

Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre (MED-OHC) & ELGO - DIMITRA

2nd ONE HEALTH FORUM

Open Talk:

**Global Crisis needs
Global Collaborative Ecosystem**

**Assumptions & Conclusions
2nd One Health Forum,**

**3 June, 2025,
War Museum, Athens, Greece**



Under the Auspices

Supporters

On Tuesday, June 3rd, 2025 at the War Museum of Athens, the work of the 2nd One Health Forum organized by the «**Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre (MED - OHC)**» and **ELGO-DIMITRA**, under the auspices of the **Ministry of Development**, the **Ministry of Digital Governance** and the **Ministry of Rural Development and Food**, with the support of "**ASCLEPIUS-ONE HEALTH**" was successfully completed with a number of useful conclusions.

The Forum was attended by more than **35 speakers** who pointed out and documented the need for joint initiatives and actions to consolidate and disseminate the concept of One Health in Greece and in the wider Mediterranean region, as well as the introduction of permanent channels of communication and cooperation between the scientific specialists and bodies involved.

During the work, the official presentation of the «**Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre (MED – OHC)**» was made and the existing needs, the existing networks and the future priorities in the fields of implementation of the One Health strategy were highlighted in four Round Tables, covering subject areas such as: **Animal Diseases, Emerging Diseases, Antimicrobial Resistance, Climate Change and Food Crisis, Social Inequalities, Education, Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Wellbeing, Welfare, Inclusion**, etc.

The proceedings began with a welcome address by **Eleni Pavlidou**, President of the «**Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre**», **Pavlos Efthymiou**, Director General of the Hellenic Entrepreneurs Association (E.EN.E) and Executive Advisor to the Athens Medical Group, acted as coordinator.

Then, there followed introductory speeches by the Professor and former Vice-Rector of the Agricultural University **Serkos Haroutounian**, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of FAO (Food Agriculture Organization) for Europe and Central Asia, **Antonis Filippis**, President of ELGO - DIMITRA and **Zacharoula Andreopoulou**, Professor in Environmental Informatics and Technologies for Green Regional policies, Department of Forestry and Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Chair of the Scientific Council of Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre MED-OHC.

Government officials, political figures, people from political parties as well as representatives of international organizations (FAO and WHO) also addressed the Forum.

In particular, addresses were delivered by **George Papandreou**, former **Prime Minister of Greece**, **Christos Kellas**, Deputy Minister of Rural Development and Food, **Nikos Papaioannou**, Deputy Minister of Education, while video messages were sent by **Adonis Georgiadis**, Minister of Health, **Dimitris Tsiodras**, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), **Ilias Kyriopoulos**, Assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy at London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), Member of the Scientific Council (SC) of MED – OHC, **Theofanis Kanellos**, Professor at the University of Surrey, Member of the SC of MED – OHC, **Dr. Christos Zafeiridis**, European Commission (Seconded National Expert), DG Health and Food Safety - Directorate G, Crisis management in food, animals and plants, Member of the Working Group for the Implementation of the EU-JAMRAI [European Union Joint Action on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) of MED -OHC, **Dimitrios Katsaounis**, Applied AI Consultant, Canada, Member of the SC of MED-OHC.

Also, the 2nd One Health Forum was addressed by **Diamantis Golidakis**, Member of the Hellenic Parliament for the constituency of Thessaloniki A' with New Democracy Governing Party and member of both the Standing Committee on Social Affairs and the Special Standing Committee on Research and Technology, while an address was also delivered by **Lefteris Karchimakis**, PASOK Party, Program Coordinator.

An honorary distinction was awarded to **Dr. Vassilis Apostolopoulos**, CEO of the Athens Medical Group, for his long-standing and active support of the One Health strategy. The award was presented by Deputy Ministers, Christos Kellas and Nikos Papaioannou.

Key contributions were made by **Dr. Stefanos Fotiou**, Director in the Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Agrifood Systems of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and **Dr. Joao Breda**, Head of the WHO (World Health Organization) Athens Office for Quality of Care.

