

Safeguarding Europe's Future: A Call to Action on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections

Safeguarding Europe's Future: A Call to Action on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections

Table of Contents

The Urgent Need to Address AMR and HAIs	3
What Needs to Happen: Five Priorities for Policy Action	3
1. Prioritise HAI reduction	4
2. Expand access to rapid diagnostics	4
3. Leverage technology for stewardship	5
4. Invest in innovative technologies and enable new antibiotic development	5
5. Foster integrated approaches	5
A United Call to Action	6

Safeguarding Europe's Future: A Call to Action on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs)

The Urgent Need to Address AMR and HAIs in Europe

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) together represent one of the gravest threats to health and patient safety across Europe. Over 35,000 people die each year in the EU from drug-resistant infections¹, with millions more affected, and an estimated 4.3 million patients in EU/EEA hospitals acquire at least one HAI annually². The combined annual cost of AMR and HAIs in Europe exceeds €7 billion, and the burden continues to rise^{3 4}.

There is no 'silver bullet' for addressing AMR. As a complex and multifactorial challenge, it requires a 'One Health' approach that recognises the interplay between human, animal and environmental factors, takes action at different points across health systems and wider society, and coordinates across multiple sectors, including healthcare, agriculture, education and research and innovation (R&I).

Medical technology plays a central role in addressing HAIs and antimicrobial misuse – two of the primary drivers of AMR – while supporting longer-term antimicrobial development. Despite the availability medical technologies that support infection prevention, rapid diagnoses, and antimicrobial stewardship, **their adoption remains insufficient and uneven.**

With decisive and coordinated actions across all levels of the health system, there is an opportunity to effectively tackle AMR and HAIs, supporting patients and their care teams, reducing healthcare costs, and safeguarding the effectiveness of life-saving treatments for future generations.

Recognising this critical challenge and the opportunity to drive meaningful change, MedTech Europe urges policymakers, health system leaders and stakeholders to take rapid, targeted action. The focus should be on prevention, wider access to innovation, smarter antimicrobial stewardship, investment in new solutions, and integrated approaches that leverage Europe's collective strength.

What Needs to Happen: Five Priorities for Policy Action

Addressing the AMR and HAI crisis requires joint, strategic action at the EU, national, regional and local levels. Rapid progress will deliver significant benefits for patients, healthcare systems, and European society and support both economic and sustainable growth with a healthy, productive population.

¹ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (2024). [Antimicrobial resistance in the EU/EEA \(EARS-Net\) - Annual Epidemiological Report 2023](#).

² Euractiv (2024). [Patient safety risk in EU, healthcare-associated infections and antibiotic use rise](#).

³ European Commission (consulted August 2025). [EU Platform on Antimicrobial Resistance](#).

⁴ World Health Organisation (2011). [Report on the burden of endemic health care-associated infection worldwide clean care is safer care](#).

To accelerate progress, it is critical that all actions are clearly aligned with the latest Council Recommendations⁵ to increase efforts against antimicrobial resistance through a One Health approach that prioritises prevention and strong leadership across health systems.

This approach must also reflect broader global developments, including the work of the Quadripartite – the formal partnership of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – which leads global action on One Health. In particular, the Quadripartite's upcoming establishment of an Independent Panel on Evidence for Action on AMR (IPEA), and its planned update of the Global Action Plan on AMR in 2026, will provide key strategic guidance. EU and national efforts should remain closely aligned with these evolving global frameworks to ensure a lasting impact.

To more effectively address AMR and HAIs through existing medical technologies, MedTech Europe urges policymakers to take the following five concrete actions.

1. Prioritise the reduction of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs)

Promote the implementation and uptake of medical technologies that prevent and control HAIs across the entire patient pathway, including in hospitals and community care settings.

- **Authorities at all levels should incentivise compliance with infection prevention and control (IPC) protocols**, incorporating result-based scoring and ensuring regular assessment of protocol implementation across all care settings.
- **Regional health authorities must proactively map, assess, and report on the implementation and impact of IPC protocols and guidelines** in hospitals, community care, and long-term facilities to support continuous improvement.
- **Guidelines should be updated more frequently** to reflect the latest scientific evidence and technological advances, including the WHO Surgical Site Infection Prevention guidance.
- **Member States should allocate sufficient resources and provide strong leadership** to develop, implement, and sustain robust infection prevention and control strategies.
- **Health authorities should promote financial incentives and appropriate reimbursement mechanisms** to encourage the uptake of new and existing medical technologies that are critical to prevent and control HAIs in hospitals and community care.

