



Organisation
Mondiale
de la Santé
Animale

World
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Health

Organización
Mundial
de Sanidad
Animal

24th Conference of the
OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Astana (Kazakhstan), 20-24 September 2010

FINAL REPORT

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List of Abbreviations

AAC	Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission
ADIS	Animal Disease Information System
AIDCO	EuropeAid Co-operation Office
ASF	African swine fever
AWWG	Animal Welfare Working Group
BIP	Border inspection post
BSE	Bovine spongiform encephalopathy
BT	Bluetongue
BTV	Bluetongue Virus
BTSF	Better training for safer food
CBRN	Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
CCVA	Central Competent Veterinary Authority
CEI	Central European Initiative
CIC	Conseil International de la Chasse
CMC	Crisis Management Centre
CSF	Classical swine fever
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer
DG SANCO	Directorate General for 'Health and Consumers'
EBLV	European bat lyssavirus
EC	European Commission
EEA	European Economic Area
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIA	Equine infectious anaemia
EU	European Union
EU CCs	European Union Candidate Countries
EU MS	European Union Member States
EUFMD	European Commission for the Control of Foot and Mouth Disease
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FESASS	European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security
FMD	Foot and mouth disease
FVE	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GF-TADs	Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases
GLEWS	Global Early Warning System
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
HQ	Headquarters
HS	Harmonised system codes
IZS A & M	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise

MC	Member Countries
MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market
NGOs	Non-governmental organization
OFFLU	OIE/FAO Network of expertise on animal influenzas
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PANAFTOSA	Pan American Foot and Mouth Disease Center
PCP	Progressive control pathway
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PPR	Peste des petits ruminants
PVS	OIE Tool for the Evaluation of Performance of Veterinary Services
RASVE	Veterinary Health Alert Network
SEACFMD	Sub-Commission for Foot and Mouth Disease Control in China and South-East Asia
SPS	Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the WTO
SRR	Sub-Regional Representation
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument
UDAW	Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WAHID	World Animal Health Information Database
WAHIS	World Animal Health Information System
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WNF	West Nile fever
WSPA	World Society for Animal Protection
WTO	World Trade Organization
VHS	Viral haemorrhagic septicaemia
VS	Veterinary Services

Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Kazakhstan, the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe was held in Astana from 20 to 24 September 2010.
2. A total of 121 participants, comprising OIE Delegates and/or nominees of 37 Members and senior officers from 5 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. Dr Carlos Correa Messuti, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates; Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General; Dr Prof Nikola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe; Dr Caroline Planté, OIE Sub-regional Representative for Europe; Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department; and Dr Francesco Berlingieri, Deputy Head of the Animal Health Information Department also participated to the Conference. The speakers presenting Technical Items I and II, namely, Dr Hinrich Meyer-Gerbaulet in collaboration with Dr Howard Batho, speaker of the Technical Item I and Prof Dr José Sanchez Vizcaino, speaker of the Technical Item II, honoured the Conference by their presence.

Tuesday 21 September 2010

Opening Ceremony

3. Mr Karim Kazhymkanovich Masimov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, stressed his gladness at hosting the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in Astana.
4. He stressed the fact that animal health and food safety are topical issues for all countries.
5. He highlighted that the government of Kazakhstan ensures the prevention of animal disease outbreak by providing adequate funding for VS and by following international standards in order to create appropriate conditions for safe trade.
6. He reported that the country continuously improves its veterinary legislation according to the different standards developed by international organizations such as the OIE and Codex Alimentarius and in accordance with SPS Agreement.
7. Currently, the livestock production industry represents more or less 40% agricultural GDP of Kazakhstan. He also stated that the favorable landscape and climate of the country can provide conditions for environmental friendly livestock production.
8. The Prime Minister ensured that Kazakhstan was more than ever open to cooperation in the agricultural sector.
9. He was convinced that the Conference was an important step in improving veterinary measures targeting livestock health and finally food safety.
10. He finally concluded by wishing to all participants fruitful work through all the week.
11. Dr Prof Nikola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe, expressed his pleasure at welcoming the participants at the 24th Regional Conference in Astana. He extended his sincere gratitude, on behalf of the OIE Regional Commission, to the Government of Kazakhstan and colleagues for their generosity in hosting and preparing this important Conference. He expressed his appreciation for the warm welcome received in Astana.

12. He stressed the importance of the meeting for the region as the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe is conducted within the framework of the OIE Vth Strategic Plan and with the aim of reviewing and discussing the progress of the OIE Strategic Plan in the Region for the last two years.
13. Prof Belev commented that, during the Conference key OIE activities in the Region will be highlighted, with special emphasis on Capacity Building of the Veterinary Services, Animal Health, Food Safety, International Standards and Communication.
14. He underlined that special attention will be paid to OIE PVS tool and electronic information system WAHIS.
15. In terms of international cooperation he spoke about the role of the OIE in international society, its relations with international organizations, such as WHO, WTO, FAO, EC, CIC, FVE and several others and OIE participation in partner programs, the most important of which is GF-TADs initiative will be highlighted.
16. On behalf of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe Dr. Belev expressed his gratitude to the President of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Mr. Nazarbaev, Prime-minister His Excellency Mr. Masimov and the Government of the Kazakhstan Republic for their hospitality to hold the 24 Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in Astana and also to the Director General of the OIE Doctor Bernard Vallat and the Headquarters' staff for their continuous support and cooperation in the organization of the Conference.
17. Dr Carlos Correa Messuti, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, thanked the government of Kazakhstan for hosting the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and acknowledged its importance for the Region. He also manifested how special it was for him to participate in regional meetings. He welcomed all participants to the 24th Regional meeting.
18. Dr Correa Messuti commented that Regional Commission meetings have a significant role for the OIE as they provide an important platform for Members of a particular region in order to work towards joint solutions to their problems.
19. The OIE President noted that the Agenda of the Conference included several relevant issues, among which were two important technical items, "The dependence of the effective border controls on appropriate resources deployments and international cooperation, including information exchange" and "Early detection and contingency plans for African Swine Fever".
20. In this regard, Dr Correa Messuti encouraged the adoption of Recommendations during the Conference which would enable implementation and follow up of relevant initiatives and activities within the Region.
21. He also underlined the item I of the Agenda: "Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme of Strengthening Veterinary Services (including PVS, PVS Gap Analysis and Veterinary Legislation in Europe and Worldwide)". Last May, the Fifth Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015, that will set out the guidelines of the work for the forthcoming years, was approved and all the experiences of the former years were the evidence of the importance of these Plans as a mean to consolidate the priorities and objectives of the OIE.
22. Dr Correa Messuti highlighted that national Veterinary Services were a key element for the OIE. As they are an International Public Good, it is necessary to consolidate policies to provide support to the good governance of the Veterinary Services in the world.
23. He also commented on the global and regular use of the PVS tool which he would like to promote during his term. He stated that it is essential to continue developing evaluation mechanisms of the Veterinary Services and to persist in the use of the next steps: the GAP analysis, Follow up and Veterinary Legislation missions.

24. The OIE has decided to support the members in order to improve the basic pillars that comprehensively support the effective systems of veterinary control. Among them, the veterinary education and legislation are of great importance. The OIE has planned concrete actions to contribute to its strengthening at a global level.
25. Regarding legislation, Dr Correa Messuti commented that OIE has developed guidelines on the essential elements to be covered in veterinary legislation. Veterinary legislation missions are being carried out to complement the work being done on this field. He referred to the First Conference on Veterinary Legislation which is to be held in Tunisia in December 2010. This Conference aims to assist developing countries to modernize and update their legislation to be well prepared to compel with the OIE rules and face the zoonosanitary challenges of the future.
26. He also made reference to the Global Conference on Wildlife “Animal Health and Biodiversity – Preparing for the Future” to be held in Paris, France from 23 to 25 February 2011.
27. Dr Correa Messuti explained that the current international situation is characterized by changing and dynamic demands. The globalization of economies and communications and other current phenomena, such as climate change, the on-going increase of world population and the growth of world trade, force the strengthening of the actions to be carried out in order to prevent and control the diseases as well as the actions destined to ensure food safety, public health and animal welfare.
28. The planet is facing new and complex challenges, obliging global organizations and institutions to strive to deliver what the international community expects of each of them. Within the scope of its special mandate and powers, the OIE can and must help to face these global challenges by contributing with its skills and experience and discharging its role as a universal, solidarity-based organization.
29. Dr Correa Messuti therefore proposed to promote the concept of " One Health" which is necessary to improve the mechanisms of good governance on health protection at a global, regional and national level as the only way to face this increasingly challenge.
30. The ‘One Health’ approach aims to make an in-depth analysis of the animal–human–ecosystems interface. This entails not only infections with the potential to cause epidemics and pandemics, but also animal diseases with an impact on food security, and their repercussions on poverty. New animal diseases have been found to emerge or re-emerge on a regular basis, and more than two-thirds of these diseases pose a risk of transmission to humans. Furthermore, 60% of the infectious human diseases currently described are of animal origin.
31. The OIE encourages an interdisciplinary approach that encompasses the biological, medical and veterinary sciences and includes specialists in wildlife, ecology and many other disciplines, together with regulators and policy-makers.
32. Dr Correa Messuti mentioned that the OIE will continue to offer its Members the support of its international reputation for declaring national disease freedom (countries or zones) in relation to the four traditional diseases, which in the future may be expanded to include other diseases affecting equids, poultry or swine.
33. Dr Correa Messuti commented on the worldwide leadership that the OIE has gained working in animal welfare standards within transport of live animals and slaughter methods, as well as different production systems, starting with meat livestock and chicken broilers.
34. Finally, Dr Correa Messuti mentioned that with its current 177 Members, the value of the OIE lies in the fact that it is an organisation with a varied membership, with strong commitment to work together. He pointed out that the high level of expertise that supports the work of the specialists and experts is not only a pride but also a security for the international community.

35. To conclude Dr Correa Messuti recognized the actions of the Director General Dr. Bernard Vallat whose strong leadership has given a great opportunity to reach the goals of the OIE and who contributed with his team to achieve the successful organization of this Conference.
36. He also mentioned the good job carried out by Prof. Dr Nicola Belev, actual Regional Representative for Eastern Europe and President of the Regional Commission for Europe. During the last 38 years, Prof. Belev has carried out a remarkable contribution to the labour of the OIE and to the strengthening of National Veterinary Services of Eastern Europe countries.
37. Dr Correa ended his speech by reiterating his deep gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting this Conference.
38. He wished a successful and enriching work and stay in Kazakhstan.
39. Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, started his speech by thanking the Government of Kazakhstan for agreeing to host the Regional Conference and for the warm welcome extended to all participants since their arrival in Kazakhstan.
40. He expressed his gratitude to the President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture and all the colleagues from the Veterinary Services for their support during the preparation of the Conference.
41. He highlighted that the Conference bears witness to the vitality of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and its willingness to bring its Members together to address animal health issues and the challenges facing Veterinary Services in the region and in all 177 Member Countries.
42. Dr Vallat emphasized that since its creation in 1924, the OIE's main aim has been international cooperation and coordination in the fight against animal diseases. In the current context of globalisation these objectives are more important than ever.
43. He underlined that Europe is the OIE's largest region, with 53 Member Countries involved in the Organisation's various activities. Numerous activities are carried out in the Region in collaboration with the European Commission and other OIE partners.
44. When defining their policies on animal health and welfare, the European Union and OIE Member Countries not in the European Union, systematically consult the OIE as the sole world reference organisation fully dedicated in these two fields.
45. Dr Vallat highlighted that, during this 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, the main animal disease problems facing the continent as well as progress in the field of animal health in the region will be discussed. He also explained that the Regional Commission would also exchange on the future activities and programmes with the perspective that their success depends upon the commitment and collaboration of all Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe.
46. He referred then to the item on the agenda which concerns early detection and contingency plans for a disease that presents one of the greatest regional animal health risks, namely African swine fever. There is a risk of the disease spreading more rapidly in the Region, and this will depend on how the situation is managed in infected countries and whether border controls are established in disease-free countries.
47. Dr Vallat emphasised the importance of effective Veterinary Services that can guarantee early detection and rapid response, in compliance with international standards, and that are capable of detecting unexpected sanitary events and responding to them rapidly. Only an effective national surveillance system and transparency of reporting can guarantee that the appropriate control policies are being implemented.

48. He also commented on the Technical Item of the Conference regarding the dependence of the effective border controls on appropriate resources deployment and enhanced international cooperation, including information exchange and remarked that, in the context of good governance of Veterinary Services, the effective border controls were of great importance. He explained that this Technical Item will present a detailed review of the regional situation regarding border controls, based on responses received from Member Countries in the Region to an exhaustive questionnaire.
49. He was pleased that a high percentage of countries completed the questionnaire.
50. Dr Vallat pointed out the OIE Fifth Strategic Plan (2011-2015), adopted this year at the General Session as a continuation with the success of the previous plans.
51. He explained that, there are however, important new elements. These include veterinary education, the contribution of animal health and veterinary public health to food security; the application of the "One Health" concept for the reduction of risks of certain diseases at the animal-human-ecosystems interface; the relation between animal production and the environment, including the contribution of climate and environmental change to the occurrence and geographical spread of diseases, disease vectors and invasive species, and the contribution of animal production practices to environmental and climate changes.
52. He stated that the OIE will support the compilation of a list of basic knowledge that veterinarians throughout the world should acquire. The aim is that all Member Countries that so wish will include it in all their initial and continuing education syllabuses.
53. He also emphasised that the OIE will continue to produce scientifically based standards and guidelines on animal diseases, including zoonoses, animal welfare and food safety. The OIE will also continue to provide services to Member Countries wishing to determine their status with regard to animal diseases of major importance.
54. Dr Vallat recalled that during the period of the Fifth Strategic Plan, the OIE will continue to work with public and private international organisations to ensure that private or commercial standards on animal health and animal welfare are consistent with and do not conflict with those of the OIE.
55. Within the framework of the Fifth Strategic Plan, the OIE will work towards strengthening the technical capacities, management, legislation and good governance of Veterinary Services. This will be achieved through the World Animal Health and Welfare Fund and in collaboration with global partners such as FAO, WHO and regional partners as well as global, regional and national donors. The European Union, represented by the European Commission, is one of the world's largest donors for projects on behalf of animal health and welfare.
56. He emphasized how much the successful implementation of the Fifth Strategic Plan and its objectives will depend on the commitment of OIE Member Countries in providing an adequate budget to respond to the annual work programmes developed under the Plan, and voluntary contributions, including those channelled through the Animal Health and Welfare Fund. The help provided by the OIE's various inter-agency partners through joint programmes and projects will be equally important in supporting national Veterinary Services, which, in the long run, bear the actual task of carrying out the programme.
57. Dr Vallat recalled participants that the implementation of the Fifth Plan, should not forget the duty of solidarity towards the poorest countries. The OIE, within its mandate and activities, and in collaboration with other international and regional organisations, provides increasing evidence that rich countries may find their own interests in helping less advanced countries to control and eradicate animal diseases that pose a threat to disease free countries.
58. He invited participants to work together to put in place the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan and to work together it success.

59. He pointed out that the OIE Global Programme for strengthening Veterinary Services, based on the OIE-PVS Tool for the evaluation of performance of Veterinary Services, has advanced significantly and has now passed the symbolic number of 100 OIE Members involved in the process. In Europe, 12 Member Countries have already carried out or requested the first PVS Evaluation, and five have already applied for the PVS-Gap Analysis procedure. The latter procedure is aimed at identifying and carrying out priority investments needed to achieve compliance with OIE international standards. Throughout the world, the governments of the countries concerned and the various funding agencies use the results of these analyses to plan the investments needed to bring the national Veterinary Services into compliance with OIE international standards.
60. The OIE Director General invited all those countries that need to take advantage of the PVS process to submit a request to the OIE if they so wish.
61. He also commented that the OIE, within this same PVS process, is also committed to providing support for Member Countries in updating their veterinary legislation, as a basis for good governance of the Veterinary Services. To give Member Countries an opportunity to discuss openly the importance of veterinary legislation Dr Vallat announced that, following the generous offer of the Government of Tunisia, the OIE is organising the First Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation, to be held in Djerba from 7 to 9 December 2010. He invited all participants to attend this Conference.
62. Dr Vallat made reference to the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations in Sofia and Brussels which intend to focus on several regional issues during the coming years. Notable priorities include helping Member Countries to comply with OIE international standards and better participation in the standard-setting process through the flow of information and capacity building programmes directed to all Members.
63. He explained that, to achieve this objective, the OIE has established national Focal Points for six specific topics: animal disease notification (WAHIS); aquatic animals; wildlife; animal welfare; animal production food safety; and veterinary medicinal products. The OIE encourages all Delegates who have not already done so to nominate Focal Points for each of these topics.
64. He concluded that, to ensure that the main contact persons in Member Countries have received suitable training, the OIE has established a permanent information and capacity building programme for new Delegates to the OIE and for national Focal Points.
65. He remarked that this programme is currently being applied in all regions in conjunction with all the OIE Regional Representations, and is coordinated by the OIE Headquarters.
66. To conclude he again emphasised the importance of good governance of Veterinary Services, which will always be in the frontline in the fight against animal diseases, including those transmissible to humans. Cooperation between OIE Member Countries and the Organisation itself, as well as with other relevant international organisations and international funding agencies is a key factor for success.
67. He thanked the Government of Kazakhstan for its support in the organisation of this Conference and all participants for their attendance.
68. Finally he wished all participants a successful conference and that fruitful outcomes come at the end of the week.
69. The texts of the above speeches were made available to all the participants.

