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H.E. Angela Merkel, Chancellor, Germany
H.E. Matteo Renzi, Prime Minister, Italy
H.E. David Cameron, Prime Minister, United Kingdom
H.E. Barack Obama, President, United States of America

Franklinstraat 106-108
1000 Brussels
Belgium
T + 32 2 735 83 96
F + 32 2 735 84 66
E info@pa-international.org

Brussels, 25 May 2016
Ref. nr.: 16.37001

MOST IMMEDIATE THREAT: COMBINED MCR-1 AND NDM-1 GENES CREATES RESISTANCE AGAINST ALL DRUGS

Your Excellencies,

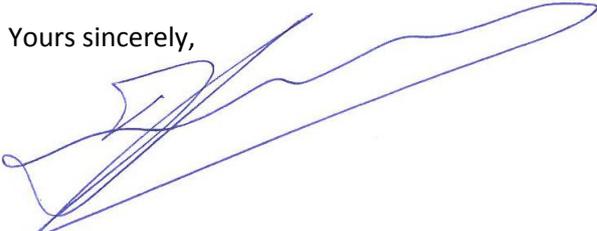
In November 2015, the discovery of the MCR-1 gene which transmits colistin resistance was announced. 95% of the Indian adult populace is expected to carry bacteria resistant to β -lactam antimicrobials; on average 20% of Indian patients demonstrate resistance to carbapenem antibiotics, a last-resort antibiotic generally used in cases of multi-drug resistance. The MCR-1 gene is now found in virtually all parts of the world, be it in limited quantity. In February 2016, The Lancet announced that the MCR-1 gene may soon be combined with the NDM-1 gene. According to The Lancet the bacteria having the combined gene would be resistant to virtually all drugs. Last week the UK Review on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) published its final report, calling for the most immediate and effective action. The combined MCR-1 and NDM-1 threat leads to a prospect of unstoppable outbreaks, causing millions of victims and laming virtually all trade. Recent Motions for Resolution in the European Parliament and elsewhere calling for the most stringent AMR-related border checks revive memories of the SARS effect on trade. Indeed a new draft report by the most senior experts in China identified the potential economic cost of an AMR outbreak based on the SARS experience: 467 billion of Yuan, or approximately US\$71 billion.

The time for more scientific approaches is over. The choice for communication only is ineffective. Both the UK Review on AMR and the Chinese report call for the immediate taxing of antibiotics use and for the development of non-antibiotic alternatives for animal health and growth promotion. Without such measures the use of even the last-resort antibiotics will only grow – bringing an unstoppable AMR outbreak near that dwarfs Ebola in both volume and geographic spread. And this may happen on our watch. Of course new molecules for antibiotics must be developed; however, the tax payers' funding for such research should only be provided to pharmaceutical companies that stop providing 'preventive' drugs to farms,

while equal funding must be awarded to replace antibiotics use in animal husbandry and fish farming.

Please consider these developments and please agree on the required truly effective joint actions. This may well be the last chance you have before a combined MCR-1/NDM-1 outbreak starts wiping out both human lives and international trade.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Mark Eyskens
Minister of State and Former Prime Minister of Belgium
Chairman of the PA International Foundation