

Regional Core Group (RCG)  
of the OIE regional Commission for Europe  
for improving countries' participation in OIE activities

**Fifth meeting of the Regional Core Group (RCG5)**  
- 17&18 April 2018 – Moscow / Russia

**Report**



The fifth meeting (RCG5) of the Regional Core Group took place in Moscow / Russia on 17 and 18 April 2018, at the invitation of Dr Nepoklonov, OIE Delegate of Russia and Member of the OIE Council. The previous RCG meeting (RCG4) had been held in Vienna in December 2017. All RCG meeting outcomes are available on the [RCG webpage](#).

**The main objective of the RCG5 meeting was to prepare for the 86<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session to be held in Paris from 20 to 25 May 2018** and notably agree on (i) the agenda of the meeting of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (21 May 2018 pm); (ii) the possible candidates to be supported at the OIE specialist Commissions, OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Council elections; and (iii) the support or not of the OIE Codes ' chapters presented for adoption in May 2018 (those that had been pre-selected at the RCG4). Other important items in the agenda included a proposed selection of Technical Items for the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Tbilisi, September 2018) and the 2020 OIE General Session, and the state of implementation of the [regional Work Plan Framework](#) of the OIE regional Commission for Europe.

**Summary**

All Members and Observers attended except Dr Valentin Almansa, Delegate of Spain. The meeting was chaired by Dr Maris Balodis, in his capacity as President of the Bureau of the OIE regional Commission for Europe (and de facto of the Regional Core Group) assisted of Dr Ulrich Herzog and Dr Budimir Plavsic, his Vice-Presidents and of Dr Evgueny Nepoklonov.

The RCG5 agenda had been prepared by the Bureau of the Regional Commission.

The RCG5 agenda, list of participants and presentations are available on the [RCG webpage](#).

## **1. Implementation status of the regional Work Plan Framework**

Dr Ulrich Herzog, as vice-President of the Bureau, provided an overview of the actions implemented since the RCG4 and indicated that the implementation of the regional Work Plan Framework was generally on track. More specifically,

- Regarding activity 3.1, he underlined the need to better link the proposed activities to the availability and sustainability of resources (both financial and human). Overall, there is a need to improve the region's planning mode and the role of the Bureau - especially in the context of the new Bureau to be elected in May 2018 -. To that effect, a short RCG will be organised in the margins of the Tbilisi conference to start preparing the 2019 Plan. In an informal meeting with OIE Director General in Brussels in March 2018, the sustainability of OIE funding had been discussed, in the perspective of the preparation of the seventh OIE Strategic plan (2021-2015). Other available sources of funding (EuFMD?) should be explored to see how they could possibly complement OIE budget for the benefit of the region. An Option Paper could be prepared by the Regional Core Group and discussed at the Tbilisi Conference;
- Regarding activity 3.9, Dr Herzog proposed to take the opportunity of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the Europe Union starting 1 July 2018 to discuss the future of the OIE PVS Pathway - notably of the PVS evaluation tool to assess how OIE Standards are implemented in all 53 countries of Europe.

### Proposed Actions:

**Action 1** → [RCG Members] To prepare an Option Paper on the Strategic Needs of the Europe region, to be discussed at the Tbilisi Conference

**Action 2** → [RCG Members] To prepare an Option Paper on the PVS in the Europe region, to be discussed at the Tbilisi Conference

## **2. Presentation of the OIE indicative 2018 work plan for Europe**

Dr N. Leboucq presented the implementation of the work plan of the three OIE offices in Europe against the provisional one presented at the RCG4 in Vienna in December 2017. All activities planned for the first trimester 2018 have been implemented so far and there are good indications that other activities will follow. She only mentioned the inclusion of a regional LSD meeting for Central Asian countries in April and of a TAD event on 6 September in the margins of the PPR global Conference

'partnering and investing for a PPT-free world'. She concluded that the number of OIE (and GF-TADs) events/activities had never been so high, due to an increase of funding – especially in animal welfare, LSD and ASF – and that the human resources in the three offices should be deployed accordingly (see presentation on Day 2).

