

# parlons graphiques

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## The 2030 Veterinary Antimicrobial Sales Reduction Target in Europe: Where Are We?

L'objectif de réduction des ventes d'antimicrobiens vétérinaires en Europe d'ici 2030 : où en sommes-nous ?

Das Umsatzreduktionsziel für veterinärmedizinische antimikrobielle Mittel bis 2030 in Europa: Wo stehen wir?

In 2020, the European Commission's Farm-to-Fork Strategy set the target of reducing sales of veterinary antimicrobials in the European Union (EU) by 50 per cent by 2030, compared to 2018 levels (European Commission, 2020a, 2020b). The initiative, aimed at combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR), connects various aspects of the EU health, environmental, agricultural and food policies. This process started in 2001 with the first Community Strategy against AMR, leading to the European ban on the use of antibiotics as growth promoters on farmed animals in 2006, and subsequently developed with the Action Plans against AMR of 2011 and 2017. In 2023, the EU Member States' governments reaffirmed their intent to step up the EU actions against AMR.

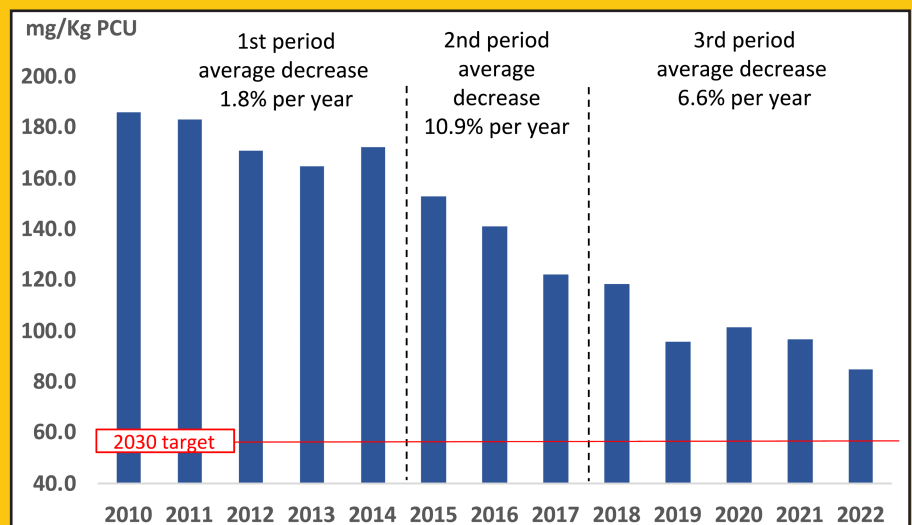
The European Medicines Agency (EMA) calculates the sales of veterinary antimicrobials relative to the animal population of European farms in terms of Population Correction Units (PCUs). This indicator considers the total population of each farmed animal species multiplied by the estimated average liveweight when treated with antibiotics (EMA, 2023). The European

2030 target is computed as the total milligrams of antimicrobial active ingredients sold in the EU per kg PCU. According to the EMA, the EU-27 veterinary antibiotic sales decreased from 185.9 mg of active ingredients per kg PCU in 2010 to 84.8 mg/kg PCU in 2022 (Figure 1).

