

One Health - Political and Strategic Context in Greece

MARY GIANNIOU

DVM,MBA

ACTING HEAD OF ANIMAL HEALTH

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF VETERINARY SERVICES

GREEK MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD

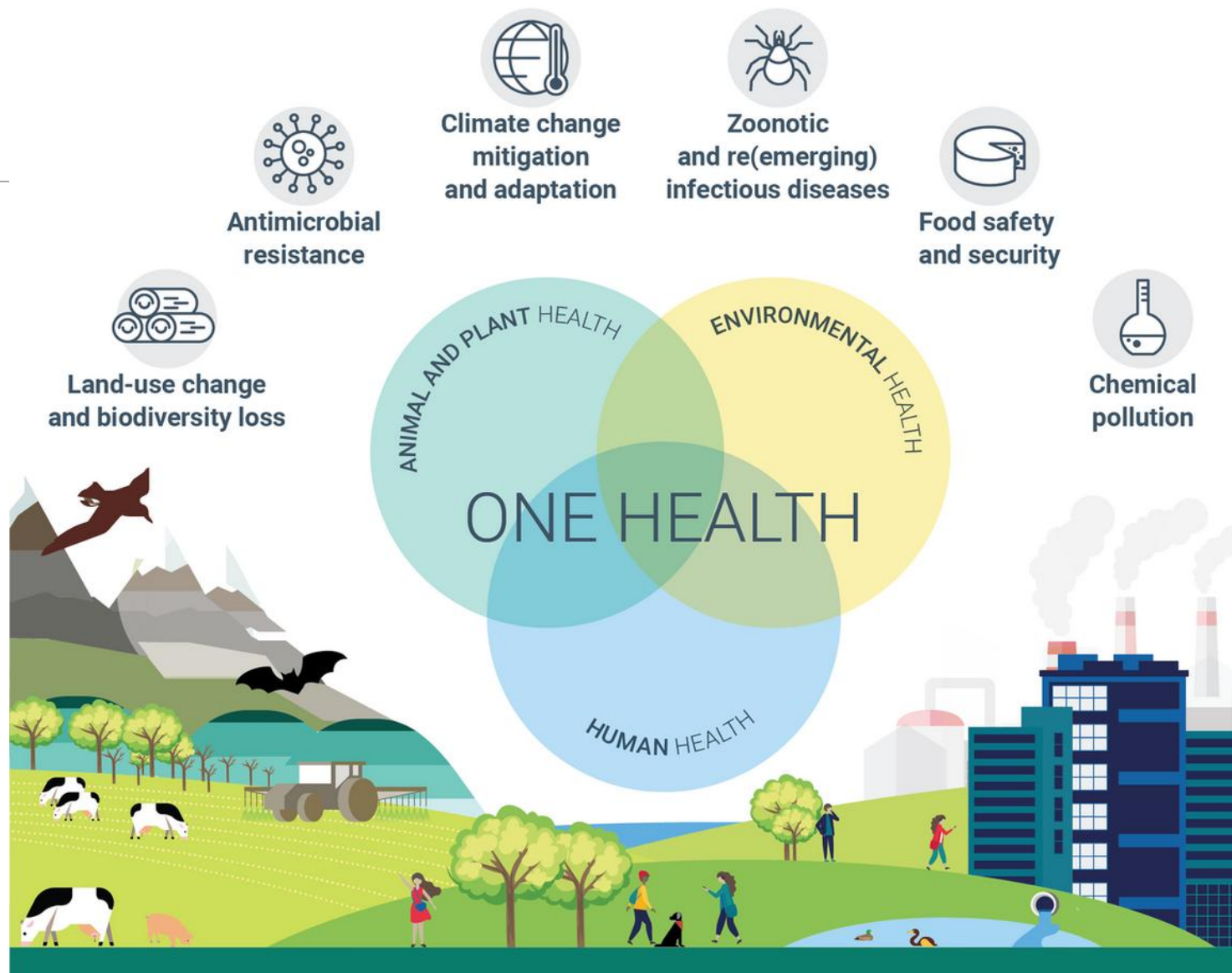
CONTENTS

- EU and national legislation supporting One Health concept
- Organizations supporting One Health concept in Greece
- Collaboration of the Greek MRDF with Health sector in Greece
- Gaps, barriers and potential solutions



