

# PRESS INFORMATION



Stockholm, 10 November 2008

## Countdown to European Antibiotic Awareness Day begins

*A large banner that went up on the Belliard Passarelle, near the European Parliament buildings in Brussels, this weekend signals the countdown to the first ever European Antibiotic Awareness Day which takes place on 18 November. The goal of European Antibiotic Awareness Day is to inform the general public about when and how to take antibiotics, and why responsible antibiotic use is important. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has today released a film explaining the threat to public health posed by the growing resistance of many microbes to antibiotics.*

**ECDC's Director, Zsuzsanna Jakab, said:** *"Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to public health in the European Union. If the misuse and overuse of antibiotics continue, we will lose the means to treat serious infectious diseases."*

### National and EU-level events

On 18 November a scientific seminar and official launch ceremony for European Antibiotic Awareness Day will take place at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Health, will be the key note speaker at this event.

The majority of activities for European Antibiotic Awareness Day will, however, be taking place at national level. Details of some of these events can be found on the [Day's official website](#).

### Why do we need a European Antibiotic Awareness Day?

The inappropriate use of antibiotics has become a serious threat to public health in Europe. Taking antibiotics for the wrong reasons or incorrectly causes bacteria to develop resistance against antibiotic treatments with a risk of rendering antibiotics ineffective in the future. There is a need for public awareness across Europe about antibiotic use to address this health threat.

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## Why is responsible use of antibiotics important?

Keeping antibiotics effective is everyone's responsibility. Responsible use of antibiotics can help reverse the growing trend of antimicrobial resistance and keep antibiotics effective for the use of future generations. On this basis, it is appropriate to inform the public, health professionals and carers of the sick, elderly and children about when and how to take antibiotics responsibly.

## Background information on ECDC

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is an EU agency tasked with identifying assessing and communicating threats to human health posed by infectious diseases. It supports the work of public health authorities in the EU and EEA/EFTA Member States.

## Further information

[European Antibiotic Awareness Day website](#)

[View the European Antibiotic Awareness Day film](#)

[Download the European Antibiotic Awareness Day campaign materials](#)

[See what is happening across Europe on European Antibiotic Awareness Day](#)

[Download media invitation to the Press Conference at the European Parliament, Strasbourg on 18 November](#)

[Read more about ECDC's activities on antimicrobial resistance](#)

[Download the picture](#)

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