



WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH
Protecting animals, preserving our future

28th Conference of the
OIE Regional Commission for Europe
Tbilisi, Georgia, 17 - 21 September 2018

FINAL REPORT

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List of Abbreviations

AADIS:	Australian Animal Disease
ADIS:	European Animal Disease Information System
ADNS:	European Commission Animal Disease Notification System
AMR:	Antimicrobial resistance
APHA:	Animal and Plant Health Agency
ASF:	African swine fever
Cefas:	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
CVOs:	Chief Veterinary Officer
EC:	European Commission
EEC:	Eurasian Economic Commission
EU:	European Union
EuFMD:	European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease
EuFMDiS:	European Foot and Mouth Disease Spread Model
EWS:	Early warning system
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FESASS:	<i>Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire</i>
FVE:	Federation of Veterinarians of Europe
GEMP:	Good Emergency Management Practices
GF-TADs:	Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases
ICFAW:	International Coalition for Animal Welfare
IHSC:	International Horse Sports Confederation
IT:	Information Technology
LSD:	Lumpy skin disease
NAITS:	National Animal Identification and Traceability System
OFFLU:	OIE-FAO global network of expertise on animal influenza
OIE:	World Organisation for Animal Health
PPR:	<i>Peste des petits ruminants</i>
PVS:	Performance of Veterinary Services
RVC:	Royal Veterinary College
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SGE:	Standing Groups of Experts
SOPs:	Standard operating procedures
UN:	United nations
WAHIS:	World Animal Health Information System
WHO:	World Health Organisation

Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Georgia, the 28th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe was held in Tbilisi (Georgia) from 17 to 21 September 2018.
2. A total of 123 participants, comprising OIE Delegates and/or representatives of 42 Members of the region and senior officers from 9 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 (see list of participants in Annex 1).

Members of the Commission: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Former Yug. Rep. of Macedonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan.

International/regional organisations: Council of the European Union, EC¹, EEC², EuFMD³, FAO⁴, FESASS⁵, FVE⁶, ICAFW⁷, and IHSC⁸.

3. Dr Lasha Avaliani, OIE Delegate of Georgia, Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Australia, Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, Dr Maris Balodis, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and Delegate of Latvia, Dr Kazimieras Lukauskas, OIE Regional Representative in Moscow, Dr Mereke Taitubayev, OIE Sub-Regional Representative for Central Asia, Dr Fabien Schneegans, OIE Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department, and Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Head of the OIE Science and New Technologies Department, also participated in the Conference. The speakers presenting the two main Technical Items, namely Dr Silvia Bellini, Head of the 'Surveillance and Control' Unit at the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna "Bruno Ubertini"* (Italy) and Member of the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases, for Technical Item I, and Dr Yuriy Kosenko, Head of the National Agency of Veterinary Medicinal Products and Feed Additives, Deputy Director of the State Scientific-Research Control Institute for veterinary medical products and food additives (Ukraine) and OIE national Focal Point for Veterinary Products, for Technical Item II, honoured the Conference with their presence.

¹ EC: European Commission

² EEC: Eurasian Economic Commission

³ EuFMD: European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease

⁴ FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

⁵ FESASS: *Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire*

⁶ FVE: Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

⁷ ICAFW: International Coalition for Animal Welfare

⁸ IHSC: International Horse Sports Confederation

Opening Ceremony

4. The following authorities addressed welcome messages to all participants during the Opening Ceremony:
 - Mr. Levan Davitashvili, Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia
 - Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Australia;
 - Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General; and
 - Dr Maris Balodis, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and Delegate of Latvia.
5. Mr Giorgi Khanishvili, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Zurab Chekurashvili, Head of the National Food Agency, accompanied the above authorities during the Opening Ceremony.
6. Mr Vincent Rey, Minister Counsellor at the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, and Mr Olivier Bürki, Regional Director of Swiss Cooperation (FAO NAITS Project Georgia) also addressed a welcome message to the Regional Commission.