Election of the Conference Committee

70. The Conference Committee was elected as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Saktash Hasenov, Vice Minister of Agriculture (Kazakhstan)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr Romano Marabelli (Italy)
Rapporteur General:	Dr Nikolai Vlasov (Russia)

Adoption of the Provisional Agenda and Timetable

71. The Provisional Agenda and Timetable were adopted.

Designation of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

72. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the technical items as follows:

Item I:	Dr Kazimeras Lukauskas (Lithuania) (Chairman) Dr Pierre Naassens (Belgium) (Rapporteur)
Item II:	Dr Karin Schwabenbauer (Germany) (Chairman) Dr Levan Ramishvili (Georgia) (Rapporteur)
Animal health situation:	Dr Ago Pärtel (Estonia) (Chairman) Dr Siala Rustamova (Azerbaïdjan) (Rapporteur)

Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme of Strengthening Veterinary Services (including PVS, PVS Gap Analysis and Veterinary Legislation in Europe and Worldwide)

73. The Session Chairperson, Dr Saktash Hasenov, Vice Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, invited Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General to present the Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme of Strengthening Veterinary Services.
74. Dr Vallat presented important key messages which will guide the new OIE Strategic Plan 2011-2015, as well as concepts and tools to be used by the OIE during this period.
75. He commented on the new Strategic Plan 2011-2015 that has been adopted by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates at the 2010 OIE General Session. He highlighted that this plan was the result of the dialog with OIE Members and with the OIE Council.
76. He started by showing trends on the growth of the population worldwide as well as demands for animal protein, indicating that the consumption would increase by 50% for 2030.
77. The Director General referred to the increased risks of disease spread worldwide due to the globalisation, the rapid movement of animals and products as well as climate changes.
78. He stressed that food security and food safety are key public health concerns considering the need for supply of safe food, and the valuable role that Veterinarians have to play on protecting the society, not only in disease control, but also in using new scientific advances to increase animal production, helping to ensure access to animal proteins for everybody (milk, eggs, meat).
79. Dr Vallat noted the growing importance of Veterinary Public health due to the Zoonotic potential of animal pathogens, taking into account that 60% of human pathogens (infectious diseases) are zoonotic, 75% of emerging diseases are zoonotic and 80% of agents having a potential bioterrorist use are zoonotic pathogens.

80. When referring to new concepts to be used for promoting protection of countries and regions from current and emerging threats for animals and humans, he started by highlighting the Global Public Good Concept. Global Public Goods are those which benefits extend to all countries, people and generations. Animal Health Systems are Global Public Goods, considering that controlling and eradicating animal infectious diseases, including zoonoses bring broad national, international and inter-generational benefits.
81. Each country plays a key role. Inadequate action by a single country can jeopardize others, making the system fail, not only within the country, but also at regional and at global level.
82. Dr Vallat remarked that Good Governance of Veterinary Services can be achieved through minimal requirements that should be reached by all Members, including:
- Appropriate Veterinary legislation, as well as adequate and enough human and financial resources,
 - Efficient epidemio-surveillance networks and territorial meshing in the entire national territory, allowing early detection, transparent notification and rapid response,
 - Responsibility of Governments, for which deeply awareness of policy makers on the objectives and importance of VS is crucial.
 - Public-private partnership through formal protocols under the monitoring of the Veterinary Authority.
 - Concept and standards of “Quality of Services”, democratically adopted by all OIE Members,
 - Bio-security measures,
 - Compensation of animal owners in case of stamping out,
 - Initial and continuous veterinary education and appropriate investment in veterinary research.
83. He explained the concept “One Health” which refers to a global strategy for managing risks at the animal-human interface. The OIE is engaged at global level in this concept in coordination with its partners such as FAO, WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank. The key role of Veterinary Services by controlling animal diseases at their source was highlighted by the Director General, referring to the reduction of public health risks when dealing with zoonoses. He also stressed that some non zoonotic diseases must be also considered as priorities in regards to their impact to food security as a matter of public health concern.
84. Dr Vallat stated that the OIE will also continue the reinforcement of the Regional Representations in order to better assist Members through capacity building activities, and will give priority in its 5th Strategic Plan, announcing that the OIE accounts now 177 Members.
85. The Director General reminded that the Fifth Strategic Plan was in line with the historic overall OIE objectives. He also explained that although the main point of contact with the Member Countries was the Delegate, it has been established that the Member Countries should nominate Focal Points to help them to deal with some specific technical items.
86. Dr Vallat highlighted that OIE National specialist focal points (namely Aquatic animal diseases; Wildlife; Animal health information system; Veterinary medicinal products; Animal welfare; and Animal production food safety) play a key role by assisting the OIE Delegate in specific issues for accomplishing his/her obligations to the OIE and to help to protect their rights. He also commented on the OIE training programme for all regions for new Delegates and Focal points, stating that all OIE National Focal Points will receive at least one training information and capacity building seminar in the next two years.
87. He commented on some tools and mechanisms that the OIE will continue to promote and support in its new Strategic Plan, such as its World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and the web linked database WAHID. He stressed the importance of transparency on the animal health situation and the obligation from Members to timely notify the occurrence of animal diseases using this system, which has to be considered as the main source for Early Warning Disease reports worldwide.

88. Dr Vallat reminded the reference role of the OIE as the International Standard Setting Organisation for Animal Health issues in relation to the SPS WTO Agreement. He also commented on other important mechanism that the OIE provides to its Members, such its informal mediation procedure, which on a voluntary basis seeks to resolve their differences by using an approach that is based on science and the OIE's recommendations for safe international trade in animals and animal products.
89. He referred to OIE Reference Laboratories & Collaborating Centres stressing their role on assisting OIE Members to comply with OIE international standards, as well as to better participate in the standard setting process. He also commented on the OIE Twinning concept which aims to assist Members and regions in order to have a broad and more balanced availability of expertise worldwide that helps developing Members, as well as reinforcing the Veterinary Scientific Community in developing countries, in order to be able to participate in the standard setting negotiations.
90. Dr Vallat reminded the global programme of strengthening VS that the OIE is currently carrying out, based on the use of its Tool for evaluation of Performance of VS (OIE-PVS Tool) to help Members to comply with OIE standards on quality as well as strengthening the OIE standards and guidelines adopted by Members influence on global, regional and national policies regarding Good Governance on animal health. The programme is funded by the OIE World Animal Health and Welfare Fund which is financed by several donors and was created to support and implement OIE capacity building activities.
91. He briefly described the Tool as well as the evaluation process, explaining that the first PVS evaluation, called "the diagnostic" is followed by the PVS Gap Analysis process, called "the prescription", for which the OIE is working with its partners (mainly with FAO in developing countries) and donors for the preparation of priority investment activities which could be financed through national Governments or international donors. This second step prioritise needs as determined by the own countries concerned.
92. Dr Vallat showed the current status of the OIE PVS Programme, both at Global and regional level, including OIE PVS Evaluations and PVS Gap Analysis missions. From a total of 177 OIE Members, more than 100 of them have already requested the PVS evaluation, from which 96 missions were already completed, and 72 final reports were completed.
93. 57 Members have requested the PVS Gap Analysis process globally, from which 26 missions were already carried out.
94. Specifically referring to the Europe, it was stressed that 12 Members requested the PVS evaluation. Dr Vallat incited the Members of the region, needing the support of the PVS Pathway, that have not yet requested to the OIE the PVS Evaluation to do so before the end of the PVS Programme.
95. Regarding Gap Analysis, 5 Members requested the OIE such a process in the region. The Director General described the benefits for the other Members to apply also for this step.
96. Dr Vallat also mentioned the importance for many Members to up-date their veterinary legislation, and commented that the OIE has developed a generic basic model which could be used as a guide for Members to be more in compliance with OIE Standards; He also commented that specific missions are being carried out to assist Members on Legislation matters, and some pilot Members were identified to further develop a Convention Agreement with the OIE to assist them and follow up on their evolution on the implementation of an appropriate Veterinary Legislation framework.
97. He explained the activities of the OIE on veterinary education with the objectives of the adoption of a basic core veterinary curriculum by all veterinary education establishments worldwide. He also gave them the final output of the work done by the OIE on the relation between domestic animals and the environment and listed the positive aspects linked with livestock production worldwide. He announced the coming OIE Global Conferences on wildlife, rabies and FMD.
98. Finally, Dr Vallat concluded by inviting the Member Countries as well as the Veterinary Statutory Bodies representatives to attend to the upcoming OIE Global Conference on Veterinary Legislation that will take place in Djerba, Tunisia, 7-9 December 2010.

Discussion

99. The OIE Delegate for Ukraine thanked Dr Vallat for its comprehensive presentation. He asked to the OIE Director General if the growing involvement into veterinary legislation would eventually stay at the level of recommendation or would become requirements to be imposed to the Member Countries.
100. Dr Vallat reminded the audience that all countries were sovereign to decide on their own legislation. He reported that, regarding veterinary legislation, the OIE was providing guidelines in order to provide supplementary support to the countries for them to better comply with international standards and guidelines. He reiterated that these guidelines would not be used to bind the Member countries but rather to stimulate improvements of all national legislation.

Activities of the OIE Regional Representation and the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

101. The Session Chairman, Dr Saktash Hasenov, invited Dr Prof Nikola Belev, OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe to give a presentation on the Activities of the OIE Regional representation.
102. Dr Prof Belev started his presentation informing that since the recent Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in September 2008 in Vilnius, Lithuania, the members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe reached 53 Member countries.
103. Dr Belev presented a summary of the activities carried out by the OIE Regional Representation from Easter Europe since the last Regional Conference.
104. He informed that the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe was re-elected during the OIE 77th General Assembly in May 2009 for a new 3-year mandate.
105. He commented on the Meeting of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe that took place in Sofia (Bulgaria) on 30 of September 2009 and where the following topics were discussed:
 - Accomplishment of the 4-th OIE Strategic Plan (2006-2010) and preparation of the 5th OIE Strategic Plan (2011-2015);
 - Discussion of the amendments to the OIE Basic Texts;
 - Epizootic Situation within the countries of the European Region;
 - Education of Veterinary Specialists;
 - Animal Welfare;
 - Food Safety within the frames of OIE mandate;
 - Aspects of use of the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) and arrears of notifications regarding epizootic situation;
 - Structure of National Veterinary Services of the countries of the European Region;
106. He gave details on the official meetings carried with different governmental representatives from Europe region with the aim of enhancing the role and influence of the OIE as well as the importance of Veterinary Services in compliance with the OIE Code.
107. He also mentioned the seminars organized during September 2008 - September 2010 period. Seminars for newly appointed OIE Delegates (in France and Belarus) as well as workshops for OIE National Focal Points on specific topics such as: food safety, animal welfare, wildlife diseases, veterinary products and meetings on important animal diseases (CSF and Rabies).
108. He informed that the OIE Regional Commission for Europe has actively participated in the common OIE/FAO/EC initiatives for Europe like GF-TADs, the EU-FMD Executive Committee and its tri-partite country meetings on FMD and other diseases of particular importance.

109. He highlighted that the staff of the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe attended a number of different veterinary events of regional importance organized by other organizations like European Commission, TAIEX-Office, FAO, EU-FMD, WTO, WHO, WB, FVE, etc.
110. Dr Prof Belev commented that the OIE Regional Representation for Eastern Europe supported the kick-off meeting of the Project “Implementation of surveillance, prophylaxis and contingency plans for brucellosis, tuberculosis, rabies, foot and mouth disease and anthrax in CIS countries”, held in March 2010 in Kiev, Ukraine and organised by the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell’Abruzzo e del Molise “G. Caporale”, OIE Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Training, Epidemiology, Food Safety and Animal Welfare in Teramo. The project embraces the period 2010-2014.
111. He concluded by informing on PVS missions carried out in the region since 2008.

Activities of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels

112. The Session Chairman, Dr Saktash Hasenov, invited Dr Caroline Planté, OIE Sub-regional Representative for Europe, to describe the Activities of the OIE Sub-regional representation.
113. Dr Planté started her presentation informing on the purpose of the OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations which is to enhance the capacities of the Veterinary Services (VS) of the OIE member countries to enable them to comply with the OIE international standards.
114. She remarked that the Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels (SRR) participated in the organisation and presentation of seminars for OIE Delegates (between 2008 and 2010) and their national focal points (food safety, animal welfare and wildlife in 2009; veterinary products and aquatic animal diseases in 2010), in collaboration with the Regional Representation based in Sofia and the OIE head office.
115. She also mentioned that, as part of the OIE world programme to reinforce veterinary services, the SRR took part in several missions using PVS to assess veterinary services and PVS Gap analyses, providing support for the modernisation of veterinary legislation in member countries. The experience gained enabled the SRR to provide support for enhancing the tools used during these missions. The SRR also participated in CMC missions (FAO/OIE) to support countries in their efforts to control African swine fever.
116. Dr Planté commented on the 4-years OIE/EC project led by the SRR since 2009. This project entitled ADIS (Animal Disease Information System), has as objective to develop a prototype animal health information system within the EU that is fully compatible with the OIE WAHIS system.
117. Regarding communication, Dr Planté stated that the SRR has continued to develop and update constantly the OIE regional web site, which includes all OIE documents translated into Russian (www.rr-europe.oie.int). In addition, in order to increase the visibility and influence of the OIE on national, regional and international animal health policies, the SRR has taken an active part in numerous conferences organised by professional, political or economic organisations, as well as by training establishments. The topics covered include the SPS agreements, food safety, bioterrorism, international animal health policies, emerging diseases and animal welfare. The importance of animal health and welfare, the crucial role of the veterinary services and the specific OIE standards were explained on these occasions.
118. Finally she said that the SRR also provides a link between the Regional Representation (RR), the OIE headquarters and the European institutions, in particular the European Commission. A large part of the work of the SRR was taken up by monitoring the various projects financed by the EC (DG SANCO and AIDCO), development of the new EU animal health strategy, communication actions (including the annual veterinary week), participation in several working groups (EFSA, ETPAH, CBRN task force, etc.) and EC training intended for the veterinary services (BTSF and TAIEX), as well as involvement in the EUFMD and GF-TADs programmes for Europe.
119. Dr Planté concluded mentioning that the OIE Sub-Regional Representation (SRR) based in Brussels has been in place since January 2007 and is currently composed of two veterinarians.

Discussion

120. The Director of the Federation of European Veterinarians thanked the OIE for its implication in the "EU Vet Week" and underlined the importance of this type of event for reaching a vast public and for explaining the essential role played by the veterinarian in the framework of the "One Health Concept". He also thanked the European Commission for this initiative.
121. A member of the Kazakhstan delegation made reference to the project undertaken in 9 countries of the CEI by the Collaborating Centre of the OIE IZS A&M 'G. Caporale' which activities will first target Brucellosis and asked if Kazakhstan was involved in the project.
122. Dr Planté confirmed that Kazakhstan was indeed involved in the project.

Technical Item I

The dependence of the effective border controls on appropriate resources deployment and enhanced international cooperation, including information exchange

123. The Session Chairman, Dr Lukauskas, OIE delegate of Lithuania, briefly introduced the speaker for this Technical Item, Dr Hinrich Meyer-Gerbaulet.
124. The Dr. Meyer-Gerbaulet first expressed his gratefulness to the OIE for inviting him to present of this important technical item. He also thanked the two co-authors of the paper: Dr Howard Batho and Ms. Dafinka Grozdanova.
125. He explained that this thorough assessment was possible only because of the strong response of the countries to the questionnaire for which the results were used to evaluate the Regional situation regarding border controls.
126. Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet expressed the importance of efficient border controls for preventing the introduction of sanitary risk into a country indicating that both commercial cargo and items brought in by travellers can present the same serious threat. He reminded that live animals and products of animal origin present the biggest threat.
127. In order to prevent the introduction of pathogens in a country, he stressed the importance of having border posts with appropriate infrastructure, sufficient administrative and technical capacity, and sufficient funding.
128. He then made reference to the different OIE Code Chapters providing information on standards and guidelines of the Organization, and especially those addressing the technical item.
129. Dr. Meyer-Gerbaulet gave some background information regarding the process under which this technical item has been identified for this conference. He reminded the Commission that this Technical Item was adopted by the Regional OIE Member Countries during the meeting of the Commission at the 2009 OIE General session.
130. He explained that, in February 2010, the authors were invited by the Director General of the OIE to elaborate the questionnaire which was then sent out by OIE Headquarters to the Member Countries of the Regional Commission of Europe. The questionnaire was in English, French and Russian.
131. In July and August 2010 the OIE HQ forwarded the replies of forty two (42) out of the 53 Member Countries to the authors for assessment and drafting of the report. The author expressed his appreciation of the high level of participation of the Members.
132. In order to better manage all the data from this survey, he reported that the authors encoded all the replies in a data base using Excel. From this data base the results were analyzed and expressed in a number of charts that he presented.

133. Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet provided the main conclusions from the analysis of all the data collected.
134. As regards the legislation enabling the Member Countries to carry out veterinary border checks, the author found that all countries have the legal base to cover the aspects of animal health both for live animals and for products of animal origin. There is only one country which has no legal base for certain products such as hay/straw, fertilizers etc.
135. Regarding the identification of items of veterinary concern, the author explained that most of the countries are applying the HS (Harmonised system codes) nomenclature that has been further developed in Europe to the Common nomenclature of commodities.
136. For an efficient implementation and enforcement of veterinary border checks on both live animals and products of animal origin covering the aspects of animal health and welfare as well as veterinary public health, Dr. Meyer-Gerbaulet analyzed that the majority of the countries have established only one Competent Central Veterinary Authority. Few countries have share responsibilities between different authorities.
137. He reported that the majority of the CCVAs are linked with a direct chain of command to the BIPs and their main role is to issue administrative measures, supervise and audit the BIPs. With regard to the CCVA's coordination and exchange of information with other services the author said that it was evident from the responses of the Member Countries that the cooperation with Customs Services is the closest in nearly all of the cases, followed by the Human Health Services and Border Police/Emigration Services.
138. With regard to the international cooperation of local veterinary border inspectors, Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet explained that eighteen Member countries replied they have contacts with their neighboring while 13 indicated that they didn't have contacts.
139. He reported that, in addition to the border inspection posts, eight member countries operate fully functioning quarantine stations for farm animals and 19 Member Countries for none farm animals. In the context of animal welfare aspects during international transports, 19 Member Countries have organized fully functioning resting posts for farm animals.
140. Regarding the inspection fees at veterinary border checks, including veterinary actions, the results showed a very inhomogeneous picture between the EEA/EFTA countries, the EU CCs, the rest of the OIE MCs and even between the EU MSs according to the author.
141. Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet explained that about half of the countries use either general or specific import conditions and most of them provide their import conditions to their exporting countries or display the relevant template certificates on a website. On the other hand, only half of the Member Countries have regular meeting with their neighboring countries to discuss about border controls.
142. The author reported that 36 Member Countries have legislation regarding the check of waste of international means of transport.
143. About thirty Member Countries reported that their CCVA is in charge of the veterinary border checks and procedures regarding noncommercial cargo checks which are mainly based on a risk assessment, according to the author.
144. From this thorough analysis, Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet concluded by stating that further actions by the Member Countries and the OIE are required to enhance the international cooperation on appropriate border control. And he wished the discussions would lead to improve this important disease control tool.

Discussions

145. Delegate of Armenia thanked the speaker for his interesting, useful and detailed presentation. He wished to know if some countries didn't have any border inspection post (BIP) at the borders and in that case what was their sanitary situation. He also asked if some of those countries were members of EU.

146. Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet answered that according to the answers received, almost all countries had a central competent veterinary authority responsible for BIPs. Dr Howard Batho added that around 3 to 4 countries, which were not UE members, were indeed facing difficulties in establishing border controls.
147. The Delegate of Russia asked if controls for export needed to be carried out at borders of the exporting country or if classical certification procedures were sufficient. Then referring to the advanced integration process in the EU and to other existing initiatives for building custom unions in other regions such as MERCOSUR, he wished to know the opinion of the speaker on the best way to operate for border controls in those countries.
148. Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet briefly recalled some provisions in the OIE Code on live animals and animal products imported and exported, stating that the EU was following those principles. He recalled the steps which led to the removal of internal borders in the EU in 1994 and commented that since then, import controls were carried out at the external borders of the EU.
149. The Delegate of France thanked the OIE and the government of Kazakhstan for their invitation and their warm welcome. He commented that the problem of import security was very important and that it was linked directly with the reinforcement of Veterinary Services. It requires among other the reinforcement of international cooperation in order to help developing countries to improve their sanitary situation and their certification capacities. He then mentioned that in 2008, a debate took place in the UE on this issue at the initiative of France and a memorandum was adopted; a report should be presented soon to the Council and the Parliament of the EU by the European Commission. He informed that in France, a dedicated service with national competence has been established for border controls, allowing for better coordination of controls as well as better service provision to the importers. He added that as regard illegal imports, it would be good to make a link with the recommendation adopted during the Regional Conference held in Lyon en 2006. He also recalled that VS were the unique responsible in the sphere of import control of animals and animal products legally imported and that sufficient resources had to be allocated to do so.
150. The representative of the European Commission commented that, regarding the reply of Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet, the harmonised border inspection post system of the EU was established in the framework of the EU internal market. It took 30 year to achieve a good operability of this market. In reference to the question raised by the Russian delegate, he indicated that this internal market can continue to evolve, but the path followed by this process has depended and will depend on the political will of the EU.
151. Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet added that the national Veterinary Services had to enhance the internal controls in order to compensate for the abolition on intra-EU BIP. He also supported the comment made by the Delegate of France on the need to address separately the issue of illegal trade and on its relevance for preserving the national health status.
152. The Director General of the OIE underlined how all inspections made on import of animals or animal products need to be done with the support from national Veterinary Services in order to avoid the entrance unauthorised pathogens into the territory. He also supported the point raised by France on the issue of illegal trade and recommended to take it into account on the specific recommendation to be made during this Regional Conference. He clarified that for any country there is no obligation to control export of its national products in border post other that the certification procedure already in place in most OIE Member Countries. He recognised that there is a trend for creating commercial union around the world (like in the EU or MERCOSOUR) because it is a cost-beneficial procedure that allows reducing internal controls while strengthening external controls.
153. Dr Lukauskas concluded by thanking the Dr Meyer-Gerbaulet, the Delegates that contributed to the discussions and Dr Vallat for giving the OIE perspective on this matter. He underlined the need to have efficient BIP's for ensuing safe trade and, finally, consumer's safety. He stated that all the pints raised would be taken into account when drafting the recommendations.

GF-TADs Activities

154. The Session Chairman, Dr Saktash Hasenov, invited Dr Alberto Laddomada to present the GF TADs Activities on behalf of Dr Bernard Van Goethem, the Chairman Regional Steering Committee of the GF TADs Europe.
155. Dr Laddomada gave an update of the activities of GF-TADs in Europe since May 2009. After commemorating the outcome of the third meeting of the Regional Steering Committee held in Brussels in February 2010, where the Terms of Reference were endorsed, the Members, chairman and vice chairmen were appointed, and a recommendation was adopted on priority diseases (FMD, HPAI, Rabies, PPR, CSF and ASF).
156. Dr Laddomada updated the Regional Commission on the activities and achievements so far in the implementation of the recommendation on the prevention and control of the priority diseases especially that of African Swine Fever. Updates were also given as to further general actions and meetings as well as on cooperation activities with neighbouring Mediterranean and African Regions, before giving an outlook on the upcoming activities (development and validation of the 4 year action plan; attendance to the Global Steering Committee meeting in September 2010).

Discussions

157. Dr Vallat commented on the presentation in relation to the EUFMD programme supported by EU through EUFMD for the control of foot and mouth disease in Northern Africa suggesting that a coordination between the OIE and the EC would be required because that topic is already implemented by the OIE Sub-regional Representation in Tunisia (Programme funded by Italy).

Update on developments in aquatic animal health

158. The Session Chairman, Dr Saktash Hasenov, invited Dr Olga Haenen, Member of the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission, to present an update on developments in aquatic animal health.
159. Dr Haenen started her presentation explaining that the OIE Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commission (AAC) deals with veterinary standards for fish, shellfish, crustaceans and amphibians. As adopted at the 2009 OIE General Session, the Commission's mandate has expanded to include aquatic animal production food safety and aquatic animal welfare.
160. She explained that Ad hoc Groups assist the AAC with their specific expertise: The Crustacean Team of the ad hoc Group on the OIE List of Aquatic Animal Diseases; The ad hoc Group on the Safety of Commodities Derived from Aquatic Animals, the ad hoc Group on the Responsible Use of Antimicrobials in Aquatic Animals, the ad hoc Group on the Disposal of Aquatic Animal Waste and the ad hoc Group on the Aquatic Animal Health Surveillance.
161. Dr Haenen pointed out that aquaculture is still the fastest growing food producing sector in the world, as it accounts for 50% of global fish production. Fish has always been a "global" commodity. She shown graphs on the contribution to human diet and world fish trade, as well as on the main fish exporters.
162. She reported on the diseases in Aquaculture based on the WORLD 2009 & 2010 WAHID database.
163. Dr Haenen emphasized on the Obligations of all OIE Members, to report outbreaks of listed diseases to WAHID (OIE) without delay. She referred to the: Article 1.1.2. of the Aquatic Code: 1. Countries shall make available to other countries, through the OIE, whatever information is necessary to minimise the spread of aquatic animal diseases and their aetiological agents and to assist in achieving better world-wide control of these diseases.
164. She informed the Commission on the outcomes of the AAC meetings of Sept 2009 & Feb 2010 as presented at the 78th OIE General Session 2010, related to the Aquatic Code and the Aquatic Manual.

165. She also mentioned that Chinese Taipei has been approved as OIE Reference Laboratory for Abalone herpes-like virus, a New OIE Collaborating Centre for 'Epidemiology and Risk Assessment of Aquatic Animal Diseases' (Norway and Canada) was approved, and the first Twinning project aquatic labs has been approved: Canada & Chile, on ISA, with 2 more under developments. A new publication (late 2009) is the Guide for Aquatic Animal Health Surveillance, developed by the ad hoc Group on Aquatic animal health surveillance.
166. Regarding Aquatic Animal Focal Points, Dr Haenen informed that as of April 2010, 119 OIE Members have nominated an Aquatic Animal Focal Point. Members that have not already nominated a focal point are encouraged to do so.
167. She mentioned the OIE Regional Training Workshops than have been conducted and those which are planned for 2010 and 2011.
168. She also commented on a pilot OIE PVS evaluation of a Member's aquatic animal health services that was conducted in Nov 2009. On the basis of the experience gained, it is proposed to develop a parallel aquatic PVS Tool to the one used for terrestrial animal health services. OIE considers the strengthening of both aquatic animal health services and classical veterinary services as a global priority. Members are encouraged to request PVS evaluations of their aquatic animal health services.
169. Finally she spoke of the working plan of the AAC 2010/2011 which includes for the Aquatic Code, ongoing review of the list of diseases, review emerging diseases, prepare text for disease chapters for gaining and regaining freedom for compartments, harmonise horizontal chapters with those in the Terrestrial Code, develop disease specific surveillance model chapters (1 fish, 1 mollusc, 1 crustacean), identify commodities that can be considered safe for trade and be included in the Aquatic Code, develop chapters on antimicrobials in aquatic animals, prepare chapter on humane killing for disease control purposes, contribute to OIE work on antimicrobial resistance in the field of aquatic animals, and develop a chapter on evaluation of Competent Authorities. For the Aquatic Manual, the template for disease-specific chapters will be revised. For meetings, presentations will be made on the activities of the Aquatic Animals Commission at the conferences of the OIE Regional Commissions, the AAC will be proactive in presenting the activities of the Aquatic Animals Commission at scientific conferences, and it will contribute to the 2nd OIE Global Conference on 'Contribution of Aquatic Animal Health Programmes to Global Food Security', and the OIE Aquatic Animal Focal Point workshops. Furthermore, a discussion paper on zoonotic diseases of aquatic animals will be made, the AAC will keep the Commission's web pages up to date, and consider new candidates for OIE Reference Laboratories for listed diseases, The AAC will provide input into the PVS to ensure its applicability to the evaluation of aquatic animal health systems, and contribute to FAO/OIE Regional Aquatic Biosecurity Framework Project for Africa.
170. She mentioned the OIE Global Conference on Aquatic Animal Health: "Aquatic Animal Health Programmes: their benefits for global food security" to be held in Panama from 27 to 29 June 2011.
171. To conclude she stated that the Commission strongly encourages Members to participate in the development of the OIE's international aquatic animal health standards by submitting comments.

Discussions

172. The Delegate of Norway thanked the government of Kazakhstan for their remarkable hospitality and she thanked Dr Haenen for her excellent presentation. She then expressed her gratitude to the entire Aquatic Animals Commission for their continuous excellent contribution to the work of the OIE; she stressed the need for all Delegates to support the work of the Aquatic Animals Commission. She then underlined the importance of climate change in the context of aquatic productions and she asked the Aquatic Animals Commission to address this matter in order to formulate predictions on the likely diffusion of emerging pathogens and new aquatic species; this would allow OIE Member Countries to prepare for such contingencies. She then underlined the importance of having an OIE Collaborative Centre on Epidemiology and Risk Assessment of Aquatic Animal Diseases (TRAD FR: Epidémiologie et évaluation du risque des maladies des animaux aquatiques) which competences are shared between Canada and Norway and she commended this partnership. She continued by reporting on the success of the conference in Norway on infectious salmon anaemia (many participants took part in it, particularly from Chile); she then stated that from this conference some recommendations will be forwarded to the OIE Aquatic Animals Commission on the issue of differentiation between the notification of pathogenic agents versus non pathogenic agents. She then informed on the notification made in 2009 by Norway on *Bonamia ostreae* and this was actually a misdiagnosis that a letter would soon be sent to the OIE to rectify this issue.
173. The Representative of Denmark thanked government of Kazakhstan of hosting this conference and she thanked the speaker for her excellent presentation. She pointed out that one outbreak due to viral haemorrhagic septicaemia (VHS) has been notified by Denmark to the OIE in 2009 and it is not reported by the speaker.
174. Dr Haenen agreed with the comment of Denmark and she stated that the country was quite advanced in reaching freedom from VHS.

Wednesday 22 September 2010

Technical Item II

Early detection and contingency plans for African Swine Fever

175. The Session Chairman, Dr Karin Schwabenbauer, delegate of Germany, briefly introduced the speaker for this Technical Item, Prof Dr José Manuel Sánchez-Vizcaíno.
176. Dr Sanchez-Vizcaino first started by expressing his gratitude to the OIE Regional Commission for Europe for inviting him to provide the audience with a presentation on early detection and contingency plan for African swine fever.
177. He then gave an update on African Swine fever by summarizing the pathogenesis, the clinical presentation, lesions, and diagnostic methods for this disease.
178. Dr Sanchez-Vizcaino explained that, according to literature review, epidemiological evidence has shown that the vast majority of outbreaks that have occurred in ASF-free zones were mainly the result of feeding food waste products from infected pigs to susceptible pigs.
179. He gave an update on the African swine fever worldwide emphasizing on the European current situation. At present time, ASF is endemic in more than 20 countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In Europe, it has been endemic since 1978, on the Italian island of Sardinia. In June 2007, an outbreak was reported in Georgia and, since then, the virus has spread through the zone, currently affecting a number of countries in the Caucasus and Russia. This epidemiological situation represents a major new risk for neighboring countries of Europe and Asia.

180. Dr Sanchez-Vizcaino claimed that, as there is no effective treatment or vaccine against infection by the African Swine fever virus, early detection and the implementation of appropriate contingency plans are the best means for controlling it.
181. He first discussed about early detection by saying that, without a doubt, early disease detection is the key component for the maintenance of animal health and is the most complex facet of effective disease surveillance.
182. He reported that a wide variety of factors can delay the early detection of ASF such as; lack of awareness or underestimation of the risk of introduction; unfamiliarity with the disease, differential diagnosis, and its clinical and anatomopathological presentation; deficient epidemiological and diagnostic procedures, and lack of preparation of field equipment.
183. He reminded that, in order to make a rapid diagnosis, the disease must first be suspected in the field. Secondly, appropriate samples must be sent to the laboratory and finally the correct control measures must be established thanks to a rapid response.
184. He informed that a CD regarding ASF diagnosis had been prepared by the OIE Reference Laboratory and will be soon available at the OIE. It is already accessible in many languages at the Website: www.sanidadanimal.info.
185. He suggested that the first and most important measure should be to provide private and official veterinarians and livestock producers in the zone with information and training on the existing risk and the main characteristics of the disease.
186. He expressed the need for animal health workers to be aware of the differential diagnosis for African swine fever: Classical Swine Fever, Salmonellosis, Erysipelas, Acute pasteurellosis, Streptococcal infection Aujeszky's disease, Leptospirosis, Circovirus infection, and coumarin poisoning.
187. Regarding contingency planning, Dr. Sanchez-Vizcaino stressed that all countries must be prepared in advance of any outbreak. All countries should therefore possess a contingency plan for African swine fever, in particular the countries currently at the greatest risk.
188. He reminded that a contingency plan for the control of ASF entails the stamping out and disposal of all infected, suspect and contact animals. For this reason, a legally supported contingency fund to compensate producers for the slaughter of their pigs is a crucial control measure for encouraging notification and guaranteeing the success of the control programme.
189. Dr. Sanchez-Vizcaino proposed that any contingency plan should include at least three general sections that provide as much information as possible on the following aspects: Administrative structure in the zone or country; livestock production structure; and characteristics of the disease and its diagnosis. He expressed the need for developing practical manual describing all the different steps to be undertaken from the suspicion of the disease up to the control or eradication.
190. He concluded by reiterating the need for a good African swine fever surveillance in the Region in order to better understand the zone at risk so the country may consequently undertake the appropriate measure to prevent and control de disease.

