



**The value that vaccines bring in the AMR fight and why new-generation antibiotics alone cannot resolve the AMR crisis**

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## OPENING REMARKS

By Mariano Votta

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Welcome and good afternoon from me as well.

A few days ago, on December 5th, the European Commission adopted the [EU4Health 2024 work programme](#) to implement the main priorities of EU health policy within the framework of the European Health Union. As Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety said, “civil society has a crucial role to play in reaching out to our citizens”. This declaration is a great achievement to be proud of, because the active role of PAGs and citizens' organisations in supporting public policies that have the interests, needs, and expectations of European citizens at their core, and that have health as the main common good to be safeguarded, is not recognised in all sectors and by all stakeholders.

On the negative side, however, it must also be said that in the mentioned EU4Health 2024 work programme, vaccination policies are the great absent, and this also clashes with the Council Conclusions of only a year ago. In fact, on 9 December 2022, the EU Health Ministers defined 'vaccination as one of the most effective tools for preventing disease and improving public health' as one of the key priorities of the Czech Presidency. On that occasion, we welcomed this important initiative which highlighted the urgent need to fight vaccination hesitancy and to strengthen EU cooperation in the field of vaccination for the future. In particular, the text emphasised that although vaccination policy is the responsibility of the Member States, a more coordinated EU approach would be helpful in preventing and limiting the spread of vaccine-preventable epidemics and

diseases.

In light of this and the 2024 scenario, I believe it is necessary to emphasise the key role of vaccination policies in all areas that will be particularly addressed by the 2024 work programme, including the:

- Europe's Beating Cancer Plan
- Cross-border health threats
- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Global Health

Today we will try to answer the following question: what role do vaccination policies play in addressing - as Bianca already mentioned - one of the ten most urgent threats to Global Health but totally underestimated by the public, represented by antimicrobial resistance?

AMR is an issue we have been working on for years, both at the Italian level (where my organisation Cittadinanzattiva is the only civic organisation officially mentioned in the National Plan for the Fight against Antimicrobial Resistance) and at the international level where, not by chance, we are officially accredited in the "AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform" recently established by 4 intergovernmental organisations, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Organisation for Animal Health (WHO), and of course the World Health Organisation (WHO), which organised its first meeting in November here in Italy, in Rome.

I am sure that a better understanding of the role of vaccination policy will be of great benefit to us as we continue our efforts both on the adult vaccination front and in our efforts to counteract AMR.

We look forward to learning more about the role of vaccination policy in helping to fight AMR because, as always, being well-informed and up-to-date is often the best prerequisite for promoting greater activism. So, we ask all of you connected today to make the most of this opportunity by interacting with our distinguished expert - whom I thank in advance - and not hesitating to ask him questions.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a fruitful webinar.