

By Marc Sprenger, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

Antibiotic-resistant infections are increasing at an alarming pace, posing a great threat to human health. I believe that improving antibiotic use practices is the most important action needed to slow the development and spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Antibiotics are frequently used inappropriately or when they are not needed in both humans and animals.

The [2001 Council Recommendation on the prudent use of antimicrobial agents in human medicine](#) stated that EU Member States should inform the general public of the importance of prudent use of antimicrobial agents. ECDC decided in 2008 to establish the [European Antibiotic Awareness Day \(EAAD\)](#) on 18 November as a platform for providing support to national campaigns across the region. For the 6th year, activities promoting prudent use of antibiotics have taken place in more than 40 countries across Europe.

The European Commission and WHO/Europe, together with numerous health-related and professional organisations, have partnered with ECDC in preparing communications materials and planning activities for EAAD. The EAAD website includes communications materials in all European Union languages targeting the general public, primary care prescribers and hospital prescribers. Social media is increasingly being used to convey EAAD messages, including through EAAD Twitter ([@EAAD_EU](#)) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/EAAD.EU>) sites.

To reduce levels of antibiotic resistance in Europe, we recognise the need for global cooperation. ECDC is proud that antibiotic use campaigns in the US, Canada and Australia have been aligned to the week of 18 November in order to coincide with EAAD.

[Read the full focus of this edition](#)