



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Standing Group of Experts on Rabies in Europe under the GF-TADs umbrella

3rd meeting (SGE RAB3)
Teleconference, 13 December 2021

Report

Summary

The third meeting of the GF-TADs Standing Group of Experts on Rabies (SGE RAB-3) was organized as a virtual meeting with over 38 participants present. The meeting objective was to check the progress made on oral rabies vaccination for wild animals in the region, while ensuring that there is coordination and cooperation in vaccination along borders. If programs are halted for one year or even half a year, in some cases, the progress made during the last decade could be lost.

Member Countries provided interesting reports on their epidemiological situation, activities and plans in terms of oral vaccination against rabies, including some seasons without oral rabies vaccination campaigns due to COVID-19 restrictions and procurement problems.

Two experts were invited by the presidency to present their work in the framework of the West Balkans project on animal health, and they also concluded that coordination between veterinary authorities, as well as sufficient passive surveillance, were essential to rabies eradication. Funding and procurement questions were discussed since they have a major impact on the positions of several countries.

Following productive and transparent discussions on the way forward, the consequent conclusions and recommendations imply that oral rabies vaccination is still required in view of recent outbreaks and improvement of passive surveillance (this document is immanent part of this report, will be attached after consolidation between Members and endorsement by President).

It was agreed to hold the next meeting in the spring of 2022, and that it is essential to have this meeting in person, with extension of membership to other Members from Europe, where rabies is a priority disease with endemic or re-emerging characteristics.

Participants:

Participants	
Members	
Albania	Keti MARGARITI
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Aleksandar NEMET
Bulgaria	Anna ZDRAVKOVA
Croatia	Ivana LOHMAN

Greece	Ioanna GEORGOPOULOU
Hungary	Melinda KOCSIC
Kosovo*	Sadik HETA
Moldova	Maxim SIRBU
Montenegro	Vesna DAKOVIC Vladimir DJAKOVIC Mevlida HRAPOVIC
North Macedonia	Vanja KONDRATENKO Svetlana MICKOVA
Romania	Andreea SEEVASTU
Serbia	Boban DURIC Tanja LABUS
Slovenia	Jedrt MAURER WERNIG
Non member countries	
Estonia	Enel Niin
Finland	Tuija GADD
Other participants	
European Commission	Bernard VAN GOETHEM Alexis LOEBER Pedro ROSADO MARTIN Thierry CHALUS Moritz KLEMM
OIE RR Moscow	Budimir PLAVSIC Marina SOKOLOVA Jean PERCHET
OIE SRR Brussels	Roberto BALBO Paolo DALLA VILLA Tomasz GRUDNIK
OIE Nur-Sultan	Aigerim ZHORGABAYEVA
OIE Paris	Alexander FEDIAVSKY
FAO	Katinka DE BALOGH Daniel BELTRAN ALCRUDO
ANSES	Florence CLIQUET
Agriconsulting	Tony KIRANDJISKI Sanuja SEPAROVIC

Opening Remarks

The meeting was opened by Dr Bernard Van Goethem, President of the GFTADs Regional Steering committee for Europe, welcoming participants and in particular the European Commission (EC) and FAO with whom the meeting was organized. Present were all the SGE members, EC, FAO and OIE Officials from HQ and Regional and Subregional Representations as well several country representatives as observers for a total of 38 participants.

The Presidency had invited two experts from the ADEWB project to give presentations, and the membership has been extended to two new countries, Moldova and Ukraine, who are in close geographical proximity to the region previously considered.

Dr Van Goethem reminded participants that the group was created to ensure greater coordination and cooperation between countries when performing vaccination campaigns as part of their rabies eradication programmes, and particularly along borders.

Consequences for inaction can be very important – if there is no oral rabies vaccination in wildlife for a year, or for six months, in the wrong circumstances, this might make it necessary to restart entire programs from the very beginning. It is very important to protect the progress and investment made during the last decades.