DEFINITION OF ONE HEALTH

“One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and inter-dependent. The approach mobilizes multiple sectors, disciplines and communities at varying levels of society to work together ... while addressing the collective need for clean water, energy and air, safe and nutritious food, taking action on climate change, and contributing to sustainable development.” (WOAH definition)



ONE HEALTH CONCEPT

- **One Health** is an approach that recognizes that the health of **humans, animals, and the environment** are deeply interconnected
- It promotes collaboration across multiple sectors—such as medicine, veterinary science, environmental science, and public health—to prevent and manage health threats that move between people, animals, and ecosystems
- Key elements: Zoonoses, AMR, food safety, climate change
- Global relevance: EU, WHO, WOA, FAO, UNEP initiatives

ONE HEALTH REQUIRES

- Active stakeholder engagement
- Cross sectoral focus
- Commitment to sustainable development

To effectively implement One Health and support multisectoral collaboration, it is crucial to determine the relevant legal components and strategies and embed them within an appropriate legislative framework.

EU Legislation Supporting One Health

EU legal framework:

- 2016/429 (Animal Health Law),
- Implementing and delegated acts on disease prevention, surveillance, biosecurity
- 2019/6 (Veterinary Medicinal Products)
- AMR and antimicrobial use



EU AMR One Health recommendation

EU AMR One Health Recommendation: Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach” (2023/C 220/01) describes the obligations of Member States, including the:

- Implementation of monitoring programs for antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic bacteria collected from slaughterhouses
- Collection and analysis of data from samples of animals and food of animal origin
- Collaboration with EFSA and ECDC to ensure harmonized methods and joint reporting
- Strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation among health, veterinary, and environmental authorities



Implementation at Slaughterhouses

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) **2020/1729** of 17 November 2020 “on the monitoring and reporting of antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and commensal bacteria”

This decision outlines:

- Mandatory sampling at slaughterhouses from specific animal species (e.g. broilers, turkeys, pigs, cattle)
- Laboratory testing for resistance to selected antimicrobial agents using harmonized methods
- Designation of National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) for antimicrobial resistance, such as the Veterinary Laboratory of Chalkida
- Submission of data to EFSA for annual evaluation and publication



Different actions at EU level

- European Green Deal
- Farm to Fork Strategy
- The European One Health Action Plan against AMR
- **Cross-agency One Health Task Force:** joint initiative of five agencies of the European Union that have a technical and scientific mandate in environmental sustainability, public health and food safety (EEA, ECDC, ECHA, EFSA & EMA)