Discussions

191. The Delegate of Russia thanked the speaker for his detailed presentation and informed the audience of the changes that had occurred in his country's situation regarding African swine fever (ASF). He endorsed the information provided by Prof. Sanchez-Vizcaino. He pointed out that the Soviet Union had been working on this disease for a long time, that it had specialists and that its States were ready to face it. At present the situation was problematic in infected countries of the Caucasus. It was his belief that the illogical decisions taken by politicians to remove the Veterinary Services (VS) at borders, as well as the current inappropriate organisation of the VS were responsible for this situation. He cited the example of his country, where there were 93 autonomous VS that reported to local governments but not to the central State, as well as civil defence services, adding that this configuration was not working. He therefore supported the OIE's view that it was crucial for the VS to be organised effectively. He mentioned certain risk regions, in particular at the borders with Kazakhstan and Ukraine, where movements of boars could occur and contribute to the spread of the disease. He also cited the problem of the illegal transport of live animals and animal products, which had caused the virus to advance by around 350 km. He said that, by 2011, the disease could be found in the Federal Central District of Moscow, basing the estimate on the spread of the virus linked with the migration of boars at an annual rate of around 80 km. He therefore advised neighbouring countries to be prepared and to apply the OIE principle of compartmentalisation in farms, when possible.
192. Dr Schwabenbauer thanked the Delegate of Russia for his detailed description of the situation in the region and affirmed how important this knowledge was for border countries.
193. The Delegate of Armenia confirmed the political problems posed in the veterinary field in recent years. He stressed how serious it was to have removed the VS at border controls and said that governments needed to understand the importance of maintaining the VS at entry points. In addition, he asked whether rapid tests were available to detect the disease in the field to avoid wasting time sending samples to the laboratory. He mentioned the very important role played by producers in ASF control, saying that they should be provided with financial support to secure their cooperation.
194. On the subject of early detection, Prof. Sanchez-Vizcaino replied by saying that the disease could not be diagnosed properly in situ. He said that penside tests existed but that they could sometimes confuse positive or negative cases. It was therefore necessary to use a laboratory and, in view of the clinical picture of ASF, this was the only real means for making a differential diagnosis. He pointed out the need to work closely with producers. In particular it was necessary to apprise producers of the high risk of ASF occurrence and to provide them with information about the clinical signs of the disease.
195. Dr Schwabenbauer also emphasised the importance of close collaboration between public and private veterinarians and producers.
196. The Delegate of the Czech Republic thanked Kazakhstan for their invitation and congratulated the speaker on his eloquent presentation. He said that, contrary to what had been stated in the presentation, his country had not been infected with ASF. Prof. Sanchez-Vizcaino confirmed that, following an early warning, ASF had not been confirmed in the Czech Republic.
197. A representative of the European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (FESASS) welcomed the invitation to attend in the capacity of a professional organisation for animal health and sanitary security, and congratulated the speaker. He noted with interest that the veterinary community was aware that collaboration between veterinarians and producers was crucial and that proper compensation was necessary, irrespective of the type of farm. Moreover, he asked what the reactions of producers and the general public in Russia had been to stamping-out measures.
198. The Delegate of Russia confirmed that difficulties had been experienced with producers and the general public. Nevertheless, work had been carried out with producers to explain these necessities, and compensation had been paid to the tune of 90% of the market price to avoid misuse. Special difficulties had also arisen owing to opposition from traders of pigs and pig products which would ignore the animal health restriction to animal movements.
199. Dr Schwabenbauer asked for further information on the number of animals that had been slaughtered in Russia.

200. The Delegate of Russia replied that around 70 000 pigs had been slaughtered in the space of three years. One case involved a very large farm where 16 000 animals had been slaughtered.
201. The Delegate of the Netherlands thanked Kazakhstan for organising the conference and Prof. Sanchez-Vizcaino for his presentation, requesting more details about the absence of neutralising antibodies, how long surviving infected animals carry the virus and on the reasons that could explain the delay in the development of vaccine against ASF.
202. Prof. Sanchez-Vizcaino replied that natural killer cells and lymphocytes T-CD8 were involved in the immunological reaction against the virus. Nevertheless, it was very difficult for the animal to rid itself of the virus. In view of the highly complex genome of the virus, a specific approach needed to be adopted to developing a vaccine. In his view, it would not be possible for a vaccine to emerge for at least another 10 years.
203. The Delegate of Spain thanked the government of Kazakhstan. He provided clarification on Spain's experience with eradicating ASF. He said that ASF had emerged in Spain in 1960 and had not been eradicated until 1995. He pointed out that the key factors to achieving eradication were: (1) awareness that pig production could not be developed while ASF was present, although pig production was very important for the country; (2) a very rapid laboratory diagnostic system was set in place to enable all field suspicions to be confirmed rapidly; and (3) appropriate finance was guaranteed, enabling laboratories and the VS to be strengthened and providing decent compensation to producers. Furthermore, the European Commission had provided supplementary financing that facilitated implementation of the programme. He concluded by underlining the importance of working with all the infected countries in order to protect the countries of Europe and the rest of the world.
204. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) thanked Kazakhstan for organising the conference and, on the subject of contingency plans, he said that it was important for plans to be geared to the different types of farm, whether factory farming or small-scale pig production. He also reminded the occurrence of ASF in backyard farming operation can represent food security concern.
205. Prof. Sanchez-Vizcaino said that he had not had enough time to describe the plans in detail and that the situation did indeed vary according to the type of pig production. Small farms tended to pose a greater risk in view of the lower level of biosecurity and the widespread practice of feeding animals on waste. He added that it was not expensive to introduce minimum biosecurity measures and that this aspect should be considered.
206. A representative of Kazakhstan pointed out that the situation of neighbouring countries was not favourable and asked for further information about the capacity of ASF to be spread by ticks through birds, the source of the infection in the countries of the Caucasus and the principal clinical signs.
207. Prof. Sanchez-Vizcaino replied that the disease had been introduced chiefly via the illegal or poorly-controlled movements of infected live animals or animal products. He said that it was crucial to control the movement of these commodities fully. As for ticks, because they remained fairly localised they became detached from animals rapidly if they moved and so they were not a major means of spreading the disease. He added that, as the virus present in the region was very aggressive, producers should be informed that the clinical picture was clear, with high fever, heavy mortality and/or haemorrhagic fever.

208. On the matter of the introduction of the virus into the Caucasus, Dr Vallat added that, in 2007, the OIE received a notification from Georgia reporting the occurrence of the disease. This was the entry point in that sub-region. This confirmed the need to have effective veterinary controls at borders in all European countries. He thanked the Delegate of Russia for his analysis of the need for the VS to be organised appropriately. It was his hope that this crisis would help countries to find strong arguments to lobby their governments to adopt a direct chain of command and maintain strong veterinary controls at borders. Commenting on the intervention of the Delegate of Spain, he stressed that it was possible to successfully eradicate ASF by using appropriate measures, including compensation for producers, which was essential for securing good collaboration. Concerning the existing ASF crisis in Europe, he said that it was necessary to adopt a policy of eradication and that, to do this, good communication, including the one between Veterinary Services, the farmers and the general public, was necessary, mainly because the culling of infected animals and in contact animals cannot be avoided and that this will be criticised by medias. He recommended the use of OIE standards, in particular those relating to the culling of animals for disease control purposes, emphasising that these standards were recognised by the World Trade Organization and all Governments, facilitating their acceptability. He proposed that it should be mentioned in the recommendation.
209. Dr Schwabenbauer thanked all the participants for their useful contributions on what was a crucial matter. She said that education for veterinarians and producers helped to prevent the spread of the disease. She added that eradication in infected countries was possible, although it often took time. She stressed the importance of building cooperation in this area, notably at Regional Commission level. She went on to propose that certain Delegates should participate in the working group for drafting a recommendation. The following countries were nominated and approved: Russian Federation, Armenia, Georgia, Spain, Ukraine, Belgium and Italy.

Animal health situation in Europe in the first half of 2010

210. The Session Chairman, Dr Ago Pärtel, delegate of Estonia, invited Dr Berlingieri, Deputy Head of the OIE Animal Health Information Department, to present the animal health situation in OIE Members in the region in the first half of 2010.
211. This report is based on information obtained from national reports provided by OIE Members of the Regional Commission for Europe in preparation for the Regional Conference. Where necessary, this has been supplemented by relevant information extracted from immediate notifications and follow-up reports submitted by countries and other official data gathered as part of the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS).
212. In preparation for the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, the OIE requested Members to submit a Report on the Animal Health Situation for 2010. The following 35 countries provided a report: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Livestock population in Europe

Country	Cattle	Sheep & goats	Swine	Equines	Poultry
ALBANIA*	541 000	2 621 000	161 000	114 310	8 099 000
ANDORRA	...	...	...	...	...
ARMENIA	570 633	511 023	112 608	10 777	4 134 570
AUSTRIA*	2 026 260	412 897	3 136 967	90 000	13 100 000
AZERBAIJAN	2 848 194	8 409 936	5 347	74 066	22 352 909
BELARUS*	4 151 000	52 400	3 788 500	125 600	34 086 500
BELGIUM*	2 596 361	157 170	6 303 683	36 809	32 493 135
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA*	529 000	875 000	420 000	...	2 500 000
BULGARIA*	584 283	2 409 468	639 724	170 123	18 277 264
CROATIA	508 871	967 999	1 663 317	166 36	11 915 167
CYPRUS	55 392	693 325	877 000	...	14 000 000
CZECH REPUBLIC	1 374 328	232 845	2 130 729	79 101	165 871 733
DENMARK*	1 625 818	191 381	13 736 061	57 981	28 996 315
ESTONIA*	233 415	67 034	224 414	...	772 149
FINLAND	899 292	105 413	1 181 208	70 500	6 016 389
FRANCE	19 805 378	9 418 789	14 719 851	...	262 355 551
GEORGIA*	1 189 873	728 767	155 000	...	8 864 200
GERMANY	12 945 000	2 443 000 (sheep)	26 886 000	...	128 463 000
GREECE*	749 623	16 423 466	2 140 897	42 028	41 745 980
HUNGARY*	790 000	1 035 253	3 247 000	60 000	41 000 000
ICELAND*	72 000	458 550	47 000	77 500	300 000
IRELAND*	6 714 700	4 792 109	1 468 200	...	18 651 000
ISRAEL	330 000	520 000	180 000	...	45 000 000
ITALY	5 840 270	8 542 787	9 017 305	384 127	175 520 000
KAZAKHSTAN*	6 117 737	17 390 709	1 350 161	1 419 367	32 940 999
KYRGYZSTAN	...	...	...	...	...
LATVIA	378 213	83 905	329 510	12 616	4 728 872
LIECHTENSTEIN	6 078	4 415	1 811	495	10 000
LITHUANIA	695 000	73 700	1 100 000	58 000	9 419 400
LUXEMBOURG	200 000	21 000	80 000	6 000	70 000
MACEDONIA (FORMER YUG. REP. OF)	269 711	798 794	...	...	...
MALTA	...	...	...	...	...
MOLDAVIA*	224 409	852 501	313 682	55 523	...
MONTENEGRO	...	...	...	...	...
NETHERLANDS*	3 967 000	1 490 184	12 187 000	144 078	96 859 000
NORWAY*	876 300	2 296 000	828 600	35 389	68 365 850
POLAND	6 320 336	296 416	13 441 796	...	...
PORTUGAL*	1 567 197	2 481 727	1 798 499	...	230 000 000
ROMANIA	2 216 423	8 763 435 (sheep)	4 887 000	543 370	...
RUSSIA	...	...	...	...	...
SAN MARINO*	1 170	170	113	90	...
SERBIA	1 002 295	1 646 945	3 631 013	14 224	22 820 613
SLOVAKIA	486 547	432 829	570 918	...	...
SLOVENIA*	470 211	168 004	415 230	19 623	4 575 277
SPAIN	5 962 894	22 982 439	22 536 727	650 840	224 330 009
SWEDEN	1 538 281	540 487 (sheep)	1 528 740	300 000	...
SWITZERLAND	1 600 000	514 000	1 600 000	58 970	8 700 000
TAJKISTAN*	1 042 477	3 242 705	1 634	74 000	2 369 243
TURKEY*	10 204 617	26 804 439	...	525 531	206 934 273

TURKMENISTAN	...	...	...	...	...
UKRAINE*	4 917 600	1 797 100	6 883 400	...	190 544 300
UNITED KINGDOM	10 025 481	32 139 292	4 724 296	...	280 091 351
UZBEKISTAN	...	...	...	...	...
Total	127 070 668	186 890 808	170 451 941	5 327 674	2 467 274 049
(*) Data completed with WAHIS reports from 2008 and 2009. (...) No data available.					

213. The above table gives an overview of the current livestock population in Europe. Compared to the figures presented at the OIE Regional Conference in 2008, there has been a slight decrease in the total population figures for cattle, swine, equines and poultry whereas the total population of sheep and goats has increased. However, it should be noted that the picture is not complete as several countries have not provided animal population data since 2008.

Bluetongue

214. Bluetongue virus (BTV) infection has appeared in previously free areas in Europe due to climate change and global warming. The two previous epizootics of bluetongue (BT), due to BTV-8 and BTV-1, now seem to be under control; BTV-2, BTV-4, BTV-9 and BTV-16 have also been reported in the southern part of the continent. Vaccination campaigns have been undertaken for several BTV serotypes, on either a compulsory or a voluntary basis. The incidence in countries applying a vaccination strategy has considerably decreased and several countries report the absence of new cases in 2010. Overall, the number of new cases for Europe remained fairly stable in 2007 (49 618 outbreaks) and 2008 (44 822 outbreaks) but decreased significantly in 2009 (1 085 outbreaks).
215. Belgium is applying compulsory vaccination against BTV-8 for all cattle and sheep. No cases have been reported in 2010.
216. Bulgaria did not detect any BT cases in 2009 and has not detected any in 2010.
217. Cyprus has not reported any cases of BT in 2010.
218. Vaccination against BTV-8 in cattle, sheep and goats older than 3 months throughout the territory of the Czech Republic started in 2008. In 2010 the vaccination is ongoing and 1 497 478 animals have been vaccinated. No cases have been reported in 2010.
219. The last reported occurrence of bluetongue in Denmark was in November 2008. The vaccination strategy against bluetongue has changed from a compulsory vaccination strategy in 2008 and 2009 to a voluntary strategy in 2010. Farmers are recommended to vaccinate their animals, but vaccination is not compulsory.
220. France has reported only one outbreak of BT in 2010, due to BTV-1 in sheep. The third compulsory vaccination of ruminant livestock started at the end of 2009 against serotypes 8 and 1. Starting from the third quarter of 2010, vaccination will be done on a voluntary basis (except for animals intended for export).
221. Even though no cases of BT have been reported in Germany in 2010, the disease is still reported as present. Due to the improved epidemiological situation, vaccination against BTV-8 has been on a voluntary basis since January 2010.
222. In Greece, the BT outbreaks due to serotype 8 in the island of Lesvos were all resolved by March 2009. The BTV-1 outbreaks on the same island were closed in April 2010. No new outbreaks have been reported in 2010.
223. In Italy, during the first semester of 2010, no significant changes were detected compared to previous years, except for sero-conversion in some sentinel animals in Central and Southern Italy, where BT serotypes 1, 2, 4, 8, 9 and 16 are known to be present. In these regions, restrictions on animal movements and vaccination are applied as control measures.

