



WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
Protecting animals, preserving our future

OIE Regional Commission for Europe

Eighth meeting of the Regional Core Group (RCG8) for improving countries' participation in OIE activities - 29 and 30 April 2019 – Madrid / Spain -

Report

Summary

The RCG8 was briefed on the current developments discussed at the OIE Council of February 2019, the outcome of the last meeting of the Code Commissions, and the OIE Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health which took place in Santiago (Chile) on 2 to 4 April 2019.

It prepared the upcoming 87th General Session: a common position was provisionally agreed on 4 chapters up for adoption this year (ASF, rabies, animal health surveillance and killing of reptiles), still to be confirmed during the meeting of the Regional Commission on 27 May; elections in the Regional Commission and the OIE council were discussed; the schedule of meetings of particular interest for the region was confirmed, including a detailed review of the agenda of the meeting of the Regional Commission for Europe and designation of speakers.

Updates were provided on the activities of the GF-TADs for Europe and the OIE Platform on animal welfare for Europe. As regards the Platform, this included a presentation of the initial draft report of the external evaluation which took place from January to April 2019, and a thorough examination of the draft terms of reference of the Platform and the initial draft of the 3rd Action Plan of the Platform, covering 2020-2022. The work on these documents will continue in the framework of the Steering Group with regular feedback to the RCG, in view of their simultaneous adoption by the Regional Commission in May 2020.

The full programme of OIE activities in the region was presented together with a review of possible gaps for the funding of these activities.

The RCG was finally updated on the future regional website, which should be ready by next September.

12 follow-up actions were identified during the discussions. They are detailed in the full report below.

RCG9 will take place in Paris on 26 May, in the margins of the General session. The UK will kindly host RCG10 in London on 2 and 3 December 2019, while Kazakhstan kindly suggested it might host RCG11 in April 2020.

Opening, introduction and review of the follow-up actions of RCG7 in Bern

Ulrich Herzog, Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, welcomed the participants and extend apologies from Maris Balodis, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, absent in Madrid. Ulrich Herzog therefore chaired the whole meeting of the RCG8.

Fabien Schneegans reminded the participants about the follow-up actions identified in Bern during the meeting of the RCG7, in December 2018 (cf. PPT presentation). Out of the 8 follow-up actions, two have been completed (session 4 – 1st and 2nd bullet points), one has been partially addressed since Bern (session 1 – objective 4 – 1st bullet point), three would be addressed during the RCG8 (session 1 – objective 4 – 2nd bullet point, session 1 – objective 5 – 1st and 2nd bullet points), and no past or future follow-up has been provided nor is expected for the remaining two (session 1 - objective 2; session 2).

Session 1 – global OIE activities

- **Report of the OIE Council Meeting of February 2019 (PPT presentation)**

As a preamble, Christianne Brusckhe mentioned the main difficulties she's facing when sitting at the table of the OIE Council, i.e. 1/ many of the documents pertaining to the topics discussed are provided during the meeting and not in advance, 2/ the financial discussion is particularly complex for those who are not familiar.

Preparation of the General Session 87

- Council members: 2 seats up for election after the departure of Dr Nepoklonov (Russia) and the retirement of the Mexican delegate. Dr Vlasov (Russia) has sent a letter for official application to the Council as representative of Europe, and the delegate of Barbados appears to be unofficially candidate in the Americas.
- It was decided to give more time than just 45' to the technical item on ASF, in order to allow for a proper discussion.
- OIE honorary awards: many applications received by the OIE are not drafted in the official languages of the OIE and are actually not eligible according to the basic text. The process needs to be made more transparent.
- Guests of honour: priority will be given to the ministers of the new member countries who wish to address the assembly.

