Press Release on European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD) 2019

Stockholm, Sweden, 18th November 2019

The European Healthcare Students’ Associations’ Summit (EHSAS) is joining the launch of the European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD), celebrated annually on the 18th of November. This day represents the beginning of the awareness week promoting the prudent use of antibiotics by European healthcare workers and by society as a whole.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the most pressing issues of our time, affecting healthcare, human and animal health, food safety, the economy, the environment, and vulnerable communities. AMR is responsible for more than 30,000 deaths in the EU yearly and it is estimated that AMR costs the EU 1.5 billion € annually due to healthcare costs and productivity losses. Addressing all relevant factors of AMR requires a multidisciplinary, one health approach and global involvement across all sectors, including governance and organisations.

The European Healthcare Students’ Associations’ Summit (EHSAS) is formed by the European Dental Students’ Association (EDSA), the European Federation of Psychology Students’ Associations (EFPSA), the European Medical Students’ Association (EMSA) and the European Pharmaceutical Students’ Association (EPSA). EHSAS, and thus European healthcare students, has set common goals to tackle AMR. Today marks exactly a year since EHSAS released its Policy Paper on AMR outlining the impact of AMR and solutions for better education of healthcare students. EHSAS encourages collaboration between different healthcare professions and has taken active steps to tackle educational gaps in AMR. Together with professional organisations representing the dentists (CED), medical doctors (CPME), community pharmacists (PGEU), and European veterinarians (FVE), EHSAS co-organises annual workshops on the ‘Implementation of One Health in undergraduate education’. These workshops aim to bring together academics, practitioners and students to look into best practices on how to facilitate interdisciplinary education for interdisciplinary collaboration, especially in the context of AMR. EHSAS, as part of the project advisory group, welcomed the initiative of ECDC to conduct a survey on European healthcare workers’ and students’ knowledge as well as attitudes towards antibiotics and antibiotic resistance and is glad to see the reported results. EHSAS recognizes this initiative as an important step forward to make healthcare professionals aware of their role in AMR. This initiative provides a strong foundation for future campaigns, policies and educational changes that are needed to address AMR.

The challenge of AMR is significant, and EHSAS will work to ensure that students contribute to tackling this challenge and ensuring good health across Europe.