



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
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Health

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Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

**SECOND MEETING OF THE
REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
PROGRESSIVE CONTROL OF TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL DISEASES
(GF-TADS) FOR EUROPE.**

OIE Headquarters (Paris), 18 December 2007

SUMMARY REPORT

The second meeting of the Regional Steering Committee of the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADS) for Europe was held at the OIE Headquarters on 18 December 2007.

The Agenda and the list of participants are presented as Appendices I and II respectively.

Welcome speeches

Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, welcomed all participants and acted as facilitator pending the nomination of the Chairman.

Dr Nicola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe, welcomed the participants to the meeting. He recalled the recommendations from the first Regional Steering Committee meeting making references to recent animal disease crises in Europe and highlighting the relevant role of Veterinary Services in the control of animal diseases worldwide.

Dr Bernard Van Goethen, EC representative, stated that in the face of new challenges posed by diseases such as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), foot and mouth disease (FMD), bluetongue, African swine fever (ASF) and Classical Swine Fever (CSF), there is a need for better coordination amongst all partners involved not only within the EU but also with neighbouring regions. He added that all Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of the EU have been requested to agree on a regional strategy for the future.

The EU is assisting many Eastern European Countries (EU non members) with their current sanitary emergencies through its Veterinary Crisis Committee. It has also established as part of its long term strategy, a permanent veterinary education programme with specific budgets for EU members and Eastern Europe countries.

Dr Joseph Domenech, Chief Veterinary Officer of the FAO, stated that since the signature of the GF-TADS Agreement between OIE and FAO, many activities including missions and meetings have been carried out particularly in relation to the HPAI crisis. The coordination mechanism for fighting animal diseases has been improved and the GF-TADS Agreement provides a good umbrella for developing partnership while avoiding overlapping and duplication of activities.

Advocacy from all partner organisations is important in relation to the prevention of TADs. As highlighted during the recent OIE/FAO/World Bank Conference held in Washington last September, donors are committed to invest on prevention of TADs as it costs less to prevent diseases than to combat them.

The recommendations adopted during the recent New Delhi Conference are coherent with previous recommendations and shall again be considered during the next Global Conference that will be held in Cairo, Egypt, in October 2008.

Dr Domenech stressed the commitment of FAO advocacy on GF-TADs matters indicating the involvement of various senior officers in the activities of GF-TADs. He also commented on the good collaborative work between the Codex Alimentarius Commission where FAO and WHO are involved, and OIE on Food Safety issues mainly related to the OIE Working Group on Animal Production and Food Safety.

Dr Bernard Vallat expressed his satisfaction to see the participation of all members of the elected Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe as well as representatives of Member Countries, FAO and FVE (Federation of European Veterinarians). He recalled that GF-TADs' Regional Steering Committees have been established for each of the five OIE Regions and are functioning in an efficient and transparent manner. He announced that all Chairmen of Regional Steering Committees will be invited to attend the Global GF-TADs Steering Committee meeting to be held in Rome, Italy at the end of January 2008. He pointed out that currently there are 52 OIE Member Countries in Europe, including recent adhesions of Montenegro and Liechtenstein.

Dr Vallat proposed that a representative of WHO be invited to attend the next GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee meeting for Europe in order to discuss activities related to zoonoses.

Dr Vallat noted that the EC is the major donor of the Region in animal health programmes and stressed the importance of investing in Veterinary Services (VS) for the eradication of pathogens at source. He insisted on the necessity to provide assistance and resources to African and Asian countries for the reinforcement of their VS. He urged the Steering Committee to support a recommendation for improving Governance of VS.

He pointed out that the current situation of ASF and CSF in some European countries is due to weakness of VS. He recalled the recommendation from the meeting in Suzdal, Russia, in 2005, regarding good governance of VS, which is still valid.

Confirmation of the nomination of the Chairman and election of the other members of the Bureau of the Regional Steering Committee:

Dr Belev proposed that the meeting confirm the nomination of Dr Van Goethen as Chairman of the GF-TADs' Regional Steering Committee as decided during the last meeting of the OIE Regional Commission in May 2007.

