



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 2 September 2015  
(OR. en)

11555/15

AGRI 442  
VETER 63

**NOTE**

---

From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Council

---

Subject: A worrying situation caused by the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak  
in the Baltic States and Poland  
– *Request by the Estonian delegation, supported by Latvia, Lithuania and  
Poland*

---

Delegations will find attached an information note received from the Estonian delegation on the above mentioned subject to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 7 September 2015.

**A worrying situation caused by the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak  
in the Baltic States and Poland**

In view of the Council Meeting of 7 September 2015, Estonia supported by Latvia, Lithuania and Poland asks the Presidency for an opportunity to give an overview the ASF outbreak in the Baltic States and Poland and introduce possible measures to ease the situation for the sector.

ASF is a highly contagious and serious virus disease of wild boar and domestic pigs. ASF was first detected in wild boar in Lithuania and then in Poland at the beginning of 2014. Previously, there has been information about ASF outbreaks in pig holdings of Belarus and Russia. Since January 2014, the disease has been detected in wild boar - as well as in domestic pigs - in all the above mentioned Member States. As the epidemiological situation evolves, there is a constant need for adjusting the disease control measures introduced in the affected Member States, for example as suggested in the most recent scientific opinion of EFSA on ASF (dated 14 July 2015). Various restrictions established due to this epidemiological situation have led to serious negative economic consequences of the sector. The disease continues to spread and may have a devastating effect even on a wider EU scale.

The support of the European Commission as well as joint measures to combat the current situation are of particular importance. The four Member States are of the opinion that the currently agreed ASF strategy of Baltic States and Poland should be further developed into a joint long-term EU-wide strategy to combat ASF.

In Estonia, the first case of ASF in domestic pigs was detected in the middle of July 2015. To cope with ASF, Estonia and other concerned Member States have applied all the preventive and eradication measures provided in the EU regulations in order to control the situation. Additional measures, agreed in the ASF strategy document for the Baltic Countries and Poland, have also been taken, as well as supplementary biosecurity measures introduced at national level. However, since the disease was detected in pig farms, the economic situation has got worse, mainly due to the strict rules (established in connection with the regionalisation of the affected Member States) for the movement of live pigs and meat products between the different zones established. In Estonia, the most restricted area (defined in Part III of Annex to Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU) includes over 130 enterprises, which corresponds to approximately a quarter of all Estonian pigs.

In order to relieve the situation and to be better prepared for the future, we propose that the following actions should be taken:

- We ask the European Commission to better define the **regionalisation issue**. According to the existing procedures, in situations where ASF is detected, regionalisation is defined and implemented in accordance with the Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU. However, there are no clearly defined criteria for the minimum area of a region/zone and for the review of the existing restriction zones (to lift the restrictions or to change from zone III to zone II or zone I).

For example, in restriction zone III, which shall apply in situations where the disease was found both in wild and domestic pig population, according to Directive 2002/60/EC restrictions can be lifted after the implementation of all disease control measures in the affected domestic pig holdings and in the protection and surveillance zones, but the zone III status of that region will persist. Thus, that particular region will still suffer from strong restrictions although the epidemiological situation has improved or shows the same risks as in part II (only wild boar infection continues to appear).

- **More flexibility** should be introduced into respective EU regulations that would help to ease the situation of the sector. To that end, Article 4 of Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU should be amended so that it would be possible to remove piglets from the approved and high biosecurity breeding farms to the approved and high biosecurity fattening farms throughout the territory of the state with the possibility of slaughter under the conditions already in place for pigs (part III). The decision to introduce such a possibility should be made individually at the discretion of the competent veterinary authority of each MS affected by ASF.
- We would also like to highlight the **importance of continual work** with a view to improve the preparedness to cope with ASF. The Commission and EFSA have recently come up with new scientific data and knowledge of how to prevent this deadly disease from spreading as well as with control measures for wild boar and domestic pigs. We are of the opinion that additional resources should be allocated at European level for the collection of more scientific data both on the ASF risk assessment and management measures.

The Baltic States and Poland continue co-operating on a daily basis to fight any further spreads of ASF. In this regard, the support of the European Commission remains essential. We believe that the application of joint measures can take us to the successful eradication of ASF in the region.

The above mentioned Member States have also met Commissioner Andriukaitis and presented a common letter with more detailed proposals on relieving the situation and on the future prevention of the disease.