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World Organisation
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1st GF-TADs Regional Conference on priority TADs in Europe

The Standing Group of Experts on African Swine Fever

A Decade of Collaborative Control (2014–2025)

Dr Budimir Plavsic

WOAH Regional Representative for Europe



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GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE
PROGRESSIVE CONTROL OF
TRANSBOUNDARY ANIMAL DISEASES



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ASF in Europe from 2007...

- Severe transboundary animal disease
- Devastating for pig populations & farming systems
- Socio-economic and trade impacts
- No treatment, limited vaccine prospects
- Requires science-based regional and global cooperation



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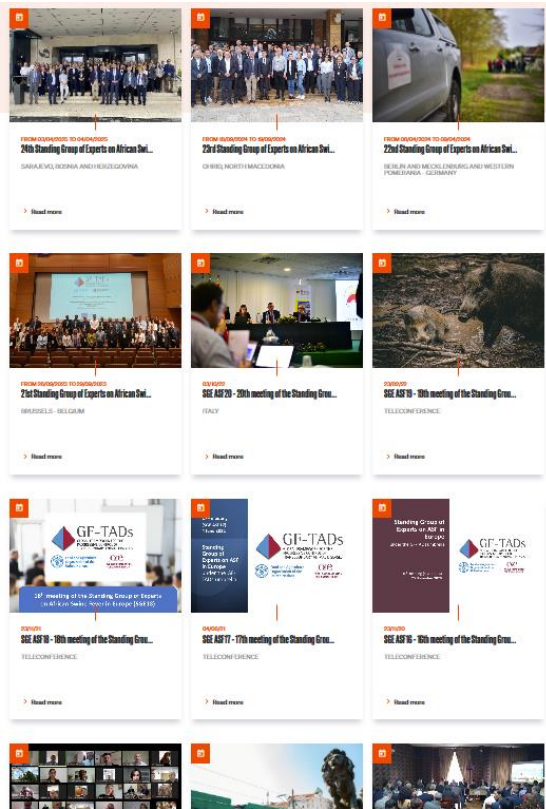
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Establishment of SGE-ASF: 2014

- Created under GF-TADs (WOAH–FAO partnership)
- Purpose: foster cooperation and harmonised strategies
- Guiding principles:
 - *Transparency & reporting obligations*
 - *Direct communication among members*
 - *Expert and decision-maker participation*
 - *Science and evidence-based discussions*





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Membership (2025*)

- In total 24 members/territories:
 - Albania, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, Kosovo*
- **Dynamic membership:** Czechia, Belgium, Greece, Sweden (joined/withdrawn based on ASF status)



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SGE-ASF Achievements: 2014-2025

- **180 recommendations issued** (2014–2025)
- **20 expert field missions** conducted
- ASF Competence Centre (Lithuania) as knowledge hub
- Eradication successes: Czechia, Belgium, Greece, Sweden
- Adaptation to epidemiological changes



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Strategic Pillars (A–H)

- A. Biosecurity
- B. Wild boar management
- C. Surveillance & early detection
- D. Awareness & training
- E. Cross-border cooperation
- F. Outbreak investigation & data collection
- G. ASF exit strategies
- H. Special issues (COVID-19, vaccine, zoning, competence centre)



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Biosecurity

- Crucial for Prevention: especially in backyard farms (low biosecurity, swill feeding risks).
- Core Measures:
 - Ban swill feeding.
 - Prevent pig-wild boar contact (fencing).
 - Restrict visitors; use separate clothing/footwear; disinfect.
 - Proper carcass/waste disposal.
 - Regular cleaning; perimeter fencing for outdoor farms.
- Additional: Biosecurity plans, assessments, lab biosafety,
- Public-private partnerships.



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Wild Boar Management

- Population management in ASF-free areas
- Coordination with hunters & forestry bodies
- Avoid uncoordinated intensive hunting
- Rapid carcass removal & safe disposal
- Hunting bans in new outbreak zones
- Depopulation only if scientifically justified



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Surveillance & Early Detection

- Passive surveillance most effective
- Incentives for reporting
- PCR = gold standard for detection
- Serology = secondary role
- Risk-based surveillance planning
- Independent expert groups for guidance
- Standardised data sharing via WAHIS



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Awareness & Training

- Regular campaigns for all stakeholders
- Joint training: vets, hunters, professionals
- Online teaching tools and mobile apps
- Public campaign: 'Don't be the carrier of a deadly pig disease'



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GF-TADS EUROPE

Home > Projects > Standing Group of Experts on African Swine Fever in Europe > A new depository on African Swine Fever

E-DEPOSITORY

New Depository on African Swine Fever



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Cross-Border Cooperation

- Joint contingency plans and simulations
- Regular meetings & transparent data sharing
- Coordinated hunting, fencing, culling at borders
- Multilingual awareness campaigns
- Identify high-risk borders (wild boar ecology)
- Genetic sequencing and data sharing



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Outbreak Investigation & Data Collection

- Countries must build outbreak investigation teams
- Investigate every new outbreak
- Share outcomes and tools (checklists, questionnaires)
- GF-TADs developing ASF outbreak investigation guidebook



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ASF Exit Strategies

- Freedom Criteria: Follow WOAH Terrestrial Code.
- Approaches: Eradication via
 - Quasi-Extinction or
 - progressive incidence decrease (zoning, hunting).
- Critical role of surveillance (passive) - two-phased:
 - Screening
 - Confirmation
- Management of wild boar
- Carcass removal
- Successful eradication examples:
 - Check Republic
 - Belgium
 - Sweeden



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Special Issues

- COVID-19: disruptions, but surveillance maintained
- Vaccine development: long-term, management essential
- Zoning & regionalisation:
 - effective EU strategy
 - Best practices in many countries
- ASF knowledge centres:
 - Competence Centre (Lithuania): hub for training & expertise
 - Collaboration centres, Reference Laboratories



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Field Missions (20 total)

Purpose: rapid support, gather evidence, share best practices

Approved experts by SGE.