The proposal was unanimously accepted.

Dr Van Goethem thanked all the participants for the trust placed in him and encouraged all partners and stakeholders to work together for the benefit of the Programme.

The proposal of Dr Belev to nominate Dr Gregory Ivanov, from Ukraine as Member of the Bureau in replacement of Dr Vertvisky in the Committee was accepted.

Dr Vallat suggested the nominations of some CVOs from non EU Member Countries in the Bureau to keep a balance.

The other members of the Bureau were confirmed. The final composition of the Regional Steering Committee is thus constituted as follows:

Chairman: Dr Van Goethem (EC):

Vice Chairmen: Drs J.Domenech (FAO) and E.A. Nepoklonov (Russia)

Members: Dr Bernard Vallat (OIE) with Dr Gaston Funes as substitute;

Dr Juan Lubroth (FAO), Dr Keith Sumption (EUFMD)

Dr K. Lukaukas (Lithuania)

Dr Gregory Ivanof (Ukraine)

Observers:

Dr R. Marabelli (Italy)

Dr P.Rogan (Ireland)

Dr M. Eloit (France)

Joint FAO/OIE activities in Europe for 2006/07

Dr Domenech presented the complementarities and synergies between OIE and FAO under the GF-TADS' Agreement, and mentioned that explanatory letters on this issue will be sent to all CVOs and FAO representatives in all countries.

He presented the different mechanisms and programmes such EMPRES, ECTAD, CMC and SEFRA that FAO is implementing at Global level.

He stressed the importance of Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCPs) Trust Fund for assisting countries highlighting the relevance of an appropriate chain of command, with the CVO being the reference person in each country for animal health issues.

Dr Domenech stated that under the umbrella of GF-TADS, and mainly due to the HPAI crisis, FAO has established some joint programmes with the OIE, such OFFLU, CMC, and GLEWS.

He described coordination activities that FAO is developing with other international organisations such WHO, WB and EC, including the participation in the organisation of international conferences on a number of issues including food safety.

He explained that the contact person for FAO in each country is the Minister of Agriculture through whom FAO tries to influence political decisions.

FAO is also assisting countries in tracking disease occurrences for improving their detection and alert system and thus help them meet with their obligations in the notification of diseases to the OIE.

Dr Domenech concluded by stating that although FAO is not responsible for elaborating animal health standards, it plays a significant role particularly in developing countries to implement OIE standards.

Dr Juan Lubroth (FAO) presented some statistics on the economic impact of TADs, and urged that all actions taken in the prevention of animal diseases be based on an epidemiological understanding of the diseases and on risk analysis.

He mentioned some activities that FAO is implementing to assist countries in their animal disease notification systems, contingency plans, simulation exercises and vaccine productions commenting on specific projects within European Region and those being carried out in collaboration with the OIE.

He described some missions carried out by the CMC for assessing sanitary crisis situations and follow up missions in some countries such as Afganistan (HPAI), Armenia (ASF) and Georgia (ASF).

In reference to the situation of ASF in Europe, Dr Lubroth stressed the necessity to adopt specific recommendations for the Action Plan 2008.

He explained in detail the GLEWS OIE/FAO/WHO joint programme which includes not only early detection, but also tracking of disease, epidemiological analysis and forecasting taking into account climatic changes that could affect the development and evolution of diseases.

He detailed the three main aspects of EMPRES comprising Intelligence, Information and Intervention.

Regarding the FAO's Global HPAI Programme, Dr Lubroth commented that although the programme is meant to help affected countries, it also assists in the preparation for prevention, detection and rapid response in free countries. The strategy is epidemiology-based.

He described the latest evolution HPAI which indicates a decrease in the incidence of the disease.

Dr Keith Sumption (FAO) presented the activities of EU-FMD, mentioning that the annual meeting of the Technical Committee was held in Cairo.

