



WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
Protecting animals, preserving our future

26th Conference of the
OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Bern, Switzerland, 22-26 September 2014

FINAL REPORT

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List of Abbreviations

API	Animal Protection Index
ASF	African swine fever
ASFV	ASF virus
BT	Bluetongue
BTSF	Better Training for Safer Food
BTV	Bluetongue Virus
CBPP	Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection agency
CI	Confidence interval
CIC	International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
CMC-AH	Crisis Management Centre – Animal Health
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DIVA	Differentiate infected from vaccinated animals
EBHS	European brown hare syndrome
EC	European Commission
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EU	European Union
EuFMD	European Commission for the control of Foot-and-Mouth disease
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FEI	Fédération Equestre Internationale
FESASS	European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security
FMD	Foot and mouth disease
FSVO	Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office
FVE	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
GEMP	Good Emergency Management Practice
GF-TADs	Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases
HHP	High health, high performance'
ICFAW	International Coalition for Animal Welfare
IFAH	International Federation for Animal Health-Europe
IFHA	International Federation of Horseracing Authorities
IHR	International Health Regulations
IZSAM	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale of Abruzzo and Molise
NGOs	Non-governmental organization
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PED	Porcine epidemic diarrhoea
PEDV	Porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus

PPR	Peste des petits ruminants
PVS	OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services
REMESA	Mediterranean Network for Animal Health
RHD	Rabbit haemorrhagic disease
RT-PCR	Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction
SAT	South African Territories
SDB1	Stray Dog population management for Balkan countries
SG	Steering Group
SPS	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the WTO
STATA	Data Analysis and Statistical Software
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
TX	Texas
USA	United States of Americas
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
VSB	Veterinary Statutory Bodies
WAHID	World Animal Health Information Database
WAHIS	World Animal Health Information System
WAP	World Animal Protection
WELNET	West Eurasia FMD Lab Network
WFO	World Farmers Organisation
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Switzerland, the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe was held in Bern from 22 to 26 September 2014.
2. A total of 98 participants, comprising OIE Delegates and/or nominees of 36 Members and senior officers from 10 regional and international organisations, attended the Conference. In addition, representatives of the private sector as well as private veterinary organisations from the region and from the host country were present. Mr Alain Berset, Federal Councillor, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs, Dr Hans Wyss, OIE Delegate of Switzerland, Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Germany, Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Deputy Director General, Dr Ago Pärtel, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, Dr Prof Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe and Honorary President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, Dr Nadège Leboucq, OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas, OIE Regional Representative in Moscow, Dr Etienne Bonbon, Vice President of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department, and Dr Paula Cáceres, Head of the OIE Animal Health Information Department, also participated in the Conference. The speakers presenting Technical Items I and II, namely Dr Gary Vroegindewey from the University of Maryland, United States of America, for Technical Item I, and Dr Harpreet Kochhar, Chief Veterinary Officer of Canada, for Technical Item II, honoured the Conference with their presence.

Tuesday 23 September 2014

Opening Ceremony

3. The opening ceremony was chaired by Dr Ago Pärtel, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, accompanied by the following personalities:
 - Mr Alain Berset, Federal Councillor, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs;
 - Prof. Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe;
 - Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and President of the OIE;
 - Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE; and
 - Dr Hans Wyss, OIE Delegate of Switzerland.
4. Their speeches are annexed at the end of the report.

Election of the Conference Committee

5. The Conference Committee was elected as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Hans Wyss (Switzerland)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr Ago Pärtel (Estonia)
Rapporteur General:	Dr Rustamova Siala (Azerbaijan)

Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

6. The Provisional Agenda and Timetable were adopted with slight modifications.

Election of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs for Technical Items and Animal Health Situation

7. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the Technical Items and the Animal Health Situation as follows:

Item I:	Dr Budimir Plavsic (Serbia) (Chairperson) Dr Peter Engelbert Malin (Liechtenstein) (Rapporteur)
Item II:	Dr Jean Luc Angot (France) (Chairperson) Dr Arbi Shpresa (Albania) (Rapporteur)
Animal Health Situation:	Dr Riitta-Liisa Heinonen (Finland) (Chairperson) Dr Vidmantas Paulauskas (Lithuania) (Rapporteur)

OIE Activities and Vision for the 21st Century

8. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, to present the OIE Activities and Vision for the 21st Century.
9. Dr Vallat began his presentation by providing a brief overview of the OIE with its 180 Member Countries throughout the world. He reminded participants on the history of the Organisation, and outlined its financial structure.
10. The Director General then commented on the OIE's current policies, highlighting key concepts, such as 'Global Public Good', 'One Health' and 'Good Veterinary Governance' and the global, regional and national animal health strategies and disease control and eradication programmes.
11. He stated that all these concepts are relevant when it comes to improving animal health worldwide while ensuring animal welfare, food security, food safety and alleviation of poverty.
12. Dr Vallat also recalled the OIE's reference role as the international standard-setting organisation for animal health issues including its relation to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement).
13. He pointed out that the OIE's role in the scientific management of animal welfare had grown to the point where the OIE was now recognised as the pre-eminent source of standards, guidelines, information and advice on animal welfare worldwide.
14. Dr Vallat reminded Delegates that another key element of the OIE's policies was the strengthening of good governance of Veterinary Services, which could be achieved by supporting Members' compliance with OIE international standards on the quality of veterinarians and efficiency of Veterinary Services and Partners including legislation and continuously building the capacity of Member Countries' Veterinary Services. Good governance includes appropriate legislation, appropriate veterinary education programmes, human and financial resources allocated to Veterinary and Livestock Services, and, finally, relevant public-private partnerships applicable to the entire veterinary domain.
15. He also highlighted the importance of veterinary statutory bodies, which, while not being part of the Veterinary Authority, are nonetheless important in supporting the good governance of Veterinary Services as a whole.
16. Referring to the current global context, the Director General started by presenting the trends in global demand for food as well as the drivers of consumption and future trends, indicating that the worldwide consumption of animal products would increase by more than 50% in the near future, mainly in developing and transition countries.
17. He emphasised that the risk of diseases spreading around the world was increasing, due to factors such as globalisation, the unprecedented increase in movements of people, animals and animal products, changes in farming systems and climate change.

18. Dr Vallat noted the growing importance of veterinary public health given the zoonotic potential of animal pathogens, and stated that 60% of human pathogens and 75% of emerging diseases are zoonotic, and that 80% of potential bioterrorism agents are zoonotic pathogens.
19. Dr Vallat emphasised that veterinarians are also in the front line where protecting human health is concerned as they play an important role in stabilising society by supporting a healthy and productive agricultural sector, which in turn leads to a safe food supply. Veterinarians also make a significant contribution to protection of biodiversity and the environment.
20. Weaknesses in the Veterinary Services of one country can threaten neighbouring countries, regions and, potentially, the whole international community.
21. Dr Vallat noted that challenges of today's world comprised the shortage of public funds, the environmental polemic regarding ruminants, the antimicrobial resistance and the necessity to highlight the importance of the veterinary profession.
22. In that regard, Dr Vallat considered that solutions to be proposed included livestock/environment new policies, development of public private partnerships, assurance of the quality of Veterinary Education and strengthening of the Veterinary Statutory Body competence in line with the international standards of the OIE, especially those dealing with quality and good governance. He also commented on the importance of having good communication on animal health, animal welfare and veterinary public health related issues.
23. In discussing the new concepts to be used for promoting the protection of countries and regions from current and emerging threats to animals and humans, Dr Vallat began by highlighting the 'global public good' concept. Global public goods are those whose benefits extend to all countries, people and generations. Animal health systems are global public goods because controlling and eradicating infectious animal diseases, including zoonoses, bring broad national, international and inter-generational benefits.
24. He reminded the participants that a major part of Veterinary Services activities are a Global Public Good, and bringing them into line with international standards must therefore be considered a national priority. Consequently, one of the OIE's commitments is to support the improvement of the legal framework and resource allocations of national Veterinary Services around the world.
25. He provided key elements for efficient Veterinary Services highlighting: early detection, rapid response to animal disease outbreaks, alliances and partnership between public and private sectors (veterinarians, VSBs, farmers), capacity to implement biosecurity measures, vaccination when appropriate, compensation mechanisms for farmers, national chain of command, and education and research.
26. The Director General commented on the Tripartite Concept Note prepared by the OIE, FAO and WHO to strengthen collaboration between the three organisations in sharing responsibilities and coordinating global activities to address health risks at the animal-human-ecosystems interfaces.
27. Referring to the collaboration between the OIE and WHO, Dr Vallat mentioned the on-going collaboration to provide countries with facilitating tools to build synergies and create bridges. In that sense, he commented on the recent publication of the OIE WHO Operational framework for Good governance at the human-animal interface: Bridging WHO and OIE Tools for the assessment of national capacities.
28. Regarding the future challenges, Dr Vallat referred to the emergence and re-emergence of new diseases, in the context of climate change and changing ecosystems; the antimicrobial resistance; the new risks arising at the wildlife-human-animal interface; the globalisation of trade and tourism bringing new risks; the constant threat of bioterrorism; societal demand for more proteins; human health risk alleviation; animal welfare; and environment preservation.

29. Regarding antimicrobial resistance, Dr Vallat emphasised on the work of the OIE on that matter since the OIE recent Global Conference on the Responsible and prudent use of Antimicrobial Agents for Animals.
30. In reference to the OIE vision, Dr Vallat went on to affirm that sanitary crises, causing considerable economic losses and social burden, may be prevented at a reasonable cost by appropriate implementation of OIE standards on veterinary good governance and disease control methods by all those concerned.
31. He added that effective implementation however, cannot take place nor without political will and support of both rich and poor countries, neither without providing or advocating effective financial and technical support to those who are not yet in a position to apply such international standards due to a lack of financial and human resources is a “win-win” investment. He also said that promoting appropriate alliances between private and public sectors at global, regional and national levels as well as, promoting cross-cooperation between international and regional organisations was of paramount importance for implementing OIE standards on veterinary good governance and disease control methods.
32. On the subject of OIE support for good governance, Dr Vallat highlighted the following: strengthening Veterinary Services through capacity building, such as regular seminars for newly assigned OIE Delegates; establishment of topic-specific National Focal Points in each OIE Member Country and organisation of regular seminars for all these Focal Points; the network of OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres; the laboratory twinning initiative as well as the Twinning opportunities for Veterinary Statutory Bodies and Veterinary Education Establishments; the OIE’s scientific and normative publications; and the OIE PVS Pathway, which is a continuous process aimed at improving Veterinary Services’ compliance with international standards in a sustainable manner.
33. He also commented on important OIE initiatives, including: support with implementing the recommendations of the FAO/OIE Global Conference on Foot and Mouth Disease Control.
34. He highlighted some tools for diseases global eradication such as the compliance with the Code standards and guidelines, OIE recognition of official programmes and disease free status of countries or zones, appropriate internal and/or external support, regional and global coordination, alliances with other organisations, use of OIE PVS Pathway; and the use of WAHIS.
35. Referring to other Global Programmes, he also commented on the development of OIE programmes for the global control of other diseases, such as rabies and peste des petits ruminants (PPR); promotion of government and donor consensus; support to OIE programmes from international donors, including foundations; new twinning projects for veterinary education establishments and veterinary statutory bodies; and OIE policy on disease surveillance and notification, including in wildlife, in the context of freedom status and national control programmes official recognition of disease status.
36. He also provided details on the key issues on international horse movements pointing out the adoption of a new Concept (HHP) published in the Code and the development of a new public private partnership on this matter.
37. Dr Vallat then made reference to the preparation of the OIE’s Sixth Strategic Plan. He explained that a draft was proposed by the Council with the support of a consultant. This draft is submitted for consultation to the Regional and Specialist Commissions as well as Member Countries in order to be ready for final adoption in May 2015 by the World Assembly of Delegates.
38. A presentation of a preliminary draft summary will be made during the Conference.
39. The OIE Director General concluded his presentation by affirming that the OIE would continue supporting its Members by: setting internationally recognised standards and guidelines on animal health, veterinary public health, including food safety, animal welfare; disseminating scientific and animal health information particularly on diseases control methods; recognising the disease-free status of countries/zones for selected diseases as well as recognition of official control

programmes for FMD, PPR and CBPP; contributing to the global control of foot and mouth disease (FMD), rabies in dogs and PPR; providing technical and political support for good governance and Veterinary Services using the PVS Pathway and other capacity-building activities; supporting veterinary education; supporting a better quality, more organised veterinary profession including public/private partnerships; and influencing governments to secure greater recognition of the key role of veterinarians in society.

Discussion

40. Dr Hans Wyss, Delegate of Switzerland and Chairperson of the Conference, thanked Dr Vallat for his comprehensive presentation. The OIE Director General not being able to attend the full Conference, Dr Wyss invited the participants to take advantage of the presence of Dr Vallat and opened the floor to the discussion.
41. The Representative of Sweden, Dr Lena Hellqvist Björnerot, first thanked the host country for the organisation of the Conference. Making reference to the presentation of the OIE Director General, she summarised what she identified as two key words of the OIE vision for the 21st Century, namely: prevention and international cooperation.
42. She suggested that the OIE put a greater emphasis on the development of standards related to prevention especially regarding antimicrobial resistance.
43. Dr Vallat indicated that the existing OIE standards and guidelines were already based on concepts of prevention, but agreed that this could be emphasised in the next OIE Strategic Plan.
44. The Delegate of France, Dr Jean-Luc Angot, warmly thanked Suisse for hosting the Conference. He also congratulated Dr Vallat for the clarity of his presentation. He highlighted that many challenges, including antimicrobial resistance, would have to be faced in the future and they should be reflected in the OIE 6th Strategic Plan.
45. Dr Angot took the opportunity to remind the Regional Commission of the two new categories of extraordinary contribution to the OIE, namely category A and B. He informed the Commission that France already took the decision to contribute to category B which represents 400 000 euros a year.
46. The Delegate of Turkey, Dr Irfan Erol, stressed the importance for the OIE to better work on communicating the activities and the role of the Veterinary Services with the stakeholders and consumers, and expressed his wish for this to be also reflected in the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan.
47. Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, reminded the work the OIE was doing in the field of communication by first inviting the Delegates to take advantage of the different platforms made available to them such as the OIE website, videos, and social media.
48. He also reiterated the importance for the Delegates to nominate their National Focal Points on Communication so they can benefit from the capacity building activities provided by the OIE.
49. He concluded by reminding the existence of a specific Code Chapter on Communication and invited the Delegates to make proposals for this topic to be better developed in the upcoming Sixth Strategic Plan, should they think it is needed.

Activities of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe including the regional initiative and mechanism for OIE standard setting in Europe

50. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Ago Pärtel, Delegate of Estonia and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, to give a presentation on the Activities of the Commission.

51. Dr Ago Pärtel described the composition of the Bureau of the Regional Commission for Europe, underlining the recent designation of Dr Budimir Plavšić, OIE Delegate of Serbia, as Secretary General of the Bureau.
52. He also informed the audience about the OIE Regional and Sub-regional Representations worldwide.
53. With regard to the activities of the Regional Commission for Europe, Dr Pärtel provided the participants with an update regarding the latest developments of the OIE regional standard setting mechanism for Europe. He started by reminding Delegates that during the last Regional Conference held in September 2012 in Fleesensee, Germany, a list of volunteers was drawn up with the intention to organise the first meeting in 2012.
54. He then commented on the two meetings of the Task Force for Common Position that took place in Brussels and Tallinn and the six common positions agreed upon at the 81st OIE General Session.
55. He also mentioned the meeting in Vienna, Austria in November 2013 and the one in Belgrade, Serbia in April 2014, which serve to identify common positions for the 82nd General Session of the OIE. He informed that possible common positions were circulated for approval by the 53 Member Countries.
56. Finally, Dr Partel reported on the meetings he attended in his capacity as President of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, including the Regional seminar for national focal points on communication held in Tallinn, Estonia, from 1 to 3 July 2014, the meeting of Ministers of Agriculture and CVOs of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on common strategy for ASF, held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 31 July 2014, and the Meeting of CVOs of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia undersigning common program for ASF, held in Pulawy, Poland on 1 September 2014.

**Activities and work programme of the
OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe, the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in
Brussels, the OIE Regional Representation in Moscow, and the OIE Sub Regional FMD
coordination Unit Office in Astana**

57. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives to report on their activities.
58. Prof. Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe, Dr Nadège Leboucq, OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, and Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas, OIE Regional Representative in Moscow, provided with a general overview on the activities organised in the region. Among the activities highlighted were:
 - The OIE Seminar for Newly Appointed Delegates held in Brussels, Belgium, from 18 to 20 February 2014;
 - The OIE Regional Seminar for Focal Points on Communication held in Tallinn, Estonia, from 1 to 3 July 2014;
 - The Regional Seminar for OIE National Focal Points for Wildlife held in St. Petersburg, Russia, from 28 to 30 April 2014;
 - The 2nd Meeting of the Steering Group (SG2) of the OIE Platform for Animal Welfare in Europe held in Moscow, Russia, on 13 and 14 May 2014;
 - The 1st OIE Regional Workshop on Stray Dog population management for Balkan countries (SDB1) held in Bucharest, Romania, from 17 to 19 June 2014, and which served to initiate a multi-year process aimed at achieving compliance with OIE international standards by 2025;

- The OIE-CIC Joint International Meeting on ASF held in Paris, France, on 30 June and 1 July 2014.
59. They also highlighted several other activities attended and projects being developed in the region such as:
- Finalising joint tools for the OIE and the World Health Organization (WHO) to evaluate human health and veterinary health systems within the framework of the ‘One Health’ approach;
 - Implementing the first Action Plan of the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe launched at the end of 2013;
 - Participation in missions with the European Union (EU) Emergency Team for situation assessment of African swine fever (ASF) in Lithuania, Poland and Latvia, organised in light of the difficult ASF situation in Europe;
 - Organisation of several meetings in Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia to discuss the current ASF situation and possibilities for strengthening and adapting the preventive measures;
 - Communication and meetings with high-ranking authorities of OIE Member Countries in the OIE Europe region and Representatives of International Organisations also took place during the year.
60. Finally, they commented on the Work Programme for 2015 and on some important tasks and activities already scheduled, such as:
- Implementation of trainer training sessions on the transport and slaughter of farmed animals, within the framework of the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare;
 - Strengthening of collaboration with European institutions and especially the European Parliament, through an event highlighting the OIE’s international solidarity actions as part of ‘European Year of Development’;
 - Contribution to the preparation of the Global Peste des Petits Ruminants Control Strategy and its presentation at the world conference on the subject, planned to be held in Côte d’Ivoire at the end of March 2015;
 - A new dossier is also being added to the programme for SRR-Brussels: strengthening of collaboration between the OIE and the World Customs Organization, based on updating of the existing cooperation Agreement, made necessary notably by the new WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
61. Some other important tasks and activities already scheduled for 2015 also include work on: ASF prevention and control measures in Europe; FMD situation in Central Asian countries; and the role of the Veterinary Statutory Body in veterinary education in Eastern Europe.

Discussion

62. The Delegate of the United Kingdom, Dr Nigel Gibbens, congratulated the four OIE Regional and Sub-regional Representations in Europe for the importance of their portfolio of activities. He recommended to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the region as a whole and to have a consistent approach across Europe, in spite of the wide variety of country situations. He emphasised the need for all countries of the region to raise their standards. He recommended to use the opportunity of the development of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan to address this in an ambitious way.
63. The OIE Director General, Dr Bernard Vallat, explained that Europe was probably the most heterogeneous region of all 5 OIE regions – and thereby the most difficult region to deal with –, with on one hand, the EU Members States and their own common obligations regarding

veterinary legislation, and on the other hand, the non-EU countries with different capacities to implement OIE standards. This is the reason why the OIE decided to open the Offices in Brussels, Moscow and Astana, in addition to the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe countries in Sofia (Bulgaria), with a view to building bridges between the different ‘groups’ of countries and facilitating regional dialogue. In addition, the OIE launched the regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe, which is a good example of harmonizing capacity by sharing a common vision.

64. He agreed that regional priorities could be clearly defined in the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan, as a way to continue improving regional dialogue. In the specific field of trade, Dr Vallat reminded the existence of the OIE mediation procedure relying on a strong scientific basis, which has never been used between countries in the region to date. He encouraged countries of Europe to use it as a possible alternative to the WTO dispute mechanism.
65. The Delegate of Estonia and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, Dr Ago Pärtel, mentioned that improving dialogue among countries of Europe was a priority of the Bureau of the Commission as soon as it was elected. The regional mechanism of OIE standard setting was therefore created to harmonize positions among the 53 Member Countries of Europe. Similarly, the questionnaire launched in 2014, on the initiative of the Bureau, aimed to identify ways to improve interactions and collaboration within the Europe Region (cf. Presentation of Dr Lucio Carbajo, see below).

The OIE Sixth Strategic Plan – Regional perspectives

66. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, to present the regional perspectives of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan.
67. Dr Karin Schwabenbauer gave the Commission a brief update on the development of the Sixth OIE Strategic Plan for the 2016-2020 period.
68. Dr Schwabenbauer commented that a preliminary version was proposed by the Council with the support of a consultant.
69. She reminded participants that the draft concept note had been forwarded to all OIE Delegates in early May 2014 to enable them to submit comments and observations to OIE Council Members in their region. Comments were received from some OIE Delegates.
70. Dr Schwabenbauer also reminded participants on key information regarding the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan, already presented during the meeting of the Commission during the General Session in May 2014.
71. The next Council meeting scheduled at beginning of October will concentrated on the Sixth Strategic Plan, finalising a first draft that will be submitted for comments to the Delegates and Regional and Specialists Commissions.
72. She said that the final text would be circulated among Member Countries for comments in March 2015 with a view to its adoption at the 83rd General Session in May 2015.
73. She provided a general overview on the strategic objectives of the Plan such as: securing animal health and welfare by appropriate risk management, establishing trust through communication, and ensuring the capacity and sustainability of veterinary services. She also referred to the three cross-cutting areas of the Plan, Area A: scientific excellence, Area B: diversity, inclusiveness, engagement, transparency, and Area C: governance.
74. She reiterated that the OIE Council considered that the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan should:
 - contain a revised consolidated statement of OIE’s strategic vision and its global goals;

- take into account current and anticipated global trends and challenges affecting OIE's operating environment;
 - incorporate important cross-cutting issues;
 - be ambitious but not necessarily expansive;
 - be high-level, flexible and enabling rather than prescriptive, and allow for optional approaches in order to be responsive and facilitate implementation; and
 - be developed with the engagement of all Members of the OIE.
75. She said that the OIE Council would also be proposing to Delegates a flexible five-year strategic human resources plan for the recruitment, retention and development of OIE staff.
76. Dr Schwabenbauer reiterated Delegates the importance of providing their thoughts and comments on the framework and directions for the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan, especially non EU Member Countries. She emphasised that Members' comments were highly valued and said that they could provide their input to the OIE Director General and to OIE Council members representing the Europe region.
77. She concluded by making reference to the recent survey, conducted by the Bureau of the Regional Commission to identify Member Countries' priorities to be considered in the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. She indicated that the discussions following the presentation of the results later during the day would represent a good opportunity for ensuring the involvement of the whole Region in the completion of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan.