OIE activities report

- **Financial result:** 200.000euros will be transferred to the OIE reserve fund.
- **Three very big projects** were highlighted, with concerns over their price and the fact that it is sometimes difficult to fully understand what can be expected in the end:
 - a. **WAHIS+:** the expenses are already 2 times more than initially expected, are covered by the World Fund. Worries were expressed by the Council about the fact that the new system will fully take over from 1 day to the next, considering that there is not much real information on WAHIS+ at this point and that the national focal points (NFP) have not received any training so far.
Discussion: Valentin Almansa insisted that real tests must be done before the OIE switches to the new WAHIS+, while Moritz Klemm clarified that 1/ these tests are being performed now by small groups of NFPs from pilot countries (including DK as regards Europe)., 2/ ADIS (joint interface for the EU ADNS and the OIE WAHIS) should be in place at the same time as WAHIS+. Fabien Schneegans informed that the training for NFPs initially scheduled early July had to be postponed and will probably not take place before early 2020.
 - b. **Genomic project:** the project aims at gathering the information on the genome of the pathogens in an OIE bank. Worries were expressed by the Council that this activity is not the work of the OIE, may bear some risk (wrong usage by some countries leading to unjustified trade barriers), and is very costly. Also, this is a very fast-moving area of expertise, and other genome banks already exist. Nevertheless, the project will go on.
Discussion: Moritz Klemm mentioned that there is an OIE ad hoc group working on this topic, that a collaborating centre has been approved in Glasgow, and that the OIE is actually only implementing a resolution of the General Session 2012. He considers that the project would have some added value in the fact that the genome will be linked with official background information. Valentin Almansa also suggested that the tool may be useful in a defensive perspective and could be of great interest for example when working on the development of an ASF vaccine.
 - c. **Observatory project:** it was covered by a working session with OECD, a partner of the OIE on this project. Yet, despite a long discussion, the purpose of the project remains not fully clear. The President of the Council eventually called for a new discussion. Nobody was negative on the project, but it is important that there is clarity.
Discussion: Valentin claimed that recognising that such or such country is not applying the Code was at the beginning of the project. For Ulrich, the most important thing is to make sure that the OIE standards are well designed and science based.
- **OIE 7th strategic plan:** a working session with the consultant firm PWC focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the OIE, its missions, the possible need to consider new areas (e.g. climate change). External forces needed to be taken into account, including technology, big data, social trends, loss of public trust in governments... The reflexion will continue with the consultation of a broad range of stakeholders.

- **Reference laboratories and collaborating centres:** difficult issue, with extensive documents provided during the Council meeting. The OIE will send a note on how to consider these applications. 3 applications were discussed: the Swedish application on animal welfare, a collaborating Centre in China on traditional medicine, and the Institut Pasteur application (eventually not endorsed and requested to form a consortium).
- **OIE partnerships:** will be addressed in the next strategic plan, with a more critical views on the additional value.
- **Creation of a new sub-regional representation in Abu-Dhabi:** considered by the Council a good initiative.

Follow-up action 1: to provide some update information on the OIE genomic project at the next RCG. **Responsibility:**
Christianne Brusckke

- **Outcome of the meeting of the Terrestrial and Aquatic Code commissions in February 2019**

Moritz Klemm confirmed that the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes commissions met in February.

As regards the Terrestrial Code: 10 chapters are proposed for adoption, and 1 small amendment in the Glossary. This is less than expected: some chapters proposed initially were eventually not ready on time (e.g. avian influenza); the chapter on animal welfare in laying hens triggered many conflicting comments to the Code Commission and will have to be carefully reconsidered. Moritz highlighted 4 chapters proposed for adoption:

- African Swine Fever: only minor changes have been introduced; the comments sent by the EU were taken into account: the EU experts are satisfied and propose to support the adoption of this chapter.
- Rabies: the Code Commission has reverted back to the initial provisions on importation from rabies infected countries and titration, after the EU in particular mentioned strong concerns. However, the EU still has significant concerns on article 8.14.6 about all other mammals imported, for which it is proposed to have either a 6 months quarantine or vaccination without any other requirement. The EU would like to have additional provisions on identification, serology and waiting periods on top of vaccination for carnivores at least. The EU will ask the OIE to really revert back to all previous provisions, including as regards article 8.14.6, as promised. The EU would be happy to support the adoption of this chapter, which includes important new provisions in view of the tripartite strategy on the global eradication of dog-mediated rabies, but with the above-mentioned correction. If not, the EU might not support the adoption of this chapter at the next General session.
- Animal health surveillance: EU experts consider that this one is ready for adoption, with minor written comments for further reflexion in the future, not jeopardizing its adoption.
- Animal welfare for the killing of reptiles: the EU is ready to support the adoption of this chapter, with just one comment as regards an inconsistency on vocalisations of reptiles.

As regards the Aquatic Code: no particular issue, only small changes in the structure of the chapters have been introduced. One small inconsistency has been spotted between the Code and the Manual.