Approval of the Agenda and Programme

7. The Provisional Agenda and Programme were adopted (Programme available in Annex 2).

Planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan

8. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, and Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, delivered a joint presentation regarding the planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan. They began by detailing the main achievements of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan and the global and external challenges currently facing the OIE, before providing general comments on the approach being adopted for the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan, including future directions and Members' involvement.
9. As preliminary thoughts regarding the Seventh Strategic Plan, Dr Eloit and Dr Schipp highlighted that:
 - The Seventh Strategic Plan will be a logical follow-up to the Sixth Strategic Plan, based on achievements;
 - It will be structured in a similar manner to the previous plan, to ease reference and consistency;
 - It will adopt a non-prescriptive approach, and an operational work plan will be developed in parallel.
10. Based on the presentation, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe noted that:
 - The main achievements of the Sixth Strategic Plan include a clearer identification of strategies (antimicrobial resistance [AMR], animal welfare, the PVS Pathway, the OIE Observatory, etc.); the launch of the WAHIS+ Project; and an internal reform of the OIE, including the revision of processes and procedures, new work methods and an Information Technology (IT) Master Plan;
 - The main challenges faced by the Organisation include, among others: supporting the achievement of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals; contending with a more competitive international trade environment; adapting to new information technologies, including the social media; and adopting the scientific approach needed to better address societal challenges, such as climate change, changes in consumption patterns and changes in production systems;

- The overriding challenge is to preserve the coherence of the Organisation's activities, its effectiveness, the legitimacy of its mandate and its credibility, for the benefit of its Members;
- The Seventh Strategic Plan should clarify, display and promote the values of the Organisation;
- It is important always to keep in mind that the OIE has to contribute to good global sanitary governance by supporting OIE Member Countries in their efforts to strengthen their Veterinary Services, and it has to promote safer trade while taking into account the development of economies and the sustainability of the systems put in place, and must continue to be the leading organisation for animal health information;
- The cross-cutting directions to be considered include: defining the OIE's science policy; defining a comprehensive and integrated Stakeholder Management System, as part of the OIE's engagement; developing a multiyear budget through a budgetary dialogue; and sustainably improving the OIE's internal governance (procedures and policies). The Delegates noted that a process of consultation will be launched in 2019 by the OIE Directorate designed to ensure that the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan is developed from an inclusive perspective and that OIE Members' and OIE partners' suggestions and concerns are given due consideration during the development of the Plan;
- All Delegates and partners of the region are invited to actively contribute to the development of the Seventh Strategic Plan by providing their inputs to the OIE Director General, to the OIE Council members representing the region, and to the members of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission.

Future regional priorities and important items for Europe

11. Dr Maris Balodis, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Delegate of Latvia, started his presentation by reminding participants of the Regional Work Plan Framework developed by the Regional Core Group for the period 2017–2020 to better support the accomplishment of the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. He outlined the regional objectives and components of the Work Plan as well as the activities that needed to be considered in order to achieve the regional objectives. He gave a general overview of the achievements during the past year and then detailed the future priorities for the region.
12. Following the presentation by Dr Balodis, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe noted that:
 - The priorities for the region include, among others: involvement in the standard-setting process, promotion of the implementation of the OIE standards and encouragement of applications for official recognition of animal disease status;
 - Members need to be aware of the financial situation in the region and therefore support the OIE in seeking better financial options to facilitate the implementation of OIE activities in the region;
 - There is an urgent need to ensure the development of the Regional website in order to facilitate information sharing in an attractive and user-friendly way;
 - The region is fully supportive of the development of the WAHIS+ system and considers it as one of the main priorities of the Organisation;
 - There is a need to promote contributions to and reinforcement of the AMR Strategy under the 'One Health' approach and to evaluate the state of play on national action plans in Europe to gain a better understanding of the situation and to take the necessary measures to ensure proper implementation of the AMR Strategy by all Members of the region;
 - More efforts are required at regional and national levels to ensure proper implementation of the Second Animal Welfare Action Plan, in particular with regard to long-distance transportation of animals and the control of stray dog populations;
 - The region needs to ensure active participation in the established Regional Standing Groups of Experts on African swine fever (ASF) and lumpy skin disease (LSD) under the GF-TADs umbrella;

- The region also needs to further strengthen the work of GF-TADs for Europe by promoting yearly meetings;
- Promotion of national control programmes for certain diseases and official recognition of such programmes could be considered in future discussions within the OIE.