Discussion

78. Dr Hans Wyss, Chairperson of the Conference, thanked Dr Schwabenbauer for providing an update on the development of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan and opened the floor to discussions.
79. The Representative of Denmark, thanked the Regional Commission for the opportunity to comment on the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. He started his intervention by raising concerns regarding the recent application of an OIE Reference Laboratories on fish diseases to patent a pathogen agent for diagnostic purpose. He highlighted that this could hamper the release of diagnostic methods and then ultimately threaten safe trade should royalties be charged to Member Countries using the services of OIE Reference Laboratories undertaking such practices. He reminded that the EU has already raised this issue in writing when commenting the OIE Sixth Strategic plan earlier this year and stressed the importance for the OIE to address this concern in the final version of the plan.
80. Dr Thomas Jemmi, representing Switzerland, thanked the OIE for preparing the Sixth Strategic Plan and for the opportunity to comment it. He went on providing the Regional Commission with a specific concern of his country regarding the health and welfare of reptiles, and how this could be addressed in the new Plan.
81. Dr Jemmi provided the Regional Commission with a comprehensive rationale on the importance for the OIE to address the health and welfare of reptiles by highlighting the perspective of his country which is an important hub for the trade of products made of reptile leather. He explained the preliminary work of Switzerland on the proper slaughter of reptiles. This work has been then shared with the OIE for consideration in 2013, but it seems that it has not been addressed yet. He therefore asked the Regional Commission of Europe to support the proposal of Switzerland for the OIE to address the health and welfare of reptiles.
82. The Delegate of the United Kingdom, Dr Nigel Gibbens, first congratulated the work of the OIE Council on preparing the draft OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. He reiterated the importance for the OIE to continue using the scientific excellence as the basis of its work. In order to do so, he suggested the Sixth Strategic Plan put an emphasis on strengthening scientific network.

83. Dr Lena Hellqvist Björnerot, Representative of Sweden, congratulated the work already done on the development OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. Making reference to her earlier intervention, she reiterated her wish for prevention concepts to be better covered in the Plan. She informed that Sweden was happy with this ambitious Plan but wonder how the OIE would finance its implementation.
84. Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, provided some clarifications to respond to the concerns raised during the discussion.
85. Regarding the work of the OIE on reptiles, Dr Vallat confirmed that reptiles would be considered by the OIE. A request in that sense has already been made to the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases and the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission to address both the welfare and health of these species. The introduction of precise reference to OIE work on reptiles in the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan will be evaluated at the next meeting of the OIE Council.
86. Regarding the OIE Reference Centres, Dr Vallat reminded the procedures already in place for the establishment of these important components of the OIE scientific network. A system of audit is currently under evaluation to ensure that OIE Reference Centres provide the services expected by Member Countries: the OIE will increasingly have recourse to the “delisting procedure” as incentive for OIE Reference Centres to maintain the required level of excellency. He took the opportunity to call for countries proposal of Reference laboratories for OIE listed diseases not already covered by the OIE network.
87. Regarding the funding of the OIE activities linked to the Sixth Strategic plan, Dr Vallat indicated that it would be done using a combination of existing and new mechanisms:
- Increased contribution of Member Countries using traditional categories as well as the two new extraordinary categories;
 - Voluntary contribution to the OIE World Animal Health and Welfare Fund; and
 - Involvement of private sector in OIE activities through Public Private Partnerships (this was recently done for the HHP concept with the financial participation of the equine industry). This approach could be used for the development of standards for reptiles.
88. Dr K. Schwabenbauer, in her capacity as OIE President, added that the level of implementation of the Sixth Strategic Plan will depend on available financial resources. She invited again all Member Countries to provide their comments on the draft Strategic Plan by February 2015 at the latest.

**Technical Item I:
“Animal health in the light of natural disasters and bioterrorism”**

89. The Session Chairperson, Dr Budimir Plavsic, Delegate of Serbia, briefly introduced the speaker for this Technical Item, Dr Gary Vroegindewey, Director of the Global Health Initiatives at the Regional College of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Maryland, United States of America, and Chair of the OIE *ad hoc* Group on Natural Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Relation to Animal Health and Welfare and Veterinary Public Health.
90. Dr Vroegindewey started his presentation by mentioning that disasters of all types had profound impacts on human and animal health, economy and trade, and societies. Animals and animal related issues are increasingly part of disaster management and risk reduction due to their economic, health and welfare, and social aspects.
91. Dr Vroegindewey commented that the OIE had taken a leadership role to identify the current state of disaster management and risk reduction processes and capacities of the Veterinary Services of Member Countries and had initiated a programme to provide guidelines and standards in this field.

92. He stated that, during the 81st OIE General Session held in Paris in May 2013, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe had adopted “Animal health in the light of natural disasters and bioterrorism” as Technical Item 1 (with questionnaire) to be presented during the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission to be held in Bern, Switzerland, from 22 to 26 September 2014. The OIE Regional Commission for Europe survey on Animal Health in the light of Natural Disasters and Bioterrorism resulted in 48 of the 53 Member Countries of the Region responding.
93. Dr Vroegindewey noted that this high response rate indicated the high level of interest in this topic among Members. He then explained that there was a wide range of responses across multiple areas, including legislation, disaster management and bioterrorism authorities, disaster and bioterrorism experience, effectiveness of response, disaster and bioterrorism capacity, use of guidelines and standards, scope of animals covered, integration of stakeholders, lessons learned analysis, resourcing, and other key elements of effective disaster management and risk reduction.
94. He specified that the variability of responses indicated the incomplete integration of Veterinary Services into many national and regional preparedness and response networks in facing natural disasters and bioterrorism. In addition, he said that it demonstrated an inconsistent capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters and bioterrorism events and highlighted the need for guidelines and standards, training and education, informational resources, and collaborative efforts.
95. Dr Vroegindewey concluded by highlighting, through potential recommendations, the fact that the vast majority of responders (94%) had indicated a desire for the OIE to provide actions that would support the Competent Authorities and Veterinary Services of their country, with the greatest emphasis on guidelines in the OIE *Terrestrial Code*, education and training programmes, and technical support activities.

Discussion

96. Dr Budimir Plavsic, Chairperson for this Technical Item, congratulated Dr Vroegindewey on his interesting presentation and opened the floor to the discussion.
97. Dr Pierre Naassen, Delegate of Belgium, underlined the importance of having clear definitions in questionnaires developed for technical items especially when it relates to new issues.
98. Dr Nigel Gibbens, Delegate of the United Kingdom, thanked Dr Vroegindewey for his presentation which he considered of great importance and very pertinent. Dr Gibbens commented on the experience of the United Kingdom in dealing with crises affecting animal health such as the FMD crisis faced by the country in 2001.
99. He highlighted the fact that, even if countries were usually conscious of potential threats, it could be very difficult to be properly prepared to deal with them due to their potential range. He considered that joint efforts were needed and that countries should share their experiences so to develop sort of a tool kit.
100. Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, expressed her gratitude for such an important presentation which clarified the role of the Veterinary Services in dealing with disasters. She highlighted the importance of taking into account the lessons learned after facing a disaster. She also underlined the importance of focusing not only on skills but also on capacity building. She considered important to avoid overloading the OIE Veterinary Education Core Curriculum with this topic but to rather make sure that we first properly manage veterinary crisis.
101. The Delegate of Serbia commented on the experience of his country in crisis management during the flooding of last May and more recently in September. He explained that the main difficulties faced were related to guaranteeing feed and medicines which may impact on animal health. Dr Plavsic highlighted the fact that his country had decided to gather the experience gained in this respect and to share the relevant information with the different national Ministries.

102. Dr Plavsic summarised the experience gained and highlighted the following:
- Improving the capacity to deal with crises;
 - Developing legislation and guidelines to manage crises;
 - Raising the awareness of the Veterinary Services, the livestock sector, local associations and local communities; and
 - Improving cooperation at national level between the different Ministries.
103. The Delegates that had intervened in the discussion were invited to join the drafting group for Recommendation 1 on 'Animal health in the light of natural disasters and bioterrorism'.

OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission Issues of interest to the Region – Challenges and proposals

104. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Etienne Bonbon, Vice-President of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Code Commission), to present the issues of interest to the region and the challenges and proposals relating to the Code Commission.
105. Dr Bonbon presented the major issues relating to the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code (Terrestrial Code)* that had been adopted at the 82nd General Session in May 2014 or discussed during the meeting of the Code Commission on 9 to 18 September 2014. He highlighted the importance for the Europe Region of the adoption in May of a User's Guide, now fully integrated into the *Terrestrial Code*, and of the updating of chapters such as those on brucellosis, now one chapter for three types of *Brucella* in all species, and on the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobials, a key issue at the forefront of collaboration with public health organisations.
106. He then detailed the outcome of the Code Commission discussions in September on the updating of chapters on Foot and mouth disease, African swine fever and Glanders, and on the drafting of new chapters on Porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome and High health status horse subpopulation.
107. He also stressed the importance of the draft new chapters on welfare of dairy cows, salmonellosis in pigs, and taeniosis.
108. Dr Bonbon ended by referring to the discussions held with the Scientific Commission regarding the issue of atypical BSE and its possible consequences for the *Terrestrial Code*, and the problem of harmonising the terminology used in the *Terrestrial Code* and their use in WAHIS.

Discussion

109. Dr Hans Wyss, Chairperson of the Conference thanked Dr Bonbon for the clear presentation and opened the floor to discussion.
110. Dr Facelli, representing Italy proposed that some terms of the Code glossary be revised, especially the definition of Veterinary Services. He considered that the current OIE definition did not reflect the full range of activities under the responsibility of the Veterinary Services particularly Veterinary Public Health. He recognised that, although this topic was covered by Codex Alimentarius, the fact that there is already a dedicated Section in the Code on this topic, it could be appropriate to update the definition accordingly so to emphasise the important role of the Veterinary Services in that domain.
111. Dr Etienne Bonbon confirmed that indeed Section 6 of the Code was covering Veterinary Public Health. Moreover, part of Chapter 3.2 on the Evaluation of Veterinary Services directly made reference to the involvement of Veterinary Services into Veterinary Public Health.

Facilitation of international competition horse movements A new OIE initiative

112. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Susanne Münstermann, Project Officer at the OIE Scientific and Technical Department, to present the OIE's new initiative on facilitation of international competition horse movements.
113. Dr Münstermann began her presentation by referring to the significant worldwide growth of the sport horse industry, which brought with it measurable and significant socio-economic benefits, including to national economies and the horse industry.
114. She noted that this growth had been particularly marked during the past decade, during which the number of events organised under the rules of the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) had doubled. While events in the racehorse industry had not increased as quickly, the amount of prize money available had risen.
115. She added that this growth was, however, not uniformly shared among all OIE Member Countries and was mainly taking place in the countries and regions of the world with a history of such events, such as the European Union and the Americas.
116. This is due not only to the long-standing tradition of equestrian sports in countries such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany, but also to the facilitated movement between countries of the EU and between EU countries and selected, approved, third countries. Other parts of the world, not covered by these EU regulations, face a number of challenges related to the international movement of competition horses as well as the expansion of the equine industry in these regions.
117. Dr Münstermann then reminded participants of the new *Terrestrial Code* Chapter 4.16., adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates in May 2014, which describes the general principles for the concept of 'high health, high performance' (HHP) horses. The concept was developed by an *ad hoc* group involving scientific and private-sector expertise, which developed the concept based on existing OIE standards for compartmentalisation, biosecurity, identification and traceability adapted for application to a sub-population of high health status horses. This status will be reserved for horses that move internationally for competitions or racing on a temporary import permit.
118. Dr Münstermann emphasised the critical importance of the quality of the Veterinary Services and the reliability of their health certification, in accordance with OIE standards, as integral to this concept. Furthermore, the concept embraces a public-private partnership approach in which equine industry bodies such as the FEI and IFHA work closely with the Veterinary Services to ensure the maintenance of the high health status of this subpopulation.
119. The HHP project continues to be supported by an OIE *ad hoc* group of experts, which is in the process of developing guidance documents and additional chapters in support of Chapter 4.16., such as a Model HHP Health Certificate, HHP horse management guide and Biosecurity Guidelines for management of the high health subpopulation, and an individual HHP horse during residence, transport and at events.
120. Dr Münstermann concluded by stating that the ultimate aim of this OIE initiative was to facilitate the safe international movement of HHP horses at a global level, by providing sanitary assurance for the importing country, the country of origin on the return of the horses and the horses themselves in transit and during competitions, while providing an opportunity for regions of the world with an interest in, and the potential for, developing their equine industry to participate more actively in international equestrian events with the full participation of the Veterinary Services. She clarified that the HHP concept is an alternative to existing free movement for equines within the EU and its approved third countries and not a replacement.

Discussion

121. Dr Hans Wyss thanked Dr Münstermann for her comprehensive presentation and opened the floor to discussion.
122. Dr Nigel Gibbens, Delegate of United Kingdom, strongly supported this initiative of the OIE. He questioned how the interaction between compartment and regional risk would be addressed for horse vector borne diseases.
123. Dr Münstermann first indicated that, out of the six diseases currently considered for certification under the HHP horses' concept, two were vector borne. For these particular diseases, the emphasis for ensuring proper certification would be during the preparatory period where regular testing for freedom would be done and during transportation where vector protection would be applied.
124. Dr Wyss reminded that, for Bluetongue, it was considered that it was not possible to reach a full vector protection. He expressed his concern regarding the approach suggested for horse diseases as this could create confusion in communicating on vector borne diseases in general.
125. Referring to African Horse Sickness, Dr Münstermann explained that it would be the only disease for which a quarantine would be requested.
126. Dr Jean-Luc Angot, Delegate of France, explained the experience of France in hosting the recent World Equestrian Games. The main challenge faced was not only to maintain the sanitary status of the horses participating to the event but also to ensure that the national horse population be protected. He explained that in order to face this challenge, the Veterinary Services of France worked in close collaboration with the OIE. Although it has not been possible to fully apply the HHP horses' concept, some principles have been applied for a smooth roll out of the event. Lessons learned from France during these games will be shared with countries hosting similar events in the future such as Canada and Brazil.

Identifying new challenges for drawing the future of the Regional Commission and its Members

127. Dr Hans Wyss invited Dr Lucio Carbajo, Delegate of Spain and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, to present the results of a survey aimed at identifying new challenges for drawing the future of the Regional Commission and its Members.
128. Dr Lucio Carbajo, Delegate of Spain and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, started his presentation by stating that, according to the OIE Fifth Strategic Plan, the most highly valued functions of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission were to promote the exchange of information and compliance with OIE recommendations among Member Countries of the region, as well to prepare the agenda for meetings and Conferences of the Commission, liaise with other Regional Commissions and put forward suggestions for activities, the latter functions being equally important but with a lower priority.
129. He then stated that, according to the survey, the most valued tools for improving synergy within the region were face to face meetings and seminars, far ahead of electronic communication.
130. Dr Carbajo said that the current communication within the Region could be improved at different levels especially between OIE Regional and Sub-regional representations and Headquarters. He particularly emphasised the importance to ensure the agendas of the different meeting address expectations of Member Countries.
131. He noted that the development of regional surveillance programmes for relevant diseases and the implementation of the OIE Codes standards were considered as priority matters to be tackled by the Regional Commission.

132. Finally, Dr Carbajo said that the majority of responding countries agreed that the Regional Commission should facilitate the continuous involvement of Members in OIE standard setting process and its implementation, and should encourage transparency and the harmonisation of work. Animal welfare and wildlife matters were considered to be of a slightly lower level of priority.

Discussion

133. The Deputy Director General of OIE, Dr Monique Eloit, congratulated the Bureau of the OIE Commission for Europe both for the initiative of conducting the Survey and for the results obtained. She was notably appreciative of the fact that the Bureau is active beyond the annual General Sessions and bi-annual Regional Conferences, and proposes options to improve its roles, with the view to notably better servicing OIE Member Countries of the region. The proposed recommendations will be considered in the course of the Sixth Strategic Plan elaboration; Dr Eloit indicated that they could also be most useful to improve the way OIE works, notably to better institutionalise the working relationships between the Bureau of the Regional Commission and the OIE. For example, a meeting between the Bureau and the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations of the region could notably be held on an annual basis, to discuss the implementation of the Strategic Plan in the specific context of the region. The OIE Council could be the right arena to take the Survey's recommendations further.

The OIE Approach to One Health

134. Dr Hans Wyss invited Dr Stéphane de La Rocque, OIE Animal Health Specialist, to present the OIE Approach to One Health.
135. Dr de La Rocque started his presentation by mentioning that experience gathered from the pandemic influenza crisis and other similar emergencies of major zoonotic infectious diseases had confirmed that collaboration between human and animal health systems was crucial to effectively manage their potential global spread.
136. He emphasised that human and animal health systems needed to be robust and to have sufficient capacities to ensure global health safety. He explained that, in order to be effective, they must work in close partnership to address common issues regarding early detection, assessment and rapid response, whilst respecting international standards.
137. Dr de La Rocque stated that the OIE and WHO are the intergovernmental organisations mandated to improve animal and human health, respectively, on a global scale; they assist countries with strengthening their capacities and improving their compliance under the normative frameworks of the international standards described in the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and *Aquatic Animal Health Code* and the WHO International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005).
138. He then explained that the use of these normative frameworks had provided opportunities to engage human and animal health systems in a constructive and operations-oriented dialogue, exploring ways to improve their coordination. Stemming from this, significant results have recently been obtained and are in line with good governance principles. To support countries in improving their governance systems, the OIE and WHO have developed complementary tools to assess national capacities and to analyse gaps in their compliance with OIE international standards and the IHR (2005).
139. Finally, Dr de La Rocque said that the OIE and WHO had also conducted, with the support of the World Bank, an in-depth analysis of the differences and synergies between the frameworks and tools used in the two sectors. Joint WHO IHR/OIE PVS Pathway national bridging workshops offer a structured approach to help countries identify strengths and weaknesses and accordingly define concerted corrective measures and strategic investments. Participation in these workshops helps countries define national strategies targeting capacity building at the human–animal health interface and led to the publication of a guide entitled “OIE WHO Operational framework for Good governance at the human-animal interface: Bridging WHO and OIE Tools for the

assessment of national capacities”. This approach has been tested in pilot countries and will be included in future programmes undertaken by the OIE and WHO. It will contribute to globally promoting the importance of a One Health approach, while accelerating progress towards Global Health Security.

Wednesday 24 September 2014

Technical Item II “Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea: current global situation and possible threat for Europe”

140. The Session Chairperson, Dr Jean Luc Angot, Delegate of France, briefly introduced Dr Harpreet Kochhar, Chief Veterinary Officer of Canada and speaker for this Technical Item.
141. Dr Kochhar began his presentation by stating that porcine epidemic diarrhoea (PED) is a highly contagious disease of swine caused by the porcine epidemic diarrhoea virus (PEDV), an *Alphacoronavirus* of the *Coronaviridae* family. He underlined the fact that PEDV poses no risk to human health or food safety.
142. He informed participants that the disease was first recognised in England in 1971. Since then, PED outbreaks have been documented in many European and Asian countries.
143. He then added that the virus had never been reported in North America until May 2013, when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed that PEDV had been identified in several states in the United States of America. Canada immediately took a pro-active risk management approach and implemented various actions in collaboration with external stakeholders, such as building laboratory testing capability and capacity, enhancing border controls, engaging the public and swine producers for disease awareness and promoting biosecurity.
144. Dr Kochhar commented that Canada had been able to prevent the introduction of this disease for almost 8 months despite its widespread presence in the United States of America and the significant movement of pigs and trucks between the two countries.
145. He then stated that the first case of PED was confirmed in Canada in January 2014. The Canadian Food Inspection agency (CFIA) has provided technical, diagnostic and scientific support to the provincial governments and pork industries, which have been leading the response in the affected provinces as this is not a federally reportable disease in Canada. CFIA also continues to recommend that producers follow strict biosecurity measures in compliance with National Swine Biosecurity Standards. CFIA works with the Canada Border Services Agency to be vigilant in assessing vehicles to ensure that they are cleaned and disinfected in line with the Health of Animal Regulations.
146. He added that the CFIA had led the investigation to address concerns that feed/feed ingredients could potentially have caused the transmission of the disease. The epidemiological evidence supports the view that the likely source for most of the early cases in Ontario and for the single case in Prince Edward Island was swine pelleted feed containing a specific lot of spray dried porcine plasma imported from the United States of America.
147. Dr Kochhar stressed that Canada understood European concerns about the current global PED situation. He considered that it would difficult to assess the risk to the animal health status of the EU from the recent global spread. The exact prevalence, virulence and level of immune cross-protection needs to be assessed within the EU to reach such a conclusion. Since it would be a re-emerging disease for the EU, the Member States need to be aware of possible pathways of introduction of the virus and it would be prudent for a collaborative government/industry/research approach to be used.

148. To conclude, Dr Kochhar said that Canada had managed this infection in a controlled manner, as indicated by the significantly diminished number of new cases being reported per month. The European Union has reviewed the requirements for the import of porcine animals into the EU. Canada will meet the specific needs as per the new certificate.

Discussion

149. Dr Jean-Luc Angot, Delegate of France and Chairperson for the Technical Item, briefly summarised the information provided by Dr Kochhar insofar as it related to the threat of PED in Europe; he then invited Dr Bonbon to provide a brief summary of the outcomes of the recent meeting of the OIE ad hoc Group on PED.
150. Dr Etienne Bonbon, Vice-President of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, provided the Regional Commission with a summary of the recent work of the OIE in response to the PED situation worldwide.
151. He began with a reminder that, in June 2014, the OIE Director General had convened an ad hoc Group on PED in response to Member Countries' concerns. The terms of reference of this ad hoc Group were as follows:
- To evaluate the current epidemiological situation;
 - To assess PED virus infection against the criteria in the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* with a view to its possible inclusion in the OIE List of diseases;
 - To provide advice on potential mitigation measures to reduce the risk of PED spreading through trade in live animals and animal products; and
 - To elaborate a Technical Factsheet on PED.
152. The main outcomes of the work of the *ad hoc* Group were summarised as follows;
- The *ad hoc* Group unanimously agreed on the non-listing of PED virus infection;
 - The conclusion in favour of non-listing was endorsed by the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases in September;
 - The infection should remain notifiable to the OIE as an emerging disease;
 - The *ad hoc* Group recognised that the major risk mitigation measures should be strict biosecurity and management at farm level; and
 - Trade restrictions were not recommended.
153. Dr Bonbon concluded by indicating that the *ad hoc* Group had elaborated a Technical Factsheet on PED to inform Member Countries. This factsheet would be circulated to Conference participants during the day and be made available on the OIE website. It would then be updated as new scientific evidence became available.
154. The Delegate of Belgium, Dr Pierre Naassens, on behalf of the 28 European Union (EU) Member States, provided the Regional Commission with an update on provisional measures undertaken by the European Union regarding PED and the new deltacoronavirus. He explained that a specific request for a scientific risk assessment had been submitted to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to be published in October.
155. Dr Naassens then indicated the provisional measures undertaken by the EU in the meantime to protect its pig population:
- Amendment of the EU model import certificate for pig blood products in order to address some uncertainties that are relevant to PED, namely, inappropriate heat treatment or contamination of the product after heat treatment; and
 - Amendment of the EU model import certificate for live porcine animals in order to also cover PED and porcine deltacoronavirus.