Then, followed subject Round Tables with the following participants:

- **Efi Pexara**, DVM, MSc, Hellenic Food Authority, (EFET)
- **Katerina Marinou**, DVM, MVM, PhD Director, Veterinary Services Department, Ministry of Rural Development and Food
- **Athina Trachili**, President of the Panhellenic Veterinary Association, Secretary General of European Veterinary Practitioners
- **Georgios Vitsas**, Secretary of the Piraeus Medical Association, Deputy Mayor of Public Health and Social Welfare, Municipality of Piraeus, Greece
- **Yiannis Liaros**, General Director of the Interprofessional Organization of Eggs and Egg Products (EDOAPA)
- **Theocharis Koloveas**, President of HAVEPHARM (Veterinary Pharmaceuticals Association)
- **Maria Linou**, DVM, MSc, PhD, President of the Hellenic Veterinary Society
- **Dasy Papathanasopoulou**, National Coordinator of WHO - Hellenic Healthy Cities Network
- **Nikos Chrysoveridis**, Special Associate of the New Democracy Party on Animal Welfare, President of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Paleo Faliro, President of the Veterinary Association of Attica and the Islands
- **Korina Liouta**, Elected Member of the Supreme Disciplinary Council of the Nurses' Union of Greece (ENE), Head of the Health Centre of Amaroussio, former President of the Sikiaridio Foundation
- **Georgios Valiakos**, Associate Professor, Department of Veterinary Medicine, University of Thessaly, Member of the AMR Working Group of MED – OHC
- **Mary Gianniou**, General Directorate of Veterinary Services, Animal Health Directorate of the Ministry of Rural Development and food
- **Smaro Sotirakiç**, Director of the Veterinary Research Institute ELGO – DIMITRA
- **Panagiotis Gargalianos - Kakolyris**, Director of the Infectious Diseases Clinic, Athens Medical Centre
- **Alkiviadis Vatopoulos**, Professor of Public Health Microbiology, Member of the Scientific Council of MED – OHC
- **Alexandros Karydis-Karandreas**, Founding Partner, SPOROS Impact Ventures, Member of the SC of MED – OHC
- **Evangelos Alexandropoulos**, Agronomist MSc, PhDc, Research Manager, Kafsis Company SA, Member of a MED - OHC Working Group.
- **Lina Toupektsi**, Agronomist, MSc, MBA

The assumptions and conclusions of the 2nd One Health Forum are summarized as follows:

ASSUMPTIONS

- *The One Health policy is a basic expression and vehicle of the holistic solutions required in the 21st century to prevent and overcome health, environmental and food crises, pandemics, etc.*
- *Through the **One Health Strategy**, we work together, developing **patterns of synergies** and models of interdisciplinary and **cross-sectoral actions**.*
- *We need a global vision that will serve as **a compass** to guide us through these turbulent times. **That compass is One Health**.*
- *The purpose of the new structure is the joint commitment of scientific forces and fields in the prevention of pandemics and health, environmental or food crises.*
- ***MED – OHC is not just a new Centre; it expresses and promotes a **New Strategy** for the dissemination of One Health in the Mediterranean, with Greece playing a leading role.***
- ***Education has a key role** to the development of a collaborative culture and communication in the new national, European and global environment.*
- ***A closer interconnection of Agricultural production, Environment and Public Health is increasingly recognized as a critical and urgent issue.***
- *One Health is the key tool for achieving **the 17 Sustainable Development Goals** worldwide, the **Green Deal** in the European Union and the implementation of relevant policies by National Governments: **Climate Strategy, Life on Land, Life Below Water, Clean Water, Secure Supply Chains, Actions for Equality and Justice**, Collaboration and Networking Initiatives between stakeholders.*
- ***Climate Change** is recognized **as the most serious problem** facing the world after poverty and hunger, lack of drinking water and armed conflicts, with **93%** of **European Union** citizens considering Climate Change as a serious and pressing problem, while 84% agree that addressing it should be a priority for improving Public Health.*