**Financial and human resources:
future sustainability of the work in Europe**

13. Dr Ulrich Herzog, Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Delegate of Austria, delivered a presentation aimed at stimulating discussions among participants regarding the future sustainability of the work being carried out in the region. He started his presentation with an overview of the main actors in the region, including the OIE's partners, and the various platforms established in order to support the work of the OIE and its partners. He also referred to the working agendas of the different actors and their resources. He then provided details of the different activities carried out in the region as well as the regional priorities, mainly in the context of complying with the OIE Sixth Strategic Plan. He also mentioned the Animal Welfare Platform and the activities carried out under GF-TADs, including the Standing Group of Experts on ASF and on LSD, and commented on the work of the EuFMD.
14. Following the presentation by Dr Herzog, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe noted that:
- The challenges facing the region include the following:
 - Challenges related to the coordination of activities, such as: the GF-TADs framework, the risk of duplication and inefficient resource management, differences in terms of scope, coordination and the decision mechanisms of the OIE and its partners;
 - Challenges regarding policy and its practical implementation: the absence of advice on regional implementation of programmes with a global perspective; the diversity of the Europe region; the status of the Veterinary Services in the different national governance structures; conflicts between science-based advice and practical implementation; and the impact of global strategies;
 - Human resource challenges: the workload of the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels;
 - Challenges related to financial resources: a clear administrative budget for the Regional Commission for Europe only exists as part of the general budget of the OIE; many programmes are financed by donors, the OIE World Animal Health and Welfare Fund, and the EuFMD Trust Fund; the lack of flexibility of projects financed by donors; and the involvement of the Bureau of the OIE Regional Commission in financial decisions related to the region.
 - To address these challenges, the region needs:
 - Greater cooperation and permeability between organisations according to their assets;
 - More flexibility concerning the key aspects of the work programme;
 - More technical staff within the OIE at regional level.
 - There is a need to:
 - Create a strong and effective programme for the region;
 - Keep in mind that, in all governance bodies of relevant animal health partners, the CVOs of the Members Countries and, thus, the OIE Delegates, should be represented. It could therefore be an option to focus on the key aspects of the work programme of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and try to align the programmes of the other organisations in the same direction;

- Use the talents and assets of the organisations to improve implementation of the different activities and programmes in the region (e.g. extend the online training programme of EuFMD to include ASF, LSD and peste des petits ruminants [PPR]).
 - It could be important to consider:
 - The possibility of developing a regional vision based on the OIE global perspective;
 - Developing working programmes following the overall approach of the OIE, selecting responsible experts for the Standing Group of Experts and possibly also for PPR, and defining the funding mechanism for implementing the different recommendations;
 - Defining financial gaps to be discussed with potential donors.
15. Following a discussion involving several Delegates on the above three presentations, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe concluded that, in the framework of the thinking process related to the development of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan:
- The OIE should better synergise with other animal health related partners in order to avoid overlapping of activities and related resources so as to ensure proper focus on the activities for which the organisation has been mandated;
 - A better definition of its strategies supported by a stronger and transparent communication will increase the visibility of OIE's activities and will most likely attract new donors; and
 - The OIE should base its reflections on the Seventh Strategic Plan on lessons learnt and best practices.

**Veterinary matters in Georgia with a focus on
animal identification and registration**

16. Dr Lasha Avaliani, OIE Delegate of Georgia, gave a general overview of the Veterinary Services' activities in the last five years. He commented on the main challenges faced by the National Food Agency and he brilliantly demonstrated how Veterinary Services can be strengthened with proper allocation of resources.

TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

Appointment of the Conference Committee

17. The Conference Committee was elected by participants as follows:
- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chairperson: | Dr Lasha Avaliani (Georgia) |
| Vice-Chairperson: | Dr Ulrich Herzog (Austria) |
| Rapporteur General: | Dr Taina Aaltonen (Finland) |

Appointment of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

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

Technical Item I:	Dr Tursyn Kabduldanov (Kazakhstan), (Chairperson) Dr Lena Hellqvist Björnerot (Sweden), (Rapporteur)
Technical Item II:	Dr Ulrich Herzog (Austria), (Chairperson) Dr Zoran Atanasov (Macedonia, Former Yug. Rep. of), (Rapporteur)
Analysis of the Animal Health Situation:	Dr Christianne Brusckhe (The Netherlands), (Chairperson) Dr Budimir Plavšić (Serbia), (Rapporteur)

Analysis of the Animal Health Situation in Member Countries in the region during 2017 and 2018

19. Following the presentation on the analysis of the animal health situation in the region by Dr Paolo Tizzani, veterinary epidemiologist at the OIE World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department (report available in Annex 3), the OIE Regional Commission for Europe noted the following:

