

## | 10. EU framework on AMR

Back in 2001, the EU identified the importance of tackling AMR with the adoption of the 2001 Community Strategy against AMR. The bloc's AMR policy was subsequently reinforced with the 2011 European Commission Action plan against the rising threats from AMR. In 2017, the Commission adopted the EU One Health Action Plan against AMR, which aims to make the EU a best-practice region, boost research, development and innovation, and shape the global agenda. Though varying from region to region, overall consumption of antibiotics in humans in the EU/EEA decreased by 23 per cent between 2011 and 2020. Total antimicrobial consumption by food-producing animals decreased by 44 per cent between 2014 and 2021.<sup>73</sup>

In 2023, the Council of the European Union adopted a recommendation on stepping up EU actions to curb AMR in a One Health approach.<sup>74</sup> This complements the 2017 EU One Health Action Plan against AMR. The recommendation aims to: (i) strengthen One Health NAPs against AMR; (ii) reinforce surveillance and monitoring of AMR and antimicrobial consumption; (iii) strengthen IPC; (iv) strengthen AMS and the prudent use of antimicrobials; (v) set recommended targets for AMR and antimicrobial consumption in human health (for example, a targeted 20 per cent reduction in total antibiotic consumption by 2030); (vi) improve awareness, education and training; (vii) foster research and development (R&D) and incentives for innovation, as well as

access to antimicrobials and other AMR medical countermeasures; (viii) increase cooperation; and (ix) enhance global action.<sup>75</sup> The European Commission and its agencies – the EMA, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the ECDC – cooperate closely on the One Health concept. The EU4Health and Horizon Europe programmes provide funding for actions against AMR.<sup>76</sup>



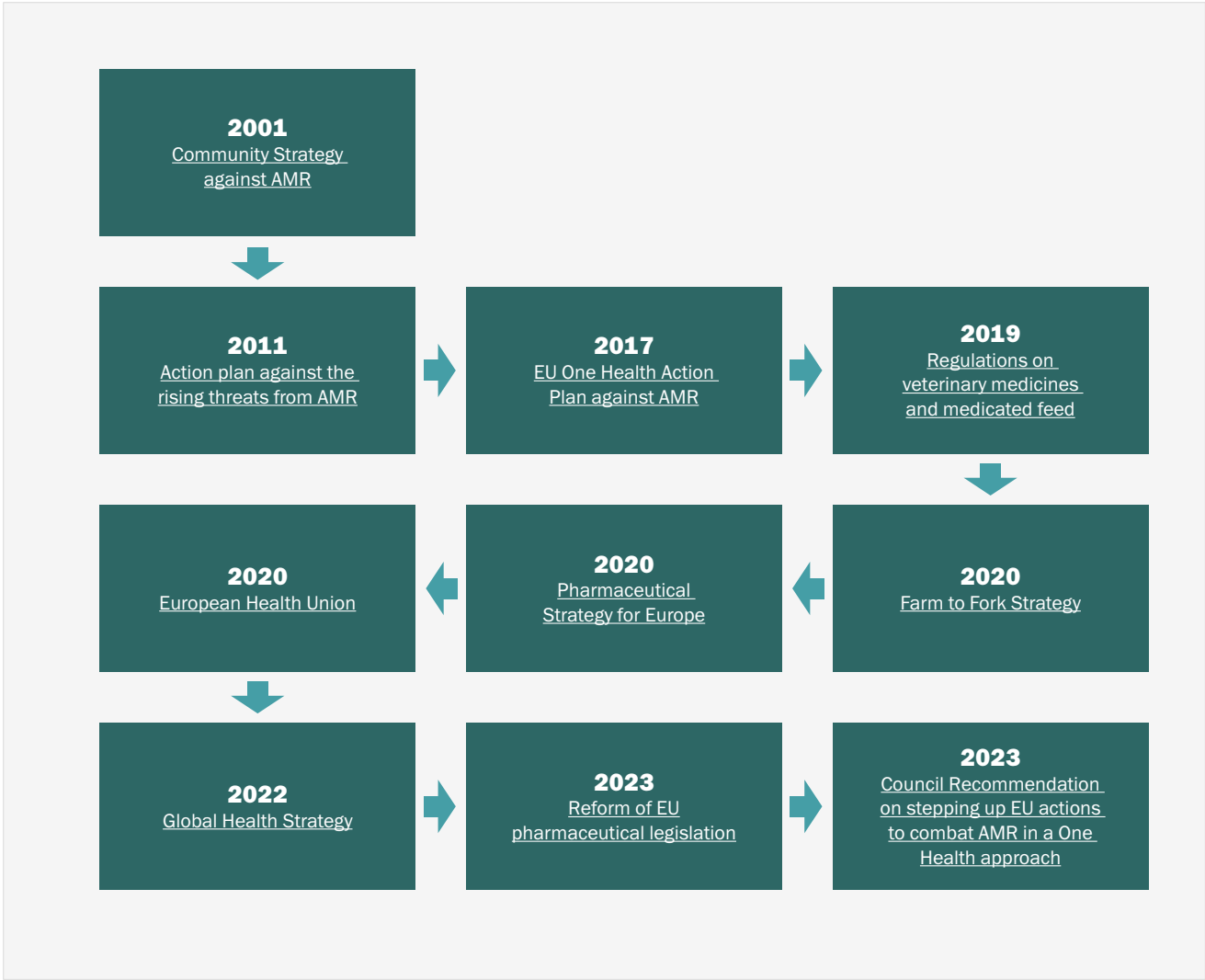
<sup>73</sup> See ECDC (2022).

<sup>74</sup> See European Commission (2023).

<sup>75</sup> See European Union (2021).

<sup>76</sup> See European Commission (n.d.b).

Figure 5. Chronology of EU AMR policy



Source: European Commission presentation at an EBRD AMR conference, 16 April 2024.

In terms of legislation on the use of antibiotics in food-producing animals, EU Regulation 2019/61 on Veterinary Medicines and EU Regulation 2019/4 on Medicated Feed have been in force since January 2022, aimed at stringently restricting the prophylactic and metaphylactic use of antibiotics to exceptional circumstances. These are the most important regulations in the area since the 2006 ban on the use of antibiotics as growth promoters.

Where the environmental monitoring of AMR is concerned, the European Commission has been working on a water framework directive, an environmental quality standards directive and a groundwater directive (including antimicrobial properties monitoring, for example). The EEA-European Topic Centre (Biodiversity and Ecosystems) and the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet, a network of 38 European countries) have been running a project since 2023 to monitor AMR in surface water (which will end in 2025). Investigations are under way in relation to the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) to upgrade selected urban wastewater treatment plants (UWWTPs) to more advanced treatment technologies. There is also a proposal to revise the UWWTD's frequency and methodology for monitoring AMR at the inlets and outlets of UWWTPs to at least twice a year to inform further actions. The integration of AMR into the Sewage Sludge Directive and the Industrial Emissions Directive is also being considered. The EU has also adopted a proposal for a directive on soil monitoring and resilience that includes AMR.<sup>77</sup>

In 2023, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new directive and regulation to revise and replace the bloc's current general pharmaceutical legislation. To encourage the development of innovative antimicrobials, the Commission has



proposed a “transferable data exclusivity voucher”, which will give developers of new antimicrobials an extra year of regulatory data protection. This aims to address difficulties in bringing much-needed new antibiotics to patients across the EU. The system will make it more attractive for businesses to develop innovative antimicrobials without direct financial contributions from EU member states. The vouchers will be granted and used under strict conditions.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> See European Commission (2024).

<sup>78</sup> See Blaney et al. (2023).