Proposed Actions:

**Action 3** → [RCG Secretariat] To pursue the implementation of the OIE workplan in Europe and report in following RCG meetings

### **3. GF-TADs ASF activities – update**

Dr K. Lukauskas provided a summary on the SGE AS10 meeting that was held in Kiev, Ukraine on 24-25 March 2018. On the occasion, the SGE ASF called for increased collaboration among competent authorities working at borders, especially the Veterinary Services and Customs Administrations within and among countries, to better address illegal movements of pigs and pig products that could be at the origin of the spread of the disease. For the first time, representatives from the World Customs Organization (WCO) and national Customs Administrations joined the SGE ASF meeting to present control activities at borders that could contribute to the fight against ASF. Open discussions took place and a set of recommendations was agreed upon, recognising coordinated border management and awareness campaigns as fundamental tools to fight illegal movements. Recommendations and meeting information are available on the [SGE ASF webpage](#).

The RCG Members reiterated the added value of the SGE ASF under the GF-TADs. They underlined again that the GF-TADs was too complex, not visible enough and not recognized enough to avoid duplications among partners in the region. Dr Leboucq mentioned a global GF-TADs meeting in the margins of the OIE General Session (24 May at lunch time, tbc) to present the main results of the third evaluation of the GF-TADs and the envisaged next steps; this may be a right opportunity to raise those aspects.

Regarding the numerous recommendations produced by the SGE ASF, it was deemed necessary to go through all of them again and try and prioritize them (GF-TADs Secretariat).

Dr Nepoklonov insisted that in light of the great achievements of the SGE ASF and SGE LSD, this format should be supported by all European countries and generalized to other priority diseases in the region.

Proposed Actions:

**Action 4** → [RCG Secretariat] To revise the GF-TADs SGE ASF recommendations in an easy format, for consideration by countries again

### **4. OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe - update**

Dr N. Leboucq recalled the activities implemented in 2017 (see [2017 Newsletter](#)) and in the first trimester 2018 (1 regional seminar on long distance transport for 8 Russian-speaking countries; 1 Train-the-trainer workshop on long distance transport for 6 Middle-east countries) and presented the chronogram for the months to come focusing on (i) the first whole journey scenario workshop, putting around the table the competent authorities of the 6 countries involved in the international trading route going from Germany to Uzbekistan (Poland, April 2018); (ii) the third stray dog regional workshop for Balkan countries (Serbia, June 2018); and (iii) the first natural disaster management event for Balkan countries (Italy, October 2018). She warmly acknowledged the increasing donors contributions. All OIE Platform activities are available on the [OIE Platform website](#).

The RCG Members congratulated the OIE for all activities conducted and planned. They suggested the possibility to translate the forthcoming OIE Platform Newsletters in Russian.

### **5. PPR vaccine – duration of immunity**

At the RCG4, Georgia had raised the issue on PPR vaccines: the PPR GEP vaccination recommendations are not always compatible with the PPR vaccine manufacturers' requirements in terms of number of injections and duration of conferred immunity.

The topic was discussed again on the basis of a note prepared by Georgia. It was agreed that the RCG Secretariat will send this note (after small modifications taking into account the RCG5 discussions) to the PPR Secretariat in Rome to get their guidance on PPR vaccines to use (those that could meet the PPR GEP recommendations).

#### Proposed Actions:

**Action 5** → [RCG Secretariat] To ask guidance to the PPR secretariat based on the Note prepared by Georgia

### **6. Russian AMR activities**

Representatives of Russia presented their national activities on Brucellosis control and their national action plan on AMR (to be provided to the OIE).

### **7. Preparation of the 87<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session (20-25 May 2018)**

#### 1) Agenda of the meeting of the OIE regional Commission for Europe (21 May)

A first draft agenda prepared by OIE had been shared with the RCG Members.