He expressed concern regarding the FMD situation in neighbouring regions of Europe. He commented on several meetings that have been organised or co-organised on FMD such as the following: special meeting at the OIE for FMD and ASF; FMD Round Table in Middle East with an emphasis on serotype O which is affecting the region and the worrying situation in Turkey, and the meeting related to FMD surveillance in Botswana at the OIE Reference Laboratory. He warned that the situation is not under control, and indicated that missions carried out in Georgia in June and in Egypt in September revealed the presence of exotic strains of FMD.

He finally commented on some programmes and missions to be funded by the EC Trust Fund in the near future.

Report of the activities of the GF-TADs for Europe for the year 2006/07

Dr Nicola Belev reported on the activities of GF-TADs for Europe in 2006 and 2007.

He commented on the OIE/EC Seminars on the Dialogue between Member Countries of the EU and other Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe', PVS evaluation missions and international meetings.

He expressed concern on the increase in the incidence of some zoonoses such as rabies and animal diseases such as ASF within the region during the last two years.

He commented on the importance accorded to the OIE-PVS Tool during the recent conference organised in Washington by the OIE and the World Bank with the support of the FAO. He stressed the necessity of reinforcing the relationship with Governments and Parliaments of Countries in order to strengthen VS.

He stated that Veterinary Schools should include in their curricula, topics related to activities of international and regional organisations such OIE, FAO and EC.

Contact and coordination with press media are also important for communicating the crucial role of VS.

Discussions

Dr Patrick Rogan remarked that although an impressive number of meetings were currently being held, the practical results were not always apparent. It is essential that real commitment be obtained more often from the highest political level of decision makers, including Financial Ministers and Prime Ministers without which those meetings would be mere wastes of resources.

Dr Vallat supported the views expressed by Dr Rogan and stated that meetings should also be organised with a main objective of convincing politicians of the importance of Veterinary Services. The OIE has organised national meetings in 21 European non EU countries and in more than two thirds of those countries, the meetings were attended by Ministers members of parliaments and in some cases by the Presidents of Parliaments. More and more CVO are currently asking OIE's help to transmit clear messages to Policy makers. The GF-TADs, which includes national representatives, International organisations and the EC, is a good channel for transmitting this type of message, not only to politicians but also to donors. He recommended that the EC provide more funds for animal health programmes in third countries.

Dr Lukauskas expressed his support to OIE activities related not only to animal health but also to those that have an impact on society at large. He stressed the importance of cooperation between different sectors and organisations. He recalled that 10 years ago, the OIE and EC undertook a mission in his country and he expressed his gratitude for the work developed in the region following the mission.

Dr Romano Marabelli supported the use of available time and resources to support VS and to improve the relationship between animal health safety and food security. He felt that the current strategy and the different options available sometimes tend to mask the "general objective" to control and eradicate diseases. It is important not to confuse strategies and tools with the final goal of improving animal health worldwide. A global approach is necessary, and this can only be achieved through strong Veterinary Services. Dr Marabelli also commented on the importance of the work being carried out in Universities particularly that in line with a good vision of public health.

Dr Domenech recalled that FAO was doing its utmost to sensitise Ministers of Agriculture and through them, other policy makers to get advocacy from organisations, donors and countries.

The Representative of FVE informed that his organisation is working on the role of veterinarians in public health issues. He provided comments on an existing system for evaluating Veterinary Schools. The experience so far shows different standards in veterinary education that need to be harmonised in order to achieve uniformly high standards. He also observed that the role of the veterinary profession has drastically changed during the last 30 years. Noting that the EU legislation is addressed exclusively to the professional community "internal market", he stated that the FVE is currently seeking to enlarging the scope to an "external market".

Dr Keith Sumption expressed a personal feeling that the message about efficient disease control is not currently reaching the appropriate level

Presentation made to the EU Parliament

Dr Bernard Vallat commented on the presentation he made to the European Parliament on Animal health policies.

He stated that the key message should reflect why new strategies and more funds are required.

He presented some trends related to world population increase and the requirements of animal proteins. The emergence and re-emergence of pathogens linked to climate change and the globalisation of the movements of goods and services were highlighted as well as the necessity to have strong VS to be able to prevent and control animal diseases including zoonoses.