Dr Van Goethem presented the agenda. No additions were requested. Dr Plavsic (SGE Secretariat) also welcomed Members and participants, including invited speakers from EU funded project, and looked forward to hearing presentations from countries.

Updates from the member countries of the SGE RAB3

Albania

Dr Margariti gave the following information about the rabies situation in Albania:

- The epidemiological situation has not evolved (last case in wildlife in 2014)
- There were issues in 2019 and 2020, with no campaign in 2019 and in spring 2020.
- ORV resumed in autumn 2020 with Biovetta ORV doses.
- In 2020, the last testing campaign detected 90 negative foxes and 270 positives for the vaccination antibodies.
- It was not possible to carry out surveillance in 2021.
- Plans for 2022 are to continue with ORV, and the veterinary authority has requested a budget to do so.
- The veterinary authority has translated OIE material on rabies awareness and standards in Albanian.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dr Nemet gave the following information about the rabies situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

- In domestic animals, the last two cases were in 2014 (1 dog) and again in 2020, in Srebrenica. The last detected cases in foxes and hulus were in 2013 and 1991 respectively.
- All campaigns were correctly executed from 2011 until spring 2019; that campaign was prolonged because of the tendering procedure.
- 2020: technical difficulties, including a plane crash, only allowed to start ORV in 2021.
- Surveillance had also had gaps, in part due to the tendering procedure.
- Funds have been identified for the two campaigns in 2022; and the 2023 spring campaign.
- In the absence of a national budget, the spring campaign could be the last one.

Bulgaria

Dr Zdrakova gave the following information about the rabies situation in Bulgaria:

- The epidemiological situation is stable. The last cases in wildlife in foxes in 2014; the last case in domestic animals in 2010, the last case in humans in 1994.
- Positive serology mostly in the north and west parts of the country
- Past 10 years have seen changes in the strategy several times, but all of the border regions were recently covered.
- There was an unfortunate interruption of ORV in 2021 due to the length of the procurement procedure.
- Surveillance has continued in 2021, both active and passive, with no positive results detected in serology.
- ORV is planned for 2022 and 2023; passive surveillance will in any case be implemented.

Croatia

Dr Lohman gave the following information about the rabies situation in Croatia:

- The epidemiological situation is still favorable.
- Passive surveillance is still carried out with about 1000 samples per year.
- Croatia is currently trying to increase the number of samples in active surveillance, but communication with hunters needs to be improved.
- Passive monitoring is easier in that respect, although there was a dip in sampling for 2020 with the lockdowns.
- Plans for 2022 and 2023 are to continue surveillance and ORV for the entire country.

Greece

Dr Georgopoulou gave the following information about the rabies situation in Greece:

- No case in humans since 1970
- All campaigns had been carried out since 2011, but in 2021 there was an administrative problem with procurement.
- Surveillance has been ongoing from 2017 to 2021; in 2021 only passive surveillance was carried out, with the usual number of 700 samples and no positives detected.
- Changes will be made in the vaccination area for 2022, and vaccination will be repeated in the same area in 2023, focusing on an area of 50 km inside the country from the border.

Hungary

Dr Kocsis gave the following information about the Rabies situation in Hungary:

- The epidemiological situation is favorable. The last cases found were in 2017 for wild and domestic animals (with an epidemiological link between cases)
- Hungary self-declared freedom from Rabies last week.
- ORV has been implemented for the last ten years.
- The 2021 vaccination area has been decreased thanks to the favorable situation in the south western neighbor countries
- Passive and active surveillance ongoing in foxes and jackals. All serologies were negative.
- Plans for 2022 and 2023 are the same as 2021; contracts for vaccine purchase and distribution have been signed.
- Active surveillance will not go on, and only passive surveillance will be continued. The cost effectiveness of the active surveillance was too low. If necessary it will start again, but passive surveillance is ongoing and will be supported with an active awareness campaign.

