European Commission

Press Release

18 November 2026

Beat the Bug on European Antibiotic Awareness Day and help protect Europe against a growing and deadly health threat

The European Commission's campaign on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) harnesses the power of Fortnite to teach young people how to stop the spread of resistant bacteria. The leaderboard of the 'Only Up: Beat the Bug' challenge closes at midnight CET today. Gamers have until then to win V-Bucks and learn more about this deadly and growing threat to our health and economy.

A serious global health risk

In Europe alone, AMR is responsible for more than 35 000 deaths every year and 4.3 million patients pick up at least one healthcare-associated infection whilst in hospital.[1] One in three of these infections contains bacteria that do not respond to first-choice antibiotics. Antibiotics only work against bacteria, not against viruses that cause colds and flu. Using them unnecessarily contributes to the spread of resistant bacteria, making infections harder to treat. Whilst the EU has made some progress in reducing the use of antibiotics it is not on track to meet its target of reducing use by 20% by 2030.

The power of gaming to spread knowledge

The European Commission has launched a campaign to tackle AMR by raising awareness and promoting the responsible use of antibiotics. The first phase targets young people through the Fortnite game 'Only Up: Beat the Bug'. The second, set to launch in early 2027, features a new portal with five interactive scenarios exploring the importance of antibiotics in everyday life, showing the connections between humans, animals and the environment (what is called the One Health approach).

"Antimicrobial resistance is a major health threat for the EU[2]" said European Commission Director-General for Health and Food Safety Sandra Galina. *"That is why the Commission is working with Member States to raise awareness of the threat and promote responsible antibiotic use. 'Beat the Bug' and the new portal are great ways*

[1] 35 000 covers the 27 EU countries, 4.3 million covers all EEA countries Source: ECDC https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/urgent-action-needed-safeguard-effectiveness-antibiotics

[2] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32023H0622(01)

to highlight both the issue, and the preventive actions we can all take in our daily lives to reduce the spread of resistant bacteria."

Since 09 October 2026, over 500 000 V-Bucks have been up for grabs on 'Beat the Bug'. There are less than 24 hours left to claim the last prizes as the leaderboard closes at the end of this year's European Antibiotic Awareness Day. Play the game and join the Discord community to stand a chance of winning prizes!

Beat the Bug: https://www.fortnite.com/@virstate/2536-2666-4953

Join the Discord community: https://discord.com/invite/beatthebug

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control press release: https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/urgent-action-needed-safeguard-effectiveness-antibiotics

Video Generic teaser:
Horizontal - https://youtu.be/q5bVA2zBm2s
Vertical - https://youtube.com/shorts/Ew5cHURS_G4

Video V-Buck focussed (contest):
Horizontal - https://youtu.be/GFmZ9HGPvxM
Vertical - https://youtube.com/shorts/WY3jaG2T-IU

Media Contact:
David Crous Duran
david.crous@esn.eu / amr-campaign@esn.eu