- With regard to ASF, Members of the region recognise the impact that the disease has had at worldwide and regional level in 2018. They will continue to comply with their transparency obligations and the requirements of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, and should also follow the recommendations of the Standing Group of Experts on ASF in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region under the GF-TADs umbrella, in particular in relation to biosecurity, communication campaigns and active and passive surveillance in domestic pigs and wild boar, so that effective control can be achieved in the region. Members of the region called for developing procedure and quality criteria for submitting dossier for the countries' disease free self-declaration in domestic pigs. They also highlighted the importance of transparency, exchange of information, and collaboration between Member Countries for effective disease control;
- With regard to infection with avian influenza viruses, all Members in the region have a role to play in preventing disease spread. Members should continue to report all outbreaks in a timely manner through WAHIS, including outbreaks of low pathogenic avian influenza in poultry, to ensure an epidemiological understanding of the current risk situation;
- A Member of the region questioned the use of the variable "the median number of months per year for which LPAI was declared present in poultry" and questioned whether the outbreak data supported the conclusions that there is more frequent detection of LPAI in the affected countries. It was explained that the number of outbreaks of LPAI in the Member Country had been decreasing in the analysed period. Furthermore, the data of the Member Country indicates that LPAI mainly occur in specific forms of production and is only detected due to intensive targeted surveillance programmes, and it was recommended that the OIE to analyse this.
- Further to the recommendation of the Member Countries on this issue, the WAHIAD re-analysed the findings on Low Pathogenic Avian Influenza (LPAI) occurrence in Europe, presented during the 28th Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe. During the process of critical revision of the chapter, it was found that missing data and incomplete data series at country level created bias in the interpretation of the overall data. Accordingly, the Animal Health Situation report has been modified to reflect that a global trend of the yearly Regional outbreak incidence could not be analysed. Additionally, to acknowledge the effort of Member Countries on disease surveillance, a paragraph on targeted surveillance performed at the regional level was added to the report, suggesting that countries have become more aware of and sensitised to the importance of this kind of surveillance.

- With regard to infection with PPR virus, Members should intensify their preventive measures and awareness, in order to prevent the introduction of the virus. In view of the goal of PPR global eradication by 2030, Members with PPR free status should keep making all the necessary efforts to maintain freedom, and those that do not currently have OIE-recognised PPR free status should implement all the necessary measures and, when appropriate, apply for official recognition of PPR free status, as per OIE standards;
- For all animal diseases, and in particular for aquatic animal diseases for which certain gaps were noted, Members should pursue their efforts to fulfil their reporting obligations to the OIE, including timeliness of notification, in order to successfully manage diseases in the region;
- Members of the region recalled Resolution No. 36 of 86th General Session regarding the establishment of an OIE Observatory to monitor the implementation of its international standards, highlighting the importance of non-discriminatory sanitary measures based on OIE international standards; and
- Members of the region are encouraged to support the project of modernisation of WAHIS (the WAHIS+ Project). They should support the participation of the OIE national Focal Points selected for the Key Users Committee to represent the interests and views of end users in the project. The WAHIS+ Project, as well as the future integration, in the form of the European Animal Disease Information System (ADIS), between the new WAHIS platform and the European Commission Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS) will help to improve still further countries' transparency and data accessibility, and will contribute to a rapid, effective regional and global response to the threat posed by animal diseases.

**Recent PPR cases in Bulgaria:
situation and emergency management**

20. Dr Alexandra Miteva, representative of Bulgaria, provided participants with a brief review of the recent PPR cases notified in Bulgaria, including the current situation and emergency management.
21. Following the presentation by Dr Miteva, the Regional Commission noted that:
 - PPR is a highly contagious and devastating disease leading to significant losses to the national economies of affected countries;
 - The region needs to be vigilant in view of the risk that PPR might become the next exotic animal disease to threaten Europe;
 - Active surveillance, awareness and timely eradication by total stamping out are key factors for control and eradication of the disease when it occurs in a free country;
 - Successful eradication of PPR globally requires a coordinated, sustained, transparent and harmonised approach by affected countries;
 - Member Countries should be encouraged to obtain and maintain PPR virus freedom;
 - Member Countries should be sensitised to the atypical presentation of PPR noticed in Bulgaria and should take this aspect into account in their surveillance activities;
 - Member Countries should be given the necessary support to enable them to respond adequately to new and existing animal disease threats by:
 - o strengthening Veterinary Services' capacity and maintaining a high level of animal disease preparedness and control;
 - o building and/or enhancing the current laboratory network to improve disease surveillance and diagnostic in Europe;
 - o providing stronger support to affected countries and countries at risk.

Outcomes of the OIE-FAO Global Conference on Partnering and investing for a PPR-free world

22. Dr Monique Eloit briefly informed the participants of the outcomes of the OIE-FAO Global Conference on Partnering and investing for a PPR-free world and highlighted the following:
- The commitment of stakeholders to protect small ruminants as an essential component of the livelihood of hundreds of millions of poor families around the world, and the recognition of the crucial role these animals play in local economies;
 - The need for many communities to have safe livestock as a vital component for their livelihoods, not only as a source of food and income, but also because of their important cultural and social roles in many rural communities;
 - The fact that donors were informed on the huge investments already done by farmers associations and countries authorities themselves in order to control the disease;
 - The confirmation by donors, including future potential donors, of their intention to support or to continue supporting the control of the disease in order to reach a PPR free world; and
 - The crucial importance of partnership and cross border cooperation as well as coordination to achieving PPR eradication. Thus, the next step is the GF-TADs Global Steering Committee to be held in November and in which the next year programme will be discussed.

