



## Health research: Commission awards €1 million to breakthrough test which distinguishes between viral or bacterial infections

Leuven, 6 February 2017

**Today's awards to outstanding health research projects are part of the Commission's efforts to promote better use of antibiotics and fight the growing problem of antimicrobial resistance.**

Today, Carlos **Moedas**, Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, handed over a €1 million [Horizon Prize for Better Use of Antibiotics](#), and Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, delivered the [EU Health Award for NGOs fighting Antimicrobial Resistance](#), at an award ceremony hosted by the University of Leuven in Belgium.

The €1 million Horizon Prize is for a finger prick test that can diagnose in less than ten minutes a bacterial infection and identify if a patient can be treated safely without antibiotics. The easy-to-use test is expected to be available for patients by 2018. It has been developed by Minicare HNL, a combined research effort of P&M Venge AB from Sweden and PHILIPS Electronics from the Netherlands.

Commissioner **Moedas** said: *"Overuse and misuse of antibiotics is a major challenge to public health. We are helping to bring this device to patients as quickly as possible, so that antibiotics are only used for bacterial infections and not for viral infections where they are ineffective or unnecessary. This helps to tackle the dangerous rise in antimicrobial resistance."*

The [EU Health Award for NGOs fighting Antimicrobial Resistance](#) recognises outstanding initiatives by NGOs to reduce the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to human health. The €20,000 first prize was awarded to BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation, for their campaign "From Farm to You", which has raised awareness about the causes of AMR, such as overuse of antimicrobials in livestock and misuse and overuse of antibiotics in human medicine.

Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety said: *"We need to put initiatives which raise awareness of the growing threat of AMR in the spotlight. Averting this looming threat before it turns into a public health nightmare is my most pressing priority as Health Commissioner, and as a former doctor. I count on the continued help and commitment of organisations like BEUC."*

### Finalists

For the Better Use of Antibiotics Prize, two other finalists were in close competition, presenting innovative patient-focused technologies. They were:

- PulmoCheck, who are developing a device that reacts within 2-6 minutes to body fluids derived from a bacterial infection
- ImmunoPoc, for a finger prick test that can differentiate between bacterial and viral infections within fifteen minutes.

For the EU Health Award, the second prize of €15,000 was awarded to the Alliance to Save our Antibiotics, Compassion in World Farming and the Soil Association, and the third prize of €10,000 went to the World Alliance Against Antibiotic Resistance for their campaign "Acting to Preserve Antibiotics".

### Background information

Antimicrobial resistance is a growing global threat and a significant societal and economic burden. Inaction is projected to result in millions of deaths globally per year by 2050 and a cumulative loss of over €90 trillion to the world economy. AMR has therefore become a political priority within the EU.

In the EU, AMR is responsible for 25,000 deaths and over €1.5 billion in healthcare costs and productivity losses annually. The European Commission has been committed to combatting AMR since 1999 with a "One Health" approach which recognises that the health of people, animals and the environment are inextricably linked. A new AMR Action Plan is being developed to build on the [evaluation](#) of the [2011 Action Plan](#). It will focus on activities with a clear EU added value and on measurable and concrete outcomes. This wide reaching public consultation should contribute towards the common goal of preserving the efficacy of antimicrobials, strengthening infection control and

stimulating innovative new treatments.

On 27 January 2017, the Commission launched a [public consultation](#) on possible activities to include in the new "One Health" Action Plan against AMR, which is due for adoption by summer 2017. The consultation, open until 28 April 2017, includes a questionnaire for public administrations and stakeholders and a questionnaire for citizens,

[Horizon Prizes](#) are 'challenge' prizes (also known as 'inducement' prizes) offering a cash reward to whoever can most effectively meet a defined challenge. Horizon Prizes do not prescribe the methodology or any technical details, giving applicants total freedom to come up with the most promising and effective solution. The aim is to stimulate innovation and come up with solutions to problems that matter to European citizens.

**For more information**

[Factsheet: How EU research funding contributes to public health and tackles antimicrobial resistance](#)

IP/17/205

Press contacts:

[Lucia CAUDET](#) (+32 2 295 61 82)

[Enrico BRIVIO](#) (+32 2 295 61 72)

[Mirna TALKO](#) (+32 2 298 72 78)

[Aikaterini APOSTOLA](#) (+32 2 298 76 24)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

Attachments

[2017\\_02\\_06\\_RTD\\_Health\\_AMR\\_factsheet.pdf](#)