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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	High level meeting on African swine fever held in Tallinn on 26 February 2016 - <i>Information from the Estonian delegation</i>

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 14 March 2016.

High level meeting on African swine fever held in Tallinn on 26 February 2016

AOB information point by the Estonian delegation

The **High level meeting on African Swine Fever** organized by the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs took place on Friday 26 February 2016 in Tallinn, Estonia. Delegations from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania and the Commission delegation headed by the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis were present at this meeting.

Since 2014, African Swine Fever (ASF) has gradually spread from Russian Federation and Belarus to Baltic countries and Poland. ASF spread to EU has resulted in serious economic loss for the meat sector. The impact of ASF in Estonia has been very severe (the number of pigs has already decreased about 15%, the state has spent almost 7 million euros on crises management) and caused serious negative socio-economic effects. Effective and efficient co-ordination between Members States is of paramount importance for crisis preparedness and management to avoid further spreading of the disease from the third countries. A common ASF strategy for the Eastern part of the EU has been developed with the aim of establishing harmonized measures in response to the epidemiological situation with regard to ASF.

The meeting consisted of two sessions:

- 1) **ASF - Europe wide challenge**, where exchange of views on the state of play and crisis preparedness was given.
- 2) **ASF: scientific cooperation**: information was exchanged on the state of play in scientific activities on ASF in the Member States and the possible agreement on the work format of future co-operation. It is important to use most recent up-to-date scientific knowledge in order to develop and apply most efficient and at the same time least economical damage causing crisis management measures. In the long run it is necessary to find a fine line between socio-economic needs and efficient prevention measures to stop the spreading of ASF.

Member States appreciate greatly the work already done by the Commission in ASF research; however, it was highlighted in the meeting that more options have to be developed to support research activities related to the ASF to understand better the epidemiology and more efficient ways of eradicating the disease in this particular region. Therefore, the collection of the scientific data and the application of control measures based on that data should be a priority both for the Commission and for the Member States. Decisions related to the areas with restrictions should be based on the latest available scientific information.

As the disease spreads along the European Union Eastern border, it is in the common interest of the entire European Union to prevent the spreading of the disease further into EU. All Member States have to contribute – cooperation on different levels is necessary.

It was agreed that a new meeting will be held in 6 months to reassess the situation and possible further steps in ASF strategy.