UNMIK/Kosovo*

Dr Heta gave the following information about the situation with rabies in Kosovo:

- Unfortunately, information about the SGE arrived belatedly, and Kosovo does not have any presentation available now.
- In 2021, both spring and autumn campaigns were carried out.
- There is some delay in surveillance, sample collection has not been carried out effectively, and since only two foxes were collected, the veterinary authority is hoping to catch up in January.
- By January new legislation will be in force for domestic animals, with mandatory microchip identification of dogs, registration in a database, and mandatory rabies vaccination for dogs better controlled.
- A campaign for procurement is ongoing within this framework.

Moldova

Dr Sirbu gave a presentation of the following points:

- The epidemiological situation remains a cause for concern in Moldova. There were 24 cases identified in wildlife in 2021. In 2020; cases were present mostly in the central part of Moldova.
- Human cases were detected in the same area in 2019; 2016, and 2003.
- Stray dog management is an issue; with about 5000 citizens reporting dog bites to medical centers every year
- ORV has been ongoing since 2014, first with manual distribution, and aerial distribution of baits introduced in 2021.
- 2021 saw a tender problem.
- The program is coordinated with the Romanian program, and aerial distribution is now planned for the whole country. Program introduced with the Romanian programme, and aerial vaccination for the whole country except for transnistria
- Surveillance is ongoing with passive surveillance and active surveillance in 2020, with positive cases detected.
- Surveillance programs and ORV are planned for spring and autumn campaigns in both 2022 and 2023.

Montenegro

New acting director Dr Vladimir Djakovic, presented himself, confirmed commitment for rabies eradication by Veterinary Authority, and say that Montenegro commends the EU and its engagement in the fight against rabies. Dr Mevlida Hrapovic gave the following information on the situation with Rabies in Montenegro:

- There was no change in the epidemiological situation; before 2012 there were between 10 and 60 cases per year. ORV began in autumn 2011 and this has greatly improved the situation. ORV has been carried out every year for ten years.
- In 2021 there was a tender problem; the veterinary authority hopes they can start the ORV in February with a new tender.
- Passive and active surveillance are carried out with low numbers, and the veterinary authority wishes to have more samples in passive surveillance. For 2021 only 2 animals were sampled in the framework of passive surveillance. Active surveillance is higher. All samples are negative.
- Plans are to carry out the spring 2022 campaign with IPA funds, and plans for spring 2023 are the same.
- Surveillance is funded by the national budget.

North Macedonia

Dr Konratenko gave the following information about the Rabies situation in North Macedonia:

- The epidemiological situation is stable. The last cases of rabies were in 2012 (cat, wolf).
- ORV started in 2011 and lasted until the end of 2019; then campaigns in 2020 and spring 2021 were canceled. 2021 autumn campaign still has not started and the weather conditions are deteriorating.
- Passive and active surveillance is ongoing. Roadkill has been included in the passive surveillance programme, allowing for an increase in the number of samples.
- Plans for 2022 plan are to cover ORV for the whole country and continue with passive and active surveillance.
- There is additional surveillance in the wolf population.

Romania

Dr Seevastu gave the following information on the rabies situation in Romania:

- The epidemiological situation is not fully cleared. In 2021 there were three cases in domestic animals close to the border with Moldova.
- Since 2011 there has been both aerial and manual distribution of baits. ORV has been carried out every year except for 2018 (tender issues) and 2021.
- Surveillance is carried out in the whole country, both passive (600 samples in 2020) and active (8000 samples in 2020).
- In 2021 passive surveillance was reinforced, and active surveillance was not carried out. 3 cases were detected in passive surveillance in 2021.
- The Veterinary Authority hopes to have the tender ready in time for the 2022 campaign. In 2023 the vaccination campaign is planned with the same conditions
- There is ongoing vaccination in the buffer zone with Moldova, and Romania has made plans to engage with the Ukraine to also define a buffer zone for ORV along the border.