The RCG Members welcomed this first proposal and proposed the following items to include:

- A short overview – as part of the update on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan Framework - of the chapters to be supported/rejected by the Regional Commission of Europe at the time of their adoption during the OIE General Session (see section 8);
- A disease (main priority TADs) overview in Europe, to be delivered by WAHIAD;

- Some budgetary aspects, as part of the closed session (Delegates only), both at global and Europe level, to be delivered by the OIE Financial Directorate; notably the RCG is interested to understand how the budget for the Europe region is calculated, what is the available budget for 2018 and the provisional one for 2019;
- The selection of the countries to be members of the Regional Core Group as according to the ToRs of the RCG they have to be selected every 3 years concomitantly with the Bureau election (see section 7.4.D).

The RCG Secretariat will share those points with OIE Headquarters for consideration and a revised agenda will be prepared on this basis. The selection of the RCG Members can however not take place in the closed session but should be included in the update of the implementation of the Regional Action Plan Framework (activities 3.2) not to confuse with the official election of OIE bodies laid down in the OIE founding texts.

Proposed Actions:

**Action 6** → [RCG Secretariat] To finalise the agenda of the meeting of the Regional Commission for Europe (21 May 2018) together with OIE Headquarters, along the lines discussed at the RCG5

## 2. Selection and preparation of Technical Items

### A) *Technical item with questionnaire for the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe (Tbilisi, September 2018)*

The Item 'Application of biosecurity in different production systems at individual, country and regional levels' had been selected in May 2017. According to a new process proposed by OIE Headquarters aimed at a greater involvement of the Member countries, a Concept Note to delineate the Item content should be prepared by the RCG.

A general discussion took place on the relevance of Technical Items with questionnaire, bearing in mind the high number of questionnaires yearly received by countries and the limited outcomes of these questionnaires compared to the investment made by countries to fill them properly. It was agreed that the questionnaire of the Technical Item on Biosecurity would be kept to a minimum of questions and would rather be the opportunity to collect practical experiences that could serve of best practices for the countries in Europe.

Dr Plavsic volunteered to deliver the Concept Note first draft (deadline 30 April) along those lines. It will be circulated to the RCG for comments and then to the expert in charge of preparing the Item (Dr Silvia Bellini / Italy).

Proposed Actions:

**Action 7** → [RCG Secretariat] To finalise the Technical Item Concept Note together with Dr Plavsic

*B) Technical item without questionnaire for the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe (Tbilisi, September 2018)*

The RCG Members agreed on the three Technical Items below, combining new proposals and proposals already made at the RCG2 for the 2017 OIE General Session.

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|--|
| 1. Vector-borne diseases : monitoring, risk assessment and control options   |
| 2. The importance of the prescription of antimicrobials and control of their distribution (with a possible e-tracking system) by the Veterinary Services for a proper implementation of AMR strategy |
| 3. Use of social media in communicating on animal health and welfare   |

This list will be shared in advance by the RCG Secretariat to the 53 Delegates of Europe. One Item will be selected during the meeting of the OIE Regional Commission on 21 May afternoon. The RCG also agreed that the expert to be selected to prepare this Technical Item should preferably come from a non-EU country (for regional balance). The RCG will need to prepare a Concept Note to the attention of the expert, once the topic selected.

Proposed Actions:

**Action 8** → [RCG Secretariat] To circulate the proposed list of Technical Items to the 53 Delegates prior to the OIE General Session, for their consideration

**Action 9** → [RCG] To prepare a Concept Note to delineate the content of the Technical Item once selected

*C) Technical item with questionnaire for the 88<sup>th</sup> OIE General Session (May 2020)*

The RCG Members agreed on the three Technical Items below, combining new proposals and proposals already made at the RCG2 for the 2019 OIE General Session.

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|---|
| 1. Livestock development as a route out of poverty: how can OIE support poverty reduction with its standards and tools?                       |
| 2. Regional implementation of the OIE 6 <sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan (as a key note to support the preparation of the OIE 7th Strategic Plan) |
| 3. Electronic certification for animal and animal product trade : opportunities and challenges  |
| 4. Animal Health and Animal Welfare Private standards versus OIE standards  |
| 5. Novel feed for animal production opportunities   |
| 6. Genetic selection for AH and AW purposes - opportunities and potential risks   |

This list will be shared in advance by the RCG Secretariat to the 53 Delegates of Europe. One Item will be selected during the meeting of the OIE Regional Commission on 21 May afternoon.