2. Expand access to rapid diagnostics

Facilitate equitable access to proven rapid diagnostic tests and establish mechanisms for the early adoption of innovative diagnostics in primary and secondary care.

- **Healthcare systems should integrate rapid diagnostics into standard care pathways** to enhance antibiotic stewardship and preserve antibiotic effectiveness.

⁵ Council of the European Union (2023). [Tackling antimicrobial resistance: Council adopts recommendation](#).

- **Funding structures and incentives should be introduced or revised** to support the adoption and sustained use of rapid diagnostic technologies.
- **National authorities should identify and implement mechanisms that accelerate the uptake of novel diagnostics**, taking inspiration from best practice examples such as France's RIHN for temporary reimbursement and Germany's DART 2030 for guideline updates.

3. Leverage technology for antimicrobial stewardship

Encourage the use of data and surveillance tools to optimise antimicrobial stewardship programmes (ASP) and standardise care across all settings.

- **Authorities should set clear targets and benchmarks for surveillance and stewardship outcomes**, promoting collaboration among member states, academia, healthcare providers, and industry.
- **Integrated data systems should be developed and maintained** to monitor progress, ensure accountability, and enable continuous improvement in stewardship practices.
- **Public-private partnerships should be fostered** to drive the adoption and effective utilisation of stewardship technologies throughout healthcare systems.

4. Invest in innovative technologies and enable new antibiotic development

Increase support for the research, development, and integration of medical technologies that prevent infections, enable appropriate antibiotic use, and facilitate the discovery of new antibiotics and novel therapeutic approaches.

- **Funding should be directed towards advanced diagnostics, surveillance tools, infection prevention devices, and collaborative platforms** that accelerate new antibiotic development, based on best practices observed in recent European and international initiatives.
- **Policymakers are encouraged to establish effective funding mechanisms and incentive structures** that promote both medical technology innovation and antibiotic research and development, supporting rapid adoption of these advancements in healthcare settings.
- **National governments should strategically invest in innovation and prevention**, including through revised payment and reward systems that incentivise uptake of new and existing technologies and essential practices for reducing infection rates.

5. Foster integrated approaches

Promote the harmonisation of AMR plans and data collection across healthcare systems, fully aligned with the One Health approach.

- **Collaboration and alignment of national AMR plans at the EU level should be facilitated** to ensure a unified approach to measurement and success criteria encompassing human, animal, and environmental health sectors.

- **Technology-enabled data sharing and cross-border collaboration should be implemented** as standard practice to strengthen prevention and control strategies.
- **EU policymakers should champion policies that facilitate a shift toward prevention and harmonisation**, ensuring that national and regional actions are coordinated and mutually reinforcing.
- **Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) should ensure these priorities and integrated approaches are clearly reflected in the upcoming SANT report** on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on AMR, reinforcing the importance of coordinated, evidence-based action across Member States.

A United Call to Action

To truly curb the rising tide of AMR and HAIs, Europe must commit to the optimal use of proven medical technologies and coordinated strategies across prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

- **Prevention**, by supporting infection control measures to reduce healthcare-associated infections,
- **Detection and diagnosis**, by enabling rapid and accurate identification of resistant bacteria to guide timely treatment and targeted antibiotic prescribing.
- **Treatment and surveillance**, by facilitating appropriate antibiotic use, monitoring resistance trends, and managing outbreaks effectively.

By fully integrating these innovations at every point of care, European health systems can substantially lower infection rates, reduce resistant pathogen transmission, and preserve antibiotic effectiveness for future generations.

MedTech Europe stands ready to partner with policymakers and all stakeholders to advance these urgent priorities, secure public health, and reinforce the foundation for lasting prosperity and resilience in Europe.

About MedTech Europe

MedTech Europe is the European trade association for the medical technology industry including diagnostics, medical devices and digital health. Our members are national, European and multinational companies as well as a network of national medical technology associations who research, develop, manufacture, distribute and supply health-related technologies, services and solutions.

www.medtecheurope.org.

For more information, please contact:

Vivien Reinhardt, Officer Government Affairs and Public Policy

v.reinhardt@medtecheurope.org