Serbia

Dr Djuric gave the following information on the rabies situation in Serbia:

- The epidemiological situation is stable. The last case was in 2012 in domestic animals and in 2018 in wild animals.
- Regarding vaccination, it was carried out every year since 2010, but both campaigns in 2020 were missed, because of Covid and a long tender procedure.
- In 2021 there was a spring campaign, and they were hoping to continue with an autumn campaign, but they were unable to because of the same tender procedure. This is very important to keep in mind.
- The impact of ORV is important, and cases have become very low. It is important to continue with the ORV campaign.
- Surveillance is the most important part of the campaign. Sampling for passive surveillance is unfortunately diminishing. Active surveillance was also down from 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- In 2022 and 2023, there are plans to continue ORV and Serbia hopes to get funds from the EU to continue this ORV. This is a very important question right now. If they do not get the funds in question, they are afraid that they will be unable to continue the project.
- It is also important to make progress in vaccine procurement. This is not specific to Serbia but needs to be improved in the whole region.
- Continued vaccination and EU financial support is essential.

Slovakia

In the absence of representatives from Slovakia, the presentation that had been provided was commented by Dr Plavsic:

- There were no new cases.
- Slovakia implements ORV every year.
- Surveillance was in progress.
- ORV is still planned for 2022 and for 2023.

Slovenia

Dr Maurer gave the following information on the rabies situation Slovenia:

- The epidemiological situation is stable.
- Surveillance continues, with testing of a little more than 200 indicator animals every year.

- Slovenia continues this testing to monitor how long immunization remains in foxes after cessation of ORV.

Ukraine

In the absence of representatives for Ukraine, the presentation that had been provided was commented by Dr Plavsic:

- The epidemiological situation is unfavorable, with an active number of cases in wildlife and in domestic animals; and the last fatal case in humans in 2020.
- In 2021 the ORV campaign was planned in the autumn. The Veterinary Authority is using a Ukrainian vaccine and they have a national budget for this activity.
- Both active and passive surveillance are carried out, with an important number of samples in both cases; about 5000 samples in passive surveillance and 10000 for active surveillance in 2020 (no numbers were provided for 2021).

Dr Van Goethem thanked participants for their input and transparency and suggested that discussions be held during the second part of the meeting.

Western Balkans Project

Drs Cliquet and Kirandjiski gave a presentation of the Western Balkans project for oral rabies vaccination that they took part in:

- The ADEWB, or Regional Action in Animal Disease Eradication in the Western Balkans, is a regional project with activities relevant to rabies, using EU funding in link with DG SANTE and DG NEAR.
- The objectives of the project are to eradicate diseases and implement solid cross-border cooperation. The project runs from 2020 to April 2022.
- Some of the outputs include SOP for sampling, and an online platform for specific teams depending on their interests. The already good cooperation between CVOs was formalized with a dedicated platform hosting two meetings a year.
- The program also noted some shortcomings. It was observed that data on the results of rabies surveillance is not always available, and the monitoring is not always sufficient, and data analysis can also be improved.
- There is still insufficient information sharing between countries. It seems that mountain areas above 2000 m in altitude are not covered, ORV campaigns can sometimes be skipped, and there are no contingency plans to revaccinate if rabies reappear in certain areas, as was recently the case in another part of the region (Poland).
- Foxes can move long distances, and rabies is a truly transboundary disease. Some countries are close to rabies elimination and there should really be efforts to work together and finalize the progress made.
- It is important to have a regional approach. One major factor is the political prioritization and the stability of activities in the institutions in the region. It is necessary to secure budgets in the long term. A clear chain of command with well-defined responsibilities at the regional and national levels is also important.
- Each country has nominated a coordinator, helping in collecting and evaluating technical data, and in taking decisions rapidly. The first meeting took place on October 20th this year. Many exchanges took place on current activities. Proposals were made to rotate the chairing of the meetings for the future; with a suggested meeting every 6 months and hope that this will go on in the future.
- An analysis of the quality of bait distribution along political borders was carried out; in general it is satisfactory but there are some gaps.
- It is proposed to continue vaccination for 4 more years, with 8 vaccination campaigns. A major prerequisite for success of these campaigns is to have improved passive

surveillance right now. The objective is to eliminate rabies infection and maintain a sufficient coverage of the fox population until eradication is achieved.