It is easier to convince politicians on the control of diseases that have public health (including food safety) significance. In addition, effects of animal diseases on market access, food security and poverty alleviation could also help to further sensitise politicians.

The main response to disease problems and threats rest on Good Governance of Veterinary Services which is possible by complying to OIE standards and this could be facilitated by assistance from international organisations and donors.

Discussions

Dr Sumption commented on the annual tripartite meeting (OI/FAO/WHO) when it was decided to set up an Interagency Working Group for setting guidelines for emerging diseases, and enquired about its effective implementation. Dr Vallat replied that an OIE Ad Hoc Group on Emerging Diseases already exists and that the reports could be transmitted to the GF-TADs' Regional Steering Committees. He proposed that a representative of the Steering Committee form part of the Group. He also invited Russia, as an important country for the region, to nominate an expert to be included in the Group.

Dr Vallat stated that the case of ASF in Georgia is a good opportunity for establishing long term strategies under the umbrella of GF-TADs, starting with the PVS evaluation. Dr Lubroth added that FAO has implemented Technical cooperation Projects (TCPs) in Armenia and Georgia related to ASF for restructuring their VS (US\$ 5 Millions each).

Dr Domenech pointed out that although FAO is not an international donor agency, the FAO TCPs play a significant role in encouraging countries prepare long term investment projects.

Dr Vallat stated that Georgia is a clear example of certain countries in Europe that are not yet capable of preventing, detecting and controlling animal diseases because of the absence of sound governance of VS. These VS need to be evaluated followed by analyses of gaps and the elaboration of priority projects. He also informed that the OIE has specific funds for PVS evaluations for countries upon requests. He suggested that the recommendations of GF-TADS be sent to the OIE Regional Commission for Europe meeting in May during the General Session for endorsement.

The representative of Russia expressed concern about the PVS mission in Georgia where useful information was not made available. It was proposed that Dr Belev take up the matter with the authorities concerned before a final decision is taken.

Dr Van Goethen commented on the different animal health crises affecting the region such as ASF (Georgia), CSF (Balkans), FMD, AI and Bluetongue (the latter affecting only EU Member Countries for the moment). He announced the Conference on Bluetongue Vaccination which will be held in Brussels on 16 January 2008, to which all CVOs will be invited. He added that long term actions should include training activities on food safety, animal health and animal welfare.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Dr Vallat proposed that one recommendation would deal with general aspects of VS governance and the other will specifically address ASF and CSF. These will be circulated for comments from the Chairman and Members within the next two weeks. The main report will follow soon after.

Second Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee
of the GF-TADs for Europe

OIE Headquarters, Paris, 18 December 2007

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**Second Meeting of the Regional Steering Committee
of the GF-TADs for Europe**

OIE Headquarters, Paris, 18 December 2007

Recommendation 1

Support to Regional Animal Health Activities under the regional GF-TADs (Global Framework for the control of Transboundary Animal Diseases) Mechanism

CONSIDERING

The impact of transboundary animal disease crises on public health, the agricultural sector, trade and the livelihoods of small breeders particularly in certain areas of Europe,

The necessity for animal disease prevention and control to be supported by Veterinary Services that comply with OIE international standards and in a broader sense by effective systems of animal health,

The necessity to develop public-private partnerships in the prevention and control of animal diseases,

The need for countries to sustain their motivation in convincing Governments and donors to provide financial and technical assistance for the prevention and control of animal diseases,

The frequent emergence and re-emergence of serious international animal health crises,

The support to be provided to initiatives, structures and mechanisms at international level such as the Global Early Warning System (GLEWS) Platform managed by the FAO, OIE and the WHO and the FAO-OIE Crisis Management Centre/Animal Health (CMC-AH),

The support to be provided by the international community and the European Community for the prevention and control of animal diseases including zoonoses to European Countries in economic transition, socio-economic instabilities or with specific needs,

The importance of regional networks as tools to improve surveillance, early detection and timely diagnosis, transparency of animal disease information, rapid response to outbreaks as well as the potential use of the network approach in providing data for studies related to socio-economic surveys applicable to livestock systems,