Recent Development in OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres: situation in Europe

23. Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Head of the OIE Science and New Technologies Department, presented the situation in Europe regarding recent developments in OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres.
24. Following the presentation by Dr Erlacher-Vindel, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe reached the following conclusions:
- The OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations should strengthen interactions with Reference Centres to explore future collaborative projects, including through inter-regional cooperation;
 - Member Countries should identify priority topics to establish future Collaborating Centres to support the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan;
 - Member Countries recognise the challenge of determining the respective focus area and specialisation of existing Collaborating Centres to reach the objective of having, within 2–3 years, only OIE Collaborating Centres for defined focus areas, and recommended a flexible approach in implementing standard operating procedures (SOPs);
 - Member Countries support the proposal to better define “OIE Networks”, based on existing examples, such as the OIE-FAO global network of expertise on animal influenza (OFFLU) and the OIE Bluetongue Reference Laboratory network, and draft future SOPs accordingly; and
 - The OIE Council should be given the opportunity to provide strategic guidance related to the OIE Reference Centres network before sharing the outcomes of the Specialist Commissions with Member Countries.

Proposal for designation of new OIE Collaborating Centres

25. In accordance with a request by the OIE Regional Commission for Europe at its meeting during the 86th General Session, Dr Christine Middlemiss, OIE Delegate of the United Kingdom, resubmitted an updated joint application by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) to be considered as an OIE Collaborating Centre for Risk Analysis and Modelling. She also presented the Regional Commission with a second application, from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) Weymouth Laboratory, to be considered as an OIE Collaborating Centre for Emerging Aquatic Animal Disease.
26. Dr Silvio Borrello, OIE Delegate of Italy, introduced to the Regional Commission for Europe the application from a Consortium between Italy and Spain to be considered as an OIE Collaborating Centre for marine mammal health and, as agreed with Dr Valentin Almansa, OIE Delegate of Spain, he left the floor to the laboratory experts. Thus, Dr Cristina Casalone, Head of the Neuroscience Department from the *Istituto Zooprofilattico del Piemonte, Liguria e Valle d'Aosta*, Italy and Prof Antonio Jesús Fernández Rodríguez from the University of "Las Palmas de Gran Canarias", presented the Regional Commission with an application from a consortium between "*Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale del Piemonte Liguria e Valle d'Aosta*" and the University of "Las Palmas de Gran Canarias" to be considered as an OIE Collaborating Centre for marine mammal health.
27. Dr Loïc Evain, OIE Delegate of France, presented the Regional Commission with an application from the *Institut Pasteur* to be considered as an OIE Collaborating Centre for identification of animal pathogens of potential concern for global health and development of tools for their detection and characterisation.
28. The presenters provided a brief review of the proposed centres and their activities and indicated that full details had already been shared with Delegates by email through the OIE.
29. The four proposals were unanimously approved by the OIE Regional Commission for Europe.

Technical item I (with questionnaire): Application of biosecurity in different production systems at individual, country and regional levels

30. Technical Item I, entitled "Application of biosecurity in different production systems at individual, country and regional levels", presented by Dr Silvia Bellini, Head of the Surveillance and Control Unit of the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna "Bruno Ubertini"* (Italy), and Member of the OIE Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases, prompted stimulating discussions among the participants, allowing the OIE Regional Commission for Europe to elaborate a recommendation in accordance with the OIE General Rules (see Recommendation No. 1 in Annex 4).

Follow up on the two recommendations adopted during the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, held in September 2016: regional overview and a practical example in a Member Country

31. Dr Lasha Avaliani, OIE Delegate of Georgia, presented a follow up on the implementation by the region of the two recommendations from the last Regional Conference. He also provided the Regional Commission with practical examples on the work done by Georgia to comply with the recommendations, elaborating on the challenges faced by the country and the points that still need to be addressed in order to improve the country situation with regards to the implementation of these recommendations.
32. In order to get a greater understanding on the use and relevance, for Member Countries, of Technical Items of the Conferences of the Regional Commissions, a working group session was undertaken. The active discussions led to the following conclusions:

Follow-up to recommendation 1 of last Regional Conference (Portugal): Control and elimination of rabies in Europe: Challenges and strategies for Rabies free Europe

- Widely implemented, the recommendations provided valuable guidance to Member Countries for their national or regional programmes to control and eliminate rabies. The need for a strong cross-border collaboration, including with neighbouring regions, increase of public awareness on illegal import of pets and making self-declaration more valuable were the issues highlighted.