- **Feedback of the OIE Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health, Santiago (Chile) – 2 to 4 April 2019 (PPT presentation)**

Djahne Montabard attended this global conference on behalf of the OIE representations in Europe. The conference was attended by many participants from Asia, South America and Africa, less from Europe.

Because of the positive image of fish, the aquatic sector faces a regular increase in fish consumption that fishing alone cannot satisfy: it requires the development of aquaculture. The particularities of the aquatic environment must be managed differently from the terrestrial environment: disease prevention and treatment, improved diagnostic capabilities, declaration of outbreaks, emerging diseases and spread, protection of the environment through better farm biosecurity, better communication in a system where the private sector plays a key role. The presentation highlighted the items to improve: production systems, including the promotion of the prudent use of antibiotics vs vaccinations; increase of aquatic reference laboratories available in the regions???: development of public-private partnerships; better use of tools proposed by the OIE such as communication and aquatic PVS tools; improvement of WAHIS declaration; and, once finalized, the possible use of the new FAO initiative (Progressive Management Pathway for Improving Aquaculture Biosecurity).

The RCG was also informed on the ongoing work on the Aquatic Code / Manual and the points concerned by the recommendations adopted at the end of the conference: they highlight the particularities of the aquatic sector to propose improvements in standard and notification, keeping in mind the needed basic excellence of OIE Standards setting process.

Session 2 – Preparing the General Session May 2019

- **Possible common positions of the Regional Commission for Europe on the standards up for adoption at the General Session May 2019**

Building on the EU positions expressed reported by Moritz during session 1, the RCG members agreed to aim at a common position of the Regional Commission for Europe on the 4 following chapters: African swine fever, rabies, animal health surveillance, and animal welfare for the killing of reptiles.

Nikita Lebedev reminded the RCG that Russia has already submitted several times (the last occasion was at the 8th West Eurasia FMD Roadmap Meeting of the GF-TADs, held in Shiraz, Iran, 4-6 March 2019) the request that the countries with an endemic situation should be requested to submit immediate notifications about outbreaks happening close to their borders, instead of mentioning these outbreaks only in their 6-monthly reports. Russia would like to have the support of the region to push this proposal forward.

Follow-up action 2: to forward to all 53 member-countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe the EU position on the 4 above-mentioned chapters: ASF, rabies, animal health surveillance, killing of reptiles, in view of their possible proposal on behalf of the whole region. **Responsibility: Moritz Klemm and Fabien Schneegans**

Follow-up action 3: to draft and circulate a proposal on the immediate notification by endemic countries of outbreaks happening close to their borders, to be presented and discussed at RCG10. **Responsibility: Nikita Lebedev**

- **Upcoming elections in the Regional Commission and the OIE council**

Council: Nikita confirmed that the Russian delegate, Dr Vlasov, is officially running for the second seat of Europe in the OIE Council. No other application was mentioned. The RCG expressed unanimous support to the application of Dr Vlasov.

Bureau: 2 positions need to be filled (vice-president and secretary general). Vesna Dakovic from Montenegro is willing to run and will be supported. The RCG discussed about possible candidates likely to come forward for the second position.

Follow-up action 4: to contact the delegates of Belarus and Azerbaijan about the bureau, ahead of the upcoming General session, to suggest a possible application. **Responsibility: Ulrich Herzog and Maris Balodis**

- **Schedule and organization of activities interesting our Regional Commission at the General Session May 2019 (PPT presentation)**

Fabien presented the overall schedule of side-meetings interesting the Europe region:

Date and time	Venue	Title	Participants
Sunday 26 May, 10:30-11:00	OIE headquarters, room on second floor of rue de Prony 14.	Preparatory meeting of the Regional Commission for Europe	OIE HQ, president and vice-president of the OIE region Europe, OIE representatives in Europe
Sunday 26 May, 16:30-17:30	Maison de la Chimie, salle 69 A	Meeting of the RCG9	Members and observers of the RCG
Monday 27 May, 14:00-18:00	Maison de la Chimie, grand amphithéâtre Lavoisier (plenary room)	Meeting of the Regional Commission for Europe	All 53 member-countries of the Regional Commission for Europe, and observers
Tuesday 28 May, 13:15-14:45	Maison de la Chimie, room 233 (second floor)	GF-TADs SGE LSD8	All members of the SGE LSD and any other country in the region interested to attend
Tuesday 28 May, 13:15-14:45	Maison de la Chimie, room 234 (second floor)	Eu-FMD – FMD TCC Regional cooperation meeting between Trans-Caucasus and neighbouring countries on the prevention and control of FMD	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia, Turkey

