



Council of the
European Union

017245/EU XXVI. GP
Eingelangt am 11/04/18

Brussels, 11 April 2018
(OR. en)

7427/18

AGRI 150
VETER 28

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	High level Conference on African swine fever (ASF) (Warsaw, 26 March 2018) <i>- Information from the Polish delegation</i>

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Polish delegation on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the session of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 16 April 2018.

High level Conference on African swine fever (ASF) (Warsaw, 26 March 2018)

The high-level conference dedicated to the African Swine Fever organised by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development took place on 26 March 2018 in Warsaw, Poland. The meeting was attended by the delegations of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Slovakia, Ukraine, and the European Commission, headed by the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Mr V. Andriukaitis.

Ever since 2014, when the first cases of ASF were reported in the European Union, individual Member States have been undertaking actions at the national level; actions at the European Union level are also undertaken. Sharing the experiences gained and tightening the cooperation are an important element in combating this dangerous disease that is difficult to eradicate, and whose economic, social, and trade consequences affect so many countries.

The conference held in Warsaw served as an opportunity to discuss a series of topics and to work out cohesive conclusions related to scientific research, legislative and informative activities, and financial aid (Annex).

During the conference, individual Member States (Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic, and Romania) and the neighbouring EU third countries (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus) presented the current situation regarding ASF and information about the activities they undertake and plan to undertake.

As the disease is spreading towards the west, it is important to implement, sufficiently in advance, preventive actions by the countries that are free of the disease. The undertaken preventive activities were presented by the German delegation. They pertain in particular to securing the farms, reducing the population of wild boars, and informing about the disease threat.

The representatives of the European Commission presented information on financing scientific research on ASF. The international scientific cooperation, integration and combination of research, transfer of *know-how*, as well as mobility of scientists and trainings were indicated as the key criteria when choosing research projects to finance.

Within the “Horizon 2020” project, for the measure “Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry, Marine, Maritime and Inland Water Research and the Bioeconomy”, financing from the EU budget for 2014-2020 was allocated in the amount of EUR 3.8 billion.

Within the sub-measure “Research and approaches for emerging diseases and pests in plants and terrestrial livestock”, which will include identifying the factors that caused the occurrence of ASF in Europe, developing tools to manage ASF, including development of a new vaccine to protect against the ASF genotype II virus, which is predominant in Eastern Europe at this time.

Another activity discussed by the European Commission within the said project was a set of tools to diagnose pig diseases, which includes development of innovative devices to perform field diagnostics, based on advanced, proven technologies.

As regards the management and control of the wild boar populations, ASF-STOP campaign will be implemented between May 2016 and May 2020. It is aimed at developing the rules of supervision that increase early detection of ASF virus in the areas that had been free of the disease to date and at determining the epidemiological role of wild boars, ticks, and the environment.

Another type of the presented solutions is formed by infrastructural projects, intended to establish and maintain a comprehensive network of leading research facilities, academic institutes, international organisations and business partners, whose aim is to develop research on significant diseases and to promote technological development and using a communication platform to ensure bilateral exchange of information with the stakeholders in the industry.

At the end of the speech given by the representatives of the European Commission, the topic of vaccine against ASF was raised. Particular attention was drawn to the epizootic situation in Europe and the role of wild boars in the disease spreading. It was noted that at least the genotypes of ASF viruses that are now present in Europe are taken into consideration in the works on the vaccine, with the ability to expand it to include exotic genotypes.

Conclusions from the Ministerial Conference on African swine fever

Warsaw, 26 March 2018

In the context of the present situation in relation to African Swine Fever (ASF),

the delegations of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Germany,

Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Hungary, Croatia, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg,

Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation,

Slovenia, Sweden, Slovakia, Ukraine and the European Commission agreed on the following:

These conclusions reflect the common goal of implementing an ambitious strategy of prevention and control of ASF.

