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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: African swine fever: state of play
- *Information from the Commission*

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Commission on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 17 and 18 July 2017.

African swine fever: state of play

On 27 June 2017, the Commission was informed by authorities in the Czech Republic of a strong suspicion of African swine fever (ASF) in a wild boar found dead in the locality of Zlin in the eastern part of the Czech Republic. The suspicion was subsequently confirmed and another case was notified on the same day also in a wild boar. This constitutes an unexpected significant epidemiological event as the cases are located hundreds of kilometres away from any previous outbreak in infected Member States (Baltic States and Poland) or in neighbouring non-EU countries (for instance Russia and Ukraine). The preliminary epidemiological investigation supports the hypothesis of virus introduction in Zlin through human activity, possibly through illegal meat (e.g. sausages from infected territories brought into the Czech Republic).

The authorities in the Czech Republic, supported by the Commission, immediately put in place all the necessary preventive measures. An Implementing Decision laying down interim protective measures demarcating the infected area where veterinary restrictions apply was adopted immediately by the Commission on 28 June. The preventive measures are due to be revised and amended at the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed on 13 July. Commission experts from the Community Veterinary Emergency Team were immediately dispatched to the Czech Republic to provide on-the-spot support to the authorities and to assess the situation.

The veterinary authorities in the Czech Republic have strengthened the level of awareness and surveillance putting in place all necessary EU measures paying special attention to minimising the risk of disease spread.

The event in the Czech Republic occurs simultaneously with the predicted epidemic seasonal summer peak of ASF with several outbreaks in small backyard holdings being notified in Poland together with isolated outbreaks in farms in Baltic States, and increased virus detection in wild boar in the affected areas. This increased seasonal threat was addressed at the recent High Level Ministerial Conference that took place in Riga on 2 June, where Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, and Ukraine agreed on a set of common recommendations. At the Riga meeting, Commissioner Andriukaitis strongly advocated enhanced awareness, preparedness and proactive strengthening on the ground of EU harmonised measures. These measures were further strengthened to take into account recent developments, and the relevant amendment of EU legislation was endorsed by the Standing Committee on 9 June.

It is essential now to better understand the recent events in the Czech Republic and tackle this new threat together with the seasonal disease peak in the already infected areas of the EU with maximum rigour. This requires full awareness, maximum cooperation and strict adherence to the EU strategy for ASF control developed over the past three years with the support of the best available science delivered by the European Food Safety Authority, coupled with the significant human and financial resources mobilised by the Commission (since 2013 EUR 36.2 million have been allocated to the affected Member States).

The Commission will continue to support ASF eradication, financially subject to budgetary constraints. Current EU funding allocates funds for eligible measures such as surveillance, awareness raising campaigns, compensation to farmers and disinfection of infected holdings. Funding for wild boar management can be increased if required by the epidemiological situation. The Commission is also ready to consider funding new types of measures, provided they are duly justified by the Member States and are subject to a sound financial control to ensure the proper use of public funds.

ASF is a very severe transboundary disease of pigs affecting a wide region in Europe covering several countries, both inside and outside of the EU. Therefore international cooperation at all levels is pivotal to successfully control this disease. International initiatives should in particular take advantage of the joint OIE/FAO Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) for refining and moving forward on technical aspects.

The Commissioner wishes to inform Ministers of the evolution of the disease, highlighting the importance of implementing measures in line with the EU strategy for ASF control, and to inform in particular of the situation in Czech Republic at the meeting of the **Agriculture and Fisheries Council** on 17 July.