Wednesday 29 May, 13:00-14:30	Maison de la Chimie, room 233 (second floor)	GF-TADs SGE ASF13	All members of the SGE ASF and any other country in the region interested to attend
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Budimir detailed the agenda of the meeting of the Regional Commission for Europe, pointing at the need to:

- Agree on the agenda;
- Identify the name of the speaker for each agenda item;
- Propose topics for technical items, including for the next conference of the Regional Commission for Europe, to take place in Italy in November 2020 (instead of September).

The RCG decided the addition of 2 agenda items, before the coffee break: 1/ update on the implementation of the Regional Work Plan Framework 2017-2020 of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe; and 2/ Discussion on common positions for selected OIE Codes chapters (to be possibly proposed on behalf of the 53 Member Countries of Europe during the 87th General Session).

The RCG requested to receive in advance some more detailed information on the working session with PwC, including possible relevant documents and expectations from the delegates of the region.

The RCG agreed on the following speakers: Maris (agenda, possible common positions on OIE Code chapters, elections in the OIE Council, the bureau and the RCG); Ulrich (update on the implementation of the Regional Work Plan Framework, outcomes of the 28th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission in Tbilisi, update on the OIE platform on animal welfare for Europe); Silvio Borrello (29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe), Christianne (selection of Technical Items I with questionnaire at the 29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission 2020 and at the 89th General Session 2021); Lena Hellqvist Björnerot and Silvio Borrello (proposal for designation of a new OIE Collaborating Centre).

As regards the technical I items:

- In addition to the list of possible topics still to be suggested by the HQ, the Regional Commission will consider the remaining list of topics established last year.
- Christianne questioned the need to systematically impose a questionnaire. She was supported by Moritz and Thomas, who also complained about the complexity and length of the questionnaire prepared in the framework of the technical item I for the GS 2019 (external factors).

The submission of a new collaborating centre on animal welfare by Sweden triggered a significant discussion about the scope of expertise claimed by the applicant (FLU, Uppsala – scope considered to be too wide) and its articulation with the already established collaborating centre in Europe for animal welfare topics (IZSAM Teramo, Italy). The EU members of the RCG indicated that they would request having an additional point on the agenda of the next meeting of EU CVOs, on 17 May. However, according to fresh information provided at the very end of the RCG8, it appeared that an agreement had been found between Italy and Sweden for the creation of a consortium between IZSAM Teramo and SLU Uppsala.

On a more general note, the RCG expressed the need to rethink the whole process applying to collaborating centres, including performance monitoring.

Follow-up action 5: to request the OIE HQ to provide some additional information on the working session with PwC scheduled for the major part of the meeting of the Regional Commission on 27 May. **Responsibility: Budimir Plavsic**

Follow-up action 6: to request the EU presidency (Romania) to add a point to the agenda of the EU CVO meeting of 17 May on the application submitted by Sweden for the approval of a new collaborating centre for animal welfare in Europe and inform Sweden and Italy accordingly. **Responsibility: Ulrich Herzog**

Follow-up action 7: to send a save-the-date to the 53 delegates of the region on the various activities specific to the region that will take place during the week of the General session. **Responsibility: Fabien Schneegans**

Session 3 – Information and discussion about specific strategic issues for the region

- **GF-TADs for Europe: update on recent activities (ASF, LSD, rabies) (PPT presentation)**

Fabien presented the latest GF-TADs activities, which have taken place within Europe since RCG7 (December 2018).