224. No outbreaks have been reported in The Netherlands in 2010. Some positive samples were identified at the beginning of 2009; however, these were antibodies resulting from infections that occurred in 2008. Vaccination is performed on a voluntary basis.
225. Following the identification of residual BTV in the south of Norway in 2009, no new cases have been identified in 2010. Surveillance with bulk milk sampling in the restricted area and blood sampling of cattle and sheep at abattoirs will continue this year. Vaccination has not been used in any part of the country.
226. Poland reported that until June 2010, no native case of BT had been found despite the almost eight thousand sheep and cattle tested, which were all negative to PCR testing.
227. Portugal has been affected by BTV-1 since 2007 and the Portuguese mainland is a restricted zone for serotype 1. Annual vaccination programmes for BTV-1 are being carried out. Portugal declared freedom from BTV-4 on March 2010. Entomological and animal surveillance programmes are being carried out; no sign of virus circulation has been registered in the free area. Vaccination is being performed in the whole country for BTV-8 and in a small southern region for BTV-4.
228. Russia reported in the first semester 2010 a BT outbreak in Kaluzhskaya Oblast involving cattle. Vaccination is practiced.
229. Spain reported the creation of a lower-risk area for BTV-4 in the south of the country, in a joint attempt with Portugal to prevent the circulation of this virus from North Africa. A preventive vaccination plan against BTV-4 was drawn up to cover sheep and cattle in this area. During the first semester of 2010, vaccination against BTV-1 and BTV-8 using exclusively bivalent inactivated vaccines continued throughout the country.
230. In Sweden, the vaccination campaign has been performed for two seasons and no new cases have been found since 2008. All measures applied are in conformity with EU legislation and OIE guidelines. Vaccination of susceptible cattle and sheep is compulsory and has been ongoing since September 2008.
231. No BT cases were detected in the United Kingdom in the first half of 2010. Surveillance of animals was performed and the probability of windborne incursion of infected midges from continental Europe was monitored in the high midge season. Voluntary vaccination remains the main national control measure.

Classical swine fever

232. Classical swine fever (CSF) is still a concern due to the difficulty of controlling the diseases in the wild boar population in a few limited areas of Europe. Vaccination of the domestic pig population coupled with vaccination of wild boar is used to control the spread of the disease. Several countries use oral vaccination only in defined high-risk areas. Specific surveillance of the wildlife population is required to determine the presence or absence of virus circulation in wildlife.
233. Bulgaria is running a programme for the oral vaccination of feral pigs and wild boars in an area within 40 km of the borders with Romania, Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of) and Serbia. No CSF outbreaks have been reported in 2010.
234. In Croatia, there is currently no evidence that CSF virus is circulating among domestic pigs. This is supported by surveillance for CSF in the first half of 2010 (over 15 000 blood samples from domestic pigs and over 7 000 blood and organ samples from wild pigs, all with negative results).
235. France monitors the situation in domestic and wild species in the areas where previous outbreaks occurred. This is done in conjunction with an oral vaccination campaign in wildlife. However, it is planned to stop the vaccination plan in view of the recovery of CSF free status (last outbreak in France was in May 2007, in wildlife in the Bas-Rhin department).

236. In Germany, the last outbreak of CSF was in July 2009, in a wild pig close to the river Rhine (near Westerwald region). A programme for oral vaccination of wild boar in the affected area is still in place. Three campaigns a year (each campaign involving double distribution of the vaccine baits) are performed under the supervision of the competent authority. Seroprevalence is 100% in adults and up to 80% in young pigs.
237. In Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of) vaccination against CSF is obligatory for all pigs throughout the territory.
238. Poland reported that all 9 965 tested samples from pigs and wild boar were negative for CSF.
239. Romania, within its programme for the eradication and control of CSF, performs emergency oral vaccination only for wild boar in the risk areas once positive cases have been identified.
240. In Russia, nine new outbreaks of CSF were reported in January and February 2010 in Volgogradskaya Oblast, Saratovskaya Oblast and Voronezhskaya Oblast. In these outbreaks 7 pigs and 27 wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) were affected. Vaccination was applied in response to the outbreaks.
241. In Ukraine, pigs are routinely vaccinated in order to prevent any occurrence of CSF.

Equine infectious anaemia

242. Equine infectious anaemia (EIA) is a persistent viral infection of equids that occurs worldwide. Many horses have very mild or inapparent signs after first exposure, and then carry the virus subclinically. All infected horses, including those that are asymptomatic, become carriers and are infectious for life. Biting flies can act as mechanical vectors for the virus. In Europe, EIA is reported to be present in some zones and international movement of horses can allow the disease to be spread to other, disease-free areas.
243. Belgium declared the first occurrence of EIA, in a horse in West-Vlaanderen. This outbreak was detected following an investigation launched, on 20 January 2010, after the United Kingdom reported having confirmed the disease in two horses in a consignment that had come from Romania via Belgium. The horse was part of a shipment of 18 horses that arrived in Belgium from Romania; 9 horses continued their journey to the United Kingdom. Six further outbreaks in Belgium took place in this same epidemiological event.
244. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported positive cases in 2010.
245. France notified the reoccurrence of EIA in March 2010, with one outbreak at Montcaret and one at Prignonieux, both located in Dordogne. The infected horses were euthanized. The outbreak at Montcaret was declared closed on 6 July 2010 and restriction measures were lifted on the same date. Following the epidemiological investigations carried out in order to identify horses having a link with the outbreak, surveillance was implemented on 29 horses within a 2-km radius around the outbreak. Movement control measures and screening were also implemented. All the results of the tests carried out using agar-gel immunodiffusion were negative. In September 2010 a new outbreak occurred in the Nord department (near the border to Belgium) with three infected horses legally introduced in France from Romania in April 2008.
246. Romania identified 1 331 outbreaks, involving 1 389 equines (serological cases), in the first half of 2010; of the positive horses 39 were destroyed, four died and 448 were slaughtered. Surveillance, control, and monitoring for EIA are carried out by the Veterinary Services. Animals exported from Romania have been linked with outbreaks in Belgium, France and the United Kingdom (see specific paragraphs).
247. Serbia reported two outbreaks in the first semester of 2010.
248. In an event which started in October 2009 and was concluded in March 2010, Germany declared five outbreaks (four in Bayern and one in Baden-Württemberg). Another outbreak in Bayern was reported later in the same month. In total, nine horses tested positive and were destroyed. Eight additional outbreaks occurred in September 2010 in the regions of Hessen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Bayern and Rheinland-Pfalz. Illegal movement of animals was related to these new outbreaks.

249. In Greece an outbreak was reported in July 2010 in Anatoliki Makedonia Kai Thraki (near the border with Turkey); the affected horse has not been destroyed.
250. In January 2010, the United Kingdom reported the presence of two IEA-positive horses that had been arrived from Romania after transiting through Belgium. Mechanical transmission by vectors (tabanids) does not seem applicable as vectors are only present in Great Britain at the larvae stage in winter. Active adults are only present in Great Britain from May to August. The two horses were destroyed. Two additional outbreaks occurred in September 2010 in England. The Northern England outbreak was due to a horse legally imported from the Netherlands; the veterinary epidemiology inquiry is on-going.

Q fever

251. Q fever is a zoonosis with a worldwide distribution. Humans acquire infection from animal reservoirs, especially from domestic ruminants. Q fever is a highly infectious disease, which is due to the proliferation of *Coxiella burnetii*, an obligate intracellular bacterium. Infection in animals can often be asymptomatic. In terms of newly reported outbreaks, the numbers were the same in 2007 and 2008 (318 new outbreaks in each year but there was a considerable increase in 2009 with 582 new outbreaks (22 European countries reported Q fever present in 2009). This increase in 2009 was mainly due to a higher number of outbreaks reported by Croatia, Hungary, Israel, The Netherlands and Slovenia.
252. In March 2010, The Netherlands reported an increase in the incidence of the disease in animals. The total number of new outbreaks increased from 12 in 2008 to 65 in 2009. Tests based on PCR positive bulk milk samples indicate there were 76 outbreaks (infected farms) in March 2010 and 91 in July 2010. The number of human cases in The Netherlands has been growing significantly, with 12 cases in 2006, 127 cases in 2007, 1 014 cases (with one human fatality) in 2008 and 2 318 cases (with 6 human fatalities) in 2009. Following these events the Veterinary Services applied vaccination and culling as control measures to contain the spread of this zoonotic disease. More than 50 000 goats were culled during the control procedures for the disease. Vaccination against Q fever is now compulsory for all sheep and goats in the following categories: dairy farms and related breeding farms (all sheep and goats), rams and ewes for breeding on farms with more than 50 breeding sheep, migratory flocks, sheep and goats (domestic) in nature reserves, sheep and goats in locations with public access (e.g. petting zoos). The significant increase in the number of human cases has been ascribed to the increase in population density (both human population and goat population) in some areas of The Netherlands.
253. In the United Kingdom, a Great Britain-wide survey of Q fever infection was carried out using stored samples. For sheep, animal prevalence was estimated at 1% and flock prevalence at 10%. For goats, animal prevalence and herd prevalence were lower, but within-herd prevalence was substantially higher at 42%. Coincidentally, Q fever was confirmed as the cause of an abortion storm on a large dairy goat farm in England when 16 abortions occurred during a 7-day period in May. There is no evidence of human infection to date. There are no towns or villages situated within 5-km of the farm, so human cases from aerosol transmission are considered unlikely. Nevertheless surveillance is being maintained.

Rabies

254. Rabies is a serious zoonotic disease in the European region. The persistence of wildlife reservoirs in some countries and the introduction of potentially infected animals in a country previously free from the disease are the two main problems that European Members are facing. Several countries are applying oral vaccination to control wildlife reservoirs. However, when endemic areas are located across two or more countries, transboundary coordination is required for an effective vaccination campaign.
255. In recent years, rabies incidence has been increasing in Azerbaijan, as a result of an increase in the number of stray dogs and cats, an increase in the population of wild animals attacking domestic animals, and the fact that free annual preventive immunization is performed only on registered domestic carnivores. The main carriers of rabies are wild animals (jackals, foxes and wolves) and stray dogs.
256. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported rabies in wild and domestic animal species.
257. Bulgaria is implementing for the second consecutive year the programme for oral vaccination of foxes (two vaccination cycles in one year) in the northern part of the country.

258. In Croatia, vaccination of dogs is performed on a yearly basis.
259. No positive cases have been found in the Czech Republic and the country reports to be free from the disease. Vaccination of foxes was completed throughout the Czech Republic in 2009. Monitoring of foxes for rabies is still ongoing.
260. Sylvatic rabies has not been reported in Denmark since 1982, while the last case of European bat lyssavirus was detected in May 2009.
261. Finland has not reported any cases of rabies in 2010. The bait vaccination campaign in wildlife was carried out from 26 April to 6 May in the same area as in previous years (near the border with Russia). The second vaccination campaign will be carried out in September 2010. A special campaign to detect bat rabies is on-going in South-Western Finland as a result of finding one bat positive for bat lyssavirus (EBL-2) in 2009.
262. In Georgia 48 cases of rabies in domestic animals were reported. Wild animals and stray dogs remain to be main reservoir of rabies. Between January-June 2010, vaccination was carried out for 5 968 susceptible animals.
263. After an absence of 13 years, wildlife rabies reappeared in Italy In October 2008, in the Friuli Venezia Giulia region close to the border with Slovenia. During 2009, positive cases, mostly foxes, were detected in the same region and in October 2009 the disease was also confirmed in the Veneto region. In the first semester of 2010, numerous cases were detected in Veneto (174) and some sporadic cases occurred in Friuli Venezia Giulia (14), Trento Province (6) and Bolzano Province (5). In response to these developments in the epidemiological situation, an emergency vaccination plan started on December 2009. This plan includes several cycles of oral vaccination coupled with compulsory vaccination of domestic animals.
264. Rabies is endemic in Latvia. However, a significant improvement of the rabies situation has been achieved during the last 5 years since the introduction of oral vaccination of wild animals. The oral vaccination programme for wild carnivores covers the entire territory of Latvia. Several rabies cases are found each year (mainly in wild animals – foxes and racoon dogs, which are main reservoirs of rabies). Between January-June 2010, 13 rabies cases were registered in Latvia.
265. Lithuania still has some sporadic cases of rabies. The oral vaccination programme of wild animals has been implemented in Lithuania since 2006. Vaccination of cats and dogs against rabies is compulsory. All other domestic animals are vaccinated after exposure to an infected or suspect animal, or in rabies outbreak areas.
266. In Poland, the spring oral vaccination campaign covered 15 of the country's 16 regions (only Dolnoslaskie region was not covered). From 1 January to 31 May 2010, 11 rabies cases were detected (9 foxes, 1 raccoon dog and 1 dog) in Lubelskie and Podkarpackie region.
267. Romania reported 309 cases of rabies in the first semester of 2010: 227 wild animals (214 foxes, 5 wolves, 1 wildcat, 2 bears, 2 ferrets, 1 jackal) and 82 domestic animals (30 dogs, 12 cats, 16 cattle, 16 sheep, 2 goats, 2 pigs, 4 horses). Vaccination of dogs and cats is compulsory. There is a plan to purchase baits for the oral vaccination of wild animals.
268. The last positive case of rabies in Slovakia was detected in August 2006. In 2010, an oral vaccination plan for foxes, covering 70% of the territory, is carried out in Slovakia.
269. Antibodies to European bat lyssavirus (EBLV) have been detected in Sweden for the first time. The animals involved were eight Daubenton's bats (*Myotis daubentoni*). The eight bats originated from three different localities in the county of Skåne, in the south of the country. Sweden has declared that its rabies free status is not affected by the isolation of bat lyssavirus.
270. Canine rabies is endemic in Turkey and cases of rabies are also detected in farm animals and wildlife. Wildlife vaccination was evaluated as having been successful.

271. The number of rabies cases in Ukraine increased in the first semester of 2010 (1 029 cases) compared to the same semester of the previous year (371 cases). Since the beginning of the year, due to insufficient funding, oral immunisation of wild carnivores has only been carried out on the territory of two oblasts (Donetsk and Luhansk), with the vaccine being distributed by air.

West Nile fever

272. This vector borne disease continues to spread to more European countries. In 2009, West Nile fever (WNF) was already reported by Austria (wild birds), Hungary, Italy, Spain (wild birds); Russia reported that the disease was suspected but not confirmed. The most recent events in 2010 include the notification of 6 affected horses in August in Greece, 18 horses in Italy in previously free areas (Sicily and Molise) between August and September, and the first occurrence of WNF in Andalucía (Spain) in two horses in August.

Infection with *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*

273. In 2008 the World Assembly of Delegates approved the inclusion of diseases of amphibians among the diseases listed by the OIE. Two diseases were added to the list: infection with *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* and infection with ranavirus. The OIE has been collecting information on these diseases since January 2009. *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* is a chytrid fungus that causes chytridiomycosis in amphibians. The pathogen infects a broad range of species of amphibians (including frogs, toads and salamanders) and has a worldwide distribution. In 2009, only two Members in Europe reported the occurrence of this disease to the OIE: the United Kingdom suspected its presence (but no confirmation available) and The Netherlands reported, through the questionnaire on wildlife diseases, 78 cases, 48 (61.5%) of these being reported in the common midwife toad (*Alytes obstetricans*).
274. In June 2010, Sweden reported the first occurrence with three outbreaks in the southern part of the country. The affected animals were wild amphibians, namely common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and European green toad (*Bufo viridis*).

Oyster herpesvirus (OsHV-1)

275. For the third consecutive year, an increased mortality in Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) has been observed in some coastal areas of Western Europe; spat and seed oysters were the most affected. The reasons behind this mortality are still being investigated but oyster herpesvirus OsHV-1 has been regularly identified in the affected farms. *Vibrio splendidus* and *V. aestuarianus* have also been reported occasionally. A decisive factor is the increase in water temperature, which gives this mortality a seasonal pattern. Until now, only three European countries have reported the occurrence of this emerging disease to the OIE.
276. Starting in April 2010, France reported 14 outbreaks, both on its Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts. Oyster herpesvirus OsHV-1 (genotype μ var) was detected. *V. splendidus* was not reported in all outbreaks. Mortality was reported to be between 40 and 90%.
277. Starting in June 2010, Ireland reported 15 outbreaks, occurring on its southern, western and northern coasts. Oyster herpesvirus OsHV-1 (genotype μ var) was detected. Mortality was reported to be between 35 and 100%. The source of the outbreaks was legal movement of animals coupled with contact with a neighbouring infected establishment (horizontal spread through water). Although mortalities now appear to be at an end, reinfection of stocks that will be introduced between now and next summer is anticipated once the temperatures begin to climb again in June.
278. The United Kingdom reported the first outbreak in July 2010 in Kent. Four other outbreaks were reported in Jersey and were epidemiologically unrelated to the Kent outbreak. Oyster herpesvirus OsHV-1 (genotype μ var) was detected in the five outbreaks. For the Jersey outbreaks the pathogen was introduced through legal movement of seed in 2009. Mortality was reported to be between 25 and 100%.