156. He emphasised that these EU measures had been put in place on a temporary basis and that the EU was ready to review them in the light of a risk assessment based on new scientific evidence when available.
157. Dr Naassens indicated that the EU considered these measures as proportionate and non-discriminatory and in line with the principles of the WTO SPS Agreement and the OIE international standards. However, the EU noted with regret that certain OIE Member Countries were failing to observe their obligations by continuing not to implement, for several other diseases, OIE standards in international trade. The EU therefore called on these Member Countries to fully implement OIE standards.
158. The Delegates of Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, as well a representative of FESASS, then engaged a discussion, summarised as follows:
- While the likely source of introduction of PED in Canada was feed imported from the United States of America containing pig blood plasma, the precise source of introduction in the United States of America remains unclear. There is on-going collaboration between Canada and the United States of America as well as with Mexico to obtain a clearer understanding of the situation.
 - Following a risk assessment, Canada concluded that pelleted feed produced under current practices would not represent a source of introduction of PED even if it contained pig plasma. However, post-manufacturing contamination of the feed cannot be excluded. As a precautionary measure, the feed industry of Canada decided to only use pig blood plasma testing negative to PED by RT-PCR.
 - In Canada, most of the PED-infected farms did not receive PED contaminated feed, suggesting that other means of transmission such as fomites could be involved.
 - Strong biosecurity measures combined with proper cleaning and disinfection has proved to be very effective as a means of avoiding the introduction of the disease and of controlling the spread of the disease in Canada. However, these measures can be quite cumbersome and should be accompanied with incentives and strong communication strategy involving all stakeholders.
 - The decision to vaccinate against PED in some big integrated pig farms in Canada was more a business decision than risk-based. More work is needed to understand the efficacy of existing vaccines and especially in relation to the possibility to differentiate infected from vaccinated animals (DIVA).
159. The Delegates that had intervened in the discussion were invited to join the drafting group for Recommendation 2 on Porcine epidemic diarrhoea.

OIE Regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe

160. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Stanislav Ralchev, Technical Assistant at the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, to present the OIE Regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe.
161. Dr Ralchev started his presentation by recalling that the idea and founding principles of an OIE Platform on animal welfare for Europe had first been discussed and agreed during the previous Conference of the OIE Commission for Europe, held in Fleesensee, Germany, in 2012. He considered that, two years on, the Bern conference provided an excellent opportunity to measure the progress achieved to date in the development of this Platform.
162. He informed the participants that the Platform had been officially launched in December 2013, during the first meeting of the Platform Steering Group. On this occasion, the members of the Steering Group had also discussed and endorsed the first triennial Action Plan of the Platform, covering the period 2014–2016 and focussing on stray dogs, transport by land and slaughter of animals. Thanks to funding from the European Commission and France, the Platform Secretariat (provided by the OIE sub-Regional Representation in Brussels) was able to start implementing the Action Plan immediately.

163. He then reported on the different activities, highlighting the fact that the website of the Platform had now been developed and would be officially launched during the Regional Conference. He said that it was expected to become a rich depository of best practices, guides, and contingency plans to facilitate the implementation of the relevant OIE standards, as well as a space for dialogue and networking for Delegates and national Focal Points in the region. He stated that all documents posted on the website would be translated into Russian.
164. Dr Ralchev also mentioned the First OIE Regional Workshop on (national strategy) stray dog management for Balkan countries, which took place in Bucharest, Romania, from 17 to 19 June with the financial support of Germany and Romania. He provided details of the main outcomes of the Workshop, namely that the countries had agreed on a shared vision ‘to be fully compliant with the OIE standard on stray dog populations by 2025’, and had agreed to hold regular follow-up Workshops to measure progress overtime, using a self-assessment and monitoring tool developed by the OIE and IZSAM Teramo (Italy). A regional awareness campaign, informing the general public of the rules of good dog ownership, is one of the planned (2015) activities to address some of the gaps identified during the Bucharest Workshop.
165. He indicated that the aim of the Platform was also to facilitate coordination among the different stakeholders and partners working in the field of animal welfare in the region. In line with the recommendations made at the previous Conference of the Regional Commission, representatives of regional organisations and NGOs, preferably those having an agreement with OIE, can attend the meetings of the Platform Steering Group as Observers according to the agenda. World Animal Protection (previously known as the World Society for the Protection of Animals) was notably present at the second meeting of the Steering Group, held in Russia in May 2014. Stakeholders and partners can also provide expertise for the delivery of the Action Plan as needs arise.
166. Finally, Dr Ralchev informed participants that a rich programme of activities was due to be carried out in 2015, focussing on ‘training of trainers’ activities on transport and slaughter for Russian-speaking countries. He stated that the visibility of the Platform also needed to be progressively increased, by means of the website, an annual Newsletter and an Advocacy Document specifically targeting donors with a view to ensuring the financial sustainability of the Platform to 2016 and beyond.
167. He concluded by mentioning that the 27th Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe (September 2016) would provide an opportunity to report on the delivery of the first Platform Action Plan — which by then would have been completed —, and present the next one.

Discussion

168. Dr K. Schwabenbauer, OIE Delegate of Germany and President of the OIE, thanked for the presentation and commended the impressive work done since the previous regional Conference in Fleesensee (Germany), when the idea of a regional mechanism for animal welfare in Europe was initially discussed and agreed. She mentioned that Germany financially supported the seminar on stray dog population management held in Romania in June 2014 and is considering financing forthcoming activities on transport and slaughter. She also questioned the need for a regional strategy on animal welfare for Europe – as is the case in Asia and some other regions -; this could be put on the agenda of the next regional Conference (2016), which will be timely with lessons learnt from the completion of the first Action Plan of the current Platform.
169. The Representative of Sweden, Dr Lena Hellqvist Björnerot, asked for an update on the OIE animal welfare initiatives in the other regions. Dr Eloit, OIE Deputy Director General, indicated that all regions are working on animal welfare at different level and that the Asia region was the most advanced, with a well-developed Regional Animal Welfare Strategy and related implementing plan. Dr Eloit also applauded the practical results achieved by the Platform on animal welfare for Europe in two years. She therefore underlined its crucial roles in terms of sharing best practises and experience and enhancing regional dialogue, conducive to the progressive harmonisation of animal welfare practises across all Europe. She finally invited all countries to get knowledge of the advocacy document and to consider possible financial support of any activity of the Platform.

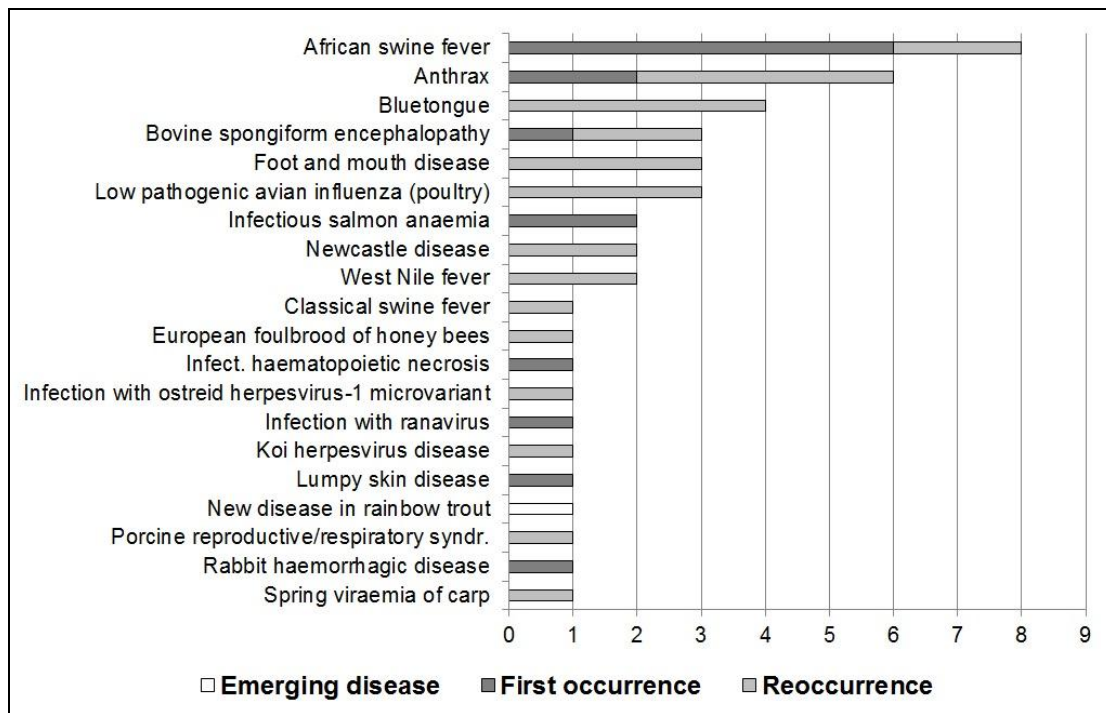
Animal health situation of Member Countries in the region during the first semester of 2014

170. The Session Chairperson, Dr Riitta-Liisa Heinonen, Delegate of Finland, invited Dr Paula Cáceres, Head of the OIE Animal Health Information Department, to present the report on the Animal health situation of Member Countries in the region during the first semester of 2014.
171. This report is based on information obtained from six-monthly and annual reports as well as from immediate notifications and follow-up reports submitted by countries to the OIE up to 25 August 2014.
172. The report begins by reviewing the exceptional events notified to the OIE by Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe between 1 January and 25 August 2014. The report then reviews the recent animal health situation in Europe regarding the major diseases notified during the period, namely African swine fever (ASF), bluetongue (BT), Newcastle disease (ND), and foot and mouth disease (FMD). Then, the report briefly reviews a new disease in rainbow trout reported to the OIE as an emerging disease in 2014, and presents an analysis of the regional situation relating to a non-OIE-listed disease in wildlife: Calicivirus of European brown hare syndrome (EBHS). This disease, voluntarily reported by countries of the Region, has been selected for its significant similarities to the OIE-Listed disease rabbit haemorrhagic disease in terms of its epidemiology, clinical signs and pathology, as well as for its impact on the hares' population in Europe.
173. Finally, the report is followed by an evaluation of the quality of six-monthly reports for aquatic animal diseases in the Region as well as by an evaluation of the impact of the turnover of National Focal Points for Disease Notification on reporting.

1. Exceptional events notified by Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2014 (up to and including 25 August 2014)

174. A total of 43 immediate notifications, relating to 20 diseases, have been submitted to the OIE by countries in the Region in 2014 (up to and including 25 August). Figure 1 gives an overview of the exceptional epidemiological events notified during this period.
175. **ASF** was by far the most frequently notified disease, with eight immediate notifications by Eastern European countries (Lithuania: first occurrence notified in January 2014 and first occurrence in the region of Panevezys notified in August 2014; Russia: reoccurrence in the region of Volgogradskaya Oblast and first occurrence in the region of Kaluzhkaya Oblast, both notified in January 2014; Ukraine: first occurrence in the region of Lugansku, notified in January 2014; Poland: first occurrence notified in February 2014 and reoccurrence in Podlaskie region notified in May 2014; Latvia: first occurrence notified in June 2014). Concern has been growing over the spread of ASF in Eastern Europe since 2007.
176. Immediate notifications have been submitted for 12 other diseases of terrestrial animals (including five first occurrences and 23 reoccurrences) and for seven diseases of aquatic animals (including four first occurrences and three reoccurrences). **A new disease in rainbow trout**, believed to be caused by virus Y, was notified as an emerging disease by Norway in June 2014.

Figure 1: Immediate notifications received from Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2014, by disease (up to and including 25 August)



2. Situation relating to selected OIE-Listed diseases and emerging diseases

177. This section will provide an update on the major events that have occurred in the Region since the last Conference of the OIE Regional Commission, in 2012. As of 25 August 2014, 96% (51/53) of Member Countries¹ of the Regional Commission had submitted six-monthly reports for 2013, and 36%² (19/53) had also submitted six-monthly report(s) for the first semester of 2014. It should be underlined that neither Turkmenistan has submitted any report to the OIE since 2010, nor Uzbekistan since 2008. These Member Countries are encouraged to update their animal health information provided to the OIE as soon as possible.

2.1 African swine fever

178. African swine fever (ASF) occurs through transmission cycles involving domestic pigs, wild boar and soft ticks, of which several species of the *Ornithodoros* genus, especially, *O. moubata* and *O. erraticus* have been shown to be reservoirs and transmission vectors of ASF virus (ASFV). The detection of ASFV in these reservoirs can contribute to a better understanding of the epidemiology of the disease. Also, recovered pigs can become ASFV carriers, and wild pigs can be persistently infected, which is a big challenge for controlling the disease. Therefore, a good understanding of the epidemiology of the disease is crucial to establishing effective control and eradication programmes³.

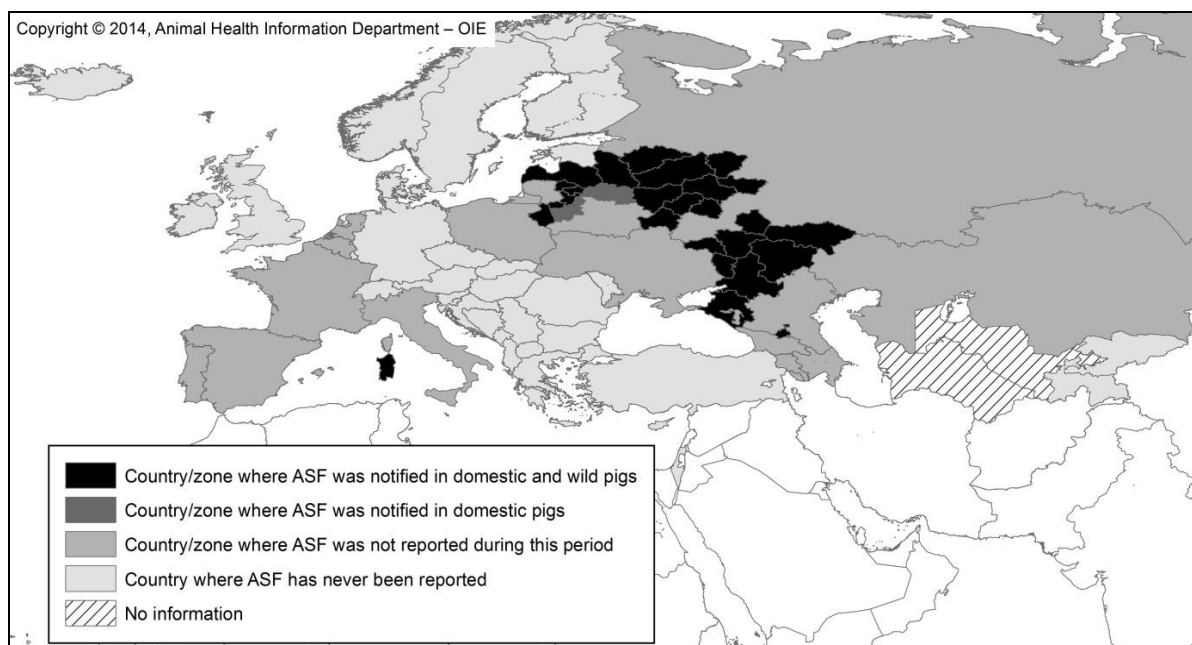
¹ Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of), Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom

² Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of), Malta, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey

³ OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* 2014, Chapter 2.8.1.

179. ASF has been successfully eradicated in some European countries, while it is considered to have been endemic in Sardinia (Italy) since 1982⁴. In Eastern Europe, outbreaks first started in April 2007 in Georgia, and subsequently occurred in neighbouring countries, namely Armenia (August 2007), Russia (November 2007), Azerbaijan (January 2008) and Ukraine (July 2012). Since January 2013, 13% (7/53) of the Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, namely Belarus, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine, have reported the disease present in domestic pigs. All of these countries, except Belarus, have also reported the disease present in wild boar (Figure 2).

Figure 2: ASF distribution in domestic pigs and wild boar in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, as reported between 1 January 2013 and 25 August 2014



180. Belarus notified the first occurrence of the disease in June 2013 and the event was resolved in August 2013. Between 1 January 2014 and 25 August 2014, the OIE received immediate notifications from three newly affected countries: Lithuania notified the first occurrence of ASF in domestic pigs and wild boar in January and the first occurrence of the disease in the zone of Panevezys, in the north-east of the country, in August; as of 25 August 2014, both events were still on-going. In February 2014, Poland notified the first occurrence of an ASF event in the country, which was resolved in March. However, a reoccurrence of disease was notified in May in domestic pigs and wild boar in the zone of Podlaskie, at the border with Belarus. As of 25 August 2014, the event was still on-going. Latvia notified the first occurrence of ASF in the country in June; as of 25 August 2014, the event was still on-going.
181. In January 2014, Ukraine (which was first affected in 2012) notified the first occurrence of the disease in Lugansk province, close to the border with Russia, in domestic and wild pigs. This event was closed on 7 April 2014. In January 2014, Russia (affected for the first time in 2007) notified the reoccurrence of the disease in Volgogradskaya Oblast (south-west of the country) and its first occurrence in the zone of Kaluzhkaya Oblast, highlighting the spread of the disease to the north-west of the country. These outbreaks affected domestic pigs and wild boar and the two events were still on-going on 25 August 2014.

⁴ Costard S., Wieland B., de Glanville W., Jori F., Rowlands R., Vosloo W., Roger F., Pfeiffer D.U., Dixon L.K. "African swine fever: how can global spread be prevented?" *Philos T R Soc B.*; 2009;10(1530):2683–2696. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2865084>

182. Control strategies have mainly been based on stamping out for affected pig farms, zoning, movement control and control of wildlife. Also, many ASF-free countries in the Region have strengthened their preventive measures such as among other measures, strengthened their protection measures at borders, reviewed their contingency plans, enhanced their diagnostic capabilities and intensified surveillance in wild boar and domestic pigs. Regional financial and technical cooperation in the European Union has also been reported⁵.
183. Between January 2013 and 25 August 2014, 224 ASF outbreaks occurred in Eastern Europe. In the 123 affected pig farms and villages, 21 568 animals were affected and 190 713 were lost due to death or to stamping out in response to the outbreaks. A total of 245 cases were reported in wild boar found sick or dead. Moreover, ASF has had an important impact on trade for the affected countries, ASF joining the list of diseases that are more regularly on the WTO agenda⁶
184. It is very important to identify and characterise disease clusters in order to better understand the epidemiology of the disease. Clusters are areas of particular interest for Veterinary Services, which could increase the level of surveillance in these zones and/or implement additional control measures. Also, clustering is very useful to identify the potential risk factors associated with the outbreaks. A few studies have used spatial clusters to detect patterns of ASF in European countries. This analysis was conducted based on the locations of outbreaks, with the number of cases notified to the OIE through immediate notifications and follow-up reports since 2007. A total of 605 outbreaks with geographical locations were identified in domestic pigs and wild boar. Data analysis was performed using SaTScan software (available free at <http://www.satscan.org>) and STATA (version 11.2; STATA Corp., College Station, TX, USA). Each location for an outbreak contained information about the number of cases, and the software (SaTScan) calculated the expected number of cases within a circular 'window', under the assumption that they were randomly distributed in space. Clusters were identified when the observed number of cases was significantly higher than the expected number cases within the circular window as opposed to outside the window.
185. The space-time permutation model (STPM) was used for this analysis which requires only case data with information about the spatial location and time for each case. In addition, a Poisson model was used to evaluate the spatial analysis in only domestic pigs, because a number of susceptible animals were provided which was considered as population whereas a number of susceptible animals were not provided in wild boars. A Poisson model is a good approximation of the Bernoulli model if the proportion of the cases is below 10%. Two methods were combined in order to determine the reasonable clusters for the first analysis. The temporal cluster size was used 50% which captured the 50% of the study period as a whole while the spatial cluster size was used 10% which captured the 10% of the geographical size. Lastly, the cluster was assessed by a maximum likelihood ratio test, and P-value was obtained by Monte-Carlo simulation with 999 replications of the data set under the null hypothesis. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.
186. As a result, a total of five significant clusters were identified (Figure 3). Cluster radius ranged from 71.93 to 165.41 kilometres (km). The average cluster radius was 111.84 km. The distance between the cluster with a radius of 165.41 km and the cluster with a radius of 127.65 km is approximately 1 072 km. Four of the five clusters were detected in the North Caucasus region and one cluster was detected in Russia. Interestingly, all the identified clusters contained outbreaks for both domestic pigs and wild boar. This evaluation may provide valuable information on which assess transmission through potential contacts between domestic and wild pigs. This transmission might be partially explained by the increased movement of wild boar in winter, when they look for food in inhabited locations where domestic pigs are raised⁷. Research is still in progress regarding the source of transmission from domestic pigs to wild boar and vice

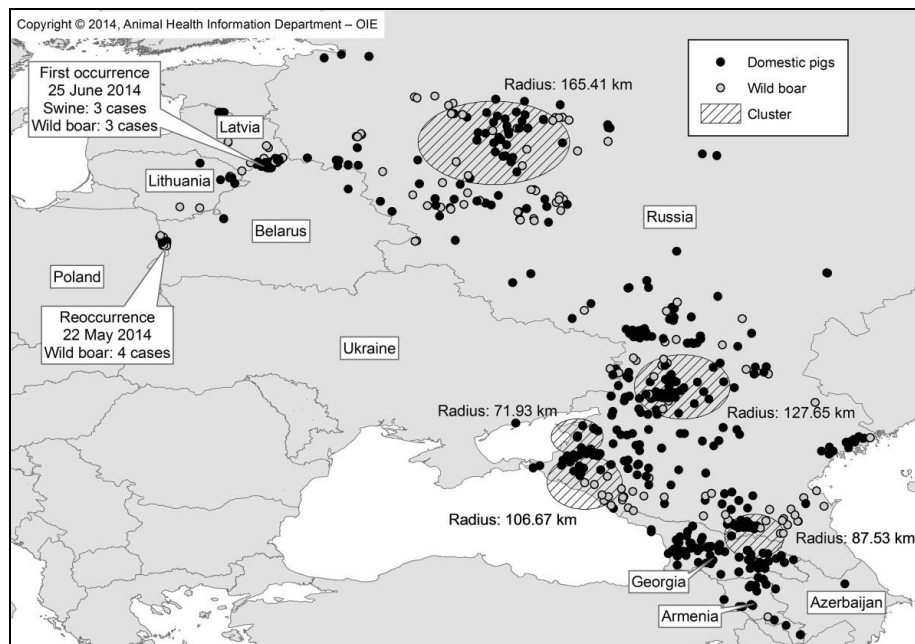
⁵ European Commission, current African swine fever situation, http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/diseases/african_swine_fever/index_en.htm

⁶ World Trade Organization, "Members to try new approach for defining private sanitary-phytosanitary standards", 5 and 26 March 2014, http://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news14_e/sps_25mar14_e.htm

⁷ Singer, F.J., Dale K.O., Alan R.T., & Charles P.H. "Home ranges, movements, and habitat use of European wild boar in Tennessee." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 1981:343-353.

versa. One study⁸ indicated that, at the early stage, the disease was spread through direct contact within infected wild boar populations and between wild boar and free-ranging domestic pigs in backyard farms. The same study stated that illegal movement of swine products contaminated with ASF virus and lack of control measures had contributed to disseminate the disease in this region.

Figure 3: Spatial clusters of ASF in Europe between 2007 and 25 August 2014



187. ASF environmental risk factors might be responsible for the clustering of disease. In the zones of the identified clusters, additional epidemiological studies could therefore be implemented to identify potential environmental risk factors depending on the regions. These risk factors might include backyard farming, wild boar habitats, free-ranging pigs, movement of contaminated vehicles, illegal movement of animals/animal products and poor on-farm biosecurity.
188. The potential limitation of space-time permutation model (STPM) for this analysis may be due to different geographical population at different times, such as the population in some areas rapidly increases than in others. Therefore, it may be a problem because the total study period is more than a year. It was possible that the background population rapidly increased or decreased in some area than others, so that there was risk for population shift bias, which may produce biased p-values. In addition clusters were determined a combination between two methods (STPM and Poisson model) which may lead to publication bias. In addition, in the WAHIS, susceptible animals were considered as a number of animals at the farms. Therefore, it may be underestimated the population in the study area which may have affected on the results.
189. Other potential limitation was related to spatial inaccuracies in the data. For instance, some Members provided information on latitude/longitude in more details (provided more than three decimal points) whereas some Members only provided less than three decimal points. Lastly, missing data was beyond the control of analysis. However, it was possible that some cases in domestic pigs and wild boars have not been reported to the OIE which may lead to detection of different clusters in the study.

