



Health Union: HERA delivers list of top-3 health threats to prepare against

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The Commission's [Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority](#) (HERA) today presents a priority list of top-3 health threats that require coordination of measures at EU level in the context of medical countermeasures. The [HERA Board](#) agreed on a list which includes three threat categories of life-threatening or otherwise seriously harmful hazards to health which have the potential of spreading across Member States: (1) **pathogens with high pandemic potential**, (2) **chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats**, and (3) threats resulting from **antimicrobial resistance**.

Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: "*For the first time, today we present the top health threats we should be preparing for, and working to respond to. This exercise is the first step in ensuring that medical countermeasures can be made available and accessible for all Member States swiftly when needed. HERA has been set up as our watchtower for future health emergencies, and I am pleased that it is now tangibly starting to deliver on this mission.*"

In line with the [HERA Work Plan 2022](#), HERA, in collaboration with Commission services, EU Agencies, and international partners and experts, conducted this prioritisation exercise to select three high-impact health threats, to ensure global alignment and close collaboration on global health security.

Identified serious cross-border health threat categories

1. **Pathogens with high pandemic potential**: this includes looking into specific viral families of concern, taking herein also into account the zoonotic nature of most high consequence emerging infectious diseases. This category includes mainly respiratory RNA viral families;
2. **Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear threats**: these can originate from accidental or deliberate release, taking into account global geopolitical tensions, as well as incidents caused by rogue actors. CBRN substances have been identified based on their likelihood to occur and their potential impact on human health;
3. Threats resulting from **antimicrobial resistance**, which pose one of the greatest risks to human health, with antibacterial resistance alone causing an annual estimate of over 1.2 million deaths globally.

Next steps

The identification of the key threats to our health security launches the process to ensure the development, production capacity and scaling-up of manufacturing, procurement and potential stockpiling of medicinal products, diagnostics, medical devices, and personal protective equipment as well as other medical countermeasures to ensure their availability and accessibility in case of need. Together with other Commission services and EU agencies, HERA will ensure that investments are continuously directed towards safeguarding public health and health security in terms of availability of medical countermeasures.

Background

A core goal of HERA is to ensure the development, manufacturing, procurement, and equitable distribution of key medical countermeasures to address any possible gap in its availability and accessibility. For this, HERA needs to assess potential serious-cross border health threats, and gather intelligence to achieve this goal, requiring HERA therefore to identify and prioritise future health threats, identify possible gaps in terms of availability and accessibility of relevant medical countermeasures, guide future actions related to Research and Development of novel MCMs, and contribute to any other relevant action.

[HERA](#) is a key pillar of the [European Health Union](#) and a fundamental asset to strengthen the EU's health emergency response and preparedness. HERA was established in September 2021 to replace

ad hoc solutions to pandemic management and response with a permanent structure with adequate tools and resources to plan ahead the EU action in case of health emergencies.

More information

[Factsheet: Identifying top 3 priority threats](#)

[HERA work plan 2022](#)

[Ensuring the availability of supplies and equipment](#)

[HERA website](#)

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