PHAGE EU

PHAGE EU NEWSLETTER 2023

Innovative treatments as well as feed, food and medical products based on phage technology are being developed worldwide and in the European Union. Unfortunately, there are still administrative barriers and regulatory hurdles linked to the authorization process of this novel technology in the EU. However, we are happy to see that more and more EU decision makers and regulators are aware of the potential of phages and their role in meeting objectives of the global and European public health policy. Bacteriophages are gaining on importance in the context of the fight against AMR, application of the OneHealth approach or transition towards sustainable food systems.

We have established the PhageEU coalition in order to make the voice of the phage community heard and to realize the full potential of bacteriophages. We are very happy to hand over to you the summary of our activities taken up in the first operational year. A lot has happened but still a lot remains to be done.

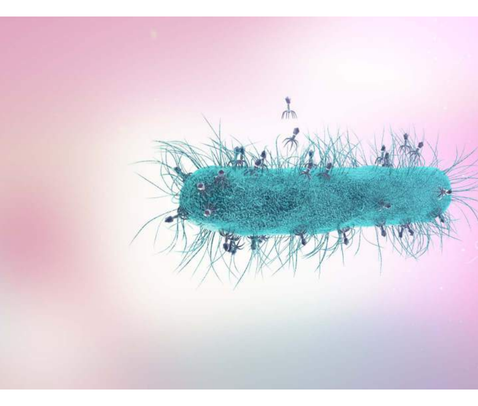
If you want to make the voice of the phage community stronger, join our efforts by becoming a member of Phage EU. You may also follow and promote our activities via

Frenk Smrekar
CEO of JAFRAL

Jarosław Dastych
CEO of Proteon Pharmaceuticals

Hansjörg Lehnherr
CSO of
Phage Technology Center GmbH

Phage EU breaking news



European Parliament Resolution on EU action to combat antimicrobial resistance

PhageEU press release

EP resolution

In its Resolution, adopted on the 1st June 2023, the European Parliament has recognized the role bacteriophages play in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. In the situation where development of new effective antibiotics and new antimicrobial agents is a challenge, there is a need to develop and implement new incentives and look at alternative treatments such as bacteriophages. MEPs have also called on the European Commission to prioritize an appropriate regulatory framework for registering bacteriophages both as feed additives and as veterinary medicinal products (VMPs) as they have a great potential to fight AMR in animal husbandry.

This Resolution is an important step for the phage community, as for the first time bacteriophages have been directly recognized by the European Parliament as an effective tool to fight AMR.

EMA guideline on quality, safety and efficacy of veterinary medicinal products specifically designed for phage therapy

EMA guideline

On 13th of October 2023 the European Medicines Agency issued its “Guideline on quality, safety and efficacy of veterinary medicinal products specifically designed for phage therapy”. The aim of this guideline is to establish the regulatory/technical and scientific requirements applicable to VMPs specifically designed for phage therapy and composed of bacteriophages. This guideline also addresses how existing EU provisions can be applied in practice for bacteriophage-based products for phage therapy.

PhageEU has welcomed publication of this guideline. We support a robust and clear framework for registering phages in the EU, as this will promote adoption and use of phages for multiple purposes.

Phage EU events

Webinar February 2023

Scientific event in the European Parliament on “How to realize bacteriophages potential in the EU”

PhageEU organized its first scientific event in the European Parliament in February 2023, in order to discuss among EU decision makers and experts how to realize bacteriophages potential in the EU. This event was co-hosted by MEP Adam Jarubas (EPP) and MEP Emmanouil Fragkos (ECR). We gathered around one table representatives from the European Parliament, European Commission from DG AGRI (L. Vivas-Alegre, Head of Sector Research and Innovation Coordination, Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development) and DG SANTE (A. Perez Team Leader, AMR, Directorate General for Health and Food Safety), representatives of the poultry and phage industries (D. Goszczynski, Director General of the National Poultry Council – Chamber of Commerce and Prof. J. Dastych, CEO of Proteon Pharmaceuticals) and academia (Prof. D. Gally, Personal Chair of Microbial Genetics, Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh).

Webinar July 2023

Online webinar on “Getting bacteriophages into the EU market- challenges, experiences and current outlook”

Webinar July 2023

Scientific hurdles to designing phage cocktail.

Alison Low
PHD Edinburgh University

Webinar July 2023

Aspects of political debate in EU institutions.

Margareta Przybyla
PhageEU

Webinar February 2023

Regulatory challenges.

Dr. Elinor McCartney

We might be on the brink of a phage paradigm shift in the European Union. This has been confirmed by various experts during an online webinar, that PhageEU organized on 11th July 2023. Experts have demonstrated that there is a good chance that in the near future a feed additive based on phage technology will be authorized by the European Commission. This would be a template for the development of ground-breaking phage products in poultry and other food producing animals. Phages are also being recognized by EU decision makers as an alternative treatment to fight against AMR.

The webinar offered an interesting discussion on how bacteriophages will be part of the framework to tackle challenges such as AMR and the EU OneHealth approach.