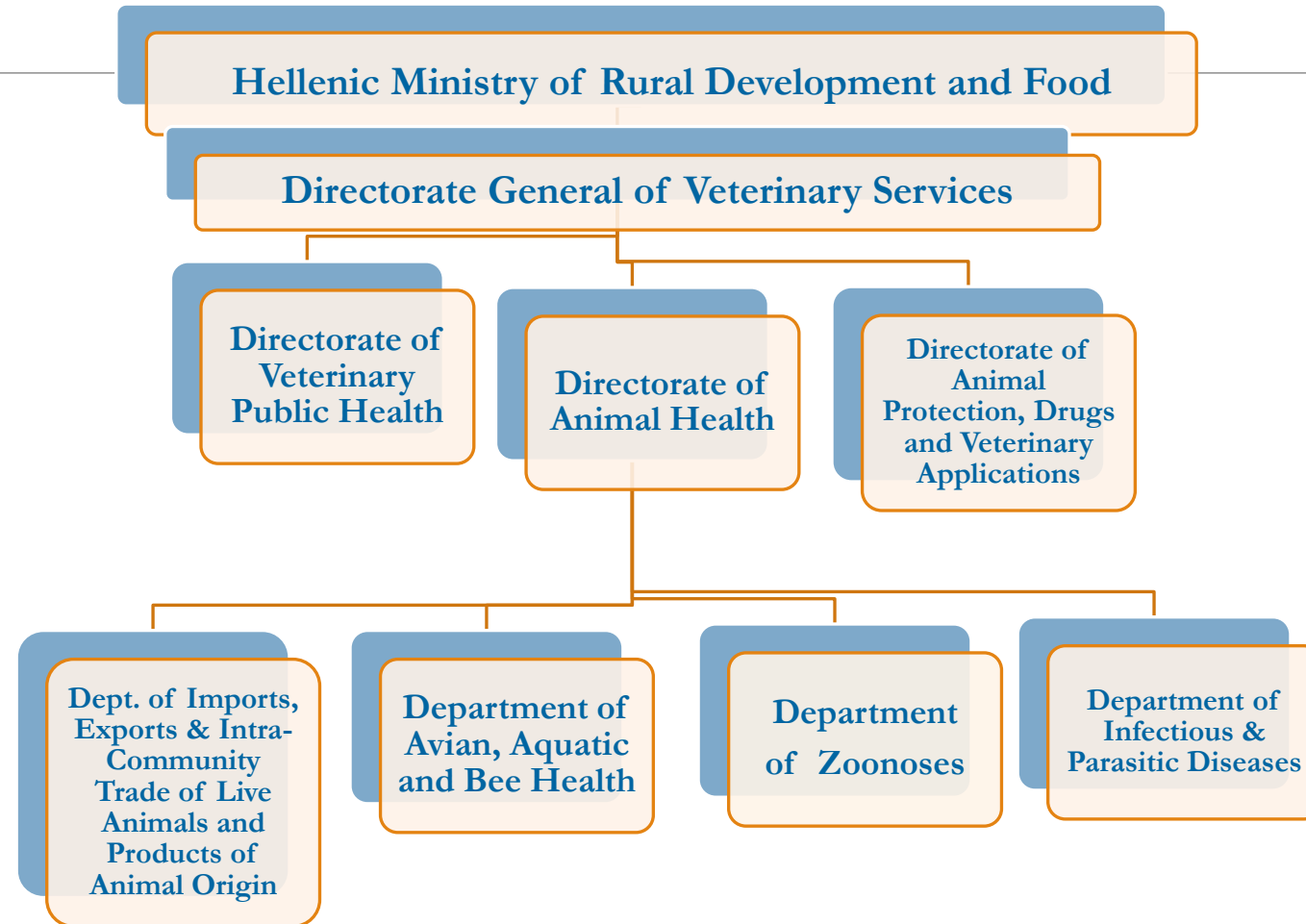


National Legislation Supporting One Health

National Laws/Plans:

- **Public Health Code:** The Public Health Code in Greece sets the basic rules and measures for protecting public health, including hygiene standards, disease prevention, environmental health, and the responsibilities of public health authorities
- **National Action Plan in Greece against AMR:** National strategy aligned with EU One Health AMR Plan
- **National Law 4036/20120:** regulates the placing on the market and the proper use of plant protection products, incorporating relevant EU legislation and establishing national measures to protect human health and the environment

Directorate General of Veterinary services



Directorate General of Veterinary Services

Directorate of Animal Health

1. **Department of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases**
2. **Department of Zoonoses**
3. Department of Imports, Exports and Intra-Union Trade
4. **Department of Avian, Aquatic animals and Bee Health**

Directorate General of Veterinary Services

Directorate of Animal Welfare, Veterinary Medicines and Veterinary Applications

- ✓ Department of Animal Welfare for Farm and Laboratory Animals
- ✓ Department of Identification and Registration
- ✓ **Department of Veterinary Medicines and Residues**

Directorate General of Veterinary Services

Directorate of Veterinary Public Health

- **Department of Animal Slaughterhouses**
- Department of Animal By-Products
- Department of Fisheries, Milk Products, Honey and other food of animal origin

