, improvements are still needed regarding animal welfare during transport and the evaluation and recording of ante and post mortem results.

The main issue is related to the lack of human resources. As a matter of fact, the report states that this issue *“seriously jeopardise an effective functioning of the control system and thus, the competent authorities' capability to enforce the correct implementation of the relevant legislation”*.

Finally, the report states that, concerning animal identification and registration by the use of the central data base, progress needs to be made.

### European Commission reports on animal-research

On 6 February 2020, the European Commission published a [report](#) on the statistics on the use of animals for scientific purposes in the Member States of the European Union in 2015-2017 and a [report](#) on the implementation of Directive 2010/63/EU (+ [commission staff working document](#)).

The first report shows a shy decrease in the use of animals in scientific research that cannot confirm the presence of a clear decrease but that suggest “a clear positive development”. This development can be imputed to the introduction of tougher regulations that came into effect 7 years ago with the [Directive 2010/63/EU](#) on the protection of animals used for scientific purpose. This directive is considered to be one of the world’s toughest on animal research.

It is interesting to note that the first report shows that more than 60% of the used animals for the year 2017 were mice, 13% were fish, 12% were rats, 8% were other mammals, 6% were birds and that only 0.3% were dogs, cats or primates.

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