Follow-up to recommendation 2 of last Regional Conference (Portugal): Lumpy Skin Disease: Current situation in Europe and neighbouring regions and necessary control measures to halt the spread in South-East Europe

- Good level of implementation after the Regional Conference in Lisbon by LSD affected and at-risk countries, widely following the recommendations related to the GF-TADs Standing Group of Experts for LSD. All those countries included LSD in their list of notifiable diseases and increased their diagnostic capacity. The need for additional research on potency and effectiveness of vaccines was identified.

Added value of a questionnaire for Technical Items of Regional Conferences

- Questionnaires for Regional Conferences allows countries having a global overview of the situation in the region and it can also serve countries for making a self-evaluation of their situation. It also allows gathering people from different governmental Departments/Units involved in the topic to discuss and analyse the points to be addressed with the questionnaire. However, to avoid workload burden, it is important to keep those questionnaires short and clear. Flexibility regarding the need for developing or not a questionnaire for a Technical Item could also be considered. Questionnaires should be used only when the selected topic really deserves a regional consultation. Otherwise, Technical Items can be prepared by the expert only based on her/his own expertise and experience;
- The Regional Core Group plays a key role in ensuring developing concept notes and providing relevant guidelines to the selected expert in order to ensure that regional needs are well addressed; and
- The questionnaires are extremely useful to the experts to better understand the region, its needs and what they really need to address in their presentation.

Relevance of Technical Items and recommendations of OIE Regional Conferences

- Member Countries recognised the value of technical items and related recommendations, despite challenges faced by countries in their implementation. They also emphasised the need to communicate the Conference outcomes to the political decision makers at national and regional levels. They proposed to review the process of identification of subjects for Technical Items, to allow flexibility in addressing emerging issues.

**Technical item II (without questionnaire):
Importance of the prescription of antimicrobial agents and control of their distribution
(with a possible e-tracking system) by the Veterinary Services
for a proper implementation of the antimicrobial resistance strategy**

33. Technical Item II, entitled “Importance of the prescription of antimicrobial agents and control of their distribution (with a possible e-tracking system) by the Veterinary Services for a proper implementation of the antimicrobial resistance strategy”, was presented by Dr Yuriy Kosenko, Head of the National Agency of Veterinary Medicinal Products and Feed Additives, Deputy Director of the State Scientific-Research Control Institute for Veterinary Medical Products and Food Additives (Ukraine) and OIE National Focal Point for Veterinary Products. The stimulating discussions that followed enabled the OIE Regional Commission for Europe to draft a recommendation in accordance with the OIE General Rules (see Recommendation No. 2 in Annex 5).

**Antimicrobial Use Data Collection and
National Action Plan Implementation in the Region of Europe**

34. Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel provided participants with details of Antimicrobial Use Data Collection and National Action Plan implementation in the region.
35. Following the presentation by Dr Erlacher-Vindel, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe noted the following:
- Member Countries are encouraged to participate in the collection of data on antimicrobial agents intended for use in animals;
 - Member Countries are encouraged to publish their data;
 - The OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representations should support all Member Countries in this work;
 - Member Countries are encouraged to publish, whenever possible, their own national reports on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals and the sale of such agents;
 - National Focal Points for Veterinary Products are invited to regularly participate in the training provided for Focal Points and to contact the Antimicrobial Use Team at OIE Headquarters should they have any questions or require further clarifications;
 - The OIE is working in collaboration with the different United Nations agencies concerned to ensure cooperation and to work in developing high level recommendations so to reach political level and ensure that countries’ relevant authorities be sensitised on AMR issues; and
 - The OIE Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives should play an increasing role in regional coordination on National Action Plan implementation in collaboration with WHO and FAO.

Activities under the umbrella of the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe

