



NDPHS Declaration

“From strategies to action – how to tackle the challenges of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in the Northern Dimension area”

Adopted during the 11th Partnership Annual Conference held at ministerial level on 20 November 2015, in Berlin, Germany

Recognition

We, the partner countries and organizations of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) that have adopted this declaration, acknowledge that the growing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in microorganisms is an increasing global health problem and a challenge to our societies.

We recognize that AMR is a multi-sectorial problem, involving human and veterinary medicine, agriculture, the food industry and the environment and that it is a problem that can only be solved through international collaboration. We therefore strongly support the direction taken by the WHO European strategic action plan on antibiotic resistance (EUR/RC61/14) from 2011, and the newly launched WHO Global action plan on antimicrobial resistance by (A68/20), in taking the one-health approach into account and providing the frame for further action. The Global action plan on antimicrobial resistance is a leading document to guide development of comprehensive national strategies to fight AMR. We also welcome the development of key indicators by WHO to have valid measurements to benchmark the implementation of the Global action plan on antimicrobial resistance. Another highly important initiative is the G7 Health Ministers Berlin Declaration on Antimicrobial Resistance –Global Union for Antibiotics Research and Development (GUARD).

We note with satisfaction that the majority of the NDPHS countries have guidelines in place on rational use of antimicrobials and infection prevention and control. However, we are aware that further evaluation of the implementation, use and impact of these guidelines is crucial.

It is of some concern that within the Northern Dimension area, there is great variation in the availability and quality of surveillance data on antimicrobial resistance and antibiotic consumption. Lack of comparable data on the prevalence of AMR and usage of antibiotics in the population, both within, but also between the partnership countries, results in an incomplete understanding of the regional antibiotic resistance situation and one of the consequences being difficulties in guiding empiric treatment decision. The lack of uniformity in surveillance methods, sampling techniques and standardization of laboratory procedures hampers research on epidemiology as well as other issues. As a response to these gaps the development and implementation of the Northern Dimension Antibiotic Resistance Study (NoDARS), an ongoing example in the Northern Dimension area that addresses many of the challenges listed above, is therefore much welcomed and demonstrate that investment into research is a key element of the fight against AMR.

We recognize that there is need for increased knowledge among health care providers and better awareness in the general public on the impact of AMR on public health.

Finally, we wish to emphasize that we are humble to the fact that due to the complexity of the AMR problem there are many different ways in which to meet the challenge.

Addressing AMR requires an intersectoral approach, involving all organizational levels and adapted to individual circumstances.

We recognize that all countries need to take action to combat AMR, and hereby declare our support for the many people who work with this issue on a daily basis, on a research, a health care, a governmental or a policy level.

Commitment

We, the partners will encourage, provide political support and facilitate the exchange of relevant information and experience among experts and between policy and decision makers.

We will work towards strengthening the coordination of activities between relevant sectors by bringing together high-level experts from national ministries and agencies, medical and veterinary institutions, the research community, NGOs and other relevant parties in the partner countries and organizations.

We encourage all partners to update and implement a comprehensive strategy to fight AMR in line with the WHO Global action plan on antimicrobial resistance.

We will strengthen the one-health approach, tackling all areas alike (human- and animal health, food and agriculture) and strive to preserve the use of antimicrobials only for the purpose of medical treatment after appropriate diagnostics. We will explore reasons for the delivery of antibiotics without prescriptions, obstacles for diagnostic procedures to better secure appropriate use.

We will encourage wider participation by relevant national authorities in already existing and new internationally agreed surveillance systems, for easier comparison and better understanding of the AMR problem. This includes EARS-net, CAESAR and the WHO global surveillance systems (GLASS), among other international surveillance mechanisms such as OIE and FAO.

We will actively support exchange of knowledge between experts in the Northern Dimension countries to ease the development and implementation of key indicators for rational use of antibiotics and guidelines regarding rational use and infection prevention and control programmes.

We will facilitate efforts to increase the capacity of health care providers and will support the efforts being made by representatives of the NDPHS in reaching out to the general public with information on AMR and its impact.

Cohesive implementation of shared policy recommendations, mentioned above, is important for the future work in the Northern Dimension region. We will therefore work to ease the processes in our respective nations.

By this, we declare that we, through the NDPHS, by all available means, support the facilitation of cooperation through joint international activities that will be adapted to the prevailing situation in the countries of the Northern Dimension.