The relevance of a Technical Item with questionnaire was discussed here again. Questionnaires may not need to be as systematic as they are, but a more targeted approach depending on the topic may be embraced.

Proposed Actions:

**Action 10** → [RCG Secretariat] To circulate the proposed list of Technical Items to the 53 Delegates prior to the OIE General Session, for their consideration

3) Proposals of new OIE Collaborating Centers for Europe

OIE Collaborating Centers are limited to one per topic per region and this is why they need the approval of the Regional Commission (contrary to OIE Reference Laboratories, which are limited to one per disease per country and therefore do not need the approval of the relevant Regional Commission and are directly approved by the World Assembly of Delegates).

UK made 2 proposals for OIE Collaborating Centers:

- Emerging Aquatic Animal Diseases (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences)
- Risk Analysis and Modelling (Royal Veterinary College and Animal and Plant Health Agency)

Dr Middlemiss made a brief presentation of the 2 Centers and the rationale for their becoming OIE Collaborating Centers. A detailed dossier on the 2 Centers will be circulated to the Delegates of Europe by OIE prior to the OIE General Session for their full information.

The RCG Members supported in principle the two UK proposals.

4) Elections at the OIE 86<sup>th</sup> General Session

*A) Election of the Members of the Specialist Commissions*

The OIE has developed a new process – in line with OIE basic texts - to guide the selection of experts for election to the four Specialist Commissions to improve transparency and independence, which was adopted in a Resolution in May 2017 by the World Assembly of Delegates. As a result of this new process, the OIE Council has provided an indicative list of suitable candidates to the 4 Commissions. Regional Commissions are expected to nominate their list on 21 May, while elections will take place on 25 May.

The list proposed by the Council was discussed by the RCG Members.

Dr Nepoklonov questioned the criteria used by the OIE Council as a very limited number of non-EU experts had been retained for Europe. He indicated that Russia will propose some additional candidates as allowed by the OIE basic texts; these candidates will need to be supported by at least one more country during the meeting of the OIE regional Commission for Europe on 21 May 2018.

*B) Election of the Members of the OIE Council*

Dr K. Schwabenbauer will no longer be a de facto member of the OIE Council after being 'OIE past president' for the last three years. The RCG Members welcomed the candidacy of Dr Christianne Brusckhe, the OIE Delegate of the Netherlands, and indicated their support to her election, and to Dr Nepoklonov's (renewal). This will be proposed to the Regional Commission of Europe on 21 May 2018.

***C) Election of the Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe***

The RCG Members were unanimously in favor of keeping to the current composition of the Bureau of the regional Commission for Europe (LV; RS; AU; BY). This will be proposed to the Regional Commission of Europe on 21 May 2018.

***D) Selection of the Members (countries) of the Regional Core Group***

The RCG Members also agreed to keep the composition of the Regional Core Group unchanged for the next 3 years (with UK, Spain, Switzerland, Georgia and Kazakhstan as selected Members). This will be proposed to the Regional Commission of Europe on 21 May 2018.

**8. Discussion on the OIE draft Chapters**

At its RCG4 in Vienna in December 2017, the RCG Members had selected 9 Chapters of the OIE Codes (8 from the Terrestrial Code and 1 from the Aquatic Code) to be possibly supported by the 53 countries of Europe. They had been selected according to criteria of relevance to the region and its work plan, and easiness to find a common position. The RCG Secretariat had made this list available to all Member Countries of Europe, engaging the Delegates to provide some comments as needs be. Thanks to the great support provided by Russia, all these Chapters (and their comments) had been translated in Russian to favor the participation of Russian-speaking countries.

