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NOTE

from : German delegation
to : Council
Subject : Antimicrobial resistance
– Draft Conclusions for the Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer affairs)

Delegations will find attached written information from the German delegation concerning draft conclusions ¹ for the Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer affairs) on 9 and 10 June 2008 on antimicrobial resistance.

¹ 9104/08.
The Council Working Party on Public Health is currently drafting conclusions (see Annex) on antimicrobial resistance (Draft Council Conclusions on Antimicrobial Resistance), to be adopted by the Council (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs) on 9/10 June. Antimicrobial resistance is described in those conclusions as a global human health problem.

The draft Council conclusions deal primarily with antimicrobial resistance in the human sphere. However, a clear allusion is also made to the keeping of animals as a factor contributing to antimicrobial resistance in humans. Specifically, livestock rearing, agriculture, veterinary medicine and the food chain are mentioned as causes of the transmission of antimicrobial resistance to man. European measures are to be prepared to record and evaluate the emergence of resistance in all areas and indicate effective risk management in the feed and food sector.

The Council conclusions therefore have considerable political significance with implications for stock breeding (e.g. possible restrictions on the use of antibiotics coupled with stricter hygiene rules), the work of the veterinary profession and the food industry, and surveillance (e.g. increased monitoring).

The EU agriculture ministers are asked to focus their attention on antimicrobial resistance in the veterinary sector and its significance for consumer health protection. There are already a wealth of measures against the spread of antimicrobial resistance in the veterinary sector which are of benefit to human health. Any new measures must therefore be taken only on the basis of scientific risk assessments.
It is therefore important, in the German delegation's view, that the EU agriculture ministers agree on what the agricultural sector should do in practical terms to deal with the subject of antimicrobial resistance.