This result was achieved in three stages. During the first stage

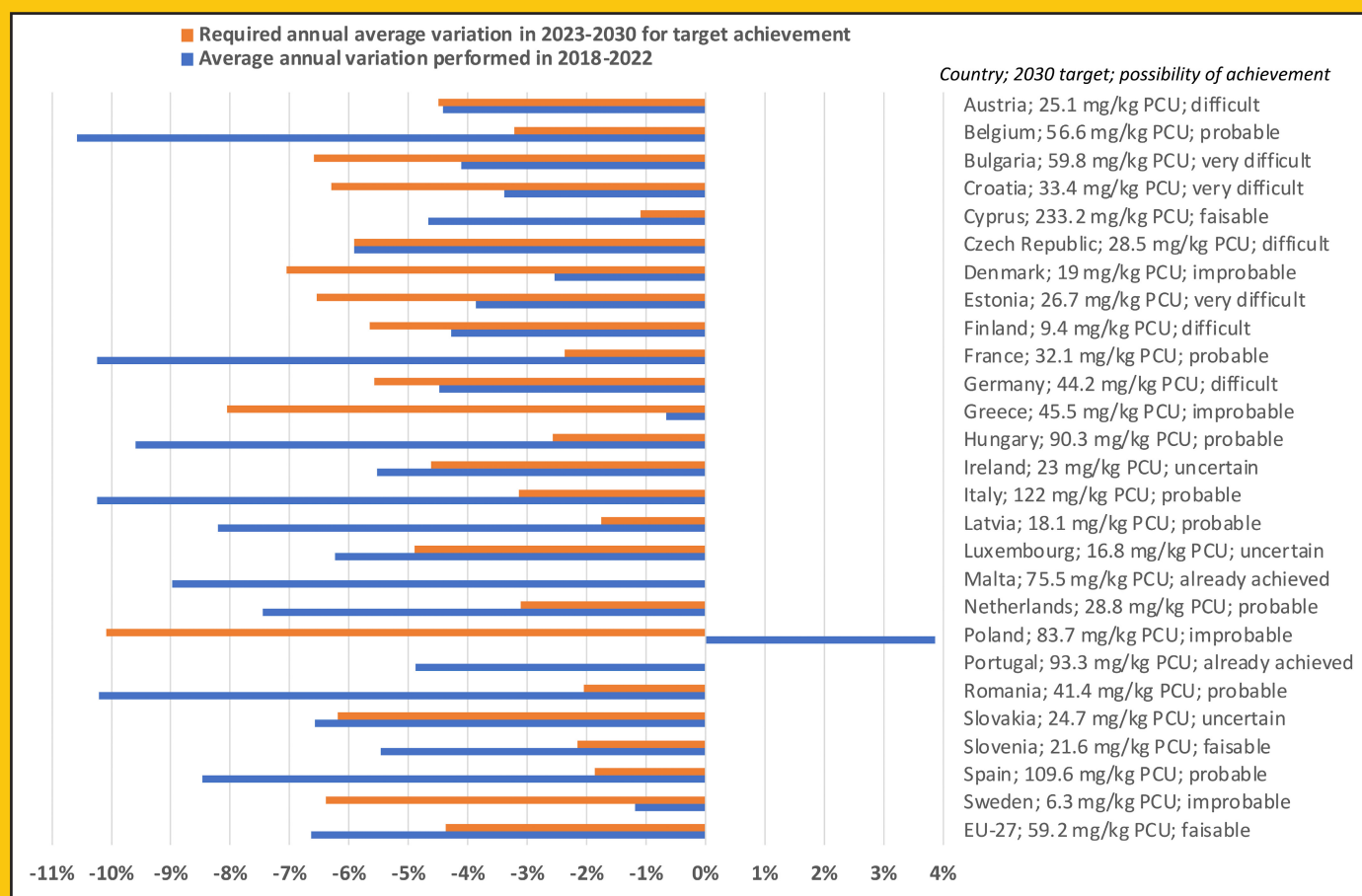
(2010–2014), the decrease in sales was gradual, averaging 1.8 per cent per year. The second stage (2015–2017) saw a much faster decline, with an average annual drop of 10.9 per cent. In the last phase (2018–2022), the decrease slowed to an average of 6.6 per cent per year (EMA, 2023). Thus, after the first launch period, the MS sales declined rapidly for three years and finally

**Figure 1: Total sales of veterinary antimicrobials in the 27 EU Member States in mg of active ingredients per kg PCU**



Note: Sales in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Germany, Poland and Slovakia are accounted from 2011; sales in Luxembourg from 2012; in Croatia and Romania from 2014; in Greece from 2015; and in Malta from 2016. Source: EMA (2023).

**Figure 2: Average % annual variation in veterinary antimicrobial sales required in each EU country in 2023–2030 to achieve its specific reduction target**



Note: A (orange bars), required average annual variation in 2023–2030 for target achievement; and (B, blue bars), average annual variation achieved in 2018–2022. For each country the 2030 sales target is reported with an assessment of achievement possibility: for  $(B - A) < -4\%$  the achievement is considered probable; for  $-4\% \leq (B - A) < -2\%$  feasible; for  $-2\% \leq (B - A) < 0\%$  uncertain; for  $0\% \leq (B - A) < 2\%$  difficult; for  $2\% \leq (B - A) < 4\%$  very difficult; for  $(B - A) \geq 4\%$  improbable. Malta and Portugal achieved the target in 2022. Lithuania is not included since the EMA could not estimate the 2018 sales relative to PCU. Source: EMA (2023).

entered a phase of slower decrease, where further marginal gains seem less easy to achieve. The EU target requires that sales of veterinary antimicrobials in the EU should decrease to 59.2 mg/kg PCU (down from 118.4 mg/kg in 2018), i.e. an average annual decrease of 4.4 per cent between 2023 and 2030, which might be feasible given the current trend in the EU-27.

Using the same criteria, the European Commission set individual targets for each EU country, aiming for a 50 per cent

reduction of sales per kg PCU in 2030 from the respective 2018 levels (European Commission, 2020b).

Figure 2 shows the average annual percentage reduction in sales of active ingredients per kg PCU required in each country in 2023–2030 to reach its target (orange bars) and the average annual variation achieved in 2018–2022 (blue bars). The difference between the two values can provide information to assess the likelihood of each country achieving its goal. The parameters used for the analysis are described in the

Figure 2 caption. Considering the main EU consumer countries of veterinary antimicrobials, the 2030 target achievement is probable for Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands, Romania and Spain. It is unlikely for Poland, where sales increased in 2018–2022 and is difficult for Germany. Countries such as Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg and Denmark, which had already reached low sales levels in 2018, are now showing considerable difficulties in realising the decreasing trend needed to meet their 50 per cent reduction objectives.

## Further Reading

- EMA (2023). Sales of veterinary antimicrobial agents in 31 European countries in 2022 - Trends from 2010 to 2022. *13th ESVAC report*. Amsterdam. Available online at: <https://doi.org/10.2809/766171>
- European Commission (2020a). A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system. COM(2020)381 final. Brussels.
- European Commission (2020b). *Recommendations to the Member States as regards their strategic plan for the Common Agricultural Policy. COM(2020) 846 final*. European Commission, Brussels.

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