CONCLUSIONS

- **Climate Crisis** is associated with **major causes of mortality and disease**, contributing to humanitarian emergencies such as heatwaves, fires, floods, storms and droughts that are increasing in frequency and intensity. Without appropriate adaptation, river floods are predicted to affect 250.000-400.000 more people per year in Europe. Therefore, we must jointly address the **triple planetary crisis** of climate change, biodiversity overturning or loss and pollution.
 - The **environmental footprint** of our actions has a direct impact on the sustainability of the HUMAN, ANIMAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL triad. Climate Change **mitigation** will be achieved **through global strategies** and not through isolated efforts. It is necessary to explore and implement **environmentally friendly ways** to support and strengthen production systems.
 - The **hidden cost of the Greek Agri-Food System**, estimated at 28 billion euros, was highlighted. In essence, it is “an **invisible tax** paid every time that a farmer is exposed to chemicals, a citizen is admitted to hospital or a child becomes obese.”
- This **hidden cost** must be taken into account into **Political Strategies and Decisions**.
 - **90% of standardized product** labels worldwide are controlled by **just 10 companies**.
 - **Over-concentration of standardized and processed food** is pure **dynamite**, the threat to Health, the Economy and the Environment.
 - The Only Way Out: **Nutrition must be treated as a Public Health Issue**.
 - **Dietary Transition** should become a **National Goal**.
 - There must be **colour or numerical identification** on food packaging, in addition to the indication of calories and nutritional ingredients.
 - There must be **labelling** of Bad Food.
 - **Official Food Control** is fundamental to the protection of public health, animal health and the maintenance of ecosystem health and is a key pillar of One Health.
 - **Official food control** is fundamental to protecting public health, animal health, and ecosystems, and is also a key pillar of One Health.
- There must be **Consumer** information campaigns to prevent misleading in relation to the composition and labelling of foods on ingredients that cause allergies or intolerances and on dietary and health claims made on their packaging.
 - **Actions** must be taken to encourage consumers to make healthy and responsible dietary choices aiming at the reduction of obesity and other chronic diseases, as well as to **avoid food waste** and therefore reduce the carbon footprint on the environment.
 - **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)**: it is necessary to target the issue to a greater extent as well as to increase the intensity of interventions on a practical level.

- *Effectively addressing AMR requires strengthening surveillance systems, developing guidance on the rational use of antibiotics in both human and veterinary practice, improving diagnostic tools, as well as raising awareness among both healthcare professionals and the public. Investment in education and laboratory infrastructure is necessary and urgent.*
- *Coordinated AMR action plans, common protocols, interoperable databases and cooperation of politics, science and the society are necessary.*
- *WHO must put emphasis on antimicrobial resistance. Pandemics, inequalities and food crisis cannot be tackled alone. Interdisciplinary cooperation, synergies and common goals are required, at a supranational level.*

*There seems to be a link between **Climate Change** and **the Emergence of New Multi-Drug-Resistant Pathogens**, possibly attributable to increased temperatures, which either facilitate the horizontal transfer of genetic material among bacteria, or favours bacterial.*

During the Forum Workshops, the following issues were also highlighted:

- *The key factors that allowed **successful treatment** of the outbreak of plague of small ruminants in the **Region of Thessaly**, which was also the focus of a special thematic unit-were sought and identified.*
- *The **need to address such outbreaks of animal diseases within the broader framework of One Health was recognized, as they affect not only productive animals:** The environment plays an important role in the maintenance and transmission of pathogens and significantly determines the epidemiological pattern of spread.*
- *The **effect on humans** of these outbreaks was recognized, not only in economic terms but also in terms of **significant psychological pressure** and social stigma of the producers involved. The goal in Thessaly has been achieved with the following important factors for success:*
 - 1) **immediate mobilization** of all stakeholders and their cooperation at all levels
 - 2) **organization of a model of immediate** and broad **active clinical** and **laboratory surveillance** throughout the Region. Surveillance was not limited simply to reports of suspected cases but also to the collection of data and samples from all units within the protection and surveillance zones, taking into account in particular the difficulty of timely notification of suspected cases by producers due to their fear of financial consequences and possible social stigma
 - 3) **full support by the local Regional Authority**, especially in covering all needs, both in human resources and in sampling materials and laboratory consumables.
 - 4) **speed of action**, which plays the most important role in dealing with such outbreaks.
- *After the disasters in Thessaly an **increase in the mosquito population, a reduction in grazing land, and a redistribution of biodiversity** were recorded.*
- *Main **biosecurity measures** for local commercial farms include **limiting contact between birds and wild birds**, maintaining excellent hygiene, avoiding the use of equipment that has been used in other farms, **staff vaccination**, and limiting access to the farm to only essential personnel.*
- *The **H5N1 strain of influenza** is quite frequently found in many countries in Africa and Asia and has more recently spread to Europe and North America, while the risk of H5N1 avian influenza infection for the general population is real.*
- *Climate Change affects the way the agri-food sector **develops**, the outcome, namely the quality and the quantity. It is **a matter of obligation** of all those involved in the primary sector to exchange know-how, information and experience.*