- Rabies: creation of a new standing group of experts (SGE) focusing on the Balkan region, and first meeting in Brussels in February. The main objective is to coordinate the vaccination of wild carnivores in all the countries of the region in order to achieve the eradication of rabies in wildlife as soon as possible. A set of recommendations was adopted.
- Lumpy Skin Disease: a teleconference of the SGE LSD took place on 25 February to touch base on the possible needs of the countries ahead of the upcoming vaccination campaign.
- African Swine Fever:
 - o A GF-TADs experts mission visited Bulgaria last January. The report was presented and approved during the SGE ASF12 in Prague (March). The next mission will be to Belgium, possibly in June.
 - o The last SGE ASF meeting (ASF12) took place in Prague, on 11 and 12 March, back to back with a joint GF-TADs-BTSF seminar. The record attendance (approximately 75 people from 32 countries, including the 13 infected countries) raised concerns on the quality of the discussion and also the cost of the meeting. The recommendation for the next meeting is to reduce the number of participants from the observers' countries to one only. The meeting mainly focused on the Czech experience, after the successful eradication of ASF in this country, to identify best practises and lessons learnt. A set of recommendations was adopted.

Fabien also presented 2 slides on the estimate of the cost of SGE events, based on the experience of the SGE LSD7 organized in Ohrid, North Macedonia (October 2018), and on the SGE ASF12 in Prague (March 2019). The total cost of LSD7 is estimated close to 20.000€ (almost 500€ per participant), while that of ASF13 has been 51.000€ (almost 700€ per participant).

Discussion

Graeme suggested the usage of online instruments such as webinars during these SGE events. This could cut the costs as well as allow for an increase of the participation. Moritz confirmed that the presentations by the experts could be filmed and made available, however not the discussions as the expert's discussions are considered confidential.

Ulrich informed that the scope of EuFMD has been enlarged now, to include similar diseases to the EuFMD training program.

- **OIE platform for Animal welfare in Europe – update on the external evaluation and the drafting of the 3rd Action Plan (3 separate PPT presentations)**

External evaluation

Fabien made a presentation of the initial draft of the report of the first external evaluation of the Platform, after five years of activity. The author of the report, Mrs Cristina Mosneaga, was selected after a tender process. The evaluation took place between January and April of this year. Main conclusions of the draft report: 1/ the Platform has delivered the planned activities in an effective and efficient way; 2/ the current activities and scope remain relevant; 3/ however it is not possible to measure to date whether its activities have been effective in delivering on its objectives; and 4/ the governance and monitoring framework of the Platform need significant improvements. A set of recommendation are provided in the draft report. The draft report is currently being reviewed, its final version should be available within a couple of weeks and will be ultimately published online. The findings will be used in the framework of the updating of the Concept Note, as already requested at the RCG7, and of the drafting of the Action Plan 2020-2022.

Discussion

Moritz, Ulrich and Christianne asked that the report be circulated to the RCG in order to look into the details. It will of course be also sent to the members of the Platform's Steering Group ahead of the meeting of 15 and 16 May, where it will be presented and thoroughly discussed. The findings came as no surprise for Moritz, while Christianne expressed some concern regarding the "loss the momentum".

Revision of the Concept Note

Fabien presented the proposed Term of Reference (ToR) of the Platform, which had been distributed to the RCG ahead of the meeting in Madrid. The ToR will not replace the Concept Note of 2013. It aims at providing details and provisions specific to the OIE Platform, particularly a mechanism to reinforce the link between the SG and the Regional Commission / RCG and to allow for adjusting the composition of the SG as relevant.

Discussion

Moritz asked for further details on the composition, roles and responsibilities of the SG: exact role of members and observers, voting system, responsibilities and types of decisions up to the SG and mechanism (e.g. who has the final say on the Action Plan?). He also suggested to better clarify the responsibilities of the SG from those of the Secretariat. Christianne questioned what exactly was intended in the expression “monitoring the financial resources” and if that should be the responsibility of the SG.

Moritz and Ulrich suggested that the member of the bureau who will chair the SG be included as an additional member of the SG, on top of the 5 representatives of member countries (2 from EEE countries, 3 from non-EEE countries). The RCG expressed the view that the member countries should normally be represented by the OIE delegates, who may occasionally send the National Focal Point for animal welfare in case they cannot attend. Budimir welcomed the idea of the rotation of the SG membership to help keep the momentum, and Ulrich suggested that the rotation be linked to the Action Plan timeline (every three years). The RCG considered that the Regional Commission should be designating the five members countries sitting at the SG, and not only the chair.

The RCG was also concerned about the NGOs and donors as members of the SG. Their roles and responsibilities on the decisions making of the SG needs to be clarified.