⁸ Gogin, A., Gerasimov, V., Malogolovkin, A. & Kolbasov, D. "African swine fever in the North Caucasus region and the Russian Federation in years 2007–2012." *Virus Research* 2013;173(1):198–203.

190. Identification of clusters might be of particular interest for Veterinary Services, enabling them to conduct intensified surveillance programmes and surveys. In order to identify potential risk factors, the OIE recommends that Veterinary Services communicate closely with veterinarians, hunters and farmers, who can play an important role in the early detection of the disease. In particular, hunters are considered to be important sentinels for ASF. With this in mind, the OIE and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) organised the first Joint International Meeting on early detection and prevention of ASF, which was held in Paris on 30 June and 1 July 2014, co-funded by the European Union and Switzerland.
191. In Eastern European countries, ASF is considered as a constant threat and it poses a potential risk to the whole of the Europe⁹. It is therefore crucial to permanently keep monitoring the situation.

2.2 Bluetongue

192. Bluetongue (BT) is an infectious but noncontagious vector-borne viral disease of domestic and wild ruminants, which has a seasonal occurrence in many parts of the world. BT virus (BTV) is spread by the bites of a few species of midges of the genus *Culicoides* and can be transmitted to ruminants. Epidemiological systems delimited by vector species and their natural history¹⁰ are considered to determine the global distribution of BTV. The virus belongs to the family *Reoviridae*, genus *Orbivirus*, and 26 serotypes have been identified around the world. Infection with BTV is inapparent in the vast majority of animals but can cause fatal disease in a proportion of infected sheep, deer and wild ruminants. A higher incidence of clinical disease has been observed in cattle infected with BTV 8 in Europe. Cattle can play a significant role in the epidemiology of the disease due to the prolonged viraemia in the absence of clinical disease, while some breeds of sheep are more susceptible to the disease than others. As a result, in some countries BTV infections of livestock can occur unobserved and will consequently only be detected by active surveillance.¹¹
193. Between 2005 and 25 August 2014, 12 serotypes (BTV-1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 24) were notified to the OIE by European countries. Between January 2013 and 25 August 2014, 17% (9/53) of Member Countries¹² of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe reported the disease present (Figure 4) and five of them submitted immediate notifications to the OIE. In September 2013, Italy notified the occurrence of BTV-1 in the region of Lazio, with 107 outbreaks in buffaloes, cattle, sheep and goats. In May 2014, Greece notified the reoccurrence of BT (serotype 4) in the country, with 271 outbreaks in cattle, sheep and goats. In July 2014, Bulgaria reported the reoccurrence of BT (serotype 4) in the country, with 154 outbreaks in sheep and goats. Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of) notified the reoccurrence of the disease (serotype 4) in July 2014, with 22 outbreaks in cattle, sheep and goats. Turkey notified the reoccurrence of the disease (serotype 4) in August 2014, with one outbreak in cattle and sheep. As of 25 August 2014, these five events were still on-going.

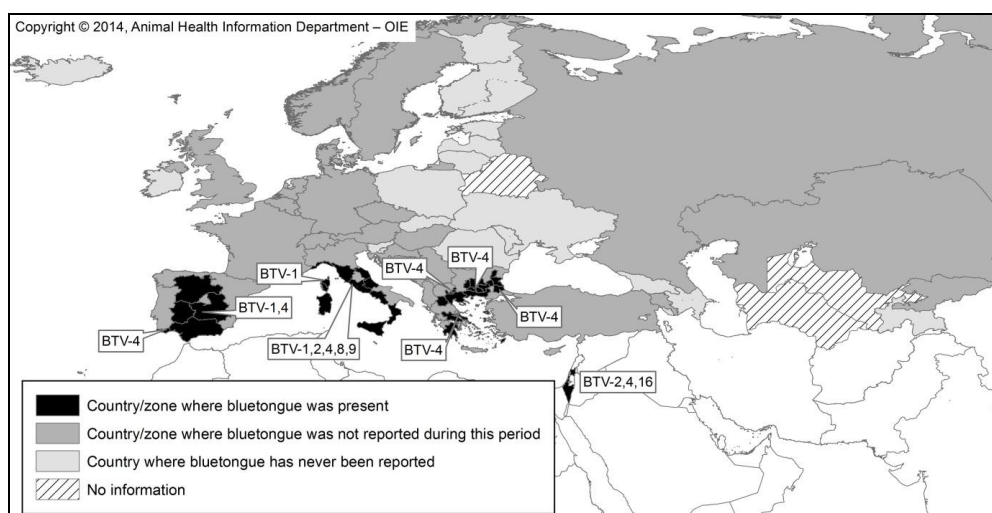
⁹ Sánchez-Vizcaíno J.M., Mur L. & Martínez-López B. "African swine fever (ASF): five years around Europe." *Vet. Microbiol.* 2013;165(1-2):45–50.

¹⁰ Gibbs E.P. & Grenier E.C. "The epidemiology of bluetongue." *Comp. Immunol. Microbiol. Infect. Dis.* 1994;17 (3–4):207–220.

¹¹ OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* 2014, Chapter 2.1.3.

¹² Bulgaria, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of), Portugal, Spain and Turkey

Figure 4: BT distribution in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, as reported between 1 January 2013 and 25 August 2014



194. BT is generally observed from midsummer until shortly after the first hard frost.¹³ The vector that spreads the virus is active during this period. Some studies have been conducted to evaluate the seasonality of BT in Europe.¹⁴ The seasonality of BT might be a useful factor in helping to prevent outbreaks, since it enables the Veterinary Services to plan their control programmes according to the next possible occurrence of the disease. Therefore, an analysis was implemented in order to evaluate the possible geographical and seasonal variations of BT, using data from immediate notifications and follow-up reports as well as available data from six-monthly reports (if countries notified by month) between January 2005 and July 2014. A number of outbreaks had to be excluded from this analysis, because the countries concerned provided information by semester without detailing it by month¹⁵.
195. As a result, a total of 105 454 outbreaks were identified, reported by 24 countries. Only 75 461 of the outbreaks were identified in terms of the month in which they started. European countries were divided into four regions (Eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Southern Europe and Western Europe) according to the Köppen climate classification (<http://koeppen-geiger.vu-wien.ac.at>). This is one of the most widely used climate classification systems, which are based on average annual and monthly temperature and precipitation, and the seasonality of precipitation. Data were imported into STATA (version 11.2; STATA Corp., College Station, TX, USA) and classified based on the start of the outbreaks by each region in order to classify the distribution of reported outbreaks by month. Moreover, the proportions of accumulated outbreaks were calculated with a 95% confidence interval (CI) by month.

¹³ Bagley C.V. Bluetongue in cattle. In Beef Cattle Handbook; http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/Beef%20Cattle%20Handbook/Blue_Tongue.pdf

¹⁴ Charron, M.V.P., Seegers H., Langlais M. & Ezanno P. "Seasonal spread and control of Bluetongue in cattle." *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 2011; 291:1–9.

¹⁵ Belgium (second semester of 2006 and first semester of 2009), Bulgaria (second semester of 2006), Germany (second semester of 2006, 2007 and first semester of 2011), Luxembourg (2007), Italy (2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013), Netherlands (first semester of 2009), Spain (2005, second semester of 2007, 2009, second semester of 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013), Portugal (second semester of 2006, second semester of 2007, 2008, 2009, second semester of 2010, 2012 and second semester of 2013) and United Kingdom (2010)

196. In Western Europe, a total of 70 835 outbreaks were reported by Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Most outbreaks were between August and December from 2006 to 2010 (Figure 5-A). The proportion of accumulated outbreaks was significantly increased in September (28.91%; 95% CI: 28.58-29.25%) followed by August (20.84%; 95% CI: 20.54-21.14%) (Figure 6-A). Five months (August to December) accounted for 84.84% (95% CI: 84.57-85.10%) of all outbreaks. In Southern Europe, a total of 4 366 outbreaks were reported by Cyprus, France (Corsica), Greece, Israel, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Turkey. The majority of outbreaks were observed between September and December from 2006 to 2014 (Figure 5-B). The proportion of accumulated outbreaks was high in October (24.81%; 95% CI: 23.53-26.11%) followed by September (22.40%; 95% CI: 21.17-23.67%) (Figure 6-B). Five months (August to December) accounted for 86.35% (95% CI: 85.29-87.35%) of all outbreaks.
197. In Northern Europe, 50 outbreaks were identified and reported by Denmark, Norway and Sweden (Figure 5-C). Most of the outbreaks were detected between September and November in 2008 and 2009. The proportion of accumulated outbreaks was high in September (54.00%; 95% CI: 39.32-68.19%) followed by October (16.00%; 95% CI: 7.17-29.11%) (Figure 6-C). Three months (September to November) accounted for 84.00% (95% CI: 70.89-92.83%) of all outbreaks. In Eastern Europe, 227 outbreaks were reported by Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of) and Russia. The majority of outbreaks were observed in October and December from 2006 to 2011 (Figure 5-D). The proportion of accumulated outbreaks was high in July (68.72%; 95% CI: 62.25-74.69%) followed by August (21.59%; 95% CI: 16.42-27.51%) (Figure 6-D). Six months (July to December) accounted for 99.56% (95% CI: 97.57-99.99%) of all outbreaks. This result was skewed by recent immediate notifications and follow-up reports from Bulgaria (154 outbreaks in July 2014).
198. Overall, most outbreaks were observed each year between July and November, which corresponds to summer and autumn in Europe and may provide favourable weather conditions for midge activity. One study found that midge activity was clearly decreased when the temperature had dropped significantly;¹⁶ however, other potential environmental risk factors that might have contributed to bluetongue infection were not taken into account. Previous studies have suggested that outbreaks of BT infection are influenced by temperature, wind speed/direction and the prevention/control measures applied.¹⁷

¹⁶ Risk Analysis: Introduction of Bluetongue Virus-infected *Culicoides* sp. into Ireland from the UK in November 2007 (1 November 2007); https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/bluetonguedisease/Bluetongue_RA011107final.pdf

¹⁷ Faes C., van der Stede Y., Guis H., Staubach C., Ducheyne E., Hendrickx G. & Mintiens K. "Factors affecting Bluetongue serotype 8 spread in Northern Europe in 2006: The geographical epidemiology." *Preventive Veterinary Medicine* 2013;110(2):149–158.

Figure 5: Distribution of BT outbreaks notified by Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, by month between January 2005 and 25 August 2014 (the scale of the vertical axis is different depending on the region)

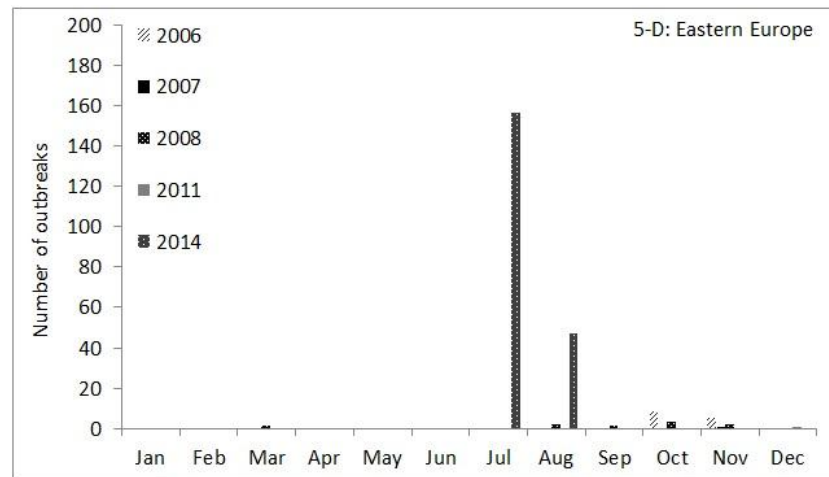
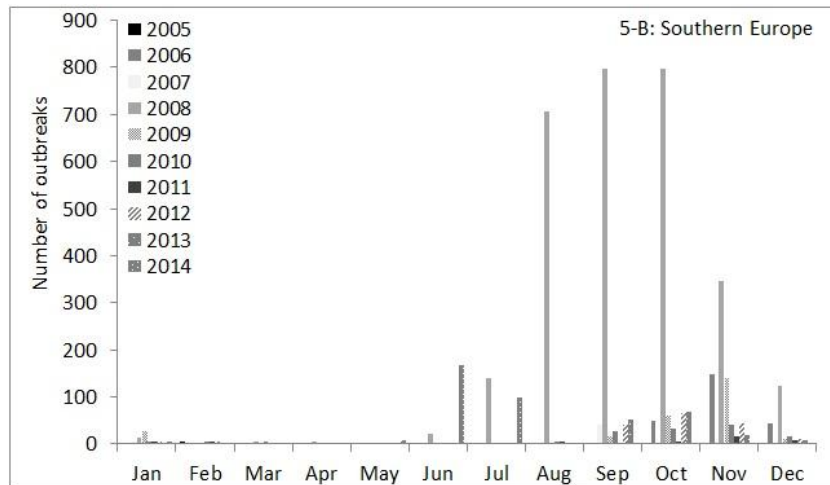
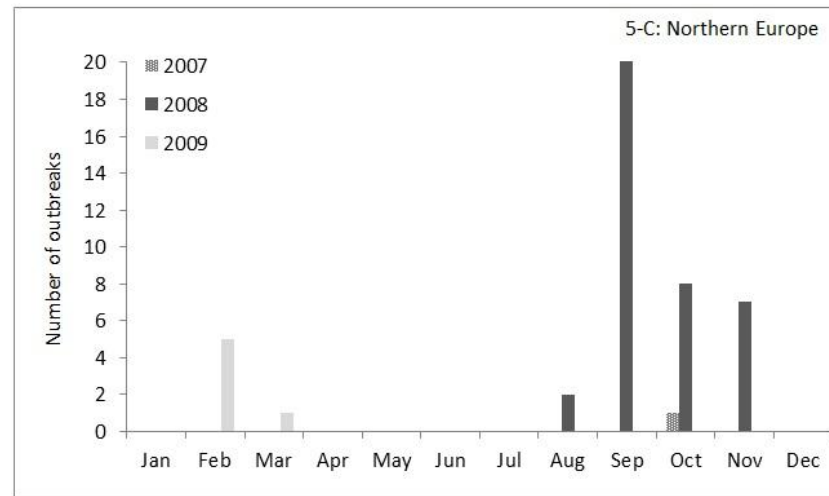
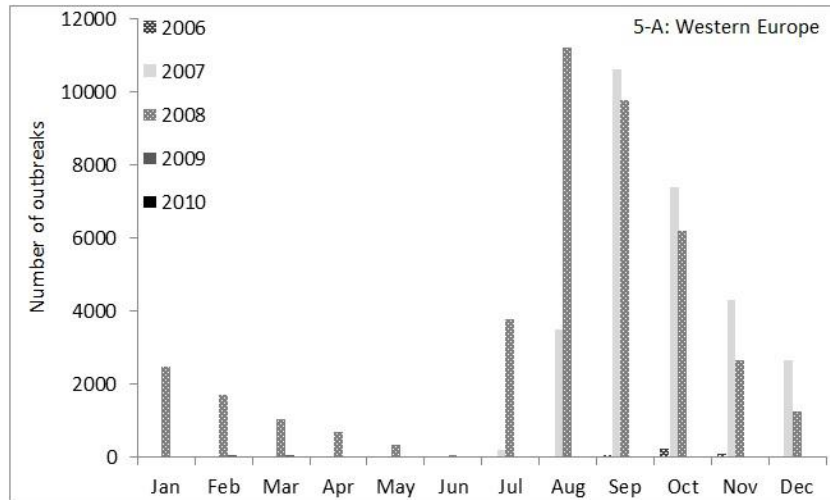
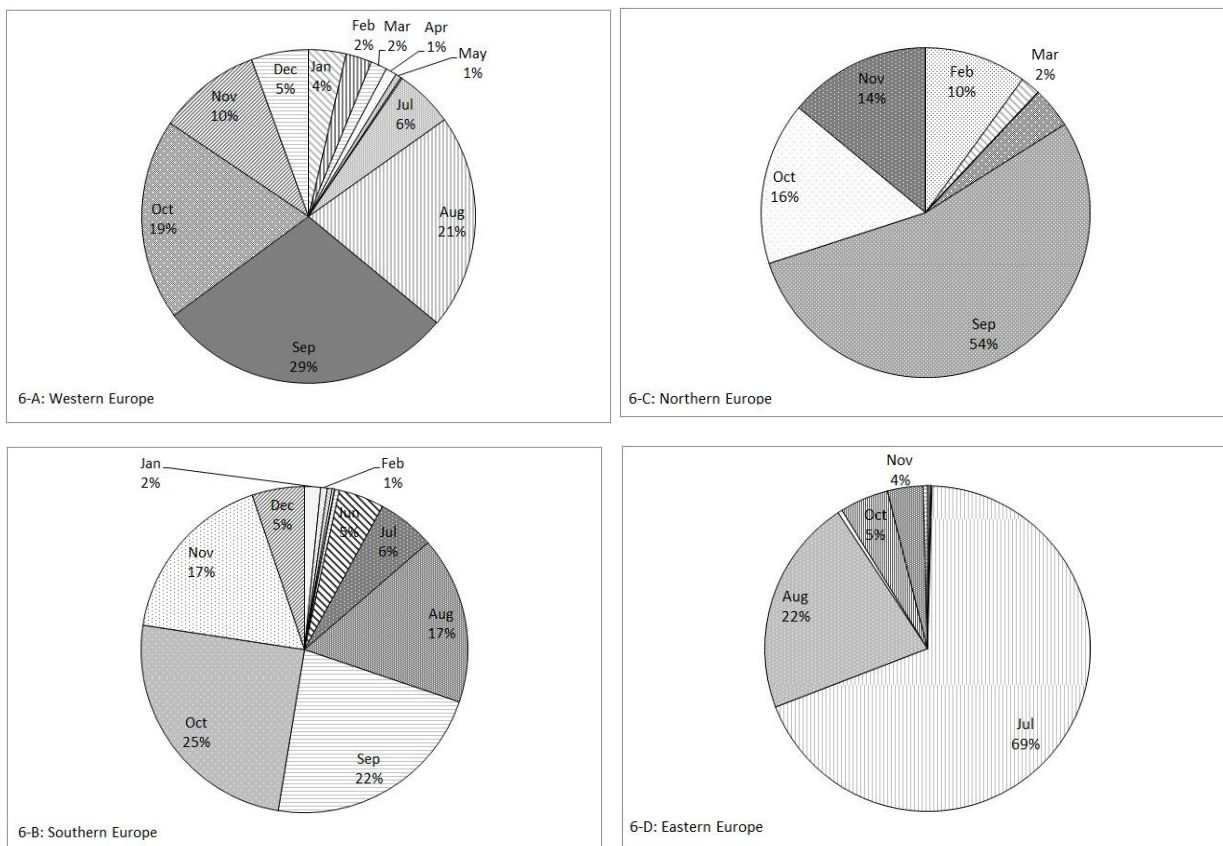


Figure 6: Proportion of accumulated BT outbreaks notified between January 2005 and 25 August 2014 by Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, by month and by climate region



199. According to our analysis, BT seasonality differs in the different climate regions. This information on the epidemiology of the disease may help countries to define the most suitable timeline for implementation of control programmes, including vaccination. It underlines the need for countries to collect and share detailed information by month and by administrative division on disease outbreaks, as recommended by the OIE, since this makes it possible to perform analyses at regional or global level, in order to coordinate control programmes. Moreover, BT is constantly evolving. In 2014, Greece and Bulgaria have reported outbreaks of BTV-4 serotype, which has never been reported in countries with northern and western European climates.¹⁸ As the disease may pose a potential threat to BTV-free countries, it is important to be especially vigilant during at-risk periods in order to prevent or reduce the risk of BT infection.

2.3 Newcastle disease

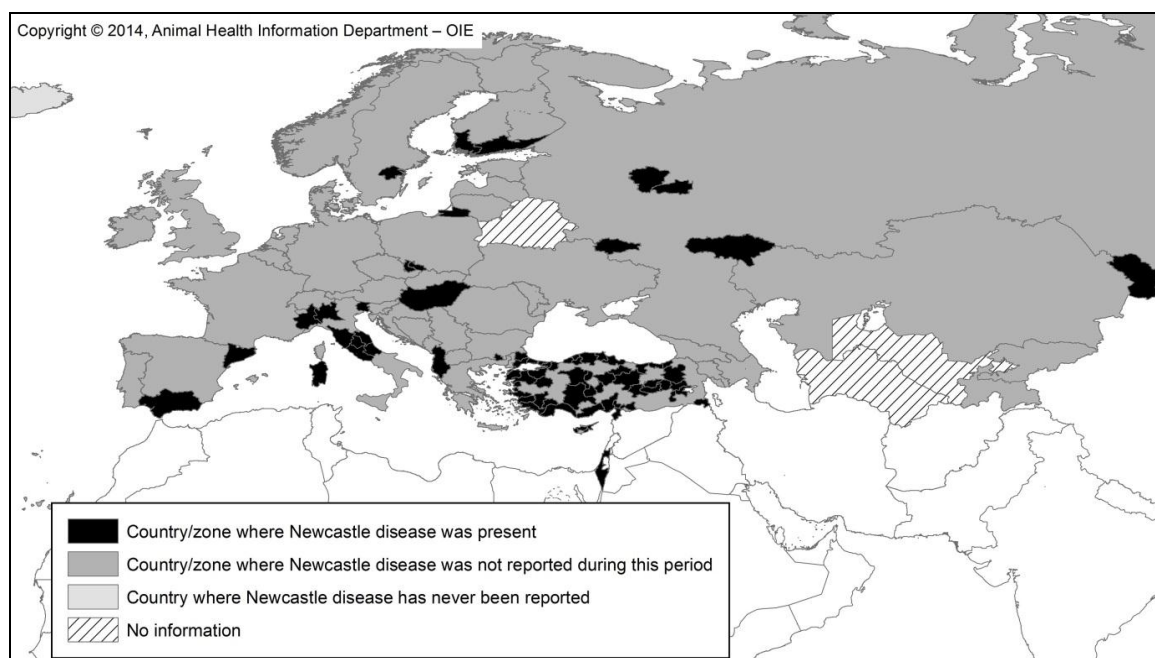
200. Newcastle disease (ND) has been shown to be one of the most important diseases of poultry. First recognised in 1926, ND is regarded as being endemic in many countries worldwide. It has the potential to cause large economic losses, with flock mortality approaching 100% in fully susceptible chickens and all the losses resulting from trade restraints and embargos. ND virus (NDV) is able to infect over 200 species of birds, but the severity of disease produced varies with both the host and the virus strain. Also, NDV is a human pathogen and the most common sign of infection in humans is conjunctivitis that develops within 24 hours of NDV exposure to the eye

¹⁸ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Animal Health & Veterinary Laboratories Agency, Veterinary & Science Policy Advice Team, International Disease Monitoring, "Bluetongue (BTV-4) in Greece and Bulgaria, Updated Outbreak Assessment"; 15 July 2014; <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animal-diseases/files/btv-greece-bulgaria.pdf>

(most often benign).¹⁹ Prophylactic vaccination is practised in all but a few of the countries that produce poultry on a commercial scale²⁰.