Contingency plans and simulation exercises for animal diseases

279. Armenia is participating in the programme on 'Prevention of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Improving Response Capacity in the Event of an Emergency in the Countries of the South Caucasus'. A simulation exercise was carried out for brucellosis.
280. In Azerbaijan, the plan in operation since 2006 for the prevention and eradication of highly pathogenic avian influenza was amended in 2008-2009 to take into account developments in the worldwide epidemiological situation. The emergency plan for FMD was updated in 2009, a national programme on brucellosis was adopted in 2008 and a project on rabies is currently being designed. In June 2008, a table-top simulation exercise for avian influenza was carried out in June 2008, a regional and national field simulation exercise for FMD was conducted in May 2009 and a field simulation exercise for avian influenza was conducted in September 2009.
281. The Croatian Veterinary Directorate has prepared contingency plans for FMD, CSF, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, BT, African swine fever and bovine spongiform encephalopathy. It also co-ordinates disease simulation exercises in order to verify the effectiveness of these contingency plans and regular reviews of the plans are carried out. Each national contingency plan indicates the legal basis for particular actions, financial provisions, the organisation and hierarchical structure of the competent authority (including the national crisis management centre, the local crisis management centre and, where necessary, local sub-centres) to manage a disease outbreak. The plan also provides for the staff and equipment necessary for the urgent and efficient implementation of the measures, the required capacities of diagnostic laboratories, the relevant continuing education and the method of communicating with the public. These contingency plans are currently available on the web pages of the Croatian Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development.
282. In Cyprus, the Veterinary Services have prepared contingency plans for FMD, CSF, African swine fever, Newcastle disease and avian influenza. Contingency plans also exist for scrapie, bovine spongiform encephalopathy and BT. These contingency plans provide details all the actions to be taken with respect to disease reporting and notification, investigation of suspected cases, clinical examination, collection and dispatch of samples, movement control, zoning, culling and disposal of animals, compensation schemes, epidemiological investigation of cases and disinfection procedures.
283. The Veterinary Services of the Czech Republic have drawn up contingency plans for FMD, CSF, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, BT and transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. The plans are updated regularly and contain provisions covering the following: legal powers, financial arrangements, chain of command, personnel and technical arrangements, diagnostic laboratories, carcass disposal, vaccination, and training and education programmes. The Veterinary Services have recently organised two simulation exercises, one on FMD and the other highly pathogenic avian influenza.
284. Denmark's Veterinary Services have contingency plans for BT, FMD, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, scrapie, CSF, avian influenza and Newcastle disease.
285. In France there are contingency plans for FMD, highly pathogenic avian influenza, Newcastle disease, CSF, African swine fever and BT. These detail the distribution of responsibilities and the chain of command, and each plan contains specific provisions for the disease in question. The plans provide different provisions at three administrative levels: national level, regional level and 'department' level.
286. In Iceland, contingency plans exist for all the major exotic diseases, but most of the work recently has focused on the plans for highly pathogenic avian influenza. Cooperation already existed among Nordic countries for the development and operation of contingency plans, in particular for highly pathogenic avian influenza and FMD. Recently, this has been extended to include BT, on which there is active cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries.

287. Israel has developed contingency plans for rinderpest and Rift Valley fever. There is also has a contingency plan for the control and stamping out of notifiable avian influenza, which addresses the following main points: procurement and maintenance of equipment needed in the event of an outbreak, mapping of all poultry farms and location of environmentally neutral burial locations, development of diagnostic capabilities, training, diagnosis and further monitoring in the case of an outbreak, setting up and administration of zones around outbreaks, stamping out, surveillance, epidemiologic investigations, cleaning and disinfection and compensation mechanisms.
288. Italy has developed a specific contingency plan for the major infectious animal diseases (FMD, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, CSF, African swine fever and BT). The plan covers the chain of command and the operational procedures and control measures to put in place in the event of an emergency. Moreover, the National Animal Disease Control Centre has drafted a national/general contingency plan, covering the horizontal activities to be carried out in the event of an emergency and linked to the specific operational procedures (manuals) for each disease.
289. In Latvia the following contingency plans are in place: horizontal issues on important animal infectious diseases, FMD, CSF, transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, BT, African horse sickness, swine vesicular disease and other diseases, manual for humane killing of animals in emergency situations, disinfection procedures, and notification procedures for highly infectious diseases.
290. The Veterinary Services of Lithuania have prepared contingency plans for FMD, CSF, African swine fever, swine vesicular disease, Newcastle disease, rinderpest, peste de petit ruminants, vesicular stomatitis, BT, African horse sickness, chronic wasting disease, avian influenza, sheep and goat pox, lumpy skin disease, Rift Valley fever and bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The contingency plans contain provisions regarding the legal powers necessary for the implementation of the plans, funding, chain of command, laboratory capabilities, manuals with description of the procedures and detailed plans for emergency vaccination (where appropriate). Veterinary Services' staff regularly take part in training on identification of clinical signs, epidemiological investigations and control measures for animal diseases.
291. Luxembourg's Veterinary Services have prepared contingency plans for FMD, CSF, transmissible spongiform encephalopathies and avian influenza. In March 2010, a table-top simulation exercise on FMD was carried out in cooperation with Belgium and The Netherlands.
292. Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of) has a horizontal contingency plan for the eradication of contagious diseases in animals and specific plans for avian influenza, BT and FMD. These plans cover, for each disease, measures relating to suspicion and confirmation of the disease, creation of protection and surveillance zones, cleaning and disinfection measures, bio-security measures, and activities relating to culling, monitoring and surveillance, epidemiological investigations, diagnosis and vaccination. Programmes for the control and eradication of CSF and the control and eradication of Newcastle disease and a diagnostic manual on avian influenza are currently being prepared. Simulation exercises for avian influenza were performed in both 2008 and 2009.
293. The Netherlands have developed contingency plans for avian influenza, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, brucellosis, CSF, enzootic bovine leucosis, FMD, Newcastle disease, rabies, scrapie, swine vesicular disease, tuberculosis (*Mycobacterium avium*, *M. bovis*, *M. tuberculosis*), aquatic diseases (infectious salmon anaemia, infectious haematopoietic necrosis, viral haemorrhagic septicaemia, infection with *Bonamia ostreae*, infection with *Marteilia refringens*). Working manuals are being developed for all notifiable diseases, such as BT and Q fever.
294. Poland has contingency plans for FMD, CSF, avian influenza, Newcastle disease, swine vesicular disease, African swine fever, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BT and fish diseases (infectious haematopoietic necrosis and viral haemorrhagic septicaemia). All contingency plans include a list of legal acts concerning eradication of an animal infectious disease, financial resources, structure and organisation of crisis centres, relevant tasks and responsibilities, training plans for Veterinary Services and other units, description of method and scope of development and transfer of information.
295. Portugal has regularly updated contingency plans for avian influenza, Newcastle disease, BT, FMD, swine vesicular disease, CSF and African swine fever.

296. In 2010, Romania has approved five contingency plans, to cover the following diseases: FMD, avian influenza, CSF, African swine fever and Newcastle disease. Forty-one simulation exercises (one for each county, excluding Bucharest) have been carried for CSF, involving all the authorities responsible for disease control and eradication.
297. Slovakia has prepared contingency plans for BT, CSF, FMD, avian influenza, Newcastle disease and viral fish diseases.
298. Spain has a number of contingency plans, including a general plan that lays down a protocol for dealing with any health alert in Spain. In 2010, a new contingency plan has been drawn up to control rabies in domestic animals, together with an emergency vaccination plan in the event of an epizootic of FMD being detected in Spain. Other alert plans are currently being drawn up, including a specific alert plan for wildlife, which will be completed later on this year. In addition to the nationwide plans, the Autonomous Communities have developed local contingency plans to deal with an occurrence of specific diseases. Virtual simulation exercises are conducted via the web page of the Veterinary Health Alert Network (RASVE), simulating health alerts for various diseases; these virtual exercises simulate suspected outbreaks of BT, avian influenza, CSF, West Nile fever and FMD. These simulation exercises are accessible to the public and are used to train both public and private sector veterinarians.
299. Sweden has a comprehensive contingency plan for all epizootic diseases which has a horizontal section and nine disease-specific plans. The general part describes responsibilities and obligations for central, regional and local authorities and organisations as well as for veterinarians who would have obligations in the event of an outbreak of an epizootic disease. In addition, Sweden has disease-specific contingency plans for eight other epizootic diseases. The diseases covered in the various contingency plans include the following: African horse sickness, BT, infectious salmon anaemia, CSF, FMD, Newcastle disease, avian influenza, rinderpest, peste de petits ruminant, epizootic haemorrhagic disease of deer, sheep pox and goat pox, vesicular stomatitis, lumpy skin disease, Rift Valley fever and swine vesicular disease. A simulation exercise will be conducted in October 2010 to improve preparedness and management of outbreaks involving contagious animal diseases; the participants in the exercise include among others: the National Food Administration, the National Veterinary Institute and the County Administrative Board of Örebro.
300. In Switzerland, the control measures to be taken in the event of an occurrence of a highly contagious disease are described in the Animal Health Ordinance. Detailed contingency plans for FMD, CSF, African swine fever, avian influenza, Newcastle disease and African horse sickness are provided on an internet platform available to all official veterinary inspectors. The contingency plans contain all relevant information on the specific diseases and all the instructions needed for the cantonal veterinarians and the official veterinary inspectors to efficiently control a disease outbreak. Several regional disease simulation exercises (addressing FMD and highly pathogenic avian influenza) have been conducted in 2010. The Swiss Federal Veterinary Office has started preparing a national disease simulation exercise for the year 2011 that will involve all regions. The scenario will be based on a severe and long-term FMD outbreak.
301. The United Kingdom has a generic plan covering all exotic notifiable diseases. The plan, which is reviewed annually, is comprised of two parts: a) an Overview of Emergency Preparedness, providing details of how the government prepares for an operational response; and b) the Framework Response Plan, outlining systems, structures, roles and responsibilities implemented during an outbreak. The United Kingdom is carrying out a national scale FMD simulation exercise in 2010 to test the government's preparedness for an outbreak of a notifiable exotic disease of animals. This exercise consists of two table-top exercises, in June and October, followed by a two-day real-time simulation exercise on 9 and 10 November 2010. The scenario will simulate a medium to large scale outbreak that has spread from England to both Wales and Scotland as well as within England. Local and regional exercises are also scheduled.
302. The table below lists simulation exercises conducted in Europe between 2008 and 2010 in Europe details of which were distributed via the OIE mailing list.

European countries that informed the OIE of their simulation exercises undertaken between 2008 and 2010, details of which were disseminated by the OIE		
OIE Member	Disease	Date
Lithuania	African swine fever, avian influenza, BT, CSF, FMD, Newcastle disease, Q fever and swine vesicular disease	September 2010
Slovenia	FMD	June 2010
Turkey	Highly pathogenic avian influenza	May 2010
Turkey	FMD	May 2010
Turkey	Highly pathogenic avian influenza	December 2009
Denmark	FMD	September 2009
Romania	FMD	September 2009
Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden	West Nile fever	June 2009
Slovenia	Avian influenza	May 2009
Lithuania	African swine fever, avian influenza, BT, CSF, FMD, Newcastle disease and swine vesicular disease	April 2009
Serbia	Avian influenza	November 2008
Turkey	Highly pathogenic avian influenza	November 2008
Spain	FMD	June 2008
Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden	Bluetongue	May 2008
Denmark	CSF	May 2008
Luxembourg	FMD	March 2008
Albania	HPAI	January 2008

Transparency of the animal health situation in the Region

303. One of the main missions of the OIE is to provide information on the global animal health situation. In order to fulfil its mandate in this respect, the OIE manages WAHIS, based on the commitment of OIE Members to notify the OIE of the main animal diseases, including zoonoses. By adopting Chapter 1.1.2. of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code and Chapter 1.2.1. of the Aquatic Animal Health Code, OIE Members recognised their obligation to notify the OIE of their animal health situation in a timely manner.
304. OIE Members are required to provide the OIE with immediate notifications, six-monthly reports and annual reports documenting the evolution of their sanitary status. The following is a list of those Members that have submitted the first six-monthly report for 2010 (as of 23 August 2010): Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom. It should be noted that a few OIE Members are overdue with their reports. No animal health reports have been received for 2009 or 2010 from Kyrgyzstan, Malta and Uzbekistan and no reports were received for 2008, 2009 nor 2010 from Andorra and Turkmenistan. The OIE wishes to point out that it is ready to provide these Members with specific assistance in order to improve their notification situation.

Discussions

305. The Session Chairman congratulated Dr Francesco Berlingieri on his clear and informative presentation and invited comments from the floor.
306. The Delegate of the Netherlands thanked the Government of Kazakhstan for their warm welcome in Astana and thanked the speaker for the very good presentation. On the issue of Q fever, she stated that the culling performed involved only unvaccinated animals. She indicated that this year, up to now, there were 300 human cases reported in the Netherlands, which indicates a trend in the reduction of human cases in comparison with 2000 the past year. Finally she concluded by clarifying that starting from this year the entire ovine and carnie population will be vaccinated.
307. The representative of the EC thanked the speaker for his excellent presentation and underlined the West Nile Fever (WNF) emerging situation which is worrying for some southern EU member states. He requested the present Delegates to consider the emergence of WNF in the framework of the “One health” approach to animal diseases; he thought that it would be appropriate to include this issue in the next discussions to be held during the next OIE Regional Conference.
308. The Delegate of Belarus thanked the government of Kazakhstan for hosting this international event. He stated that in Belarus there were no cases of bluetongue (BT) nor bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and that the country wished to keep this good sanitary status in order to keep its good export market. It inquired which would be the import risks in importing cattle from European countries such as France or Germany.
309. Dr Berlingieri indicated that there is an OIE procedure for the classification of countries according to their BSE risk and this would be a basis for determining the risk of importing cattle from other OIE Member Countries. He added that the respect of the OIE International Standards would allow for any country to safely import animals and animal products.
310. Dr Vallat recalled that for countries wishing to gain official sanitary status recognition, a specific procedure existed in OIE for FMD, BSE, Rinderpest and CBPP. As regards BSE, both France and Germany have been classified by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates as countries with a Controlled BSE risk and that all conditions to certify such animals without risk were defined in the OIE Code. He then specified that there was not such mechanism for BT. He then clarified that using the very detailed chapter of the OIE Code on the disease for the safe trade of animals and their products would allow countries to perform import with a negligible risk of introducing diseases. He stressed that respect of certification procedures were however crucial.
311. In reply to the question raised by the Delegate of Belarus, the representative of the EC indicated that BT has considerably improved in the EU as it was indicated in the presentation on the animal health situation. He then indicated that the EU has an agreement with Russia for the export of cattle and in the framework of that agreement regular export of cattle from France and Germany take place. He would be available to further discuss this matter.

Activities of the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group

312. The Session Chairman invited Dr Professor Neville Gregory, to present details of the Activities of the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group.
313. Prof Gregory presented the role of the Animal Welfare Working Group (AWWG) which is to provide international leadership in animal welfare through the development of science-based standards and guidelines, the provision of expert advice and the promotion of relevant education and research.
314. He informed that there were 12 participants in the AWWG, from 10 countries, and they include individuals working with the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission, OIE International Trade Department, National Government veterinary offices, European Commission, International Coalition for Farm Animal Welfare, Universities, International Dairy Federation, International Meat Secretariat and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers.

315. He highlighted that the issues which the group consider have an international focus. The aim is to achieve incremental changes in animal welfare standards rather than rapid revolutionary changes. In addition, the group is sensitive to the feasibility of achieving changes in poorer nations which do not always have the infrastructure or resources to invest in animal welfare improvements.
316. The group is responsible for promoting the production of animal welfare standards. This is achieved by guiding the Director General to appoint ad hoc working groups consisting of experts in a field. The ad hoc groups produce draft standards which are put before the AWWG, and after amendment they are forwarded to the OIE's Code Commission for its approval before they can be put forward for consideration by the national governments. So far seven standards chapters have passed through this procedure and have been adopted by OIE members:
- The transport of animals by land
 - The transport of animals by sea
 - The transport of animals by air
 - The slaughter of animals for human consumption
 - The killing of animals for disease control purposes
 - The control of stray dog populations
 - Laboratory Animals
- and three standards are being drafted:
- Broiler Chickens
 - Beef Cattle
- Three approaches are being encouraged to enable regional implementation of the standards
- The formation of Regional Animal Welfare Strategies
 - The formation of Collaborating Centres
 - The implementation of national Focal point Workshops
317. He concluded mentioning that a primary goal in the group's activities is to support the OIE in its endeavours to monitor and fight animal diseases at the global level. Particular attention so far has been given to the welfare of animals in transboundary live animal trading, at the time of killing during disease eradication or at slaughter for consumption, and the use of laboratory animals in vaccine production or diagnostic support. As the work progresses, the focus will broaden to encompass the welfare of individual animal species and production animal types.