- Conclusions were that :
 - The rabies situation has greatly improved since 2010.
 - ORV alone is not enough. Efforts in surveillance are essential.
 - A regional approach is essential.
 - ORV and surveillance should have high level political priority and long-term funding.

Dr Van Goethem thanked the two experts for their input, and concluded that coordination is essential in this region, as everywhere in the world. He believes that this project is on the right track.

Discussion: vaccination, post vaccination monitoring, sustainability

Dr Van Goethem opened the floor to comments from participants, first inviting the 6 CVOs of the ADEWB project to react on how they felt about the CVO meetings.

Dr Dakovic agreed that the coordination between western Balkan countries is essential, and that the CVO meetings were enabling this cooperation.

In the previous period, substantial funds were allocated to countries for ORV. All of the countries depend on IPA funds provided by the EU commission. It is important to think about how to use that money in a more efficient way. The campaign is coordinated at the national level, but there is still no common organization, and the 6 countries still refer to different EU Delegations, some with direct procurement, others with indirect procedures. She explained that common procedures for procurement would be helpful; and hoped that a model could be provided for the situation.

Dr Van Goethem agreed that the financial support was important but added that coordination between countries was also a major contributing factor.

Dr Rosado Martin explained how DG SANTE and DG NEAR have planned the funding.

- Funding has been identified for the campaigns in 2021, 2022 and 2023 (spring). He hopes this is a step in the right direction. This has been communicated to all of the VAs and ministries of agriculture in the region.
- From autumn 2023, it will be necessary that countries in the region identify funding.
- Surveillance is therefore even more essential because it is the only way to obtain the information needed to phase out vaccination. The example provided by North Macedonia proves it is possible to improve passive surveillance tenfold.
- The European Commission is ready to discuss ways to improve coordination.

Dr Van Goethem agreed that both increasing the surveillance and going on supporting the ORV with funding is essential since some countries still have outbreaks.

Dr Hrapovic and Dr Djuric agreed that the CVO forums were important for them, and that they are an important part of success by providing regional support from regional projects. The creation of a regional template for procurement is also important.

Regional coordination is present, it also exists in other diseases, and it works appropriately. The other main issue now is the financial support. One of the main tasks of this project should be finding a common answer for all countries regarding the funding. There must be a regional approach on this funding issue.

Dr Van Goethem answered that they had committed to help for a few more years.

Dr Loeber from DG NEAR agreed that there was support for all the countries in the region aiming to eradicate rabies. He added that when national budgets were not available, it was possible to extend the EU budget initially planned for this project, but that these budgets should be gradually transferred to the national budget, if not for this budget cycle, then for the next one.

Dr Rosado Martin explained that the idea was indeed to prolong the support, but that this was not always easy. For instance, it is a challenge to work on common procurement procedures.

Dr Van Goethem explained that it is possible that hosting meetings by video was not very efficient in this regard. He hoped that in the spring it will be possible to all sit together around the table, so that solutions can be found for every case. A little bit more is needed to help each country in its procedures. All of our efforts should be steered towards finalizing eradication.

Discussion: passive surveillance

Dr Van Goethem declared that passive surveillance had already been demonstrated to be essential, as explained by Dr Cliquet.

Dr Cliquet added that monitoring is less important than passive surveillance when budgets are constrained. In France during the ORV campaigns 30 years ago, due to budgetary constraints the focus shifted towards vaccinating smaller areas and having less active sampling, but focusing on passive surveillance. It is important to plan a budget for the passive surveillance, and to determine a minimum amount of surveillance, with less focus on monitoring if there are funding issues.