201. ND has been present in Europe for many decades. It was first described in 1926 in Newcastle upon Tyne, England (from where it got its name), although there have been suggestions that there may have been earlier outbreaks²¹. Between 2005 and 25 August 2014, 72% (38/53) of the Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe reported ND present or suspected. Since 2013, 13 of these countries have reported the disease present. During this period, Albania, Finland, Israel and Turkey notified the disease present in both domestic birds and wildlife, while Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Russia and Sweden notified ND present only in domestic birds, and Hungary, Italy and Spain notified the disease only in wild birds (Figure 7).

Figure 7: ND distribution within Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, as reported between 1 January 2013 and 25 August 2014



202. In January 2013, Bulgaria notified the reoccurrence of ND in the zone of Kardzali (in the southern part of the country), after the disease had been absent in the country for more than three years, while the Czech Republic notified the first occurrence of ND in the zone of Olomoucky (in the eastern part of the country), extending the distribution of the disease in the country. Both events affected backyard birds and were resolved the same month after the implementation of control measures including stamping out and zoning. In addition, vaccination was conducted in response to the outbreaks in Bulgaria.
203. In the eastern part of the Region, Kazakhstan notified in April 2013 the first occurrence of ND in the eastern part of the country, where village birds were infected by contact with wild species. The event was resolved after two months. The control measures applied included control of wildlife reservoirs, modified stamping out and movement control inside the country.

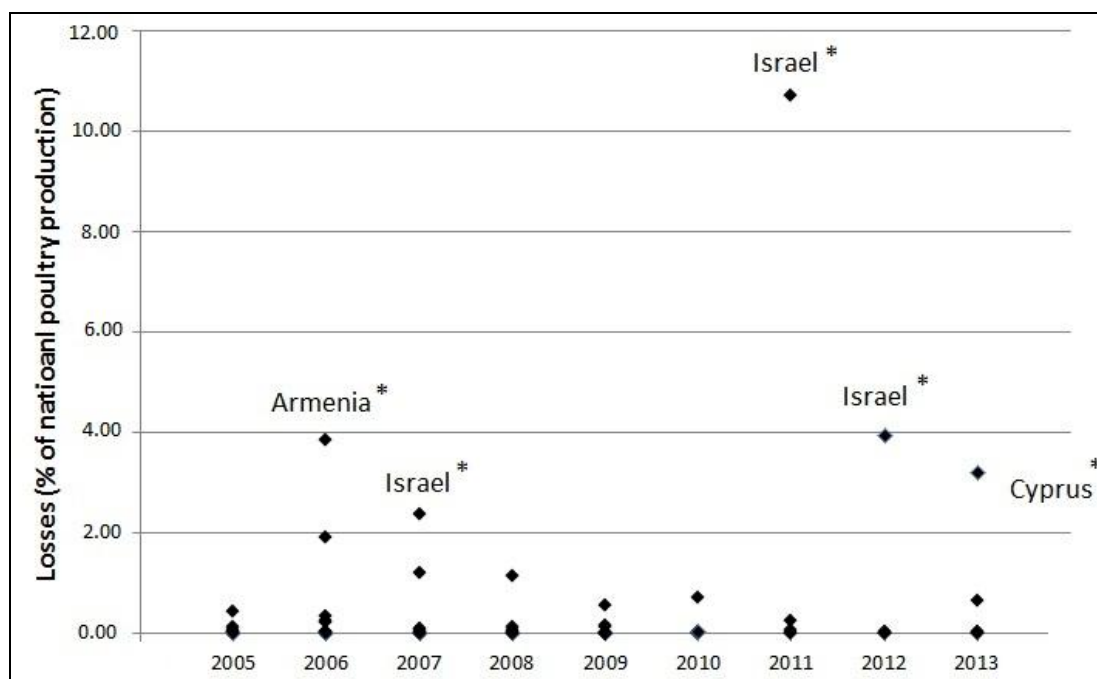
¹⁹ Swayne D.E. & King D.J. "Avian influenza and Newcastle disease". *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* 2003;222(11):1534–1540.

²⁰ OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* 2014, Chapter 2.3.14.; http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/tahm/2.03.14_NEWCASTLE_DIS.pdf

²¹ Alexander, D.J. "Newcastle disease", The Gordon Memorial Lecture. *British Poultry Science* 2001;42:522.

204. In the southern part of the Region, Cyprus notified in June 2013 the reoccurrence of ND in the country, after a five-year absence. A total of 17 outbreaks were reported (consisting of 5 poultry farms and 12 backyard holdings) before the event was resolved in November 2013. The control measures applied included movement control inside the country, stamping out and zoning. **Israel** notified several events of ND reoccurrence in the country. Between March and August 2013, nine outbreaks were notified; in September, two more outbreaks occurred, in the zones of Hadarom and Yerushalayim. Since December 2013, 36 outbreaks have been reported; as of 25 August 2014, the event was still on-going. The control measures that have been applied included movement control inside the country, stamping out, zoning and vaccination in response to the outbreaks.
205. Finally, in the northern part of the Region, Sweden notified three reoccurrences of ND, in June and July 2014 in commercial laying poultry farms in the zone of Norrköping, Linköping and Motala municipalities, in the mid/southern part of the country. All three events were promptly resolved in one month after the implementation of control measures, which included stamping out, cleaning and disinfection, and movement control inside the country and zoning.
206. ND is distributed worldwide and has the potential to cause large economic losses in the poultry industry²². Between 2005 and 2013, 55% (29/53) of the Member Countries²³ of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe reported losses (defined as the combined total of animals dead, slaughtered and destroyed as a consequence of ND) associated with disease outbreaks. For each country and year, this number was divided by the total number of poultry in the country, as reported in annual reports to the OIE, to obtain the percentage of losses caused by ND among the national poultry population (Figure 8). The maximum number of countries reporting losses to the OIE was in 2006, for which 14 countries provided figures.

Figure 8: Percentage of losses among the national poultry population, by Member Country of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and by semester, between 2005 and 2013



**These countries were identified as the countries with the highest percentages of losses due to ND within their national poultry population*

²² Dortmans J.C.F.M., Koch G., Rottier P.J.M. & Peeters B.P.H. "Virulence of Newcastle disease virus: what is known so far?" *Veterinary Research* 2011;42:122. <http://www.veterinaryresearch.org/content/42/1/122>

²³ Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom

207. As shown in Figure 8, for most countries and most years, ND had only a limited impact on the national poultry population, with less than 0.01% of losses. However, the disease had a stronger impact in some countries. In Israel, in 2011, 10.72% of the national poultry production was lost due to ND (4 825 951 birds dead and destroyed among 45 000 000 birds produced). The country also had considerable losses in 2007, with 2.36% of the national poultry production lost (856 646 birds dead or destroyed among 45 000 000 birds produced), and 3.95% in 2012 (1 779 147 birds dead, destroyed or slaughtered among 45 000 000 birds produced during the year). In Armenia, in 2006, 3.84% of the national poultry production was lost due to disease outbreaks (157 696 birds dead or slaughtered among 4 102 701 birds produced during the year). More recently, in 2013, Cyprus lost 3.22% of its poultry production due to ND (367 217 birds dead or destroyed among 11 419 725 birds produced during the year).
208. According to the findings, ND has had a huge economic impact on the poultry industries of some countries. It is assumed that the possible sources of infection include not only trade but also infected wild birds, which in certain parts of Europe constitute a natural reservoir of low virulence for chickens. In particular, waterbirds may play an important role in NDV epidemiology due to the shedding of viral particles into the aquatic environment, which is more favourable for virus stability, and due to their potential for long-distance dissemination by migration²⁴. Therefore, surveillance, prevention and control programmes are essential, as ND still has a worldwide influence on poultry production, either as a continuing disease problem or as a constant threat²⁵.

2.4 Foot and mouth disease

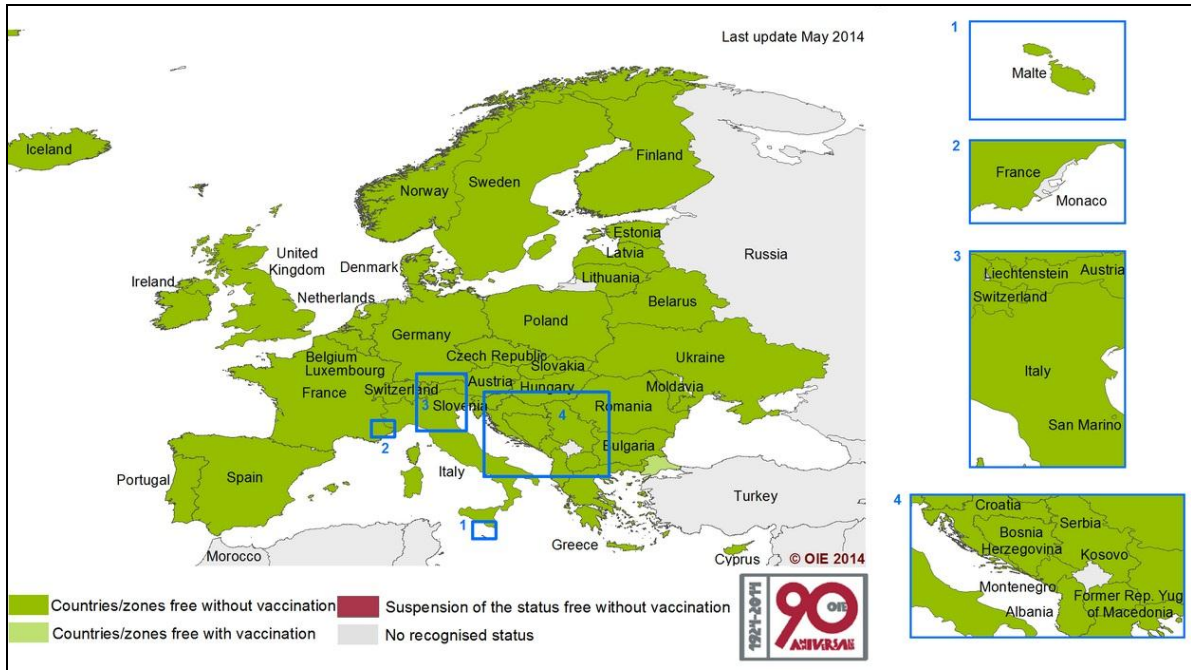
209. Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is the most contagious disease of mammals and has a great potential for causing severe economic loss in susceptible cloven-hoofed animals. Seven immunological serotypes have been recognised O, A, C, SAT 1, SAT 2, SAT 3 and Asia 1.
210. Currently, 77% (41/53) of Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe have an official FMD status. Thirty-nine countries²⁶ are recognised as FMD free where vaccination is not practised, while one country (Moldova) has an FMD free zone where vaccination is not practised and one country (Turkey) has an FMD free zone where vaccination is practised (Figure 9).

²⁴ Jørgensen P.H., Handberg K.J., Ahrens P., Therkildsen O.R., Manvell R.J., Alexander D.J. "Strains of avian paramyxovirus type 1 of low pathogenicity for chickens isolated from poultry and wild birds in Denmark." *Vet. Rec.* 2004;154:497–500.

²⁵ Dennis J.A. "Newcastle disease in the European Union 2000 to 2009." *Avian Pathology*, 2011;40(6):547–558.

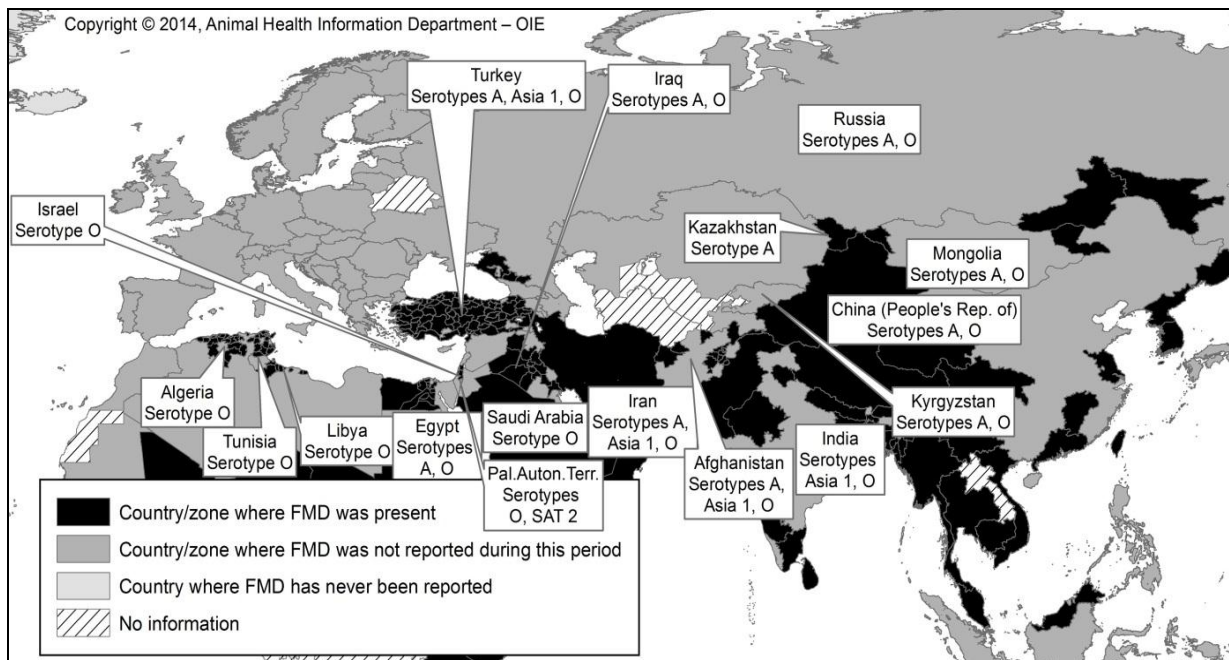
²⁶ Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of), Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom

Figure 9: Europe, OIE Member Countries' official FMD status



211. Between January 2013 and 25 August 2014, FMD was reported present in four Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Israel, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey); which had all previously experienced several episodes of the disease. It is very important to understand the situation in affected countries in the Region as well as in neighbouring countries (Figure 10).

Figure 10: FMD distribution, with serotypes, in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, as well as in neighbouring countries, as reported between 1 January 2013 and 25 August 2014



212. In March 2013, Russia informed the OIE of the occurrence of a new FMD strain, with serotype A in Zabajkal`Skij Kray, close to the border with China (People's Rep. of); the event was resolved in May 2013. FMD with serotype A reoccurred in the same zone in January 2014. In February 2014, serotype O was notified in the same zone and, in May 2014, it was notified in the neighbouring zone of Primorskiy Kray. On 25 August 2014, these three events were still on-going despite the application of control measures, including movement control inside the country. Moreover, for the events in Zabajkal`Skij Kray, 30 353 animals were vaccinated in response to the outbreaks and modified stamping out was applied. In the western part of Russia, in June 2013, FMD reoccurred in a village in the zone of Karachayevo-Cherkesskaya Respublica, close to the border with Georgia. Serotype A was identified and there were 17 outbreaks, affecting cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. This event was resolved in December 2013.
213. In May 2013, Kazakhstan notified the reoccurrence of the disease, which had been absent for eight months. Serotype A was identified in three outbreaks in cattle, sheep and goats in East Kazakhstan province, close to the border with China (People's Rep. of). This event was closed in July 2013 after the implementation of control measures including zoning, movement control inside the country, modified stamping out and vaccination of 39 167 animals in response to the outbreaks.
214. In November 2013, Israel notified the reoccurrence of FMD (serotype O) close to the border with Syria; this was the first occurrence of FMD in the country for more than a year. One village was affected and the event was resolved the same month. In January 2014, FMD (serotype O) reoccurred. Two farms were affected; the event was closed in February 2014.
215. Finally, Turkey notified the presence of FMD in 2013 through its six-monthly reports, since the disease has been present every year in the country for more than 15 years, with a stable situation in recent years.
216. In Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), there is a potential risk of FMD virus introduction from neighbouring countries (such as Afghanistan, China [People's Rep. of] and Iran). Several FMD episodes have occurred in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in recent years, but the disease has been reported absent since the first semester of 2013; Turkmenistan has not submitted any report to the OIE since 2010 and neither has Uzbekistan since 2008.
217. Furthermore, FMD has recently spread in North Africa, and this situation is of great concern for European countries. In April 2014, Tunisia notified the reoccurrence of the disease (serotype O) in the country after an absence of 15 years; the reoccurrence was reported to be due to illegal movements of animals. Up to 25 August 2014, 120 outbreaks in 19 administrative divisions had been reported in cattle, sheep and goats. The Veterinary Services were only able to apply limited vaccination until August 2014 due to a lack of resources and no stamping-out policy was implemented. As of 25 August 2014, the event was still on-going. In July 2014, the disease spread through illegal movement of livestock to Algeria, which notified a reoccurrence of FMD, after an absence of 15 years, in cattle in the north of the country. As of 25 August 2014, a total of 198 outbreaks had been reported and the event was still on-going.
218. Concerning vaccine stocks against FMD, the European Commission has accepted to positively reply to the request addressed by the concerned countries, request strongly supported by the OIE and the European Commission for the control of Foot-and-Mouth disease (EuFMD), Commission of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Thus the European Commission, as an emergency response, provided doses of FMD vaccine in support of the FMD control campaign carried out following the spread of the new strain of the virus in North Africa. On 21 August 2014, Tunisian authorities received a total of 1 million doses of FMD trivalent vaccine A, O and SAT 2 for cattle, and Algerian authorities received 100 000 doses of the same vaccine. The European Commission's donation of vaccines has been very welcome because shortages of national vaccine stocks may hamper a proper management of the situation. Recently, Moroccan authorities solicited the European Commission to send 1.5 million doses of FMD vaccine for cattle. This request is currently under study.

219. There is a potential risk of FMD virus being introduced from neighbouring countries to European countries, in particular southern European countries. The risks are mainly related to illegal movement of animals/animal products, people, vehicles and commodities due to the relatively short distance between Southern Europe and the Maghreb region (mainly Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia). In addition, illegal human migration can be an important risk factor since migrants may bring agri-food products to Europe. Lastly, there is a possibility of wind-borne spread of FMD virus due to the relatively short distance between Spain and Morocco (currently FMD free) (15 km), Italy and Tunisia (69 km), Spain and Algeria (150 km) and Malta and Tunisia (289 km). A study has suggested that a sufficiently large amount of virus for infection can spread up to 100 km or more from an infected premises, even in moderate winds.²⁷
220. In addition, the OIE proposed to set up, through the REMESA mechanism, a regional vaccine bank for North Africa using the successful model implemented in Asia since 2010 with the support of European Union.
221. In consequence, globalisation and the unregulated movement of people and animals/animal products are considered to be significant risk factors for the introduction of FMD virus to FMD-free European countries. It is therefore crucial to keep monitoring the situation; furthermore, risk assessment would be helpful to evaluate the potential risks from infected neighbouring countries through trade and possibly wind.

2.5 Emerging disease: new disease in rainbow trout

222. A new disease in freshwater rainbow trout (*Onchoryncus mykiss*), described for the first time by scientists at the Norwegian Veterinary Institute, was notified to the OIE as an emerging disease by Norway in June 2014.
223. A new virus (virus Y) has been detected in blood of diseased fish. Virus Y has been detected in hatcheries with diseased rainbow trout and at sites in contact with these hatcheries, both in brood fish and at seawater sites producing rainbow trout for human consumption. Virus Y has also been detected in small quantities in randomly tested historical material dating back to 2011.
224. Up to 25 August, five cases had been detected in fresh water hatcheries. Sick fish showed signs of circulatory failure, such as anaemia or ascites. Histopathological examinations revealed inflammation in heart and red muscle tissue and cellular necrosis in the liver. After sea transfer, mortalities and clinical signs of the disease are apparently reduced.
225. A recent pilot trial conducted by the Norwegian Veterinary Institute has indicated that virus Y is contagious for rainbow trout and it could be horizontally transmitted to cohabitants through the water.
226. So far it has not been confirmed that virus Y is the causal agent of this disease and more research is needed. Further information will be provided by Norway through follow-up reports. As of 25 August 2014, the event was still on-going.

3. Situation relating to a non-OIE-listed disease in wildlife: Calicivirus of European brown hare syndrome (EBHS)

227. The OIE collects information through *WAHIS-Wild* on a voluntary basis for 53 diseases even though they do not meet the criteria to be OIE-Listed. These diseases have been selected for monitoring because of their potential role with regard to domestic animal and public health, as well as for their impact on biodiversity and wildlife conservation. *Calicivirus* of European brown hare syndrome (EBHS) is one of these diseases.

²⁷ Sørensen J.H., Mackay D.K., Jensen C.O. & Donaldson A.I. "An integrated model to predict the atmospheric spread of foot-and-mouth disease virus." *Epidemiol. Infect.* 2000;124:577–590.

228. EBHS is a highly contagious acute disease of wild and farmed hares belonging to the species European brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) and mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*)²⁸. Interest in these two species has recently increased as they are susceptible bio-indicators of environmental change and because of their declining populations across Europe²⁹.
229. The disease was first reported in Europe in the 1980's, in Sweden, and it is now considered as common in southern, central and Eastern Europe, as well as in part of northern Europe, namely Denmark and Sweden. The morbidity and mortality rates of EBHS can reach 100%, particularly in susceptible adult hares. The disease is characterised by rapid progression, mild nervous signs, severe necrotic hepatitis and circulatory dysfunction in various organs.³⁰ As the disease becomes endemic and the population recovers, mortality is general sporadic with a low impact on the population³¹.
230. The disease is caused by a small, non-enveloped, single-stranded RNA virus, classified as a *Calicivirus* of the genus *Lagovirus*.
231. EBHS has significant similarities to the OIE-Listed disease rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD) in terms of its epidemiology, clinical signs and pathology. Initially EBHS and RHD were considered as the same disease caused by a single agent. A similarity in genomic organisation between these two different caliciviruses has been demonstrated by the sequencing of the viral genome³².
232. The disease has been voluntarily reported as present since 2008 by Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and The Netherlands. The disease is reported as present for one reporting year in Denmark (2008), Slovenia (2009), Sweden (2009), and the Netherlands (2012), two reporting years in Finland (2008, 2009) and France (2008, 2009) while Spain (2008-2010), Belgium (2008-2011), Hungary (2008-2012) and Italy (2008-2013) have reported EBHS present for a period longer than three reporting years. In Europe, during the period 2008 to 2013, the disease was reported as mainly affecting European brown hare (by 82% of countries) and mountain hare (by 9% of countries) and Granada hare (*Lepus granatensis*, a species found on the Iberian peninsula and on the island of Majorca (reported by 9% of countries). The cumulative distribution of EBHS with the percentage of affected species in Europe between 2008 and 2013 is shown in Figure 11.
233. Hares have been introduced extensively as a game species to countries across the globe, as reported by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). Translocation for various purposes (hunting, repopulation, farming, etc.) of wild and farmed hares from areas infected with EBHS to EBHS-free areas should be avoided or carefully managed. In this context, the *WAHIS-Wild* interface (www.oie.int/wahis_2/public/wahidwild.php) is a useful tool to provide early warning, to protect animals and to improve our understanding of the epidemiology of various pathogens.