The importance of integrating in the global context the control of relevant animal health events as well as public health approaches and programmes regarding the control of zoonoses (e.g. rabies, brucellosis, echinococcosis, leishmaniosis etc),

The role of livestock trade notably that carried out illegally and the importance of small village farms in the epidemiology of important transboundary animal diseases,

The importance of systems of compensation schemes providing incentives within the framework of compulsory sanitary stamping out of animals in order to optimise efficacy in national zoo-sanitary situations,

The necessity to achieve the goal of the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP) which aims to declare the world free from Rinderpest by the end of 2010,

The importance of climate change and globalisation of trade and movement of people on the emergence, re-emergence and spread of diseases,

The re-emergence of African swine fever and the emergence of bluetongue in certain regions and the negative impact of these diseases on animal production as well as on regional and global trade of livestock and livestock products,

The importance of animal health on food safety, food security and animal welfare,

THE SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE GF-TADS FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Veterinary Services (VS) be reinforced preferably after an evaluation using the OIE Tool for the performance of Veterinary Services (OIE- PVS Tool) which would also investigate the relationship between the Veterinary Services and veterinary teaching establishments, livestock associations and plants processing animal products. The evaluation will be followed if necessary, by a strengthening of the Veterinary services with the support of EC and FAO, identification of investment projects and training programmes to ensure that VS are brought in conformity with OIE standards;
2. Veterinary schools and other veterinary training institutions review the curriculum for veterinary training and whenever appropriate, progressively adapt the curriculum to comply with the requirements laid down in Council Directive 2005/36/EC. Veterinary teaching establishments should also offer appropriate postgraduate training programmes directed at continuous professional development for Veterinary Services. The EC should provide support whenever necessary to improve veterinary education;
3. International organisations such as OIE and FAO as well as donors including the EC pursue and reinforce their support to programmes aimed at the prevention and control of major animal diseases;
4. Countries continue their commitment towards projects regarding the prevention and control of animal diseases and ensure that they are implemented according to agreed objectives and time frames set out;
5. The fundamental basis of disease surveillance be addressed on an holistic approach taking into account the social, economic and cultural context as well as the global changes taking place;
6. Bluetongue, African swine fever and highly pathogenic avian influenza be the subject of preparations of emergency plans in all Member Countries of the Regional Commission for Europe and that studies on preventive and control measures be intensified;

7. Reference Laboratories of the region engage in twinning arrangements under the aegis of the OIE and FAO networks with other laboratories in order to provide and share expertise in the diagnosis and control of TADs. FAO and EC will provide support to these initiatives;
8. The OIE and FAO and their Member Countries in the region continue their advocacy role in the general prevention and control of animal diseases particularly HPAI in line with the momentum gathered during the recent ministerial meeting on avian influenza held recently in New Delhi, India;
9. The EUFMD participate fully in the forthcoming international conference on FMD in 2008 and that the OIE and FAO continue their coordinating role in the global control of the disease;
10. Member Countries and the GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee for Europe participate actively in the Conference on bluetongue vaccination to be organised soon by the European Commission;
11. The mechanisms and structures for the coordination of and support to animal disease control at international level such as the GLEWS and the CMC-AH reinforce their assistance to Member Countries;
12. Member Countries review the management and level of their animal health budgets in order to ensure a timely, fair and sustainable compensation to farmers who lose their animals as part of disease control measures resulting from stamping out policies;
13. The role of trade especially that carried out illegally on the epidemiology of diseases be better evaluated in compliance with OIE standards;
14. Veterinary Services endeavour to carry out disease surveillance in all their national territories and strengthen identification and traceability capabilities and capacities for bovines, ovines, caprines and porcines in order to establish a functional and effective traceability system for the food chain of animal origin;
15. The public-private partnership develop further in order to create systems of animal health and food safety in which livestock breeders, traders and other stakeholders are more closely involved;
16. Member Countries review their zoonoses control plan including their strategy on rabies control involving oral vaccination of foxes and stray dog sanitary measures and control;
17. Member Countries review their legislation on registration and harmonisation of veterinary pharmaceutical and biological products (including products derived from genetically modified organisms) and ensure their compliance with international standards;
18. Member Countries review the organisation and functions of Veterinary Statutory Bodies including the involvement of the private veterinary sector;
19. Member Countries review the system of veterinary border control regarding importation and transit of animals and animal products including procedures and facilities as well as sampling for laboratory testing;