Discussions

318. The Delegate of Norway thanked the speaker for its presentation and commended the work done by the Working Group on Animal Welfare and by the related ad hoc groups. She indicated that it would be best if the Working Group could further address the issue of welfare in aquaculture, given the welfare issues related to intensive productions. She offered to provide expertise from Norway if required.
319. Prof. Neville Gregory stated that he would report this important matter to the Working Group at their next meeting and he indicated that it would be necessary to find additional expertise on aquatic animal welfare.

European Union Animal Health Strategy: Integration of OIE Standards

320. The Session Chairman invited Dr Moritz Klemm, Officer, from the European Commission (DG SANCO), to present details of the European Union Animal Health Strategy.
321. Dr Moritz Klemm gave an introduction to and background information as to the new European Union Animal Health Strategy, explaining how the Animal Health legislation in the EU has developed in the past decades and what emerging or re-emerging factors have led to the need to update and upgrade the Animal Health policy in the EU.
322. Dr Klemm explained the underlying principle of partnership, including with international organisations especially the OIE, the need to define priorities and adopt a modern legal framework, and how the convergence of EU Animal Health legislation with international standards such as the Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes and Manuals could be further improved and what the challenges are in this respect. An update was also given on the state of play of the implementation of the Strategy and the development of the EU Animal Health Law.

Discussions

323. The Chairperson thanked the speaker for his very good presentation and he underlined how the EU animal health strategy took into account OIE perspective and international standards. He indicated that this was an encouraging fact indicating that this work is going in the right direction.
324. Dr Vallat thanked the speaker and he pointed out how the OIE is working on categorisation of diseases in cooperation with the EC. This is a complex tool to be used to support decision makers in defining policy and prioritising resources for disease control programmes. He also clarified that ADIS is an important project implemented by the OIE with the financial support of EU which has a time span of 4 years and special efforts have been done to meet the deadline. He indicated that ADIS was meant for all EU Member States, but that the OIE wish the use of this tool for all countries in Europe. Finally he stated that he was happy to see EU willingness to consider the criteria of quality of Veterinary Services and the OIE PVS Tool.

Update on the activities of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission

325. The Session Chairman invited Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General, to present an Update on the activities of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission on behalf of Dr Alejandro Thiermann, President of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code Commission not allow to participate at the last moment.
326. Dr Vallat provided an update on the most recent activities of the Code Commission. He gave a brief review on the work and recommendations from the Code Commission on the most relevant chapters for the region.
327. He also explained the OIE standard setting process more in detail and provided the Delegates with recommendations as to how to improve their participation during the course of the year.
328. He spoke on the improvement of the specific chapters which improves the notification requirements for listed diseases. Regarding the status of OIE listed diseases, he presented the diseases proposed for suppression from the list. He also mentioned the new questionnaires on African horse sickness to be prepared for status recognition and the changes proposed on the FMD chapter in order to facilitate a better control worldwide.
329. He commented on the future inclusion on new PVS criteria (management, communication), the draft chapter on pet food, the revision on the salmonellosis text, the continued work on animal welfare and the revision of the chapter on rabies to be submitted for adoption.
330. Dr Vallat also informed that all chapters on diseases of bees were revised and that at in reference to the chapter on bovine spongiform encephalopathy there were no new proposals from Members for first time after close to twenty years.
331. Finally, he mentioned the new chapter prepared on enzootic abortion of ewes and the chapter on swine vesicular disease already revised by the Commission and to be submitted for adoption.
332. Dr Vallat highlighted the future activities already planned by the Commission, he informed that the Code Commission recently met in Paris to discuss Member's comments and the outcomes from the 78th General Session.
333. The Chairman thanked Dr Bernard Vallat for his clear presentation and Dr Thiermann for the preparatory work.

Animal Welfare: European Union perspectives and expectations

334. The Session Chairman invited Dr Maria Ferrara, from the European Commission, to provide information on EU perspectives and expectations regarding animal welfare.
335. Dr Ferrara gave an overview of the on-going animal welfare initiatives in the European Union with particular focus on the current evaluation of EU animal welfare policies which will be the basis for the development of a new EU Strategy on animal welfare.
336. Dr Ferrara recalled the international activities undertaken by the EU in order to raise awareness and create greater consensus on internationally recognised animal welfare standards, such as the OIE standards, highlighting the important role of international organisations and possible further international developments. In particular, she highlighted the relevance for the European Region to develop a common strategy for the enforcement of the OIE standards on animal welfare as discussed and agreed in previous meetings of the OIE delegates.

Discussions

337. The representative of Switzerland complimented the speaker and the EC for the presentation. He indicated that animal welfare was an important political issue and that new laws on that topic had been adopted after long debates in Parliament in his country. He mentioned that scientific data were needed in animal welfare and that Switzerland had two research centres dealing with animal welfare issues in livestock and in pet animals. He stated that this work needed to take into account the behavioural changes of pet owners. He concluded by indicating that he supported the proposal of creating a Regional Animal Welfare Strategy.
338. The Belgian Delegate thanked the government of Kazakhstan for the excellent hospitality; then, speaking on behalf of the 27 EU Member States, he recognised that a Regional Animal Welfare Strategy for Europe should be developed to facilitate a common understanding on the implementation of the OIE animal welfare standards within the Region. He recommended further discussing such strategy at a technical level in view of the meeting of the Regional Commission for Europe during the General Session of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates next year.
339. The Delegate of Norway expressed her support for the creation of an Animal Welfare Regional strategy for Europe and she advised for the inclusion of aquatic animal welfare issues into this regional strategy.
340. The Chairperson thanked the speaker for her excellent presentation and underlined how it would be important for consumer's perception to move forward on this issue. He stated that the variability in types of animal productions and their environmental impact, as well as the best use of available resources needed to be taken into account by VS when defining the animal welfare strategy.

Presentation by International and Regional Organisations

OIE Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Training, Epidemiology, Food Safety and Animal Welfare

341. Ms Barbara Alessandrini presented the work done by the OIE Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Training, Epidemiology, Food Safety and Animal Welfare focusing on training and animal welfare initiatives in the European Region. Training is considered strategic in implementing animal welfare standards. The OIE approved international animal welfare standards based on scientific principles and is promoting their application worldwide. The European Commission urges member countries to improve official controls and to increase stakeholder responsibilities toward the welfare of animals in each stage of their life. Recent orientations led the European Union to evaluate the future possibility of taking up responsibility on the protection of companion animals, as a consequence not only of their impact on veterinary public health, but also of the great interest of European citizens on this issue. The OIE has recently produced recommendations on stray dog population control and on the welfare of animals used for research and education. Another area of increasing interest for the European Commission and international organisations from an animal welfare perspective, is the management of non epidemic emergencies, such as natural or human induced disasters. Training represents, in this as in all other cases, a reliable tool to enhance veterinary service awareness as well as preparedness to provide an appropriate response in emergency situations.

342. Istituto “G. Caporale” from Teramo, Italy – OIE Collaborating Centre for Veterinary Training, Epidemiology, Food Safety and Animal Welfare – has been providing training courses to official veterinarians of EU member countries and third countries, as provider of the DG SANCO of the European Commission, in the framework of the “Better training for safer food” initiative since 2007. This work offered the opportunity to investigate new learning pathways to train veterinarians on animal welfare and to test innovative training methods, developing learning programmes and validating training management models able to respond to the ever-changing and constantly increasing demand for veterinary training at international level. The attempts to transform the expertise acquired into web based knowledge management systems on animal welfare for the stakeholders community are achievable at www.sancotraining.izs.it (training on farm animals) and www.carodog.eu (communication and training on dog population management, developed with the international organization “Vier Pfoten”).

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

343. The FAO representative, Dr Peter de Leeuw, thanked the country for his invitation and presented the key elements of the FMD control situation following the conference held in Asunción, Paraguay, in June 2009.
344. He referred to the existing cooperation between OIE and FAO, notably through GF-TADs, GLEWS, OFFLU, CMC-AH and the Regional Animal Health Centres. He recalled the decision taken at the GF-TADs Global Steering Committee to draw up an OIE/FAO working group in order to promote a global strategy to control the disease and to develop a Progressive Control Pathway or PCP.
345. He mentioned the regional roadmaps that laid down the coordinated regional strategies adapted to each situation, such as EUFMD in Europe, SEACFMD in Asia, PANAFTOSA in South America and those currently under development in West Eurasia and in Africa.
346. He described the stages of the PCP from 0 to 5, with stage 3 under discussion with OIE and stages 4 and 5 corresponding to the official recognition of free status with and without vaccination by the OIE.
347. Finally, he reported on progress made since the conference in Asunción, including the announcement of a joint FAO/OIE scientific and pledging conference in Asia in June 2012.

Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE)

348. Dr Walter Winding from the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) provided an update on the activities of this organization that represents the veterinary profession in 38 countries throughout Europe. He highlighted that the FVE promotes the importance of good cooperation between all different disciplines in the profession, both in the public field as well as in the private field.
349. He expressed that FVE strongly supports the OIE concept of Veterinary Services comprising all actors, including official and private veterinarians as well as animal owners and keepers. FVE very much welcomes the OIE initiatives on good governance and veterinary legislation.
350. He reported that for the FVE president, Dr. Winding, it is very important to clearly identify roles and responsibilities of the veterinarian as well as his mandate in the society. Referring to the One World - One Health concept, he also stressed that veterinary medicine is a health profession, playing a key role in animal health as well as in public health.
351. The representative of FVE stressed the need for better communication for the benefit of animal health, animal welfare and public health.
352. He concluded by providing the audience with the address of the website of the organization where further information can be found (www.fve.org).

World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)

353. Dr Rasto Kolesar, representative of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA), took the floor. He indicated that the OIE European region accounts for 13% of the world population, yet the region produces 19% of global meat. While the most intensive technologies such as sow stalls and cage technologies are being banned in the EU, some non EU countries are employing more intensive technologies than traditional ones with potentially more pressure on the welfare of animals. He considered that the impact of global farming of livestock – particularly ruminants – on climate change was now a high profile issue and the importance of this matter will continue to grow. Varied reports have been produced suggesting ways to achieve the most environmentally-friendly modes of farming. However, these do not yet provide a global perspective.
354. Because of constant pressures on scaling up and intensification of farming, international standards such as OIE standards on animal welfare are required, and safeguarding minimum requirements for the welfare of farmed animals is extremely important.
355. He considered that, thanks to OIE global initiatives on animal welfare, WSPA has observed a change in attitudes towards the animal welfare agenda amongst policy makers in Asia and in Latin America. Work of global international organisations, industry and NGOs on animal welfare can be mutually beneficial.
356. As an example of WSPA activities, he indicated the promotion of the global work on the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare (UDAW). The aim of the programme is to achieve adoption of the UD at the UN, to underpin a global recognition of animal welfare. At present there was no such recognition suggesting that the welfare of animals used by humans should be respected. WSPA believes that its adoption would encourage governments to consider animal welfare principles and introduce them in their legislation. Up to the present moment, governments and governmental bodies from 57 countries have officially supported the UDAW. Out of these 32 are Member Countries of the OIE in the European region. Other are welcomed to join. The speaker stated that the OIE has been a leading organisation supporting the UDAW.

Discussion

357. Dr Correa Messuti, President of the OIE addressed the issue of impact of livestock farming on climate change, informing that an OIE ad hoc Group was working on this complex issue and that the report « Livestock Long Shadow » from the FAO on this matter needed to be addressed in the context of other existing works on this matter since it was controversial, not unanimously accepted, as the FAO having published later different additional documents. He added that other aspects needed to be weighted when addressing this matter, such as the positive aspects of the interactions between humans and animals. He informed that the report of this OIE ad hoc is available on the OIE website. He then addressed the Universal Declaration on Animal Welfare and recalled how the OIE had adopted a Resolution in 2007 for supporting while introducing in the declaration the role of the OIE as reference standard setting body on animal welfare; he enquired if this Declaration did consider these points and if the speaker could provide the OIE Director General with an official copy of the draft.
358. The speaker explained that he was not aware of the state of play of this Declaration but he could find this information.
359. The Chair supported the intervention of Dr Correa Messuti on the issue of climate change and also indicated that a balance between animal welfare and public health should be found. He stated that the OIE was an independent organisation, and a reference in this matter.
360. The Delegate of Germany stressed the fact that the link between climate change and livestock production is a complex phenomenon and that a broad range of studies need to be taken into account when addressing the issue. She made reference to the work of the OIE ad hoc Group on this topic which showed positive aspects of livestock production. She then made reference to a more recent report (2009) from the FAO “Livestock in Balance” where positive aspects of livestock farming have also been described. She stated that there will always be a need for livestock and that therefore there will be a need to further mitigate the negative effects of animal production on the environment.

361. The speaker clarified that there is indeed no clear picture of the situation and that many reports that need to be taken into account when considering this matter.

Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire (FESASS)

362. Mr. Alain Cantaloube representing the Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire (FESASS) reminded the primary mission of this federation which is to promote a collective action of the producers and highlighted that this mission had to be embedded in a strong partnership with veterinary practitioners and public veterinary services.
363. He reported that FESASS actively support the new European Union animal health strategy which is based on prevention principles rather than on intervention. In this framework, making reference to the OIE recommendations on the need for enhanced sanitary surveillance, he indicated that FESASS was organizing, in collaboration with CODA-CERVA, a conference dedicated to this topic. This conference will be held on this coming December first in Brussels and he invited all the Members of the OIE regional Commission for Europe.
364. He reported that FESASS currently conduct an internal consultation regarding the financing of the sanitary action and he expressed his appreciation regarding the OIE involvement on that matter.
365. He concluded by recognizing the OIE humane and responsible approach towards producers which favors the establishment of real faithful partnership that serves sanitary security.

Speech of the Ministry of Agriculture

366. Mr. Kurishbayev, the Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, remembered the audience that Kazakhstan had been a member of the OIE since 1995. This membership is very important for the country in its effort to reach a full integration into the world economy and especially in its active entry to the foreign food markets.
367. He reported that after a mission of Dr Vallat in his country a revised version of the Veterinary Law that includes most of the OIE recommendations was adopted last year. He explained that the regulatory functions of the Veterinary Services of Kazakhstan are performed by the State Inspection Committees under the Ministry of Agriculture as per a recent reform.
368. He also reported that during this reform, a special attention have been paid to shift to new modern methods of animal disease prevention, diagnosis and control. Today, all regional veterinary laboratories of the country are equipped with the up-to-date facilities and use state of the art diagnostic methods.
369. The Minister stressed that this Conference was a critical step in resolving issues of interest to regional issues and concluded by highlighting the importance of mutual support at regional level.

Acknowledgment from the Academy of Agriculture Science of Russia

370. The Professor Alexander Panin started by mentioning that Dr Vallat has always emphasized on the impact of the OIE Collaborating Centres and Reference Laboratories in the development of international collaboration. He highlighted that this collaboration helps Veterinary Services to be in compliance with the international standards.
371. He explained that, in the Russian Federation, the recognition of two eminent institutes, FVSCI (Moscow) and ARRIAH (Vladimir) as OIE Collaborating Centres, has served as an impetus for upgrading other national veterinary laboratories and support to other laboratories within the region.
372. He reported that the Russian veterinary community highly appreciates the on-going OIE inputs in the science field and he especially recognized the contribution of the OIE Director General, Dr. Bernard Vallat, by nominating him as a Foreign Member of the Russian Academy of the Agricultural Sciences. The Prof. Alexander Panin handed to Dr Vallat the diploma regarding this nomination.

373. Dr Vallat thanked Dr Panin for the extremely honourable reward that he was awarded and he expressed surprise and pleasure in receiving it. He then stated that the OIE support the development of a scientific community of excellence contributing to the international scientific cooperation, facilitating negotiation of OIE standards and mentioning that presently two OIE Reference centres are based in Russia; he added that he would support projects aiming at increasing the number of OIE Reference laboratories in Russia, allowing to improve diagnostic capacities in Russia and in the region. He also encouraged the implementation of twinning projects between laboratories of the region with existing OIE Reference laboratories in Europe and worldwide.

Discussions of Recommendations Nos 1 and 2

374. 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 were presented for adoption at the Friday session with some minor amendments as per suggestions and discussions from participants.

Date and venue for the 25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

375. The president of the Commission asked delegates present if any of their countries wished to host the 25th Conference of the OIE regional Commission for Europe.
376. The delegate of Germany expressed the wish of his country to host the Conference on the second half of September.
377. The proposal of Germany was unanimously accepted.
378. The precise dates of the Conference will be decided during the Regional Commission meeting to be held during the General Session in 2011. This conference will be fixed during the end of September 2012.
379. The representative of Switzerland also expressed the wish of his country to host the 26th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in Berne in 2014. He mentioned that 2014 will be the 100 anniversary of the Swiss Veterinary Services.
380. The proposal of Switzerland was unanimously accepted.
381. As usual, two technical items will be discussed during the Conferences of the Regional Commission.
382. One technical item will include the response of Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe to a questionnaire that will be prepared on the specific subject. This item will be decided during the next meeting of the Regional Commission during OIE General Session in Paris in May 2011. The other technical item will deal with a subject of current interest that will be proposed by the Regional Commission during the meeting of the Region during the General Session preceding the Conference, i.e. in May 2012. This Item will not include a questionnaire.

