

# Global Leaders Group (GLG) on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) co-hosts event for Belgian parliamentarians

 GLOBAL LEADERS GROUP  
ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

Brussels, Belgium  
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In advance of the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on AMR in 2024, GLG member and member of the parliament of Belgium, Maggie de Block, on behalf of the GLG, hosted an event on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) on July 6, 2023 at the Federal Parliament building in Brussels. The meeting aimed to raise awareness about AMR among 60 participants, including members of parliament, federal ministries, medical directors from agencies and private sector stakeholders and build support for bold and concrete commitments and next year's high-level meeting.



Welcoming participants, Ms de Block, a former federal minister of Public Health of Belgium, emphasized that AMR is one of the most pressing challenges of our time that requires a multisectoral response across human, animal, plant and environmental sectors. She noted that this event presented a valuable opportunity to review progress and challenges at the global level and in the response to AMR in Belgium and the European Union (EU).

## Responding to AMR regionally and nationally

Mr Frank Vandenbroucke, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Social Affairs and Public Health of Belgium, describing AMR as one of the greatest threats to public health today that is responsible for up to 700 deaths per year in Belgium, discussed several highlights of the country's response.

At the EU level, Belgium has supported the new Council recommendations on AMR, which raise EU ambitions by including concrete targets to reduce antimicrobial use by 2030, including a 20% reduction in total human consumption of antibiotics and a 50% reduction in overall EU sales of antimicrobials used for farm animals and aquaculture. At the national level, Belgium has a One Health National Action Plan on AMR that aims to ensure responsible antimicrobial use across sectors and promote infection prevention and control, particularly in hospitals, residential facilities and ambulatory care. The plan also addressed surveillance, communications and coordinated governance of the AMR response. Mr Vandenbroucke expressed Belgium's commitment to ensuring that AMR is prominent on the EU agenda during Belgium's presidency of the EU in 2024 and noted that Belgium will hold a conference on AMR in May 2024.





## Ensuring ambition at the 2024 high-level meeting on AMR

Dr Haileyesus Getahun, Director of the Quadripartite Joint Secretariat, highlighted the opportunity that high level meeting offers for a health issues, including AMR. He reiterated that the first UNGA AMR HLM held in 2016 was a major milestone in raising the importance of tackling AMR including the One Health approach. He, however, stressed that only commitments that were specific and with responsible stakeholder to follow them through were implemented. He therefore expressed his hope that the 2024 high-level meeting on AMR will be transformative for the global response through specific commitments. He emphasized on the key areas that the meeting needs to tackle as proposed by the Global leaders group: effective and transformed human health, agri-food and animal health systems; measures to reduce misuse and overuse of antimicrobials; ensuring an adequately financed NAPs, research and development pipeline for new antibiotics and equitable access to them; more accountable global and national governance; AMR addressed as part of biodiversity and climate solutions; strong link between AMR and PPR and effective implementation of the WHO pandemic accord; strong sector specific and integrated AMR/U surveillance systems; and enhanced information sharing for action in all sectors. He noted that it is also vital that the 2024 political declaration include aspirational targets to galvanise political action for AMR.



## Mounting a robust national response to AMR in Belgium

Pedro Facon, Deputy Administrator General of the Belgian National Institute for Sickness and Disability Insurance, provided further details of the Belgian national response to AMR, which has led to significant drops in human antibiotic consumption in recent years and involved close attention to transforming human and animal health systems and effective coordination between the human and animal health sectors. Belgium has been a frontrunner in surveillance, infection prevention and control, limiting the prescription of some antibiotics and public communications campaigns. However, more attention is needed in Belgium and the EU to increasing the manufacture of medicines and to the environmental dimensions of AMR.

The event concluded with a networking reception and lunch.

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