

## **Prioritisation of the animal health industry during potential gas shortages as a consequence of the war in Ukraine**

On Wednesday 20 July, the European Commission announced the adoption of a [European Gas Demand Reduction Plan](#) setting out measures, principles, and criteria for coordinated gas demand reduction.

This Plan aims to safeguard supply to essential services and industries that are critical for the provision of essential social services. In case of necessary energy curtailments, the Plan also provides guidelines for Member States to identify and prioritise “non-protected” consumers on the basis of a set of criteria.

The animal health industry welcomes the fact that industries to be considered under the criteria ‘societal criticality’ include amongst others the health, food, and safety sector. We therefore call for Member States to recognise the essential role of the animal health industry within these sectors.

The animal health industry’s aim is to ensure that veterinarians, farmers and pet owners continue to have access to the medicines they need. Ensuring availability of veterinary vaccines and medicines throughout the EU and globally is essential both for companion animals and food-producing animals. Vaccines and medicines are not only important for animal health and welfare but also for public health by safeguarding the availability of food of animal origin and food safety, and by prevention of foodborne diseases or other diseases that are shared between animals and people.

If the animal health industry is not included in “essential services” we would be deeply concerned that energy supply disruptions would negatively impact on the production and supply of veterinary medicines. This would threaten the availability of products for veterinarians and farmers and the safe functioning of food supply chains, as well as the care of companion animals.

Failure to ensure sufficient power supplies would have an immediate impact on supply and result in shortages.

We therefore call on Member States to ensure that the animal health industry is prioritised in national preventive and emergency plans on gas supply.