²⁸ Lavazza A., Scicluna M.T., Capucci L. "Susceptibility of hares and rabbits to the European brown hare syndrome virus (EBHSV) and rabbit haemorrhagic disease virus (RHDV) under experimental conditions." *Journal of Veterinary Medicine Series B* 1996;43(7):401–410.

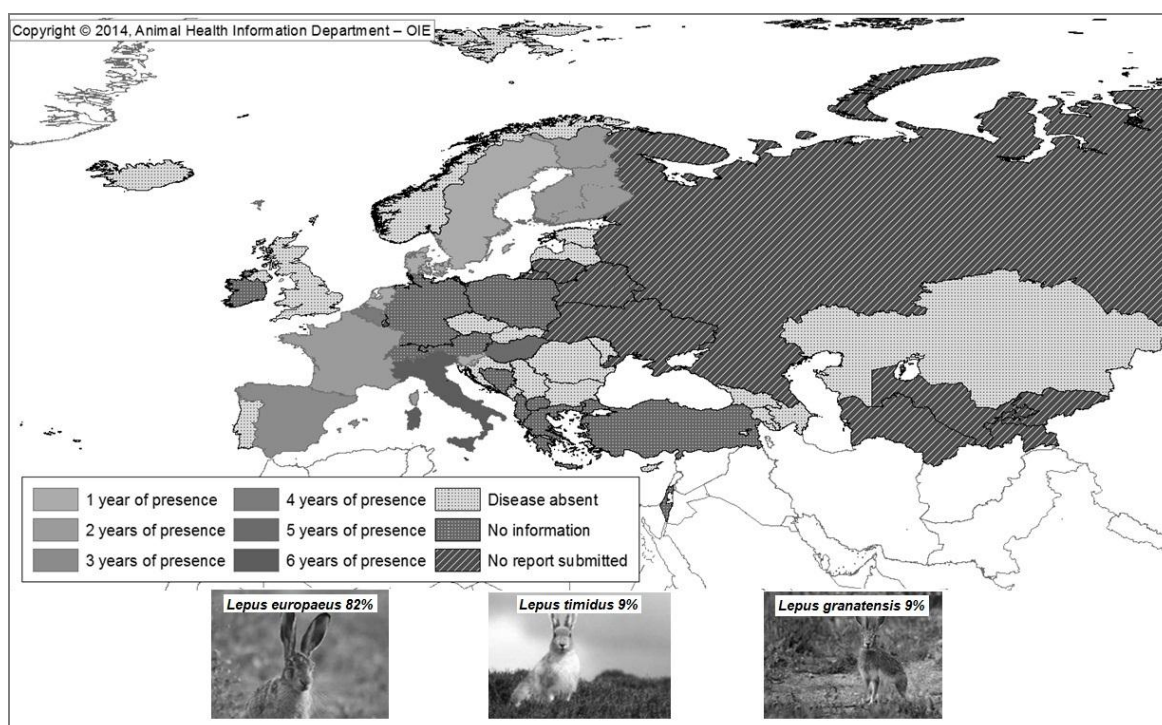
²⁹ Trembl F., Pikula J., Bandouchova H., Horakova J. "European brown hare as a potential source of zoonotic agents" *Veterinarni Medicina* 2007;52,(10):451–456.

³⁰ Duff J.P., Chasey D., Munro R. & Wooldridge M. "European Brown Hare Syndrome in England." *Veterinary Record* 1994;25:669–673.

³¹ Gavier-Widén D. & Mörner T. "Descriptive epizootiological study of European brown hare syndrome in Sweden." *J Wildl Dis.* 1993;29(1):15–20.

³² Wirblich C., Meyers G., Ohlinger V.F., Capucci L., Eskens U., Haas B. & Thiel H.J. "European Brown Hare Syndrome Virus: Relationship to Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus and other Caliciviruses." *Journal of Virology* 1994;68:5164–5173.

Figure 11: Cumulative distribution of EBHS with the percentage of affected species in Europe between 2008 and 2013



4. Evaluation of the quality of the six-monthly reports for aquatic animal diseases submitted by Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

234. Up to and including 2011, countries sent the OIE information for terrestrial animals and information for aquatic animals in the same six-monthly report. In 2012, the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) introduced a separation between reports for terrestrial animals and reports for aquatic animals. Between 2005 and 2013, an average of 87% of Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe provided information for aquatic animal diseases through their six-monthly report, with a stable trend, which is very positive. Indeed, Europe is a Region where countries provide a high level of information in comparison with the global figures as, during the same period, an average of only 65% of OIE Members worldwide have been providing information on aquatic animal diseases. There are currently 28 OIE-Listed diseases and infections of aquatic animals.
235. Aquatic animal diseases are of great importance for many countries of this Region. In 2012, aquaculture production in Europe was 2 880 641 tonnes (4.32% of the world total production)³³. Among the biggest producers in the Region, Norway notified the OIE of an annual production of 1 244 180 tonnes of fish in 2013, France produced 293 922 tonnes of fish and molluscs in 2012, Italy produced 232 130 tonnes of fish and molluscs in 2013 and the United Kingdom produced 213 021 tonnes fish and molluscs in 2013.
236. In their six-monthly reports, countries provide quantitative data for OIE-Listed diseases and infections present on their territory, including the number of susceptible animals, cases, deaths and animals slaughtered or destroyed. Countries can choose to report this information with various levels of detail, namely by month, by administrative division or, as recommended by the OIE, by a combination of these two parameters. Some countries are only able to provide the occurrence code for diseases (present, absent, etc.) without quantitative data.

³³ FAO, "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2014", <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3720e.pdf>

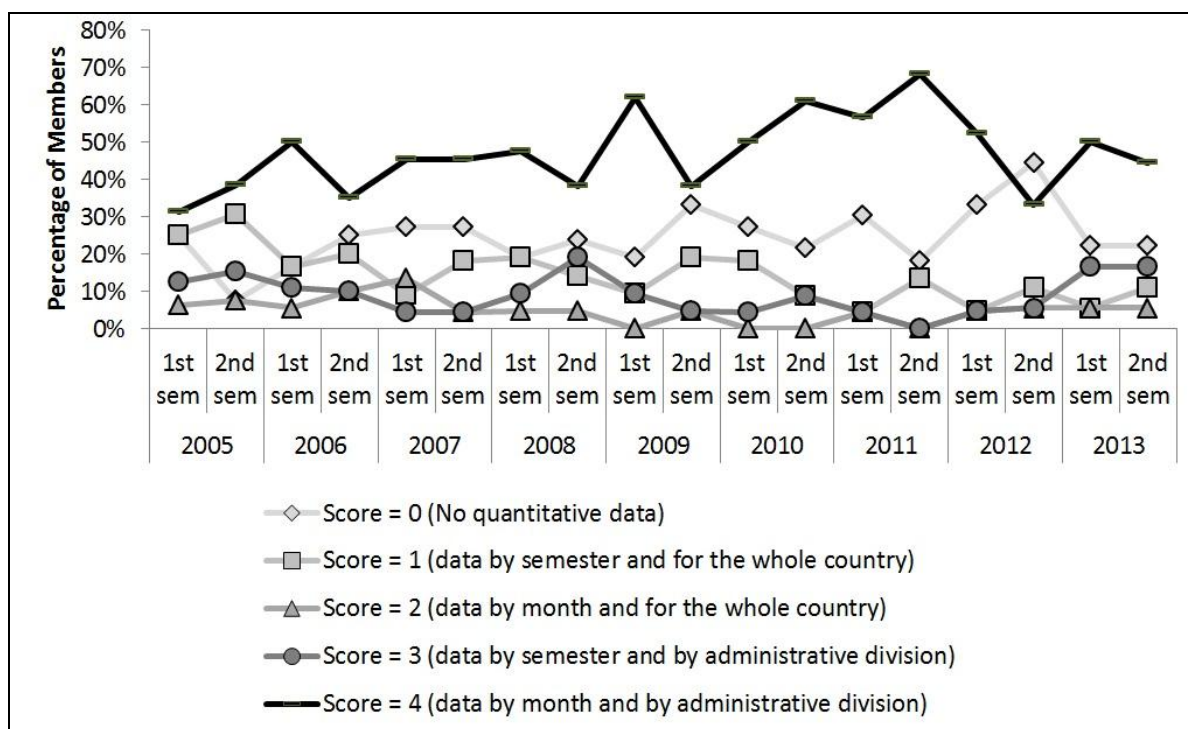
237. The quality of six-monthly reports can partly be measured by the level of detail of the supplied data. For this analysis, Members of the Regional Commission that reported the presence of at least one disease or infection of aquatic animals in their six-monthly report have been included (average of 20 Members per semester). For each of these reports, the analysis takes into account the maximum level of detail provided. Thus, if several diseases or infections are reported present, it is the one with the highest performance in terms of detail that is taken into account in the analysis. On this basis, each report is assigned a score between 0 and 4 (see Table 1).

Table 1: Classification of the level of detail provided in the six-monthly report

Level of detail provided	Score
No quantitative data (occurrence code only)	0
Data by semester and for the whole country	1
Data by month and for the whole country	2
Data by semester and by administrative division	3
Data by month and by administrative division (format recommended by the OIE)	4

238. Figure 12 presents the percentage of Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe assigned to each of the scores, by semester, for their reporting of aquatic animal diseases. For all semesters except the second semester of 2012, the highest percentage of Members (average of 47%) presented a score of 4, corresponding to a maximum level of detail, between 2005 and 2013. The second highest percentage (average of 25%) was for Members presenting a score of 0, corresponding to the absence of quantitative data. The average percentages for Members presenting scores of 1, 2 and 3 were 14%, 5% and 9%, respectively.

Figure 12: Percentages of Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe that reported diseases or infections of aquatic animals present in their six-monthly reports to the OIE between 2005 and 2013, classified by the maximum level of detail provided



239. As shown in this analysis, the highest percentage was for countries providing the maximum level of detail regarding data on aquatic animal diseases. Nevertheless, a quarter of all Members of the Regional Commission did not report any quantitative data in their six-monthly reports on aquatic animal diseases. These results are, however, far better than the results of a similar analysis for the world as a whole: a large majority of countries/territories (average of around 70%) did not provide quantitative data for aquatic animal diseases during this period.
240. In conclusion, although Europe is one of the Regions providing the most detailed information on aquatic animal diseases, with a percentage of Members providing information through their six-monthly reports that has remained very high and stable since 2005, and with the highest percentage of these countries providing a maximum level of detail, there is still room for improvement. The OIE encourages countries currently reporting the presence of diseases and infections of aquatic animals without providing quantitative data (about a quarter of Members) to increase the level of detail of the data provided. The OIE also encourages Delegates to nominate National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals and to provide them with access to WAHIS. Moreover, in order to contribute to improve the reporting on aquatic animal diseases, the OIE informs Delegates that WAHIS training will be implemented for National Focal Points for Aquatic Animals during Regional Seminars, from 2015.

5. Evaluation of the impact of the turnover of National Focal Points for Disease Notification on reporting in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

241. National Focal Points for Disease Notification are appointed by their governments to assist the OIE Delegate and act as a direct contact point with the OIE Animal Health Information Department on matters relating to information on animal diseases. They are in charge, under the authority of the Delegate, of animal disease notification to the OIE. Focal Points are key players in ensuring optimal use of the online notification system. They thus act as information providers to the OIE and through the OIE to the rest of the world.
242. National Focal Points for Disease Notification to the OIE need to be efficient in gathering good quality information on both terrestrial and aquatic animal diseases as well as in the technical aspects of processing this information into WAHIS. The OIE has therefore set up training programmes to support the capacity building of the Veterinary Services by teaching National Focal Points the required techniques for notifying diseases³⁴.
243. The OIE recommends that Member Countries ensure the stability of the National Focal Points for Disease Notification to the OIE, to keep their technical knowledge and enhance their experience and expertise.
244. The following analysis was performed to evaluate the impact of the turnover of National Focal Points for Disease Notification to the OIE on the quality of reporting. In this analysis, submission times of six-monthly reports were considered to be an indicator of the quality of reports. The period considered was between 2011 and the first semester of 2014 and the countries considered were the Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe. During this period, 31 countries appointed one Focal Point and maintained this appointment throughout the period, 11 countries appointed two different Focal Points during the period and eight countries appointed three different Focal Points. On average, eight new Focal Points were appointed each year in the Region, which is equivalent to an annual turnover of 16%. The association between the number of different Focal Points for Disease Notification to the OIE appointed by their government during this period and the average time for submission of six-monthly reports was analysed by linear regression (Figure 13). It should be noted that three Member Countries³⁵ of the Regional Commission have not yet appointed a National Focal Point for Disease Notification to the OIE

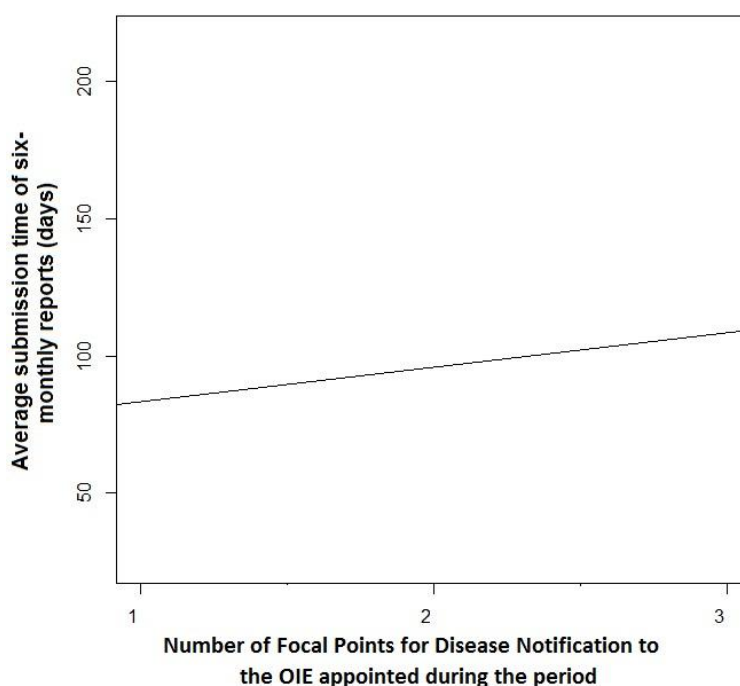
³⁴ Since 2005, three Regional Workshops for training on WAHIS for National Focal Points for Animal Disease Notification to the OIE have been conducted in the Region (Georgia, October 2005; Russia, June 2011; Bulgaria, January 2012) as well as three Global Workshop on WAHIS, in OIE Headquarters for recently appointed National Focal Points for Animal Disease Notification to the OIE (April 2008; October 2012; February 2014). A Regional Workshop for training on WAHIS for National Focal Points for Animal Disease Notification to the OIE will be conducted in Sofia, Bulgaria in October 2014.

³⁵ Andorra, Liechtenstein and San Marino

and were not included in the analysis. In these countries, it is the Delegate who regularly submits information to the OIE.

245. As shown in Figure 13, linear regression suggests that the increase of average submission time in days is associated with an increased number of different National Focal Points for Disease Notification to the OIE appointed during the period (i.e. a higher turnover). The analysis revealed that the average submission time increased by 12.7 days per new Focal Point appointed during the period. In contrast, shorter submission times, as recommended by the OIE, were achieved by the countries that maintained the same National Focal Point for Disease Notification to the OIE throughout this period.
246. These results clearly demonstrate the importance of Members maintaining continuity in the appointment of National Focal Points for Disease Notification to the OIE, as recommended by the OIE.

Figure 13: Linear regression line of average time for submission of six-monthly reports associated with the number of Focal Points for Disease Notification during the period “2011 – first semester 2014” in Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe



247. Regarding the turnover of National Delegates in the Region between 2011 and the first semester of 2014, 31 countries appointed one Delegate and maintained this appointment throughout the period, 14 countries appointed two different Delegates during the period, four countries appointed three different Delegates, two countries appointed five different Delegates and one country appointed six different Delegates. On average, ten new Delegates were appointed each year in the Region, which is equivalent to an annual turnover of 19%.
248. It should be noted that, in countries with the highest turnover of Delegates during this period, appointments of National Focal Points for Disease Notification have however been maintained during several years. This is very positive, since it gives to possibility to countries to maintain over the years the technical knowledge of Focal Points, gained through experience and OIE WAHIS trainings.
249. Furthermore, in some of the countries for which the highest turnover of National Focal Points was observed, only one Delegate has been appointed and maintained during the period. This comparison shows that the turnover of Focal Points is not always linked to the turnover of Delegates in the Region.

Discussion

250. Dr Lucio Carbajo Goni, Delegate of Spain, strongly congratulated Dr Caceres for her presentation and more generally the Animal Health Information Department for their innovative way of presenting the animal health information, both during the recent OIE General Session and the current Regional Conference. In particular, the global and regional analyses of the sanitary data provided by countries bring a real added value in terms of prevention and control measures.
251. Dr Carbajo also expressed his concern with regard to the FMD situation in North Africa. He underlined the active role played by the OIE through the Mediterranean Network for Animal Health (REMESA) which is a relevant umbrella to control the disease. The next meeting of the Joint Permanent Committee of the REMESA (early November, Tunis) will hopefully allow to gain of clear understanding of the FMD situation in Tunisia and neighboring countries including on vaccination strategies. Dr Jean-Luc Angot, Delegate of France, proposed to make of short presentation of the FMD situation in North Africa, which was accepted.
252. Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, Delegate of Germany and President of the OIE, asked for clarifications on the way the 'clusters' of ASF outbreaks were delineated.
253. Dr Caceres indicated that additional information on clustering would be provided in the Final Report of the Conference.
254. Dr Nigel Gibbens, Delegate of the United Kingdom, also congratulated the Animal Health Information Department for invigorating the way the animal health situation is presented. He however pointed out the remaining gaps of data in some of the the presented maps and suggested as well to even further 'interrogate the data' to improve the correlation between the reported data and control measures.
255. Dr Lena Hellqvist Björnerot, Representative of Sweden, echoed the positive developments in the Department presentations made earlier by the Delegates of Spain and United Kingdom. She considered that it was a great improvement that the countries affected were no longer fully colored as it was confusing by wrongly indicating a spread over the whole country even in the case of successful regionalization. She however wished that WAHIS/WAHID be even further improved and notably gain a more exact precision in the geographic delineation of outbreaks as it appears on maps to ensure a proportional representation of disease situation based on the lowest administrative level as defined by the Country itself in its reporting. She also congratulated the OIE for the focal point training programme which allows better reporting.
256. Mr Alain Cantaloube, representative of FESASS, indicated that the data presented were very relevant for the livestock breeders of Europe and thanked the OIE for this. Pointing out FMD in Northern Africa and ASF in Eastern Europe countries, he stressed that sanitary threats for the EU – coming from neighbouring countries – dreadfully increased over the past years. This situation should prompt enhanced international solidarity to better mitigate risks to EU. He engaged all countries to become more proactive in addressing diseases, notably using existing mechanism such as the REMESA.
257. Dr Eloit, Deputy Director General of OIE, informed the audience about a vacancy announcement for a Veterinary Epidemiologist to support the work of the OIE Animal Health Information Department.

Celebration of the centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Service and the creation of the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO)

258. Dr Thomas Jemmi, Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer, taking the opportunity of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe made a special presentation regarding the Centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Service and the creation of the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office.

259. He started by mentioning that this year, the representatives and partners of the Veterinary Authorities have been celebrating the centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Service. The Swiss Veterinary Office was created in 1914 by the Federal Council. At that time, its priority was the control of epizootic diseases within Switzerland and at national borders. Food safety of products of animal origin and animal welfare were subsequently included in the missions of the Office.
260. He then added that, in 1848, when the Federal State was created, the control of animal diseases was still the responsibility of the health commission in each canton. However, following the spread of rinderpest in Switzerland in 1871, the authorities recognised that a canton could not eradicate such a large epizootic single-handed. One year later, the first federal law on animal diseases came into force. Finally, it was the creation of the Swiss Veterinary Office, in 1914, that marked the birth of the Veterinary Service in Switzerland.
261. One hundred years ago, the Veterinary Service focused primarily on animal disease control, and this remains one of its priorities today. Indeed, at a worldwide level, a great many of the emerging diseases that affect humans originate from animal diseases. Examples such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy, tuberculosis and rabies illustrate the importance of animal health for food safety and human health.
262. Finally he commented on the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), which was created on 1 January 2014, bringing together responsibilities and competencies on food and veterinary matters. Its principal mission is to actively promote the health and welfare of humans and animals: its main areas of activity are thus food safety – including healthy food –, protection of animals and animal health.

Discussion

263. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Deputy Director General, warmly congratulated Switzerland for the 100th anniversary of the Swiss Veterinary Services and wished success to the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office.

Update on African swine fever

264. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Nadège Leboucq, OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, to present an update on African swine fever in the region.
265. Dr Leboucq began her presentation by stating that 2014 had been a pivotal year in the evolving epidemiology of African swine fever (ASF) in Europe. Joining the ranks of countries in the region that have been infected since the start of the epizootic in 2007, three European Union countries, Lithuania, Poland and Latvia, notified the disease in January, February and June 2014, respectively. The reported cases essentially involved wild boar. In July, however, Lithuania also notified an outbreak in a pig farm. Control measures, including regionalisation, were immediately put in place, in accordance with the provisions of the OIE *Terrestrial Code*.
266. She commented that the whole region has been on the alert for ASF ever since it began circulating in the countries of the Caucasus, in Russia and then in Ukraine and Belarus. Numerous information and awareness-raising meetings have been organised, with countries of the region being recommended to step up their preparedness, including disease contingency plans that have been tested (simulation exercises) and are backed up by a system of compensation for producers if stamping-out measures have to be applied. Two meetings recently placed ASF under the spotlight, with (i) the presentation of a Technical Item on ASF at the 82nd General Session of the OIE (May 2014); (ii) the organisation of a joint regional meeting by the OIE and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (Paris, July 2014), which highlighted the role of hunters and more broadly of environmental organisations in early detection of the disease (and more generally of all diseases of wildlife) and its notification to the Veterinary Services. The secondary role of wild boar in the epidemiology of the disease was also highlighted: not only are wild boar not the reservoir of the disease (in the absence of domestic swine that are themselves infected), as shown by recent scientific studies, but indeed any option involving mass culling of the wild boar population runs the risk of spreading the disease by modifying their sedentary behaviour; in terms of disease control, this option is therefore counter-productive. A

system of surveillance involving all stakeholders coupled with strict biosecurity measures in pig farms will prove far more effective.

267. Finally, Dr Leboucq presented an inventory of the recent recommendations and tools available to countries to help them improve their preparedness for any incursion of the disease and, where appropriate, organise an appropriate rapid response. She informed the participants that the OIE had also issued a reminder of the obligations on all its Member Countries in terms of sanitary transparency and compliance with OIE standards (and the statuses stemming from them), notably to avoid any unjustified sanitary barriers to international trade. The OIE's mediation procedure in the event of a trade dispute between two countries may enable an amicable solution to be found. Lastly, the OIE listed all its activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of countries through its PVS Pathway, regional seminars for Delegates and Focal Points (for wildlife and for animal disease notification) and the GF-TADs initiative conducted in collaboration with FAO.