20. Member Countries pursue their commitment towards the Global Rinderpest Eradication Programme (GREP) in their efforts to seek the global free Rinderpest status in accordance with the realigned OIE Pathway with the support of the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe;
21. The WHO participate actively in GF-TADS Regional steering Committee meetings;
22. The FAO and OIE as well as WHO should continue their active support in the prevention of transmission of animal infections to humans by combating pathogens at their animal source and thus avoid possible risks of pandemics;
23. The FAO and OIE in conjunction with the World Trade Organization (WTO) use their influence through the GF TADs Steering Committee, the Advisory Committee of the OIE Animal Health and Welfare Fund and other appropriate fora to define and disseminate communication strategies and messages relevant to sound governance of Veterinary services and the perception of crises of animal origin particularly in the field of risk management communication.

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Recommendation 2

**Support to the Control of African swine fever and Classical swine fever under the
Regional GF-TADs (Global Framework for the control of Transboundary Animal
Diseases) Mechanism**

CONSIDERING THAT

African swine fever (ASF) and classical swine fever (CSF) outbreaks have been reported in several countries of Eastern Europe and the Balkan region respectively and are likely to spread to other countries if appropriate steps are not taken,

There is a need for neighbouring countries to develop and implement appropriate surveillance and early warning programmes for an early detection and rapid response against these diseases and this can only be accomplished by sound governance of Veterinary Services along with appropriate investments,

ASF and CSF have significant impacts on national pig production and regional and global trade of animals and animal products,

There is currently an urgent need for countries at risk to mobilise necessary resources to counteract the diseases using veterinary inspection at borders (ports, airports, roads)

**THE SECOND MEETING OF THE REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE
GF-TADS FOR EUROPE**

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Veterinary Services (VS) of European countries that are affected by ASF such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia be urgently reinforced following an evaluation using the OIE Tool for the performance of Veterinary Services (OIE- PVS Tool). The evaluation should be followed by a gap analysis done by OIE or FAO to redress weaknesses and other deficiencies of VS to bring them in line with OIE international standards;
2. Countries in proximity to ASF affected-areas such as Azerbaijan and Ukraine benefit by employment of the PVS Tool and ensure contingency plans are updated, detection methods available, and VS well prepared for response.
3. The reports of the gap analysis be used by FAO, EC, OIE and the countries involved, to develop project proposals to be submitted for financial support from international donors, including the European Commission;
4. Funds made available to countries affected by ASF be also utilised whenever appropriate, to control foot and mouth disease (FMD) and/or other TADs;

5. Control measures directed at the control of CSF in the Balkan region be overseen by the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations for Europe located respectively in Sofia, Bulgaria and Brussels, Belgium, in permanent collaboration with FAO;
6. The Network of Reference Laboratories in the region provide appropriate guidance to countries at risk in the surveillance and diagnosis of ASF, CSF and FMD;
7. Governments of East European countries at the highest political level be made deeply aware of the urgent necessity to provide adequate resources to their Veterinary services particularly to effect veterinary border controls and also to provide assistance to farmers including fair and timely compensations for stamping out and farm rehabilitation in case of epizootics;
8. Countries of the region ensure compliance with their obligations on animal disease reporting by promptly reporting all outbreaks of ASF and CSF to the OIE for continuous incorporation in the World Animal Health Information Database (WAHID) and provide FAO with relevant epidemiological and other livestock related information to allow its contribution to a permanent analysis of the global animal health situation and trends;
9. The Director General of the OIE address a letter to sensitise relevant Ministers of concerned countries on the importance of controlling those diseases in order to prevent their spread to other European countries.