Thursday 23 September 2010

Professional and Cultural Visit

383. Participants and their guests highly appreciated the professional and cultural visit organised for the day by the host country. Sincere thanks to the organisers for their kind hospitality were presented.

Adoption of final report and Recommendations

384. Dr Vallat explained the procedures to adopt the report of the Conference and the recommendations. Delegates are allowed to comment or make suggestions which are taken into account on the spot but additional comments on the report, received by 15 October 2010 at the OIE Headquarters, will also be considered. However, the recommendations need to be adopted during the session and cannot be changed later on.
385. The report was adopted with a few minor amendments.
386. The two recommendations were adopted without any amendment. Few suggestions from the Representative of Russia regarding the translation into Russian language were accepted and adopted.
387. The traditional motion of thanks for the host country was read by the President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe.

Closing ceremony

388. The President of the Regional Commission for Europe, Dr Nikola Belev, thanked the host country, all participants and the OIE Secretariat for a most fruitful conference. He thought that the Conference agenda was relevant to the region and the social programme most enjoyable. He conveyed the gratitude of the Commission to the Government of Kazakhstan for supporting the Conference.
389. Dr Carlos Correa, President of the World Assembly of Delegates thanked all participants for their active participation. He expressed his sincere appreciation to the Secretariat of the host country and of the OIE for the excellent work carried out to ensure the success of the Conference. He hoped that participants enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Kazakhstan and that they would carry home with them nice memories of their stay in Astana.
390. Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General stated that the Conference provided a good opportunity for Members of the region to raise issues of mutual interest but also those of concern. He noted that the technical presentations were of a very high level. He expressed his appreciation to the OIE Secretariat and other OIE staff from the Central Bureau for their active and fruitful participation. He remarked the excellent organisation and coordination of the Conference He invited all participants to be present in the next Regional Commission Conference. Dr Vallat thanked the Government of Kazakhstan for their contribution in making the Conference a success.
391. Dr Saktash Hasenov, Vice Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, thanked all participants including speakers, interpreters and the Secretarial staff of the OIE Representation and the OIE Central Bureau for making the Conference meaningful and interesting.
392. Dr Saktash Hasenov officially declared the Conference closed at 11.30 a.m.

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AGENDA

- I. Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme of Strengthening Veterinary Services (including OIE-PVS and PVS Gap Analysis and veterinary Legislation in Europe and Worldwide)
- II. Activities of the OIE Regional Representation and the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
- III. Activities of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Europe in Brussels
- IV. Technical Item I: The dependence of the effective border controls on appropriate resources deployment and enhanced international cooperation, including information exchange
- V. GF-TADs Activities
- VI. Update on developments in aquatic animal health
- VII. Technical Item II: Early detection and contingency plans for African Swine Fever
- VIII. Animal health situation of Member Countries until the first semester of 2010
- IX. Update on the activities of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission
- X. European Union Animal Health Strategy: Integration of OIE Standards
- XI. Activities of the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group
- XII. Animal Welfare: European Union perspectives and expectations
- XIII. Presentations by international and regional organisations
- XIV. Other matters:
 - Date, venue and selection of the technical item for the 25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe

Programme

MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2010

15h00 Registration and distribution of documents

TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2010

08h30 Registration and distribution of documents (cont)

09h00 Opening ceremony

- Prof. Dr Nikola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe
- Dr. Carlos Correa, President of the OIE
- Dr Bernard Vallat, Director General of the OIE
- His Excellency the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan

10h00 Break

10h30 Election of the Conference Committee
Adoption of the Agenda and Timetable
Election of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs for Technical Items and Animal Health Situation

11h00 Fifth OIE Strategic Plan and OIE Global Programme of Strengthening Veterinary Services (including PVS, PVS Gap Analysis and Veterinary Legislation in Europe and Worldwide) (Dr. Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General)

12h00 Discussion

12h30 Activities of the OIE Regional Representation and the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Dr Prof. Nikola Belev, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Regional Representative for Eastern Europe)

12h45 Activities of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation for Europe in Brussels (Dr Caroline Planté, OIE Sub Regional Representative)

13h00 Lunch

14h30 TECHNICAL ITEM I: The dependence of the effective border controls on appropriate resources deployment and enhanced international cooperation, including information exchange (Dr Hinrich Meyer-Gerbaulet)

15h30 Discussion

16h00 Break (Preparation of Recommendation No. 1 by designated small group)

16h30 GF-TADs Activities (Dr Alberto Laddomada, European Commission)

16h50 Update on developments in aquatic animal health (Dr Olga Haenen, Member of the OIE Aquatic Commission)

19h00 Reception (dinner) hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan

WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2010

- 09h00 TECHNICAL ITEM II: Early detection and contingency plans for African Swine Fever (Dr José Manuel Sánchez-Vizcaíno)
- 10h00 Discussion
- 10h30 Break (Preparation of Recommendation No. 2 by designated small group)
- 11h00 Animal health situation of Member Countries until the first semester of 2010 (Dr Francesco Berlingieri, Deputy Head OIE Animal Health Information Department)
- 11h45 Discussion
- 12h00 Activities of the OIE Animal Welfare Working Group (Dr Professor Neville Gregory, Member of the OIE AW Working Group)
- 12h20 European Union Animal Health Strategy: Integration of OIE Standards (Dr Moritz Klemm, European Commission)
- 12h40 Lunch
- 14h00 Update on the activities of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General)
- 14h20 Animal Welfare: European Union perspectives and expectations
(Dr Maria Ferrara, European Commission)
- 14h40 Presentations by international and regional organisations
- 16h30 Break
- 17h00 Discussions of Recommendations Nos 1 and 2
- 17h30 Date, venue and selection of the technical item for the 25th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
- 19h00 Reception (dinner) given by the OIE

THURSDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2010

Professional and guided tourist visit

FRIDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2010

- 09h00 Adoption of the Final Report and Recommendations
- 10h30 Break
- 11h00 Closing ceremony

Recommendation Technical Item 1

The dependence of the effective border controls on appropriate resources deployment and enhanced international cooperation, including information exchange

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Member Countries should have the necessary legal framework in place to apply the OIE standards and guidelines regarding border control;
2. Member Countries should have an adequate administrative veterinary and judicial capacity and capability in place at central and border post level;
3. Member Countries should provide the necessary infrastructure, human, and financial resources to carry out veterinary border checks on relevant commercial consignments efficiently and effectively;
4. Member Countries, in accordance with the OIE standards and guidelines, should invest in infrastructure for the veterinary border checks on commercial cargo at their national frontiers;
5. Member Countries should pay more attention to establish a system for the veterinary border checks on non commercial cargo, travelling pet animals and food waste from international means of transport to avoid particularly the introduction of disease agents or other biological risks into their territories;
6. Smuggling of live animals, animal product, veterinary biological, as well as pathogens is still an on-going threat to animal health, public health and consumer confidence in all countries;
7. For the purpose of this recommendation “border post” means first point of entry of goods or people in a national territory.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries, in particular their Parliaments and Governments, ensure that their legal framework fully take into account the relevant OIE standards and guidelines concerning import, transit and export covering all items of veterinary concern;
2. Member Countries, in particular their Parliaments and Governments ensure that they have an adequate administrative veterinary and judicial capacity and capability in place at central and border post levels to carry out the necessary veterinary checks and controls on both commercial and non-commercial consignments;
3. Member Countries, in particular their Parliaments and Governments, ensure that there is a legal base for providing close cooperation and exchange of information between the competent authorities involved in border controls, in particular Customs administration;
4. Member Countries efforts be directed to provide the necessary infrastructure, human, and financial resources to carry out veterinary border checks on commercial consignments efficiently and effectively, including fast lane procedures for consignments of live animals;
5. Member Countries give emphasis on the investment in infrastructure to enforce veterinary border checks at their frontiers;

6. When Customs' Unions between Member Countries are planned or established, it should also apply to the outer border of the new Union of the Member Countries concerned instead of being at the frontier of the individual members. This also requires a harmonised outer border control system prior to the establishment of the Union;
7. Member Countries apply a strong system for veterinary checks on non-commercial cargo, travelling pet animals, and especially on the control and safe disposal of waste presenting a sanitary risk from international means of transport;
8. Member Countries be encouraged to ensure political commitment, effective legal base and coordination of activities among various government departments, other relevant agencies, industry, transport companies, private practitioners and potential "end-users" to effectively address smuggling;
9. The OIE review its current Codes chapters covering import, transit and export in order to expand them, in particular to include rules on veterinary border checks in areas excluded from customs inspections (such as free zones, free ports, free warehouses, customs warehouses and ship chandlers/caterers with a similar customs status) and on non commercial cargo (such as products in travellers' bags or sent by mail, travelling pet animals and waste from international means of transport presenting a sanitary risk);
10. The OIE, in order to enhance the international cooperation and strengthen the transparency on veterinary border checks and procedures as regards the ever increasing world wide trade in commodities of veterinary concern, study the possibility to provide additional guidance to Member Countries on the whole scope of veterinary border checks and controls.

Guidance by the OIE should address:

- Models of appropriate legislation;
 - required infrastructure, human and technical resources including equipment for carrying out the checks and operating the border post and certain facilities out with the border post and importation premises,
 - the details on the procedures and actions prior to the arrival of consignment and its presentation at the border inspection posts and possible actions necessary following the decisions made at the border inspection posts,
 - required equipment for communication, data processing and documentation and,
 - establishment of veterinary systems on checks of items of veterinary concern in areas excluded from customs inspections and non commercial cargo.
11. The OIE endeavour to find additional resources in order to enhance the cooperation and transparency between the European Region Member Countries by collecting and disseminating information via its Regional website on certain key information on border posts, contact details, import conditions, certificates and code lists for the identification of commodities of veterinary concern;
 12. The OIE try to provide continued assistance by organising training courses and provision of expertise on veterinary checks and controls, in particular to those countries which appear to be lacking an adequate veterinary border control system;
 13. The OIE develop more provisions in the PVS criteria addressing border controls, including quarantine and resting premises, and veterinary capacities of Member Countries for import and transit controls in general;
 14. The OIE collaborate more with the World Customs Organisation in order to provide a harmonised list of items of veterinary concern.

Recommendation Technical Item 2

Early detection and contingency plans for African swine fever

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Since the latest infection was notified in Georgia in June 2007, the African swine fever virus has spread through the European Region, currently affecting a number of countries in the Caucasus and the Russian Federation;
2. African swine fever is a highly contagious disease affecting both domestic and wild pigs of all ages and, even though it is not a zoonotic disease, it causes major economic losses and threaten food security owing to its ability to spread constantly and to the lack of available vaccines for its control;
3. African Swine Fever has no pathognomonic signs and lesions. The signs observed during acute and peracute infection depend on the virus isolate, the viral dose, the route of infection and these can be confused with other swine diseases presenting haemorrhagic lesions;
4. Early detection as well as accurate laboratory diagnosis are vital for controlling the spread of the virus;
5. The virus enter free zones mainly as a result of illegal movements of live pigs and pig products, and that infection occur either through direct contacts between pigs or by feeding pigs with non-heat-treated food waste prepared by using products from infected pigs;
6. Once the infection has become established in a specific zone, the disease is spread by the movement of carrier animals, contaminated transport vehicles and feeding healthy pigs with contaminated products. Ticks and wild boars can also be involved in the epidemiology of the disease;
7. In the absence of an effective treatment or vaccine, the strategy for preventing the entry of the virus at farm level should be based on good biosecurity practices such as, avoiding contact of domestic pigs with wild boars, banning non proper use of biological waste and feeding pigs with non-heat-treated pig products and tick control.

THE OIE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries support information and education programme for veterinarians (private and official) and livestock producers that warns of the risk of infection in the zone and describes the direct and indirect consequences of introducing the disease and that provides the main characteristics of the disease (routes of infection, clinical course, lesions, etc.) and basic biosecurity methods;
2. Member Countries conduct quick refresher training courses to review the clinical forms of the disease, the principal biosecurity measures for preventing the introduction of African swine fever, the biocontainment measures to be adopted in the event of a suspicion or infection, and the various laboratory diagnostic techniques available;
3. Member Countries implement an epidemiological surveillance plan specific to each country in the zone in which targeted samples should be selected on the basis of each zone's risk;
4. Member Countries reinforce movement controls in the affected zones to prevent the illegal movement of pigs or pig products and at risk materials;

5. Member countries better enforce their certification processes related to the movement of susceptible animals and products to avoid the movement of animals and products at risk;
6. Member Countries impose, at least, the ban of the use of non-heat-treated food wastes for feeding pigs and provide livestock producers with more information on the importance of not feeding their pigs with non-heat-treated food waste;
7. Member Countries ensure they have the reagents and appropriate virological and serological methods to conduct a proper diagnosis of the disease, as well as appropriate relation with OIE Reference Laboratories;
8. Member Countries have an up to date contingency plan and a practical manual of procedures describing the various actions to be taken during a suspected or confirmed outbreak in both commercial and backyard farming. As part of the contingency plan, the Member Countries should provide a contact telephone number that is available around the clock, every day of the year, for reporting any suspicion;
9. Member Countries work collaboratively on the improvement of the knowledge regarding the distribution of wild boar and of soft ticks of the *Ornithodoros* genus, and their epidemiological role in the disease;
10. In order to ensure optimal cooperation with farmers for disease control purposes, Member Countries ensure they have proper contingency funds created by relevant legislation for compensating, on time and at the right value, producers whose pigs are culled as part of a stamping-out policy using culling methods based on OIE relevant standards;
11. Member Countries to notify their epidemiological situation regarding African Swine Fever to the OIE and maintain permanent relations with their neighbouring countries in order to ensure proper actions are taken by all parties;
12. Member Countries ensure that their Veterinary Services encourage establishment of an integrated emergency response structure that takes into account all stakeholders;
13. Member Countries take into consideration the recommendations of the Technical Item 1 of this Conference on border controls;
14. Member Countries support regional workshops on African Swine Fever to help in the implementation of these recommendations.

PRESS RELEASE**Veterinary controls must be enhanced to control the spread of animal diseases including at border and importation checkpoint controls**

Astana, 24 September 2010 – The spread of African swine fever in the region has shed light on veterinary border or importation checkpoint controls as potential weak links in the regional control of animal diseases, participants in the 24th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe (Astana, Kazakhstan; 20-24 September 2010) recognised.

“The Conference acknowledged that Veterinary Services working under an appropriate national chain of command play a major role at border and importation checkpoint controls; this must be strongly supported by governments as any weakness in this field allows microbes to pass through,” Dr Bernard Vallat, OIE Director General said.

Improvements in sharing information, international cooperation and dedicated human resources at border and importation checkpoint controls are necessary throughout the region, Dr Vallat commented: “it is also important to support countries that are the original source of the outbreaks to build up capacity so that they stop to be a reservoir of pathogens for others”.

Recommendation was made that Member Countries apply a system for veterinary checks also on non-commercial cargo, travelling pet animals and in particular, on the control and safe disposal of food waste of international means of transport.

Conference participants also requested the OIE reviews its standards covering import, transit and export in order to include rules on veterinary border checks in areas excluded from customs inspections (such as free zones, free ports, free warehouses etc.).

African swine fever affects countries in the Caucasus and the Russian Federation

The Conference assessed that African swine fever, a highly contagious disease of hogs, has spread in the region with confirmed outbreaks in different Caucasian countries. “The prevention mechanisms that could help contain African swine fever, or as a matter of fact any infectious animal disease must be improved in several countries of the region,” OIE Director General, Dr Bernard Vallat said.

The assessment made during the Conference points to different factors responsible for the recent spread of the disease. Control strategies need to rely on efficient Veterinary Services that comply with OIE quality standards. They must include contingency plans which:

- take into account local and regional variations in animal husbandry practices,
- target hygiene rules,
- impose stricter movement controls and,
- facilitate the financial compensation of animal owners, allowing the humane culling of infected and in-contact animals, which is the most efficient measure accepted to eradicate African swine fever in the absence of a potent vaccine.

The OIE will continuously assist Member Countries strengthen governance of their animal health systems.

The Conference was kindly hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan. Mr Karim Kazhymkanovich Masimov, Hon. Prime Minister of Kazakhstan opened the Conference. It was chaired by Dr Saktash Hasenov, Vice Minister of Agriculture of Kazakhstan with the support of the OIE Headquarters and the OIE Regional Representation for Europe.

Participants in the Conference included higher government officials of OIE Members Countries as well as national, regional and global organisations including the Food and Agriculture Organisation.

MOTION OF THANKS

The OIE Regional Commission for Europe, the 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 Kazakhstan, the Host Country of the 24th 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 Astana from 20 to 24 September 2010.