Foot and Mouth Disease Control in Eastern Europe

268. The Session Chairperson, Dr Hans Wyss, invited Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas, OIE Regional Representative in Moscow, to present a report on Foot and Mouth Disease Control in Eastern Europe.
269. Dr Lukauskas commented on the overall foot and mouth disease (FMD) situation in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. He stated that no new FMD outbreaks had been detected in 2014 in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan. He then highlighted the recent outbreaks in Kyrgyzstan.
270. Dr Lukauskas reminded the participants about the Vision of Shiraz meeting, held in Iran in 2008, regarding objective of the West Eurasia region becoming free from clinical FMD by 2025.
271. Dr Lukauskas said that, in line with this objective, the OIE had opened the OIE Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Office in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 15 October 2013, which operates under the OIE Regional Representation in Moscow and covers the OIE's FMD activities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
272. He explained that the objectives of the OIE Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Office in Astana were to strengthen FMD control in the 5 Member Countries in Central Asia; develop a uniform FMD approach and strategy at sub-regional level and ensure sub-regional cooperation for FMD control between Veterinary Services and OIE FMD experts of the region.
273. Dr Lukauskas commented on the outcomes of the fifth Annual West Eurasia Roadmap Meeting, held in Astana on 23 and 24 April 2014. He specifically highlighted the following recommendations:
- Continue the Roadmap process for West Eurasia countries, with an annual survey (based on the self-assessment questionnaires) and meeting to monitor progress, subject to the availability of funding;
 - Countries that are well progressing with the development of their official control programme to submit the revised control plans for review no later than October 2014 with evidence of the programme feasibility for implementation, these control plans to be submitted to the GF-TADs FMD Working Group;
 - Countries should be actively involved in the OIE PVS Pathway to improve their compliance with OIE international standards on quality of Veterinary Services and Governmental Authorities should support the development of an 'Enabling Environment', of which the reinforcement of Veterinary Services is an integral component;
 - Countries should consider reciprocal and regular communications with neighbouring countries to assess and mitigate risk across borders, and should seek assistance from FAO and the OIE to facilitate this if it is deemed necessary;

- Greater use should be made of the vaccine matching services offered by the World Reference Laboratory at Pirbright (United Kingdom) and other Reference Centres;
 - Countries should, on request, receive technical support and assistance from the OIE, FAO, and EuFMD in the design of serosurveillance, identification of risk hotspots, effective vaccination strategies and post vaccination monitoring;
 - Vaccines used by countries in the region should comply with the OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* and, in particular, the potency of the vaccines should be selected based on a consideration of the level of protection required against the main circulating viruses;
 - The West Eurasia Region Roadmap programmes should be well articulated with other regional control programmes, such as in the Middle East;
 - The West Eurasia FMD Lab Network (WELNET) should develop guidelines on selection of samples for further characterisation by genotyping and vaccine matching, and review minimum potency requirements for vaccines for use in West EurAsia.
274. The Conference was also informed that, during the 5th Annual West Eurasia Roadmap Meeting, held in Astana on 23 and 24 April 2014, new members of the Roadmap Advisory Group had been elected.
275. Dr Lukauskas concluded by mentioning some shortcomings in FMD control and communication and that efforts should be made to better promote the initiative at national and sub-regional levels. He stated that the roadmap remained on track to achieve the regional Vision by 2025.

Discussion

276. Dr Hans Wyss, Chairperson of the Conference thanked Dr Lukauskas for the comprehensive presentation and opened the floor to discussion.
277. Dr Ago Partel congratulated the OIE for the recent establishment of the OIE Representation in Moscow and the OIE Sub-Regional FMD Coordination Unit Office in Astana in order to better address the specific needs of some Member Countries of the Region. In his capacity as President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, he took the liberty to express his concerns regarding the low participation, in the Conference, of the countries covered by these OIE offices.
278. Dr Lukauskas agreed that, indeed, the OIE had to strengthen its communication with these countries in order to ensure a full ownership of their responsibilities towards the organisation such as participating in institutional meetings. He hoped for a better attendance of these countries at the next Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe in 2016.

FMD situation in North Africa

279. Dr Jean-Luc Angot, Delegate of France to the OIE and member of the Executive Committee of EuFMD, gave a short presentation on the foot and mouth disease (FMD) situation in North Africa. He began his presentation by informing participants that, after a 15-year absence, FMD had reappeared in Tunisia in April 2014, and had then occurred in Algeria in July 2014. He noted that the virus responsible for these outbreaks, serotype O, was very similar to the virus that had circulated in Libya in 2013.
280. He explained that the large scale animal movements (both legal and illegal) in this part of the world had undoubtedly been responsible for the introduction and spread of the disease. He said that the current situation was now threatening Europe, which had mobilised to supply the affected countries with vaccines.
281. He also pointed out that the preventive measures using vaccination and the responses provided by each of the affected countries were highly variable and not well harmonised.

282. Faced with this situation, Dr Angot explained that the Mediterranean Animal Health Network (REMESA), which covers the countries around the Mediterranean, was clearly a crucial tool for regional coordination aimed at establishing an effective strategy to control the disease, notably based on setting up a vaccine bank.
283. Lastly, he announced that, following a technical meeting held in Tunis in September 2014, the REMESA would be reporting on its strategic directions in Tunis on 3 and 4 November 2014.

Presentations by international and regional organisations

European Commission (EC)

284. Dr Alberto Laddomada, on behalf of Dr Bernard Van Goethem, Director for Veterinary and International affairs of the European Commission, highlighted the activities of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers in the area of animal health and animal welfare in Europe, including transboundary animal disease control programmes in the EU and neighbouring countries, TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument) and BTSF (Better Training for Safer Food) activities, the OIE platform on animal welfare for Europe and other OIE capacity building activities co-financed by the European Commission. He also gave an update on the state of play of the EU animal health law.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

285. Mr Melvin Spreij, Counsellor, Agriculture and Commodities Division, WTO, highlighted the close and good working relationship between the OIE and the WTO.
286. He reminded participants that both organizations share common goals of assisting the economic development of countries with improved human and animal health, and of encouraging international trade in safe animal products.
287. He referred to the update on the relevant activities of the SPS Committee and the WTO provided during the 82nd OIE General Session in Paris in May 2014. In addition, he drew attention to the following developments: (i) a planned WTO workshop on risk analysis (13-14 October 2014), which will include OIE participation; (ii) a decision adopted by the SPS Committee in July 2014 on a new mediation procedure, designed to assist WTO Members to resolve their differences on SPS matters; (iii) recent developments in WTO dispute settlement, including a recent report of WTO's Appellate Body in the EC – Seal Products dispute on 22 May 2014, which is relevant to the OIE's work on animal welfare; and (iv) cooperation between the OIE and the WTO on technical assistance matters, including in the context of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF).

Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

288. Dr Andriy Rozstalnyy, FAO Animal Production and Health Officer, gave a brief presentation regarding the FAO's assistance to member countries. He commented that such assistance was based on Country Priority Framework, Regional Priorities and results of FAO Regional Conference. It contributes to achievement of 5 Strategic Objectives.
289. He explained that the FAO provided technical and institutional assistance, and policy advice on prevention and control of priority transboundary animal diseases and zoonoses.
290. He also said that advice and capacity development for the reinforcement of existing progressive control pathways tool on brucellosis and FMD WestEurasia Road map were also provided for veterinary services of the region.
291. Dr Rozstalnyy explained that assistance was provided through capacity development, technology transfer, knowledge management, epidemiological analysis, risk assessments, and manuals. Strengthening of legal and institutional frameworks for sustainable and responsible livestock production, food safety and quality and development of veterinary public health capacities

including animal welfare, traceability of livestock and food of animal origin are other important priorities.

292. Finally, he commented on the FAO tools available for countries and that could be implemented in support of the PVS Pathway and its "Treatment" component. Those tools include Laboratory Mapping for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, mobile devices to assist in real-time reporting and surveillance efforts, CMC-AH response and GEMP, and step-wise approach for progressive control of brucellosis and rabies.

European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (FESASS)

293. Mr Didier Delmotte started his presentation mentioning that animal producers had a crucial role to play in the health surveillance of their animals. He explained that, given their day-to-day presence on their farms and their experience built up over generations, they alone were in a position to detect a new problem in real time. He underlined that a collective approach was needed to organise this surveillance and ensure that it covers all production units. This is one of the priorities of FESASS and its members in line with the following principles: massive participation on a voluntary basis and partnership with veterinary practitioners, laboratories and national Veterinary Services.
294. Mr Delmotte also commented that FESASS had succeeded in building and maintaining a very real relationship of trust with producers, listening to their needs and providing services that were adapted in consequence. This trust is also founded on a knowledge of each farm, our presence alongside each producer and the competence and responsiveness of our teams.
295. Finally, Mr Delmotte mentioned that the surveillance resulting from this collective and partnership approach was very effective. For example, it contributed to the early detection of Schmallenberg virus and then the collection of epidemiological data needed to improve our understanding of the disease and its implications for livestock production.

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)

296. Dr Jan Vaarten, Executive Director of the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe, introduced the organisation and presented the FVE Activity Report 2012 – 2014. He highlighted the good relation FVE has with OIE and the fact that the two organisations are working on an exchange of letters to formalize their relation.
297. He informed that in recent years FVE produced several leaflets on the responsible use of antimicrobials, which were available at the FVE website in many different languages. Attention is asked for the prescription of veterinary medicines. In the view of FVE prescriptions shall only be made for animals that are under the care of the prescriber.
298. Dr Vaarten commented that a draft report on the health and welfare of aquatic animals was published on the FVE website and open for comments. One of the critical issues is the lack of authorised medicinal products. FVE is in communication with the European Medicines Agency's Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products to find ways that could help to address the issue.
299. Finally FVE mentioned the on-going on-line survey on veterinary demography. Over 13 000 veterinarians from 27 countries have participated. Results are expected around the end of the year.

International Federation for Animal Health-Europe (IFAH-Europe)

300. Dr Norbert Mencke, Representative of the International Federation for Animal Health (IFAH), gave a brief review of his organisation, highlighting the fact that IFAH is the global representative body of companies engaged in research, development, manufacturing and commercialisation of veterinary medicines, vaccines and other animal health products in both developed and developing countries across the five continents.

301. Regarding 'One Health', Dr Mencke commented that about 1500 infectious diseases were known and many were shared between animals and humans, thus they were zoonotic. The challenges are those of infectious diseases spreading, emerging or re-emerging from the interaction between animals and humans. To protect the health and well-being of animals and humans alike is the 'one world – one health' approach. He said that, with that in mind, the IFAH is proactively compiling information on vector-borne diseases.
302. He concluded by informing the Conference that a white paper on “vector-borne diseases in humans and animals: recommendations for optimizing solutions and innovations across all species and all regions” was currently being finalised and would be released in October 2014.

World Farmers Organisation (WFO)

303. Mr Koen Mintiens, representative of the World Farmers Organisation (WFO), began his presentation informing that WFO was a community of geographically balanced entrepreneurial farmers, small, medium and large-scale holders, who aimed to see their rights as food producers and economic actors, globally recognized.
304. He said that WFO was established in 2011 and it counts almost 70 member organizations of small, medium and large-scale farmers, from more than 50 countries in the developing and developed world.
305. Finally, Mr Mintiens said that WFO brought together farmers organizations and agriculture cooperatives from all over the world. And that, as a community of farmers, WFO actively participated in global policy fora and tirelessly works to create conditions for the adoption of policies aimed to improve the economic environment and livelihood of producers and their communities.
306. He concluded by mentioning that, as a community of farmers, WFO acknowledged partnership as a fundamental tool to reinforce the role of farmers in policy dialogue at all levels. Therefore, WFO worked hard to establish and develop partnerships and liaisons with all relevant stakeholders.

World Health Organization (WHO)

307. Dr Hilde Kruse, Representative of the WHO, presented on the WHO's “Strategic Plan for Food Safety including Foodborne Zoonoses 2013-2022”, which provide a coherent framework for taking action on priority issues in the area of food safety and zoonoses, with the aspiration outcome that “All countries are adequately prepared to prevent and mitigate risks to food safety”.
308. She reminded the ambitious project jointly led with the OIE on the implementation of the WHO-IHR Monitoring Framework and the OIE PVS Pathway. Highlighting the outcomes of the presentation of Dr Stéphane de La Rocque, she confirmed the value of the publication of a common guide to support the Member Countries in improving the governance of the concerns faced at the human/animal interface.
309. Dr Kruse explained that the current food safety work-plan in WHO was developed in order to achieve 3 major outcomes:
- 1) Support the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to develop, and for countries to implement, food safety standards, guidelines and recommendations;
 - 2) Multisectoral collaboration to reduce foodborne public health risks, including those arising at the animal-human interface;
 - 3) Adequate national capacity to establish and maintain risk-based regulatory frameworks to prevent, monitor, assess and manage foodborne and zoonotic diseases and hazards.
310. She also informed that WHO was working closely with FAO and OIE in the response to public health risks arising at the human-animal interface. She highlighted the fact that countries were encouraged to ensure efficient intersectoral collaboration and information-sharing at the national levels.

311. Furthermore, she added that, “Health 2020 - the European policy for health and well-being” underlined that expanding interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration between human, environmental and animal health enhances public health effectiveness.
312. Finally, Dr Kruse mentioned that WHO's capacity building in the food safety and zoonotic area is aimed at:
- Facilitating involvement in Codex Alimentarius work;
 - Strengthening the surveillance of foodborne disease;
 - Strengthening the monitoring of chemical and microbiological food contamination in the food chain;
 - Addressing antimicrobial resistance from a food safety perspective;
 - Strengthening food safety emergency and outbreaks preparedness and response;
 - Improving food safety risk communication.

World Animal Protection (WAP)

313. Dr Joe Anzuino, representative of the World Animal Protection, started his presentation mentioning that World Animal Protection was an NGO which specifically aimed to support the veterinary profession in improving animal welfare.
314. He described recent developments in its areas of work relevant to OIE Animal Welfare Standards including developments in approaches for World Animal Protection's core programme areas of Dog Population Management, Humane & Sustainable Agriculture and Disaster Management. Development of relationships with Veterinary Associations and availability of educational resources in animal welfare were also outlined.
315. Dr Anzuino explained that the World Animal Protection was a member of the International Coalition for Animal Welfare (ICFAW) which brings together NGOs from across the world. He explained that ICFAW cooperated in providing comments and suggestions during the development and implementation of internationally recognized animal health and welfare standards, guidelines, recommendations and other OIE activities related to animal welfare.
316. He then described the current mission and vision statement of ICFAW.
317. In addition, Dr Anzuino gave a progress report on the Animal Protection Index (API), which has been developed by a multi-organisational working group and which will be launched later this year.

Discussions on Recommendations 1 and 2

318. Draft Recommendations Nos 1 and 2 on the two technical items of the Conference were presented to the participants and put forward for discussion. Both draft Recommendations will be presented for adoption at the Friday session with amendments as per suggestions and discussions from participants.

Date, venue and selection of the Technical Item for the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

319. The Delegate of Portugal confirmed his country's proposal to host the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in Porto in 2016.
320. The proposal was unanimously accepted.

321. The precise dates of the Conference will be decided during the Regional Commission meeting to be held during the General Session in 2015. The Conference should be held at the end of September 2016.
322. This proposal was also unanimously confirmed.
323. As usual, two technical items will be discussed at the next Conference of the Regional Commission.
324. One technical item will include the response of Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe to a questionnaire that will be prepared on a specific subject. This item will be decided at the next meeting of the Regional Commission during the OIE General Session in Paris in May 2015. The other technical item will deal with a subject of current interest that will be proposed by the Regional Commission when it meets during the General Session preceding the Conference, i.e. in May 2016. This item will not include a questionnaire.

Thursday 25 September 2014

Cultural Visit

325. Participants and their guests greatly appreciated the cultural visit organised for the day by the host country. Sincere thanks were extended to the organisers for their kind hospitality.

Friday 26 September 2014

Outcome of the survey aimed at identifying new challenges for drawing the future of the Regional Commission and its Members

326. Dr Ulrich Herzog, Delegate of Austria, provided details on the proposal of actions arising from the analysis of the results of the questionnaire conducted by the Bureau of the OIE Commission for Europe and presented during the Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe by Dr Lucio Carbajo, Delegate of Spain and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, in the context of the development of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan.
327. In that sense, it was stated that, in order to optimise the contributions and outcomes from the OIE Regional Commission in support of the overall OIE objectives, it is recommended that:
- There should be more interaction between the OIE Regional and Sub Regional Representations, the Bureau of the Regional Commission and the Member Countries of the Region. This can be achieved through proactive, timely and direct involvement of all Member Countries of the region in the preparation of the agenda for all meetings concerning the region, through the Bureau of the Regional Commission.
 - Regular meetings between the Bureau, Headquarters representatives and the Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives be put in place, as such meetings are considered essential to the good governance and the optimal operation of the Regional Commission.
 - A strategic outline for a multi-annual work-plan (e.g.3 years) for the region should be put in place. This work-plan would be agreed and pursued by the Delegates and would be facilitated and verified by the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission.
 - The holding of the regional conference/meeting on an annual basis should be maintained – firstly taking into account the rapid development and evolution of disease situations globally and across the region and secondly in the interest of facilitating the enhancement of personal contacts between Delegates, with the consequential benefits accruing from such contacts. At least regular meetings of the Bureau should be organised.

328. Finally, it was suggested that these proposals be incorporated into the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan.

Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations

329. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Deputy Director General, explained the procedures for adopting the report and recommendations of the Conference. Delegates could submit comments or suggestions for consideration during the Conference itself. Further comments on the report received at the OIE Headquarters by 15 October 2014 would also be taken into consideration. However, the recommendations had to be adopted during the current session and could not be changed subsequently.

330. As requested by some Delegates of the Region, an electronic version of the draft final report will be provided to all Delegates and Representatives of Delegates that attended the Conference in order to facilitate the comments to the report.

331. The two draft recommendations were adopted, with minor amendments taking into account participants' suggestions and discussions.

Closing Ceremony

332. On behalf of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, the OIE Headquarters and the Conference participants, Dr Ago Pärtel read the traditional motion of thanks dedicated to the host country.

333. Dr Hans Wyss, OIE Delegate of Switzerland, made first a special mention and thanks to his staff for the work done in the preparation of the Conference. He then expressed his gratitude, on behalf of his government and on his own, to all the participants, the speakers and the OIE secretariat for the productive Conference. He wished all a safe trip back home and hoped that the stay in Bern was pleasant.

334. Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, reiterated her thanks to the government of Switzerland for the organisation of the Conference.

335. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Deputy Director General, thanked the colleagues from the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office for the organisation of the Conference. She also expressed her gratitude to the Conference Secretariat and the OIE staff from the Headquarters and the Regional offices for their active and fruitful participation.

336. She invited all participants to be present in the next Regional Commission Conference.

337. Dr Hans Wyss declared the Conference officially ended at 10.30 a.m.

.../Annexes

Speech by Mr Alain Berset
Federal Councillor, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs
at the occasion of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Bern, Switzerland, 22 to 26 September 2014

Madam President,
Mr President of the Commission,
Mr Director General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Swiss Federal Council, I welcome you most cordially to Bern.

We are delighted to welcome the World Organisation for Animal Health and the 26th Conference of its Regional Commission for Europe. It is an honour for us to have here today the Delegates from more than 50 States of Europe and Central Asia and the representatives of various international organisations.

And most especially in this year 2014: firstly, because on 1 January 2014 Switzerland set up a Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office, thereby bringing closely linked topics together within a single organisation, and, secondly, because we are celebrating the centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Service. A century after its creation, the Veterinary Service remains dedicated to the prevention and control of epizootics.

In 1871, during the Franco-Prussian War, Switzerland agreed to intern 87 000 French soldiers in Switzerland. The soldiers arrived along with their herds... and rinderpest, which at that time was circulating in France. The Federal Council immediately introduced strict confinement measures and entrusted responsibility for rinderpest control to the chief veterinarian of the army. As a result, epizootic diseases became a matter for national concern. This led to the enactment of a first Federal law on epizootic diseases and then the creation, thus 100 years ago, of a Swiss Veterinary Office. Nowadays, the spread of African swine fever in Europe clearly demonstrates that globalisation does not just involve economics or culture.

Viruses and bacteria know no borders

The only way we can fight epizootic diseases effectively is through international cooperation. Another example, bovine tuberculosis, serves as a reminder that we must not relax our surveillance. Although the disease was considered as eradicated since 1960, Switzerland has identified around ten outbreaks since last year. Thanks to the rapidly introduced control and prevention measures within the framework of collaboration between the cantons affected and also with neighbouring countries, the situation is now under control. Good quality national Veterinary Services and international cooperation are therefore essential, both for animal health and for human health.

The role of Switzerland within the OIE

Switzerland is one of the 28 founding Member States of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) created 90 years ago. Ever since, Switzerland has supported the Organisation in its missions, and especially:

- ensuring transparency in the global animal disease situation,
- collecting, analysing and disseminating veterinary scientific information,
- encouraging international solidarity,
- safeguarding world trade in animals and animal products.

Furthermore, Swiss experts regularly serve on various OIE committees.

Protection of animals is of great importance in Switzerland. It is therefore with great satisfaction that we note that the OIE plays an international leadership role and has developed recommendations in this field. Last year, Switzerland sent the OIE recommendations on humane killing methods for reptiles. Reptile skins have an important place in the watch-making industry.

In doing so, our country hopes to contribute, in the near future, to an international standard on the subject. Among other things, this will help to improve, in their country of origin, the protection of animals killed for their skins.

Learning from each other

We all face the same challenges when confronted with illness and epidemics.

But challenges also represent an opportunity. They teach us to learn from each other.

Switzerland wants to ensure that Animal epidemics can be combated throughout the world.

That the food we consume is safe,

And that we take account of animal welfare.

These objectives can be reached, but only if the international community works together and in a transparent manner. Your Regional Conference here in Bern must address this difficult task.

The conference – paper cutting

An old Swiss tradition has been chosen for the Regional Conference as symbolic of your work over the next few days: paper cutting.

Paper-cut motifs show how closely together people and animals traditionally lived in Switzerland. Good conferences are not unlike paper cuts. Both involve patient, detailed work with the aim of presenting a convincing picture. This is a task which requires hard work, precision and attention to detail.

I hope you enjoy many fruitful discussions and achieve sustainable results over the coming four days.

Speech by Prof. Nikola Belev
OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe
at the occasion of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Bern, Switzerland, 22 to 26 September 2014

Dear colleagues,

I am glad that my colleague from the hosting country has said most of the things I wished to say. I will be very short, I want just to welcome the countries from Europe as an honorary President of the Regional commission for Europe in this beautiful city of Bern.

In the last years we realized that we have to stand together to meet the well-known and new challenges in the veterinary and public health.

In order to be effective we have to understand the necessity of strong structure and position of the veterinary services and support from the Governments of the countries. Now, accept my best wishes to you and your families for health, fruitful work, understanding, positive approach and, finally, useful outcomes of the conference.

I wish to extend our thanks to the federal service of Switzerland for hosting this event and enjoy your stay in Bern.

Thank you

Speech by Karin Schwabenbauer
Delegate of Germany and President of the OIE
at the occasion of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Bern, Switzerland, 22 to 26 September 2014

It is my pleasure to welcome you here in Berne.

I hope you had a safe and pleasant journey!

OIE Regional Conferences and the activities of the Regional Commissions remain of great importance for all of us. They cannot be replaced by electronic exchanges or video conferences! This is the place where veterinarians from countries across the region meet on a regular basis, where they can get to know each other better and jointly work towards solving problems. In the age of globalisation, climate change and in light of financial and economic crises, political unrests with all the insecurities it entails, this is of particular importance, as it is well known, that all these factors have a negative impact on our mission: Protecting animals and preserving our future!