As regards the timeline, it was generally considered that the proposed ToR will not be ready for presentation and possible approval at the next meeting of the Regional Commission (27 May). It was eventually unanimously agreed that a short update will be provided at the upcoming meeting of the Regional Commission (27 May), while the adoption of the ToR will be proposed in May 2020, together with the next Action Plan.

3rd Action Plan (2020 – 2022)

Fabien presented the initial draft of the 3rd Action Plan of the Platform, covering the period 2020 to 2022. It will be discussed in detail in Lyon at the meeting of the Standing Group on 15 and 16 May. The proposed 3rd Action Plan builds on the previous two. Its main features, taking into account the preliminary findings of the external evaluation are as follows: no addition to the list of priority topics; emphasis on the activities relating to animal welfare during long distance transport; systematic development of monitoring and evaluation tools (SAT for the activities where they are currently missing, and horizontal indicators for the Platform); enhanced communication, including translations in Russian language, if budget or in-kind support is available.

Discussion

Christianne suggested that the experience and material produced by the Platform should be disseminated outside Europe, as it could be used by other regions in the same way. Fabien and Budimir confirmed that a lot of ready-to-use material is available (e.g. the OIE stray dog awareness campaign, some of the material being actually used by France in some overseas departments). The interregional collaboration is also already happening: Tomasz Grudnik, the Platform expert, has been training colleagues in Middle East and Africa, particularly on animal welfare during transport, and the proposed action plan includes the organisation of Whole Journey Scenarios on specific routes from Europe to the Middle East, and from Europe to North-Africa. Christianne also mentioned slaughter as a good candidate for dissemination of Platform information to regions where animal welfare at slaughter is a lower priority.

Moritz reminded that one of the recommendations from the evaluation exercise was to reduce the activities, hence the need to be careful not to increase them, or even to reduce some activities at a lower level.

Fabien clarified that the base line survey for the working equids should be launched later this year, the actual development or not of an awareness campaign depending on the results of this future survey.

Follow-up action 8: to send the full report of the external evaluation to the members of the RCG and of the SG as soon as possible and in any case ahead of the next SG on 15 and 16 May in Lyon. **Responsibility: Fabien Schneegans**

Follow-up action 9: to present the initial draft of ToR at the upcoming meeting of the SG on 15 and 16 May, together with the present comments of the RCG. Subsequently to provide to the RCG the comments of the SG and come up with a revised version of the ToR at the RCG10 (December 2019). **Responsibility: Fabien Schneegans**

Follow-up action 10: to share the progress made on the development of the 3rd Action Plan at the RCG10 (December 2019). **Responsibility: Fabien Schneegans**

- **PVS: progress made since December 2018**

Ulrich briefly announced that the 1st meeting of the newly established joint working group (OIE / European Commission-DG SANTE directorate F) will take place on 21 May 2019, in Brussels. Representatives of the following 5 EU member States will attend: Austria, Belgium, The Netherlands, Italy and Portugal.

Session 4 – Other issues of interest for the region

- **2019 schedule of OIE activities in the Europe region (PPT presentation)**

Mereke Taitubayev listed all of the 36 activities to be organized in 2019 in the Europe region. They relate to the Regional Commission for Europe (RCG and meeting of the Regional Commission itself), the training of national focal points, the GF-TADs (regional and global), the OIE platform on animal welfare of Europe, and other activities proposed by the OIE HQ (including national bridging workshops).

Session 5 – Administrative items

- **Information about the new OIE regional Website (PPT presentation)**

Djahne presented the updated progress of the preparation of the OIE Europe website and the new action plan to deliver the product in September 2019. Even though the delivery has been postponed in order to ensure the quality of the product, the fundamentals have been retained: harmonization of all regional sites, centralized maintenance, Europe site to be delivered in priority, including a page in Russian, inclusion of current pages to ensure continuity of information. However, the initial plan to keep the OIE Animal Welfare Platform website independently from the OIE Europe website has been reconsidered; it will eventually be embedded in the regional website, once the main page will have been finalized, stabilized and the bugs addressed. Pages that have not been updated since 2014 will not be fully transferred.

The participants were presented the website map, as well as the plans to adapt it to the available information in Europe.

Discussion

The participants expressed the wish of having access to the Delegates e-mail addresses in the secured part of the site, noting that they are already available in the reports of OIE General Sessions.