Examples:

- Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Moldova (2015–2016)
- Bosnia & Herzegovina (2023, 2025)
- Albania (2024), Montenegro (2024)



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Outcomes & Lessons

- Strengthened regional cooperation
- Evidence-based recommendations
- Eradication successes prove feasibility
- Improved transparency and trust
- Ongoing challenges: backyards, wild boar ecology, borders



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Conclusions

- **SGE ASF Achievements:** Evolved into key platform for transparency, knowledge sharing, harmonized strategies.
- **Decade Impact:** 180 recommendations; 20 missions; adaptive to epidemiology.
- **Ongoing Role:** Vital for ASF prevention, control, eradication in Europe and beyond.
- **Future Focus:** Continuous adaptation and collaboration.
Modernization, new technologies



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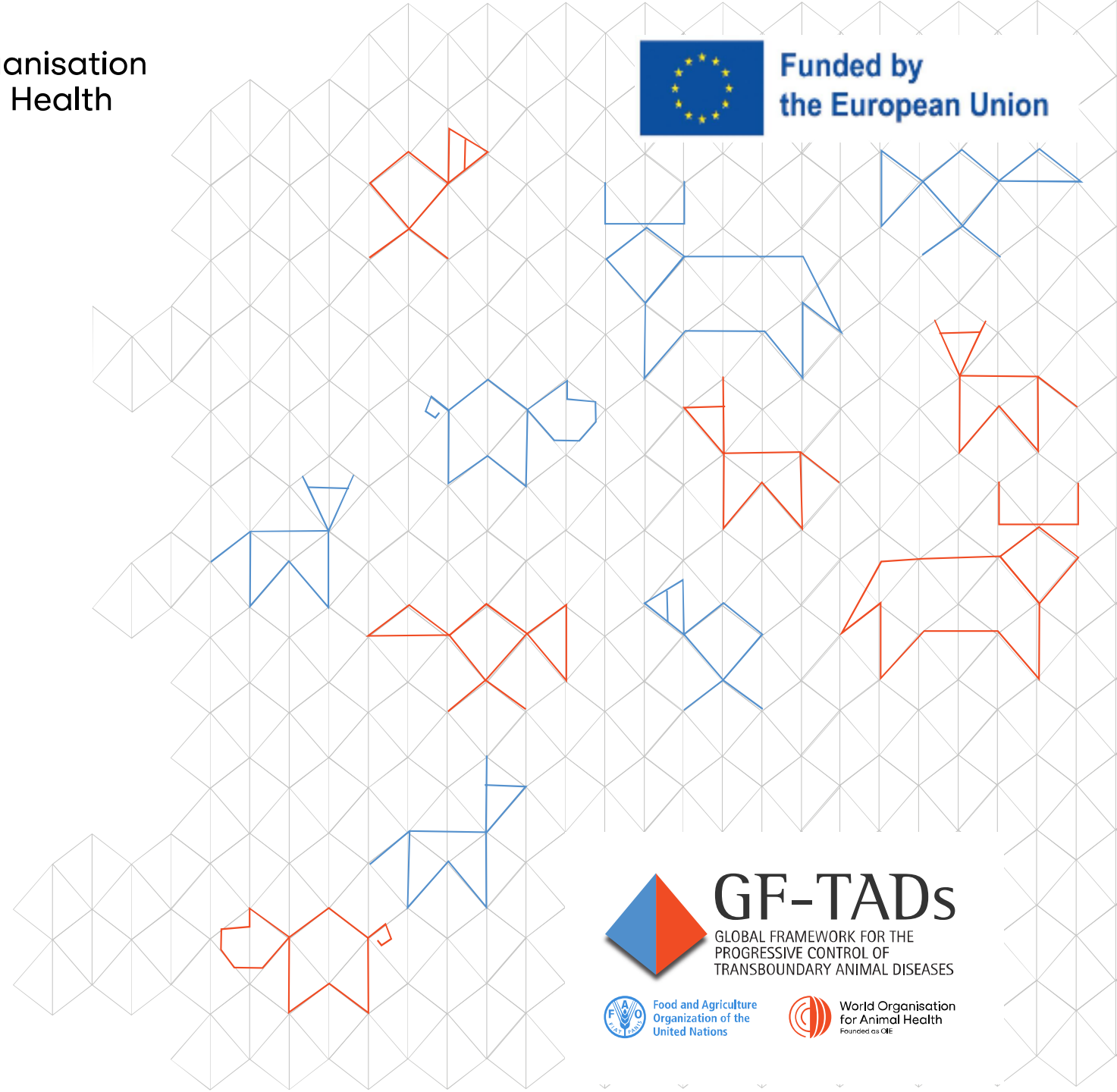


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