Other authorities/entities involved

-
- **NPHO** (Hellenic National Public Health Organization): National Public Health Agency. Private Legal Entity (P.L.E.) operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. Its responsibilities include epidemiological surveillance, risk assessment, preparedness for health emergencies, and providing public health data
 - **EOF** (National Medicines Agency): Protects public health for a wide range of products — human & veterinary medicines, medicated animal feed, special-diet foods, food supplements, biocides, medical devices, and cosmetics
 - **EFET** (Hellenic Food Authority): Food-safety regulatory body, setting and enforcing food safety and hygiene standards for foods, food contact materials, and additives. Greece's focal point to EFSA , Codex Alimentarius and RASFF
 - **ELGO** (Hellenic Agricultural Organization "DEMETER"): Public-interest organization (private-law entity) supervised by the Ministry of Rural Development & Food, promoting agricultural research, innovation & technology, and modernize the agricultural sector
 - **Universities:** Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki & University of Thessaly
 - **Ministry of Environment and Energy:** Competent authority responsible for conservation of biodiversity and monitoring of wildlife population, focuses on environmental governance, implementing climate policies, and raising public awareness for climate change

Common actions

Even if currently there is no intersectoral legal framework in place to support institutional collaboration with a focus on One Health Interventions, joint actions are carried out between the Veterinary Services and Human health (NHPO) such as:

➤ **West Nile Virus (WNV) surveillance**

- Joint monitoring of human cases (NHPO), equine cases & bird/mosquito surveillance (Veterinary Services)
- Coordinated vector-control and seasonal risk assessments
- Data sharing/communication

Common actions

➤ **COVID-19 in farmed minks (Greece, 2020)**

- Detection of SARS-CoV-2 in mink farms in Northern Greece
- Veterinary Services conducted animal testing, culling decisions, and biosecurity measures
- NPHO monitored human exposures, tested farm workers, and assessed spillover risk
- Close intersectoral cooperation aligned with EU/WOAH guidance

➤ **Foodborne disease outbreak investigations**

- NPHO identifies human clusters (e.g., *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, *Campylobacter*)
- Veterinary Services assist with farm-level inspections, sampling, and food-chain risk assessments
- Coordinated interventions to remove contaminated products from the market

Common actions

- **Disposal of animal by-products** with respect to the environment: (i.e disposal of carcasses in case of zoonosis): collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Energy
- **Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever:** please see poster
- **Avian Influenza**
 - Joint monitoring of human (NHPO) /animal cases (Veterinary Services)
 - Data sharing/communication

Joint meeting with NPHO



Joint simulation exercise with Human Health (NPHO): Theoretical-practical tabletop simulation exercise, focused on the management of Avian Influenza with the participation of Animal Health and Public Health competent authorities, for the implementation of the “One Health” approach.

One health approach in Greece

➤ Participation in national and EU One Health structures

- Collaboration on zoonoses monitoring, AMR surveillance, food safety alerts, and emergency preparedness
- Joint committees, risk assessments and coordinated communication strategies
- Joint workshops, EU programs
- Data sharing: EFSA, ECDC platforms
- CSN (Collaborative Surveillance Network) project joint collaboration with Hellenic National Public Health Organization (NPHO) started in 2025 with the exchange of data

Goals of the national contingency plan on AMR (2025-2030)

- The primary goal is to immediately limit the consumption of antimicrobial substances in humans and animals with targeted actions and policies within the framework of the One Health approach.
- For this purpose, it is necessary to implement a cross-sectoral **national strategic action plan** aimed at preventing and controlling infections, limiting the use of antibiotics, the absence of antibiotic residues in food, monitoring trends in antibiotic resistance and use, as well as publishing the results with the ultimate aim of raising awareness among the public and all stakeholders involved, and developing knowledge and research.
- The leading role in the entire effort is played by the competent public bodies for the formulation and implementation of appropriate policy involved in public health, veterinary medicine, agriculture/livestock and environment. Finding ways for a holistic, cross-sectoral and multifaceted approach to this ever-growing problem is a challenge for everyone.

Gaps and barriers in Greece

- Fragmented governance
- Legal basis for cross-sector collaboration
- Data silos between ministries
- Low public awareness
- Limited funding for One Health projects
- Lack of resources

Solutions Under Discussion

- National One Health coordination body
- Establish an intersectoral legal framework
- Digital integration of surveillance systems
- Public engagement campaigns
- EU project participation (Horizon Europe, EU4Health)
- Capacity building: recruitment and training

ROLE OF THE VETERINARIAN IN ONE HEALTH

- Ensuring animal health and welfare
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Environmental Impact
- Programs for the preservation of species and populations
- Food borne diseases

ONE HEALTH: THIS IS THE PATH



Thank you for your attention