As the result of the RCG5 discussion, the RCG Members agreed to the following positions of the Regional Commission for Europe:

Item No.	Texts for Member Countries' comments and proposed for adoption in May 2018 selected by the RCG at its RCG4	Report of the Code Com (February 2018, Part A)
<b>Terrestrial animals</b>		
4.7	Infection with lumpy skin disease virus (Articles 11.9.4., 11.9.5., 11.9.6. and 11.9.15.)	Full support
4.8	Infection with African swine fever virus (Articles 15.1.1bis., 15.1.2., and 15.1.22.)	Not proposed for adoption
5.4	Zoning and compartmentalisation (Chapter 4.3.)	Full support
5.10	Harmonisation of national antimicrobial resistance surveillance and monitoring programmes (Chapter 6.7.)	No support
5.11	Monitoring of the quantities and usage patterns of antimicrobial agents used in food-producing animals (Articles 6.8.1. and 6.8.1bis.)	No support
5.12	Introduction to the recommendations for animal welfare (Article 7.1.1.)	Full support (with some comments)
5.12'	New article on guiding principles for the use of measures to assess animal welfare (Article 7.1.X.)	Full support (with some comments)



5.13	Animal welfare and pig production systems (Chapter 7.X.)	Full support (with some comments)
<b>Aquatic animals</b>		<b>Report of the Aquatic Com (February 2018)</b>
2.1.	User's guide	Full support (with some comments)

Speaking notes will be prepared with the support of the European Commission and the Delegates to present those notes at the OIE General Session will be identified in the coming weeks.

Proposed Actions:

**Action 11** → [EC together with RCG Secretariat] To prepare Speaking Notes for the 8 chapters to be commented on behalf of the 53 countries of Europe at the 86th OIE General Session

### 9. OIE February Council meeting - Report

Dr K. Schwabenbauer, as Member of the OIE Council, reported the outcomes of the OIE Council meeting, held in Paris in February 2018. She particularly focused on the selection of the experts to the OIE Specialists Commissions, WAHIS+ and the new [OIE Observatory project](#) on the implementation of OIE standards (Technical Item to be presented at the OIE 86<sup>th</sup> General Session).

### 10. OIE regional website - update

Dr N. Leboucq provided a quick update regarding the development of the revamped OIE regional website. The unveiling of the new website at the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe in September 2018 in Tbilisi had actually proved too optimistic and is now postponed at the end of the year. This is due in particular to the fact the OIE has now decided to establish a strategy for the management of the five Regional Websites in the short and long term. All regional websites will be based on a common general platform (website template), developed and managed by the HQ.

The RCG Members were disappointed with the delay but understand the point of view and willingness of the OIE to develop a consistent approach across all five regions.

The RCG Members strongly suggested to close the current website or at least provide an announcement on the current developments.

Proposed Actions:

**Action 9** → [RCG Secretariat] to make an announcement on the home page of the existing [OIE regional website](#)

### 11. Human Resources at the OIE regional and sub-regional Representations - update

Dr N. Leboucq informed the RCG Members of the nomination of Dr Fabien Schneegans as the future OIE Representation based in Brussels; he will take position on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. Dr Fulvio Salati seconded by Italy has just resigned after 2 month duty at the OIE Representation in Brussels, for health reasons. It is hoped that Italy will provide a new secondee in replacement of Dr Salati. A technical assistant is to be recruited in the Moscow office and an administrative one both in the Brussels and Astana ones.

## Next meeting of the Regional Core Group

It is proposed to hold:

- A short RCG meeting (RCG6) on 20 May 2018 (4 pm; tbc) in the margins of the OIE General Session to fine-tuned the last details of the meeting of the Regional Commission for Europe to be held on the next day;
- A short RCG meeting (RCG7) in the margins of the 28<sup>th</sup> Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Tbilisi, week of 19 September 2018 – exact date tbc). This meeting will focus on the preparation of the work plan for 2019 (and associated budget);
- A (full) RCG meeting (RCG8) in December 2018 (exact dates to be confirmed) in Bern / Switzerland. The RCG Members are very thankful to the government of Switzerland for kindly proposing to host the RCG8.

**Action 10** → [RCG Secretariat] To organise the RCG8 in Bern in December 2018

## Acknowledgements

The Members and Secretariat of the Regional Core Group express their deep thanks to the government of Russia for their valuable contribution to the organisation and hosting of the RCG5.