I. In terms of scientific research:

Taking into account the past experience in ASF eradication in populations of wild animals, it is necessary to continue to provide financial support considering the ongoing initiatives under Horizon 2020, the already achieved milestones such as Blueprint and Roadmap on the possible development of a vaccine for ASF and, also new research projects through dedicated financial priority calls concerning:

- I.1. international scientific cooperation on a development of vaccine against ASF;
- I.2. coordination and links between all research initiatives, including gap analysis and scientific advice on specific disease control measures on wild boar and domestic pigs provided in particular by EFSA.

- I.3. scientific support for solutions to be implemented as a part of ASF surveillance, control and eradication, including research on ASF epidemiology, (i.e. evaluation of dissemination and persistence of ASF virus in the environment, within the infected wild populations, the routes of ASF introduction in the pig farms and into new wild boar populations (supposedly human factors), and the scientific assessment for better identification of measures that contribute to contain ASF spread and duration such as wild boar fencing, hunting or feeding).

II. *In terms of legislative action and implementation of rules:*

- II.1. ASF measures and risk assessments should be regularly reviewed based on current scientific knowledge and experience acquired, as well as the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code chapters.
- II.2. Taking into account the new chapter of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code adopted in 2017, it is necessary to undertake international efforts in order to develop the application of rules concerning regionalisation, in particular for the cases of ASF occurrence only in wild boar by implementing strict, serious, reliable and sustainable regionalisation, separation between wild boar cases and domestic pigs outbreaks to prevent unnecessary restrictions in trade.
- II.3. As a human factor is crucial in the transmission of ASF over long distances, it is important to strengthen international cooperation and involvement of customs and other control and police authorities of all countries in combating illegal transport of animals and foodstuffs across borders, including in personal luggage of the travelers.

III. In terms of information measures:

III.1. As it has been proven repeatedly, properly structured awareness-raising campaigns concerning measures reducing the risk of ASF spread constitute a key element in combating the spread of ASF. Such campaigns should target not only special risk groups such as veterinarians, farmers, hunters or suppliers of goods and services to pig farms, but also other entities, especially from the meat industry, transport and tourism sectors. In this regard, the authorities should, support efforts both at technical and financial level. Priority should be made to awareness-raising activities, which would constitute the primary source of knowledge about the disease for the society.

Nevertheless, the operators involved in the international passenger traffic should take their responsibility in this field. Sharing best practices by the most efficient means of delivering information to different risk groups should be highly encouraged.

III.2. The system of appropriate Europe-wide trainings for services dealing with disease eradication in domestic and wild animals, including Better Training for Safer Food initiative and exchanges of practices should continue to be efficiently and effectively prepared to ensure sufficient preparedness to quickly contain a sudden disease outbreak.

III.3. It is important to obtain the most complete and reliable information on the evolution of the situation in both EU and non-EU countries, in which ASF is present. This is necessary to outline the actual state of knowledge in the context of epizootic situation in those countries, and thus to properly design veterinary and administrative measures in border areas. Therefore, the countries and the European Commission should take all possible efforts and means to ensure regular delivery of such information to the concerned EU and non-EU countries.

IV. In terms of additional financial support:

- IV.1. The experience gained in the implementation of different EU and non-EU support schemes for farmers intended to accelerate disease eradication should be considered and existing support and rural development mechanisms, including state aid should be further exploited, as appropriate.
- IV.2. Implementation of preventive measures, which involve raising the biosecurity level of farms and transport and implementing efficient methods for wild boar containment and/or reduction in particular in case of new focal outbreak It is necessary to develop mechanisms encouraging farmers to take preventive measures and properly secure their farms, as only appropriate actions on their part will contribute the most to reducing the risk of ASF introduction to their farms.

These conclusions, together with the awaited EFSA opinion and the consideration of the evolution of the disease in the coming months will inform a review of the strategy to be discussed in the next Ministerial Conference to be scheduled in the second half of 2018.