Follow-up action 11: to forward to the IT department and contractor the request to have the Delegates e-mail addresses available in the secured part of the site with regular update. **Responsibility: Djahne Montabord**

- **Possible financial gaps regarding OIE activities of interest for the Regional Commission for Europe, including the regional website, animal welfare activities of neighbouring regions with an impact on AW in transportation from Europe, etc. (PPT presentation)**

Fabien examined the animal welfare activities scheduled in 2019 by the Middle East and Africa OIE regions. Their funding appears to be secured, no risk of financial gap was identified.

He also reviewed all activities of the Europe region scheduled in 2019:

- A seminar of the national focal points for food safety had to be cancelled due to a lack of funding. It was also considered a low priority.
- The funding of 2 animal welfare activities has not been fully secured so far:
 - o The second workshop on the welfare of animals in disasters in the Balkans, tentatively planned next November in Bosnia and Herzegovina: 10.000 € will have to be covered either by the grant 2019-2020 of the European Commission or by another source.
 - o The first whole journey scenario workshop (WJS) along a route from Europe to the Middle East: the co-financing by the grant 2018-2019 of the European Commission had been ensured, supposing it happens in October 2019 at the latest. However, it will have to be organized later (probably early 2020), with no certainty today.

And he screened the animal welfare activities of the Europe region envisaged in 2020, according to the proposed action plan 2020-2022 of the OIE platform

- 3 activities may face a funding issue, depending on the willingness of the European Commission to provide co-financing: stray dog population control, welfare of animals in disasters in the Balkans and welfare of working equids.

- Also, it is proposed that the next Action Plan includes the development of new Self-Assessment Tools, as well as the translation of the website of the Platform in Russian language. Additional funding may be required to address these activities.

Discussion

Moritz clarified that unfortunately no extension of the validity of the current grant can be envisaged to cover the WJS from Europe to the Middle-East, should this workshop be postponed after October 2019.

Thomas Jemmi expressed the willingness of Switzerland to continue funding the activities related to the control of stray dog population, and possibly activities other than transportation if need be. It will help to have information on financial gaps on "animal welfare" for the financial discussion of the next year, which takes place in September.

Nikita offered the in-kind help of Russia as regards translations into Russian of various material.

Follow-up action 12: to review the possible funding gaps on a regular basis (annual). **Responsibility: RCG secretariat**

Next meetings of the Regional Core Group

The RCG will have a short meeting (RCG9) in the margins of the General Session, on Sunday 26 May 2019.

The United Kingdom volunteered to host in London the 10th meeting of the RCG on Monday 2nd (afternoon only) and Tuesday 3rd December 2019. Kazakhstan kindly offered to host the subsequent meeting in April 2020, to be confirmed.

Initial suggestions of topics to be discussed at the RCG10 in London:

- Updated information on the OIE genomic project. Responsibility: Christianne Brusckke (The Netherlands).
- Presentation and discussion of a proposal on the immediate notification by endemic countries of outbreaks happening close to their borders. Responsibility: Nikita Lebedev (Russia).
- Outcome of the meeting of the terrestrial and aquatic Code commissions in September 2019. Responsibility: Moritz Klemm (European Commission).
- Discussion on the OIE procedure for the registration of diagnostic kits endorsed by a resolution of the general assembly. Responsibility: Moritz Klemm (European Commission).
- Animal welfare: follow up of the discussions on the OIE AW platform (aftermath of the external evaluation, next Action Plan and terms of reference of the platform). Responsibility: Fabien Schneegans (SRR Brussels).
- Update on the development of the new regional website. Responsibility: Djahne Montabord (RR Moscow).

Budimir indicated that the OIE regional representation in Moscow would increase its involvement in the organisation of the future meetings of the RCG, starting with the RCG10 in London.

Follow-up actions 13: to prepare the RCG10. **Responsibility: Budimir Plavsic (RR Moscow) and Fabien Schneegans (SRR Brussels), as well as Christine Middlemiss and Graeme Cooke (United Kingdom)**

Any other business

Graeme announced that the United Kingdom would organize a One-Health Science side event on Monday evening 27 May of the General Assembly, a reception at the UK Ambassador's residency. This would provide an opportunity to meet with the UK scientific community leading experts and also encourage countries to meet and exchange needs and ideas in this area.

Acknowledgements

The Members and Secretariat of the Regional Core Group would like to address their deep thanks to the government of Spain for their warm hospitality.