



**Standing Group of Experts on rabies for Europe**  
under the GF-TADs umbrella

**Session on Rabies surveillance, in the context of the SGE LSD9**  
**Athens, 17 October 2019**

## Recommendations

### Considering that:

- Rabies eradication is a priority for Europe; for the EU Member States the objective is to have it eradicated by 2020;
- Rabies eradication is now in sight in most of the European Union and in the Western Balkans;
- Phasing out of oral rabies vaccination campaigns (ORV) is considered in the mid-long term;
- The recommendations of the first meeting of the Standing Group of experts on rabies (SGE RAB1) remain valid, particularly recommendations 1 and 2 related to the duration of the vaccination and recommendation 3 regarding the importance of close coordination;

### Recommendations on surveillance

1. Passive surveillance must be the top priority for competent authorities both in free and non-free areas.

#### As regards passive surveillance

2. Poor surveillance in free areas may lead to a failure to identify re-incursions. This may prevent implementing an emergency vaccination campaign before the next planned ORV or have it implemented on too small an area. Therefore, adequate surveillance levels should be maintained particularly in the areas where rabies eradication is in sight and in the areas where rabies has already been eradicated.
3. Surveillance depends on the ability of competent authorities to engage hunters, farmers and other persons spending time in fox habitats. Reinforced actions to raise awareness should be conducted particularly during the last stages of rabies eradication, and in the areas where rabies has already been eradicated.
4. If the favourable epidemiological situation persists, ORV may be limited to certain areas or even stop. To be able to take an informed decision, the assessment of surveillance data is crucial.

Competent authorities should make sure they have the all the necessary data and knowledge to perform this assessment.

### **As regards active surveillance (monitoring of the effectiveness of the vaccination)**

5. Experience has shown that without active interventions and supervision from competent authorities, the monitoring programmes do not always receive high priority. This may lead to their under-implementation, resulting in a reduction of the reliability of the monitoring results. Therefore, competent authorities should conduct actions towards keeping monitoring at adequate level.

### **Other issues**

6. The coordination of vaccination activities along the borders should be encouraged and monitored by the relevant members of the bureau of the OIE regional Commission for Europe.
7. The SGE RAB2 will be organised in June 2020, in Zagreb, Croatia.