JOINING THE DOTS
TACKLING PHARMACEUTICALS IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN EUROPE
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Event organised by
European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
Changing Markets Foundation
European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Hosted by Annie Schreijer-Pierik, MEP (EPP, NL) and Nicola Caputo, MEP (S&D, IT)

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The twin problems of pharmaceuticals in the environment (PiE) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) should not be tackled in separate policy silos. The current public consultation on a strategic approach to PiE, and ongoing discussions about the most effective implementation of the EU One Health Action Plan against AMR, provide an opportunity to establish synergies and to highlight the serious impacts of irresponsible production, consumption and disposal of drugs on the environment and on global health.

Water bodies, a major repository for pharmaceutical residues, are increasingly under strain both in Europe and third countries. This translates into loss of biodiversity and behavioural changes in aquatic species, impacts soil and crops, as well as the supply of safe drinking water. With regard to manufacturing, concerns are mounting over opaque global supply chains and the practice of dumping active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) into the environment, with serious consequences for the health and livelihoods of local populations. Such irresponsible practices contribute to the creation of resistant bacteria, which, in our globalised world, can travel fast, bringing serious potential consequences for European health systems and patients.

Key Questions
- How can pharmaceutical residues ending up in water be prevented in the first place?
- How do you effectively encourage proper use and disposal of pharmaceuticals?
- What policy measures can best tackle environmental pollution in the pharma supply chain?
- What can the public health community do to support ‘green’ production methods and better waste management?
- Who should bear the costs associated with more systematic monitoring of pharmaceutical residues and increasing efforts to remove pharmaceuticals present in water bodies?
- Should Environmental Risk Assessment results be considered for the decision on granting market authorisations of human medicinal products?

Expected Outcomes
The conference aims to instigate a multi-stakeholder debate and increase awareness of the PiE and their environmental and health impacts. It will discuss mitigation strategies including strengthening legislation and policy measures to protect water bodies, ensure responsible use and disposal of medicines, expand Good Manufacturing Practices and ethical procurement. Initiatives from the Netherlands and Sweden will demonstrate current efforts by public authorities and other actors.

Another objective is to build up support for comprehensive and effective policy design and implementation of the EU strategies on PiE and AMR, as well as the review of the Water Framework Directive. The size of the problem remains underestimated and Europe can play an important role in “joining the dots” between sectors.