Phage EU campaigns

World Phage Week

World Phage Week aims to increase the global community's awareness of the life-saving potential of phages. In 2023 communication campaigns and awareness raising activities were undertaken by the global phage community from 22nd till 28th of October. PhageEU joined these efforts by running a communication campaign on its social media and involving various experts in raising awareness about the potential of phages.

PhageEU believes, that there were reasons to celebrate World Phage Week 2023, due to important developments at the EU level. In June 2023 the European Parliament adopted a Resolution, in which it has recognized the role of bacteriophages in the fight against antimicrobial resistance. On a similar note, EMA has published a guideline on quality, safety and efficacy of veterinary medicinal products specifically designed for phage therapy.

View

World AMR Awareness Week

The World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW) is a global campaign to raise awareness and understanding of AMR and promote best practices among OneHealth stakeholders to reduce the emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections. WAAW is celebrated from 18-24 November every year. On this occasion, PhageEU took part in an online webinar organized by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. We also launched an article, drafted by one of our founding members Proteon Pharmaceuticals, presenting how phages can fight AMR.

View

Future of agriculture in the EU and sustainable food systems

During her State of the Union speech, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, announced, that the Commission will launch a strategic dialogue on the future of agriculture in the EU. According to the 2024 Commission work programme, this dialogue will engage farmers and stakeholders in the food chain and citizens working together on the transition towards sustainable food systems.

Phage EU, as the voice of the phage community in the EU, published an Open letter to three Commissioners in order to express its strong interest in taking an active part in this strategic dialogue. With this letter PhageEU wants to draw the attention of the European Commission to the potential of phages with regards to transition towards sustainable food systems.

View

Phage Ambassadors

“Phage therapy is a promising, affordable and natural solution for combating antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The EU must not overlook the potential of this innovative, risk-free therapeutic approach. Slovenia, Belgium, Poland, Germany and France are in the vanguard: let's take the initiative to support and develop this sector without delay.”

Michèle Rivasi
Member of the European Parliament

"We cannot leave any stone unturned in our fight against antimicrobial resistance. Everyone is aware that the antibiotic pipeline is severely broken and that there is an urgent need to look into alternative treatments. Here, especially bacteriophages could have a considerable potential to become an affordable and effective tool for bacterial control as a possible alternative to or complement for antibiotic therapy."

Tiemo Woelken
Member of the European Parliament

"According to the Farm to Fork strategy the use of antibiotics needs to be reduced and other related EU policies will move into this direction. As bacteriophages can be an alternative to antibiotics, they can help achieving EU goals with regards to food safety, animal welfare and safety of humans."

Adam Jarubas
Member of the European Parliament

"In many places around the world we will soon witness large scale usage of bacteriophages in agriculture and food processing. Farmers and food producers will learn how to use this technology to their benefit and phages will become routine methods of controlling bacterial pathogens. This will change the perception of bacteriophage technology from something very abstract and theoretical into something concrete and practical."

Prof. Jarosław Dastych
Founder & CEO of Proteon, Pharmaceuticals S.A.

"Phages have huge potential for various applications. For their application, stakeholders have to work together (academia, industry, regulatory, governments, etc.). We are hopeful, that current positive trend is additionally accelerated in next months in order to address pressing issues, where phage products could help."

Dr. Barbara Hubad
COO of JAFRAL

"As a GMP and non-GMP phage manufacturers, we are happy to see, that with increased demand for various phage products, standards and quality of products are increasing in phage field as a whole."

Dr. Frenk Smrekar
CEO of JAFRAL

"It is an exciting time to be involved in phage biology research and the application of phage to reduce or treat infection. As academics, we are optimistic that the incredible complexity of phage interactions can be understood and harnessed for precision medicine to the benefit of human and animal health".

Prof. David Gally and Dr. Alison Low
University of Edinburgh

"Phage therapy provides cure when either antibiotic allergies, resistance, sticky biofilm, or prosthetic/hardware associated infections are causing dead-end infections. Phages out produce and out- evolve bacteria. We do not have the lives and the dollars to spare to continue to keep this targeted and personalized medicine on the sidelines in Western Medicine. We recently looked back since the 1920s and shown that in around 1400 UTI patients, phages cured between 50 and 80 % and had only 1% minor side effects".

Greg German
MD PhD FRCPC Unity Health (Toronto), Medical Microbiologis, PhageCanada

"Bacteriophages are a unique tool nature provides us to fight pathogenic bacteria in Modern Food safety. Phages are omnipresent in our environment. Lytic bacteriophages are very effective in killing their targeted, specific bacteria without affecting anything else. Beneficial micro flora like starter or protective cultures remain intact. These properties make us believe that bacteriophage applications will be an essential principle in the future of food pathogen control".

Dr. Michael Fink and Dr. Hansjörg Lehnherr
Phage Technology Center GmbH

Phage EU campaigns

Phage EU is a coalition of likeminded stakeholders who represent phages in industry, the scientific community and civil society. We want to realize the full potential of phages in Europe.

https://phageurope.eu

Want to join us?
If you want to make the voice of phage community in the EU and globally stronger, join us while sending your expression of interest to: mprzybyla@phageurope.eu