Dr Kiranjiski added that several countries in the region were close to eradication, but the only way to know how close they were was by carrying out effective passive surveillance. As North Macedonia has shown, this is possible. ORV can be vain if this passive surveillance is not carried out in parallel.

Dr Plavsic added that the investment in passive surveillance is minor compared to the rest of the expenses. He suggested that OIE could support the analysis of the 10 past years of the program, and to how effective this program has been.

Dr Van Goethem thanked participants for their input and concluded that these remarks should be reflected in the recommendations. Some recommendations had been drafted, but he suggested amending them with the following proposals:

- Underlining the importance of coordination at the regional level.
- Underlining the important role of the OIE in coordination.
- Underlining the importance of not losing decades of financial support for a few months without coordination or funding.

He also suggested to extend membership of the group to additional countries in the region where the eradication was initially successful, but that have recently known outbreaks, such as Poland.

Dr De Balogh pointed out the pivotal role played by hunters in surveillance of animal diseases in wildlife, for rabies as well as for other diseases. She suggested making common sampling kits for hunters for different diseases, such as avian influenza, ASF, and rabies. Dr Van Goethem agreed that something could be added on the hunters.

Dr Labus asked what numbers represent a sufficient sample for passive surveillance.

In response to a written question by Dr Labus, Dr Cliquet said that there is no definitive sufficient sample size for passive surveillance, but that the initial sample size when the project started ten years ago could be taken as a reference, and not be allowed to diminish.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The SGE RAB secretariat presented the draft recommendations to be discussed before adoption by the SGE RAB3 once countries had had an opportunity to comment on them. The Secretariat of the GF-TADs will circulate these draft recommendations within the next few days and participants will be invited to reply before December 24th.

Considering that:

- Rabies eradication is a priority for Europe as a region of 53 Member Countries;
- Experience in Europe shows that rabies can be eradicated if oral rabies vaccination campaigns (ORV), coupled with robust surveillance, are implemented consistently, twice a year, over a period of several years, including a number of years after the last confirmed case of rabies when strong passive surveillance to be implemented;
- The epidemiological situation in Europe is progressively improving as the number of cases has dramatically decreased in the last years;
- Although there was no sound surveillance data to provide scientific basis to confirm absence of rabies virus, some countries in the region have already ceased ORV in recent years;
- In certain countries of the region, surveillance remains the weakest point of their rabies eradication programmes, particularly as regards the testing of indicator¹ animals for rabies detection (passive or general surveillance); as a result, in some countries/territories, the number of animals sampled and tested is very low and this compromises eradication efforts and overall success achieved during last decade.
- There is a non-negligible administrative burden of implementation of ORV and surveillance, including budget allocation and procurement of vaccines and diagnostics, and services for oral vaccine distribution, which is often managed by different authorities or stakeholders in respective countries.
- It is necessary to safeguard and consolidate the achievements on rabies control, accomplished so far by the combined efforts of all countries/territories, in the region of South-East Europe

General conclusions and recommendations

1. To uphold coordination of measures between countries in the region, including on ORV and surveillance, and dialogue between CVOs and animal health officers from Veterinary Authorities, experts and representatives of GF-TADs, and therefore, consider organising the next SGE meeting in face-to-face format, if the pandemic situation allows, in Brussels or at another venue in the region.
2. To task SGE Secretariat (OIE Regional Representation in Moscow) to continue regional coordination on Rabies in the region of Europe, to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the multiannual eradication program in the Balkans, in collaboration with the European Commission and SGE Members, and promote any actions relevant for rabies eradication, with possible support of rabies experts from the existing EU funded project for Western Balkans.
3. To develop pathways to facilitate sustainable planning and implementation of rabies eradication programmes, including administrative (procurement, capacity building) and in-field (aerial and/or manual baits distribution) activities. SGE members should continue building own capacities to implement these activities in close collaboration with relevant national authorities, and with EU Delegations in respective countries when relevant, with a view to start with these activities well in advance and to implement a strong project management prior to and during their implementation. The

¹ Suspect or indicator animals are animals that show clinical signs or abnormal behaviour suggestive of rabies, animals found dead, road-kills and animals involved in human exposure

experts involved in the existing EU funded project for Western Balkans may also provide guidance in this regard.