- *The enormous importance of implementing One Health strategies in the **Transport sector** was highlighted, with **Shipping** being a **key factor and field of utmost importance for Public Health**. The **port of Piraeus**, the 3rd largest port in Europe, is a leading example of application of the One Health Strategy as through traffic of people (tourists, migratory flows, etc.), food, and goods in general, ideal conditions for the re-emergence and spread of diseases, within a very short period of time, are created.*

- ***We must exploit the opportunities** created by technological developments and **Artificial Intelligence**, to our benefit.*
- ***We must highlight** our strong role in managing the major issues that concern us and will concern us in the coming years, such as the Climate Crisis consequences, open social issues (security, housing, poverty), energy self-sufficiency, water management, etc.*
- *We need to respond to modern challenges for **digital cities**, "**smart**", "**green**", **sustainable** and **certainly durable** to the threats of Climate Crisis.*

- ***Circular Economy** is a **strong vehicle** of One Health. Small and medium-sized enterprises that focus on real economy develop a strong, sustainable profile, as a condition for strengthening their connection with consumers and allowing their access to green sustainable forms of financing.*
- *The interconnectedness of the **Circular Economy, Bio-economy, and One Health** is crucial. The need to create a production model in Greece which will stand the test of time, namely: "**today's products must be tomorrow's resources at yesterday's prices**".*

- ***Inclusion** is the most decisive **antidote** to social exclusion.*
- *The daily life of People with Disabilities is inextricably intertwined with humans, animals and the environment, in a therapeutic context.*
- *Based on an inclusive culture it is necessary for the One Health strategy to build a **bridge** between disability and well-being, to accept diversity, to ensure accessibility and a rights-based approach to disability.*
- *Equally important for health and well-being promotion is the **interdisciplinary approach**, with **education** and awareness-raising of families with members with special needs, and of caregivers of vulnerable social groups.*
- *Accessibility is the rights-based approach to disability.*
- *One Health Accessible platform for all citizens*

The official presentation of the «**Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre**» (MED - OHC) has shown **the will to make the Mediterranean region a hub for prevention and biosecurity, through substantial cross-sectoral collaboration and innovative approaches.**

The current global and local health crises, as well as those looming on the horizon, make it a matter of urgent necessity that there should be cooperation, innovative solutions and coordinated and joint action. In this context, the creation of the «**Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre**» is a key point for the necessary **coordination** of issues and actions, **lifelong education** - in line with the culture of One Health- and the proper **training** and **education** of **students** already from the beginning of their studies, with an emphasis on prevention and the basic parameters of One Health.

It has become clear that **One Health is not a theoretical framework. On the contrary, it is an increasingly urgent necessity that must now be translated into Daily practice.**

It should also be noted that the Working Group of the «**Mediterranean One Health Innovation Centre**» undertook to prepare the “**One Health Code**”, a framework of basic principles and objectives that will henceforth form the basis for dialogue and interdisciplinary collaborations and synergies to fulfil the goals of One Health.

“One Health Code” will be completed in 2025.

The MED - OHC has addressed, and is addressing an **OPEN CALL** to all interested institutions, so that this cross-sectoral Collaboration and Innovation Centre becomes very soon the **Mediterranean Collaborative Ecosystem** - and not only - where experts from all fields will participate and co-shape a common ground, based on dialogue, through fruitful collaboration and open communication.

Without personal agendas and based solely on unanimously supporting initiatives and actions that will promote One Health and Sustainable Development.

*The **contributions of the speakers** are available on the official **MED - OHC** website www.medohc.com



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