The OIE Regional Commission and the Regional Conferences are places where veterinarians are gathering with the common willingness to address important issues, like animal welfare and health, despite of adverse political and economic circumstances. This has always worked, since the creation of our technical organisation 90 years ago! And especially in our region that was separated for many years, the OIE Regional Conferences have contributed to bridge across the borders, allowing Veterinary Services to work together.

I am particularly happy – and also a bit proud – that the Task Force which was decided in our last Conference in Fleesensee, is working well and that in the last 2 General Sessions our region could present a number of common positions. This is encouraging and I hope that this approach will continue to grow. Our President, Ago Pärtel, will tell us more on this later today!

2014 is a year for quite a number of commemoratives: 100 years WW I, 90 years of OIE, 75 years WW II, 25 years fall of the Berlin Wall, and the Centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Services. The creation of the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office this year demonstrates the dynamic of the Veterinary Services in our host country, where the institutional arrangements are adapted to meet the needs of the Services and the society, respecting the long tradition!

How important functioning health services, including animal health services are, can be seen currently in West Africa with the Ebola-outbreak. This outbreak has the potential to destabilize the whole region.

We have to remain aware, that health services, including veterinary services, contribute directly to a global public good: health, food security and eventually peace. It is therefore of utmost importance, that our Organisation continues to advocate for the support of Veterinary Services by the international community. The world needs strong veterinary services of high quality and supported by adequate legislation.

To be respected, we need to be a strong and credible Organisation, working in partnership with other technical agencies. To this end the Sixth Strategic Plan is a good opportunity to define our Objectives and how to meet them. So far 3 Strategic Objectives have been identified:

- Securing animal health and welfare by appropriate risk management
- Establishing trust through communication
- Ensuring the capacity and sustainability of Veterinary Services and 3 cross-cutting areas:
- Scientific Excellence
- Diversity, Inclusiveness, Engagement, Transparency
- Governance

We will have the opportunity to discuss the Sixth Strategic Plan more in details during this conference.

And please consider that while preparing the elections next year, to propose individuals to be elected who will help OIE to implement the Strategic Plan to be adopted.

The technical topics of this Conference reflect the regional concerns of the veterinary services: Natural disasters and bioterrorism have an impact on animal health and need therefore our attention.

New emerging diseases as PED in Northern America, but also well known “old” friends as FMD and ASF are threatening our economy.

Animal Welfare, a topic that is on a raise worldwide, will be addressed. And I hope personally that the work started in Fleesensee on the animal welfare platform will end in a regional animal welfare strategy.

The importance to work closely with our partners on “One Health” is just demonstrated in the already mentioned Ebola-crisis. It is good to know, that OIE is cooperating closely with WHO on the One Healthsubject.

I am looking forward to learning more on these diverse themes in the coming days.

I would now like to wish us all a productive conference, with many interesting discussions and plenty of new findings. But let us also enjoy the more informal part of the conference; I hope that you will find the time to talk to colleagues who you do not see that often! And that we all together will enjoy the great sceneries of Switzerland. The weather forecast is promising, at least to my knowledge.

Speech by Dr Bernard Vallat
Director General of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)
at the occasion of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Bern, Switzerland, 22 to 26 September 2014

Federal Councillor, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs,
President of the OIE,
President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe,
Members of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe,
Delegate of Switzerland and Swiss colleagues,
Delegates of Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe,
Representatives of international and regional organisations,
OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives in Europe,
Distinguished guests,

It is a great honour and a privilege for me to welcome each of you to the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe.

This year, we are celebrating the 90th anniversary of our organisation, the OIE, and as an incredible coincidence, our colleagues from Switzerland are also commemorating important accomplishments; the centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Service and the creation of the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office. This Conference is a great opportunity to celebrate our Organisation and to congratulate our colleagues from Switzerland.

We are deeply grateful to the Government of Switzerland for agreeing to host this 26th Conference and inviting us to Bern. This peaceful and welcoming place is a perfect setting for a successful conference. They did a great job for all of us.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr Alain Berset, Federal Councillor and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs, to Dr Hans Wyss, OIE Delegate of Switzerland and Director General of the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office of Switzerland, to our colleagues from the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office of Switzerland, to the regional and local authorities, to the OIE staff and to our Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives for all the efforts made in preparing this event.

The OIE was founded 90 years ago by 28 countries to prevent the spread of animal diseases throughout the world. For many years, the OIE has worked to set animal health standards, mainly with a view to updating disease prevention and control methods as well as regulating and facilitating safe trade in animals and animal products between countries and regions of the world. This has led to a steady increase in the number of OIE Member Countries, which reached 180 in last May.

Over the past decade, the OIE has broadened its mandate to include food safety, quality of Veterinary Services, and animal welfare. The OIE is indeed the reference Global Organisation for adopting standards on animal welfare.

The OIE also strives to bring Veterinary Services in line with international standards in terms of governance, organisation and functioning.

Global control of animal diseases is impossible without good governance of national Veterinary Services. Good governance includes appropriate legislation, appropriate veterinary education programmes, appropriate human and financial resources allocated to Veterinary and Livestock Services, and, finally, relevant public-private partnerships applicable to the entire veterinary domain and livestock owners.

For over 50 years the mandate of the OIE has also included aquatic animals. The OIE constantly encourages its Members to implement the OIE's standards for disease prevention, disease control, and trade in aquatic animals. In that regard, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you or your representatives to the 3rd OIE Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health, to be held in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) from 20 to 22 January 2015.

As you may already know, the OIE is also working in close collaboration with the WHO to promote and implement the One Health approach, to address risks at the animal-human interface by bridging programmes to strengthen national health and animal health systems' governance worldwide through the national WHO International Health Regulations monitoring framework and the OIE PVS Pathway. We are publishing this month a common WHO/OIE Guide on for providing relevant information to our countries for improving cooperation between public health and Veterinary Services at the national level.

The OIE has also worked actively for more than a decade on veterinary products, including antimicrobial agents, and developed a coherent strategy for its activities in this area. It has developed standards on monitoring both the quantities of antimicrobial agents used globally and antimicrobial resistance. The OIE has also developed standards and guidelines to provide methodologies for OIE Member Countries to appropriately address the prudent use of antibiotics in food producing animals. There is a growing societal concern. We must work together and communication is key to explain our role for prudent use of antibiotics as a key component for animal production and animal welfare.

The OIE also collect, analyse and disseminate the latest scientific information on prevention and control methods for animal diseases, including those transmissible to humans, while keeping the international community informed in real-time of the animal disease situation worldwide on the basis of the WAHIS system.

The network of Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres is at the heart of the OIE's scientific core of excellence and is a key part of global good governance in all scientific basis of standard and guidelines for animal health control and veterinary activities. The Third Global Conference of OIE Reference Centres – 'Challenges and expectations for the future' will be held in Incheon (Seoul, Republic of Korea), from 14 to 16 October 2014. You are all invited as well as OIE experts from all our 296 Reference Centres.

Ladies and Gentlemen, National Delegates to the OIE,

The OIE's work is dictated by five-year strategic plans developed in collaboration with OIE Members and partners and adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE.

The Fifth Strategic Plan, implementation of which will soon be coming to an end, provided a continued commitment to the strengthening of Veterinary Services and included important new elements such the contribution of veterinary public health, zoonoses control, food security, the application of the 'One Health' concept, the relationship between animal production and the environment, and the global improvement and harmonisation of veterinary legislation and of initial and continuous veterinary education through OIE global guidelines adopted by Member Countries.

The Sixth Strategic Plan current draft submitted to you for comments contains a consolidated statement of the OIE's strategic vision and its global goals, taking into account current and anticipated global trends and challenges affecting the OIE's operating environment, and incorporating important cross-cutting issues. This new Plan will allow for the possibility of addressing new challenges, for example the possible future involvement of the OIE in establishing standards relating to reptiles and competitive horses, as requested by many stakeholders and Member Countries, and a new global database on pathogen genotypes.

I would like to thank all the donors contributing to the work of the OIE (including Switzerland), all Member Countries providing annual contributions to our general budget and some countries and others to the OIE Animal Health and Welfare Fund.

To conclude, may I once again, on behalf of all the participants, express my sincere gratitude to the authorities of Switzerland for having invited us to Bern, and to all our colleagues from the host country for the very warm welcome we have received.

I have every confidence that the Twenty-Sixth Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe will be a great success.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Speech by Dr Hans Wyss
OIE Delegate of Switzerland
at the occasion of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Bern, Switzerland, 22 to 26 September 2014

Your Excellency, Federal Councillor Alain Berset,
Dear President of the OIE; Dr. Karin Schwabenbauer,
Dear Director General of the OIE, Dr. Bernard Vallat,
Dear President of the Regional Commission for Europe, Dr. Ago Pärtel,
Dear Chief Veterinary Officers and Members of Delegations,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

It is a great honor for me to welcome you here in Bern for the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe.

Four years ago, at the 24th OIE Regional Conference in Astana (Kazakhstan) we expressed the wish to host the Regional Conference in 2014 in Switzerland and were very pleased that our proposal was unanimously accepted. Because 2014 is a very special year for the Veterinary Services of Switzerland:

We are celebrating the centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Services, as in 1914 the Federal Council enacted the establishment of the Federal Veterinary Office.

Furthermore, in January this year, the Federal Veterinary Office has been merged with the division for food safety of the Federal Office of Public Health to become a new office: the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office. Animal health, animal welfare, safe food and articles of daily use as well as healthy nutrition are among the primary responsibilities of the FSVO. It is also responsible for the import controls of animals and animal products and as implementing authority of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) the FSVO also monitors cross-border traffic and trade in protected animals and plants.

This merge is an important step towards the implementation of the “stable to table - concept” and of course an excellent start for the next 100 years.

In the field of animal health, we have a lot of big challenges.

What we need is leadership.

LeRoy Eims (Author of “Be the leader you were meant to be”) said: “A leader is one who sees more than others see, who sees farther than others see, and who sees before others do”

So let's be leaders!

Switzerland has always been actively engaged in the activities of the OIE. Control of transboundary animal diseases is only effective when you cooperate with other countries in your region, when you share information on outbreaks and when you establish common rules for trade. The OIE has rendered outstanding services since its creation in 1924 and is today the world's standard-setting body in this respect. All Member countries, not only Switzerland are contributing with their expertise in order to meet new and recurrent challenges in animal and public health as well as in animal welfare.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are very pleased to be the host country for this Regional Conference. Of course there would have been a lot of nice places in Switzerland to hold this conference. Bern was our first choice, because it is the capital of Switzerland, it is the seat of our Office, the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office, and of course it is a beautiful and charming small city. Since 1983 the old city of Bern is recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

I hope you will enjoy your stay in Bern and I wish you a very successful conference.

Herewith I officially declare the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe open.

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AGENDA

1. OIE Activities and Vision for the 21st Century;
2. Activities of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe including the regional initiative and mechanism for OIE standard setting in Europe;
3. Activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe, the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, the OIE Regional Representation in Moscow, and the OIE Sub Regional FMD coordination Unit Office in Astana;
4. The OIE Sixth Strategic Plan – Regional perspectives;
5. Technical Item I:
“Animal health in the light of natural disasters and bioterrorism”;
6. OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region- Challenges and proposals;
7. Facilitation of international competition horse movements – A new OIE initiative;
8. Identifying new challenges for drawing the future of the Regional Commission and its Members;
9. The OIE Approach to One Health;
10. Technical Item II :
“Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea: current global situation and possible threat for Europe”;
11. OIE Regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe;
12. Animal health situation of Member Countries in the region during the first semester of 2014;
13. Celebration of the centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Service and the creation of the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO);
14. Update on African swine fever;
15. Foot and mouth disease control in Eastern Europe;
16. FMD situation in North Africa;
17. Presentations by international and regional organisations;
18. Other matters:
Date, venue and selection of the technical item for the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe.

26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Berne, Switzerland, 22-26 September 2014

TIMETABLE

Monday 22 September 2014

5:00 p.m. Registration and distribution of documents regarding the Conference

Tuesday 23 September 2014

08:30 a.m. Registration and distribution of documents (cont.)

09:00 a.m. Opening ceremony

- Dr Ago Pärtel, OIE Delegate of Estonia and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe;
- Monsieur Alain Berset, Federal Councillor, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs;
- Prof. Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe;
- Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, OIE Delegate of Germany and President of the World Assembly of Delegates;
- Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE;
- Dr Hans Wyss, OIE Delegate of Switzerland.

09:45 a.m. Group photo and Break

10:20 a.m. * Election of the Conference Committee
(Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and Rapporteur General)

* Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable

* Election of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs for Technical Items and Animal Health Situation

10:45 a.m. OIE Activities and Vision for the 21st Century
(Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General)

11:30 a.m. Activities of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe including the regional initiative and mechanism for OIE standard setting in Europe (Dr Ago Pärtel, OIE Delegate of Estonia and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe)

11:45 a.m. Activities and work programme of the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe, the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, the OIE Regional Representation in Moscow, and the OIE Sub Regional FMD coordination Unit Office in Astana (Prof. Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe, Dr Nadège Leboucq, OIE Sub Regional Representative in Brussels, and Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas, OIE Regional Representative in Moscow)

12:05 p.m. The OIE Sixth Strategic Plan – Regional perspectives (Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, OIE Delegate of Germany and President of the World Assembly of Delegates)

12:35 p.m. Lunch

- 2:00 p.m. Technical Item I:
 “Animal health in the light of natural disasters and bioterrorism”.
 (Dr Gary Vroegindewey, Director, Global Health Initiatives, Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Maryland and Chair of the OIE ad hoc Group on Animal Health and Welfare in Natural Disasters)
- 3:00 p.m. Discussion
- 3:30 p.m. OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission – Issues of interest to the Region- Challenges and proposals (Dr Etienne Bonbon, Vice-President of the OIE Code Commission)
- 4:00 p.m. Break
 (Preparation of Recommendation 1 by designated small group)
- 4:30 p.m. Facilitation of international competition horse movements – A new OIE initiative (Dr Susanne Münstermann, Project Officer, OIE Scientific and Technical Department)
- 5:00 p.m. Identifying new challenges for drawing the future of the Regional Commission and its Members (Dr Lucio Carbajo Goñi, and Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe)
- 5:30 p.m. The OIE Approach to One Health (Dr Stéphane De la Rocque, Animal Health Specialist, OIE Sub Regional Representation in Brussels)
- 8:00 p.m. Dinner hosted by Switzerland

Wednesday 24 September 2014

- 09:00 a.m. Technical Item II:
 “Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea: current global situation and possible threat for Europe”(Dr Harpreet Kochhar, Chief Veterinary Officer for Canada, Executive Director of the Animal Health Directorate, Canadian Food Inspection Agency)
- 10:00 a.m. Discussion
- 10:30 a.m. Break
 (Preparation of Recommendation 2 by designated small group)
- 11:00 a.m. OIE Regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe (Dr Stanislav Ralchev, Technical assistant, OIE Sub Regional Representation in Brussels)
- 11:30 a.m. Animal health situation of Member Countries in the region during the first semester of 2014 (Dr Paula Cáceres, Head of the OIE Animal Health Information Department)
- 12:15 p.m. Discussion
- 12:45 p.m. Lunch
- 2:00 p.m. Celebration of the centenary of the Swiss Veterinary Service and the creation of the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO)
- 2:30 p.m. Update on African swine fever (Dr Nadège Leboucq)

- 3:00 p.m. Foot and Mouth Disease Control in Eastern Europe (Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas)
- 3:30 p.m. FMD situation in North Africa
- 3:45 p.m. Presentations by international and regional organisations
- 4:30 p.m. Break
- 5:00 p.m. Discussions on Recommendations 1 and 2
- 5:30 p.m. Date, venue and selection of the technical item for the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
- 8:00 p.m. Dinner hosted by the OIE

Thursday 25 September 2014

Cultural visit

Friday 26 September 2014

- 09:00 a.m. Outcome of the survey aimed at identifying new challenges for drawing the future of the Regional Commission and its Members
- 09:30 a.m. Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations
- 10:00 a.m. Closing ceremony

Recommendation 1
Animal health in the light of natural disasters and bioterrorism

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Disasters of all types have profound impacts on human and animal health, economy and trade, and societies;
2. Disaster management and risk reduction in animal health and welfare is a multifunctional responsibility involving multiple stakeholders;
3. Animals and animal related issues are part of disaster management and risk reduction due to their economic, health and welfare, and social aspects;
4. International frameworks including the Rio+20, Hyogo Framework for Action, and Millennium Development Goals all address disaster management, disaster risk reduction, and resilience;
5. Veterinary Services are highly variable in their disaster management and disaster risk reduction legal authorities, capabilities and capacities;
6. Knowledge of veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals on disaster management and disaster risk reduction is not optimal;
7. OIE has a strong global leadership role in animal health and welfare and veterinary public health;
8. OIE has already established an *ad hoc* Group on Disaster Management and Risk Reduction in Relation to Animal Health and Welfare and Veterinary Public Health; and
9. According to the results of a questionnaire-based survey conducted among Member Countries in the Region, the vast majority of responding countries agreed that there are actions or activities by OIE that would assist Member Countries to better plan and respond to animal health and welfare in disaster and bioterrorism events.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. The Member Countries foster the development of collaborative mutual support to augment the capacity of Member Countries to prepare for and respond to disasters;
2. The Member Countries assess and share lessons learned and best practices on animal disaster related events;
3. OIE identify and engage strategic partners in disaster management and disaster risk reduction;
4. OIE convene a Global Conference on Animal Health and Welfare and Veterinary Public Health in disasters;
5. OIE support the development of trainings for Animal Health and Welfare and Veterinary Public Health in disasters including regional workshops, on line training, and table top exercises, considering existing tools such as the Livestock Emergency Guidelines Standards (LEGS) tools ;

6. The OIE evaluate the inclusion of awareness of disaster management and disaster risk reduction in the OIE Recommendations on the Competencies of Graduating Veterinarians (Day 1 Graduates) and on Veterinary Education Core Curriculum;
7. The OIE continue to develop guidelines on the management of animal health and welfare and veterinary public health disasters including bioterrorism and evaluate including these within the *Terrestrial Code*, taking into account existing relevant guidelines;
8. The OIE explore the possibility to include the capability of management of animal health and welfare and veterinary public health disasters including bioterrorism into the OIE PVS Tool;
9. The OIE evaluate the creation of a database of lessons learned and best practices on the management of animal health and welfare and veterinary public health in disasters; and
10. The OIE evaluate the establishment of a Collaborating Centre and/or a virtual network of expertise in the Europe Region on animal health and welfare and veterinary public health in disasters including bioterrorism to give Member Countries in the Region easier access to a source of capacity building in this field.

Recommendation 2
Porcine Epidemic Diarrhoea: current global situation and possible threat for Europe

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. At the present time, the emerging form of porcine epidemic diarrhoea, as notified by Canada, the United States of America, and other Member Countries (hereafter “PED”) has not been identified in Europe, and that its emergence poses a possible threat to Europe given the considerable impact on naive swine populations;
2. A collaborative approach between the Veterinary Services and the swine sector as well as proactive education and awareness programmes have already shown success for detecting and controlling PED in OIE Member Countries;
3. PED is a viral disease of pigs with no risk to human health or to food safety;
4. The disease can be transmitted directly or indirectly, often by contaminated faeces;
5. It is important to understand the PED epidemiological situation in the affected countries;
6. PED is not included on the OIE List but is notifiable as an emerging disease by all Member Countries;
7. Some European OIE Member Countries may not have the laboratory capability to confirm the clinical diagnosis of the disease;
8. Strict implementation of high biosecurity measures and surveillance at farm level has proved to be the best defence against PED; and
9. The OIE has convened an *ad hoc* Group to provide expert advice and is publishing a Technical Fact Sheet on PED.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Veterinary Services of Member Countries adopt a collaborative approach to PED by proactively engaging with the swine sector and the various other relevant stakeholders to prevent the introduction in Europe of, or where appropriate control, PED;
2. Member Countries direct their efforts to building and enhancing the laboratory capability and capacity for rapid PED diagnosis in Europe;
3. Member Countries include PED in their animal disease education and awareness programmes with relevant stakeholders so as to assist with early detection of PED;
4. Member Countries emphasise the development and implementation of high biosecurity measures at all levels of the pig sector, including producers, processors, transporters, the feed industry, and border inspection posts;
5. Where appropriate, Member Countries notify detections of PED to the OIE as an emerging disease;

6. Member Countries minimise disruption to trade by adopting appropriate and proportionate protective mitigating measures when facing emerging diseases such as PED;
7. The OIE, through its network of Reference Centres, encourage scientific research on routes of transmission of PED, such as feed, aerosols and contacts, and on the development of effective vaccines; and
8. The OIE continue to provide guidance on PED and other emerging diseases to its Members as new scientific evidence becomes available.

PRESS RELEASE

Bern, 26 September 2014 - The 26th Conference of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) Regional Commission for Europe, attended by 53 Member Countries from the Region, was held in Bern (Switzerland) from 22 to 26 September 2014. It was organised in cooperation with the Swiss Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office.

Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, President of the OIE, Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE, Dr Monique Eloit, Deputy Director General of the OIE, Dr Ago Pärtel, Delegate of Estonia and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, Prof. Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe, Delegates from the Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, representatives of concerned international and regional organisations, as well as many observers took part in the conference.

The opening ceremony was held in the presence of Mr. Alain Berset, member of the Swiss Federal Council and Head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs.

The conference began with a brief report on the activities of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, followed by those of the Regional and Sub-Regional Representations.

The participants discussed several key issues involving the Member Countries of the region, with special emphasis on the following matters:

- the control of food and mouth disease in Eastern Europe, as well as in the Maghreb countries, in the framework of the Global Strategy promoted jointly by the OIE and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO);
- the evolution and prevention of African Swine Fever, which has been affecting several countries of the region since early 2014;
- the new international procedure to facilitate and harmonise the international movement of competition horses, based on the concept of a "high-health, high-performance" sub-population of horses;
- the enhanced participation of all Member Countries of the region in OIE standard-setting activities concerning animal diseases and animal welfare;
- the OIE's "one health" approach;
- the preparation of the OIE's Sixth Strategic Plan (2016-2020), and its perspectives for the European region.

The new OIE Regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe was then presented to the Assembly. Focusing notably on the management of stray dog populations and on conditions for transport and slaughter of farm animals, it aims at harmonising the approaches of the countries of the region to animal welfare and the implementation of OIE standards.

The participants received detailed information on the zoonitary situation and developments in all the countries of the region, gathered through the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS). They then discussed the following technical items:

- 'Animal health in the context of natural disasters and bio-terrorism' and 'porcine epidemic diarrhoea: current situation in the world and potential threat to Europe'.

'Natural or man-made disasters have considerable repercussions on animal and human health, and on the economies of all our societies' recalled Dr. Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE. 'Local or regional conflicts, flooding in Europe, global warming and many other factors underscore the need to develop national disaster management plans that integrate questions of animal health, animal welfare and veterinary public health. In this context, Veterinary Services and their partners as well as animal health experts have a prime role to play.'

The Conference was also an opportunity to celebrate the centennial of the founding of the Swiss Veterinary Service and the creation of the new Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO), coinciding with the OIE's 90th anniversary.

The discussions were fruitful and useful to all the Member Countries. The recommendations adopted will be submitted to the OIE World Assembly and its 180 national delegates in Paris, May 2015, for final ratification.

MOTION OF THANKS

The OIE Regional Commission for Europe, the Deputy Director General of the OIE, members of delegations, observers and representatives of countries and international organisations, wish to express their gratitude to the Government of Switzerland, the Host Country of the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission, for the excellent welcome accorded to the participants and for all facilities made available to them during their stay in Bern from 22 to 26 September 2014.