4. To promote regular and transparent epidemiological information sharing from countries/territories in the region with other GF-TADs members (e.g. disease notification through ADIS and WAHIS) and stimulate cross-border coordination of rabies control measures.
5. To open the membership of the Standing Group of Experts on Rabies in Europe to other countries in the region of Europe where the epidemiological situation has deteriorated or the risk of spreading of rabies has increased.

Recommendations on oral vaccination campaigns against rabies

6. To ensure ORV to be implemented for at least 6 years and to be ceased not earlier than two years after the last confirmed case of rabies, provided that appropriate passive surveillance is performed in accordance with standards. The situation in bordering countries/territories should be taken into account before any decision in this regard.
7. To consider phasing out of vaccination only after careful assessment and within a regional perspective, as premature cease of vaccination in a country/territory might jeopardise rabies eradication in the whole region of South-East Europe.
8. To secure adequate coordination of ORV amongst bordering countries/territories in terms of timing and vaccination areas to eradicate the disease. This is particularly relevant in areas close to the international borders where the adequate coverage of the areas with vaccine baits might be challenging.
9. To draw up specific arrangements at national level for the supply of vaccines for emergency vaccination to ensure timely response to rabies recurrence.

Recommendations on rabies surveillance

10. To step up efforts on rabies surveillance as it remains a key point for rabies eradication programmes, particularly passive surveillance² and appears to be still a weak point in some countries or areas where the number of animals sampled and tested is very low. Hence, to improve surveillance, it is important to raise awareness, allocate resources, implement procedures and improve coordination amongst the competent authorities, hunters, farmers and other stakeholders involved. EU funded project(s) may also be important tool(s) to support SGE Members in designing proper sample size and providing operating procedures/guidance to improve national surveillance programmes. In the case of budgetary constraints, number of samples for active surveillance could be reduced, in order to increase number of samples for passive surveillance.
11. To increase surveillance in proximity of any new cases to appropriately estimate the extension of the outbreak and take an informed decision of the area to be vaccinated.
12. To ensure greater coordination of surveillance activities for Rabies with activities implemented for other TADs (e.g. ASF, avian influenza) to ensure cost-effective and complementary work, particularly if these actions involve

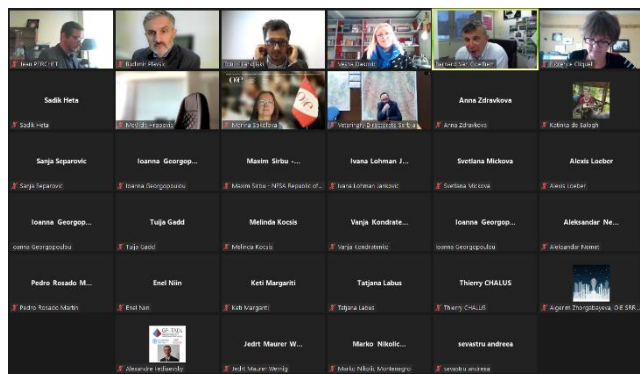
² Detection of indicator animals for rabies detection.

coordination with hunting associations and other stakeholders, training and awareness raising campaigns.

Closing remarks - Future steps

The SGE RAB will meet again next year before the summer, in order to better follow up the accessibility of oral rabies vaccine for ORV. It is essential that this meeting will be organized in person, and Dr Van Goethem suggested that it be held in Brussels.

NB: all presentations of the SGE RAB3 are available on the webpage of the [GF-TADs SGE RAB webpage](#) dedicated to Rabies.



* References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)