36. Dr Tomasz Grudnik, Animal Welfare Specialist at the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, presented a review of the activities carried out under the umbrella of the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe and emphasised that the Platform continues to work on empowering Veterinary Services to take actions on animal welfare in compliance with OIE standards. He stated that the second Action Plan (2017–2019) of the Platform retains three of the original priority topics: slaughter of animals, transport of animals by land and stray dog population control. In addition, two new topics of relevance to the region have been included in the present Action Plan: welfare of animals in disasters and welfare of working equids.
37. Following the presentation by Dr Grudnik, the Regional Commission noted the following:
- The OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe is continuing to work on animal welfare during slaughter by conducting train-the-trainer workshops and following up on cascading activities;
 - The OIE Platform has organised a set of capacity-building activities to address animal welfare challenges during long distance transport with a sustainable and comprehensive approach. Train-the-trainer workshops and regional seminars are aimed at addressing legal, initial and continuing education, and awareness aspects, while the Whole Journey Scenario Workshop concept has been developed to foster communication/coordination among the competent authorities, especially in the context of inter-regional trade of livestock;
 - The OIE Regional stray dog Roadmaps for the Balkans and West Eurasia are on track towards full compliance of Member Countries with the relevant OIE standard, while also addressing rabies issues;
 - The OIE Platform has developed a stepwise pilot approach with the main objective of assisting Member Countries in promoting a culture of preparedness among Veterinary Services and relevant stakeholders, so as to ensure appropriate animal welfare during and after natural disasters. This approach will be tested with a three-year pilot project to assist Balkan countries with developing a contingency plan for a flooding scenario;
 - The OIE Platform has initially focused on raising awareness on the welfare of working equids in central Asian and Caucasian Member Countries and will now work on the identification of their specific challenges and needs;
 - The OIE Regional Commission for Europe calls for the support and active participation of Member Countries in the proposed OIE Platform activities;
 - The EU confirmed its support to the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare and exhorted other potential donors to support the work done by the OIE. Reinforcing the coordination of donors regarding funding of OIE activities is key for the sustainability of the Platform;
 - The Platform has been very successful so far and it could be useful to consider making an evaluation of the achievements in order to better plan future activities and ensure sustainable funding;
 - The OIE Regional Commission for Europe supports the OIE Platform's continuing to implement its Second Action Plan and calls for starting the process of identifying priority topics with a view to developing the Third Action Plan (2020–2022); and
 - The 13th OIE Animal Welfare Platform Steering Committee will be held in Lyon, France in 2019.

Evolution of the OIE PVS Pathway: perspectives for Europe

38. Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department, started his presentation by reminding participants of the discussion that took place at the last Regional Conference, when four myths about the PVS Pathway were dispelled and four options for PVS Pathway evolution to enhance its value to Member Countries were described. He then presented details of the activities carried out since the last Regional Conference, with particular emphasis on the PVS Pathway Think Thank Forum and the evolution of the PVS Pathway, including the new graphical representation, with a special focus to its relevance in Europe.

39. Following the presentation by Dr Caya, the Regional Commission noted the following:

Regarding the activities proposed under the evolved PVS Pathway:

- The OIE is planning to organise, in 2019, a PVS Pathway Orientation Training Workshop in Eastern Europe to provide Member Countries with greater knowledge on how to better take advantage of PVS Pathway mission reports' recommendations;
- To increase their capacity to implement the OIE/FAO Global Strategy for the Control and Eradication of PPR, Member Countries infected by this disease are invited to request a PVS Evaluation or Follow-up mission with PPR Specific Content;
- When relevant, Member Countries should request a PVS Evaluation of their Aquatic Animal Health Services; and
- OIE Delegates interested in strengthening their inter-sectoral collaboration at the human-animal interface are invited to communicate with their Ministry of Health counterparts and formulate a joint request to the OIE and WHO.

Regarding future PVS Pathway-related activities

- Based in the advice of both the OIE Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Standards Commissions, Member Countries are invited to contribute to the revision of Chapter 3.1 on the *Veterinary Services (Quality of Aquatic Animal Health Services – Aquatic Code)* and Chapter 3.2 on the *Evaluation of Veterinary Services (Terrestrial Code only)* when draft revisions be circulated most likely in March 2019; and
- Member Countries should be actively involved in the development of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan, especially regarding the positioning of the “Strengthening of Veterinary Services through the PVS Pathway” as one of the pillars of OIE’s mandate, including considerations for better financing the developmental and maintenance of related activities through the regular budget.

40. The OIE Regional Commission also took note of the following:

- The reflection process soon to be undertaken within the European Union regarding the use of and support to the PVS Pathway by EU Member States; and
- The upcoming establishment of a platform to synergise the activities of the five OIE Collaborating Centres on Training Veterinary Services.

Discussion of recommendations

41. Draft Recommendations 1 and 2 on the two Technical Items of the Conference were presented to participants and put forward for discussion. Both draft Recommendations will be submitted for adoption at the Friday session with amendments as per participants' suggestions and discussions.
42. Following adoption by the Regional Commission, the Recommendations will be submitted for endorsement by the World Assembly of OIE Delegates in May 2019. Once endorsed by the Assembly, they will serve as an important guideline for Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, as well as for the Organisation as a whole.

THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2018

Cultural visit

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

FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2018

Building a European animal disease spread model (EuFMDiS project) to assist Member Countries and the region in emergency preparedness: progress, benefits and opportunities to participate

44. Dr Keith Sumption, EUFMD Secretary, started commenting on the FMD status by 2018 and the global burden. He then provided details on the EuFMDiS project which was developed to respond to the need for a projected scale and impact of the disease at national and European level.
45. Following his presentation, the Regional Commission for Europe noted the following;
 - EuFMDiS is based on the conceptual hybrid modelling approach developed for the Australian Animal Disease (AADiS) model. It is a sophisticated disease modelling platform and decision-support tool for FMD with a potential to be used in Europe;
 - The measures in EuFMDiS are consistent with the approaches described in European FMD Directive (2003);
 - Model will track: animal values (for compensation); cost of managing outbreak including operational activities (surveillance, culling, vaccination, running disease control centres), trade losses, and post-outbreak management costs (surveillance, vaccinated animals);
 - It can support to provide economic outputs and, thus, in comparing costs of different control strategies which is very important for decision-makers;
 - Among the potential applications of the model there are: training purposes; resources planning, estimation of cost, support for decision making, defining high risk areas based on the outputs of the model, carry out risk assessments;
 - There are some difficulties in the region to obtain vaccines as not much countries hold a vaccine bank; thus, the modelling could be also used to assist the simulation in terms of vaccines needs and vaccines stocks management;
 - A workshop was organised in July 2018 to install a modelling software and provide training for seven pilot countries and other interested member states to run the EuFMDiS model and use the outputs to support FMD planning;

- Participants at the July workshop considered that it is important to keep the EuFMDiS regional modelling initiative active through a collaborative approach. This could be done by building a regional modelling group/network to support FMD policy/planning in central Europe, continuing to use the existing online project platform, and sharing experiences;
- The multi-country disease spread modelling study has been an outstanding success. The drive of this small, but dedicated community involved in this project conveys a strong sense of ownership and despite the ambitious time frame has been able to deliver a sophisticated disease modelling tool (EuFMDiS) that can be used to support FMD planning and response at both national and regional scales in Europe;
- This model can be adapted to other diseases including wildlife. It will be presented in detail (especially for the vaccination aspects) during the 2018 Open Session of the EuFMD Standing Technical Committee, to be held in Italy from 29 to 31 October 2018;
- Countries interested in developing a national version of EuFMDiS were invited to contact the team responsible;
- OIE will continue to reinforce its collaboration with EuFMD as well as with its other partners such as FAO to assist Member Countries in preparedness. The revision of the GF-TADs governance will definitely support the reinforcement of such collaboration.

**Addressing the challenges of animal health emergency management:
how to engage all interested parties at
national, regional and global level to be better prepared?**

46. A panel discussion, chaired by Dr Etienne Bonbon, Senior Veterinary Advisor from the Emergency Management Centre for Animal Health, brought together representatives from the European Commission, EuFMD, FAO, FESASS, and the OIE to discuss on animal health emergency management.
47. Experts of the panel presented their mandate and activities in infectious animal disease emergency management, including challenges faced and opportunities for improved inter-organisation and intersectoral cooperation. They highlighted the need for preparedness from the field (breeders and private veterinarians) to the global level (international organisations), the major role being always played by the National Veterinary Services.
48. Following the panel discussion, the OIE Regional Commission for Europe took note of the following:
 - Early warning system (EWS) to detect a disease when introduced and before its spread is an essential tool to react in a timely manner;
 - Veterinarians play a key role when it comes to EWS and to the responses at all levels (investigations, movement control, culling, disposal, etc);
 - There is a lack of education regarding emergency management in the veterinary schools, therefore, efforts should be done to ensure including emergency management as part of the Core Veterinary Curriculum;
 - When it comes to emergency situations, there are 3 major challenges: the quick management of the outbreak, the adoption of preventive measures, and the economic and trade consequences;
 - It is necessary to involve all stakeholders such as farmers, traders, veterinarians, food chain operators, competent authorities, laboratories, and other important players such as the sub-contractors, scientific experts, representatives of the general public and society and the European authorities in a high-level emergency preparedness, especially for the early detection, the first rapid response at farm level, and for the implementation of contingency plans;
 - A strong partnership and trust between farmers and private/public veterinarians is essential and should be facilitated;

- There is a need to sensitise all parties involved on the fact that prevention is better than cure;
- At international level, it is necessary to align with and leverage existing frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, UN SDGs, Tripartite, as well as to ensure that issues related to animal health and welfare are systematically included on the agenda of high-level discussions;
- There is some overlap between preparedness and reaction, thus, the most important is to work in ensuring early detection and diagnoses as well as transparency in reporting;
- Preparedness needs to be tailored to local context and resources available;
- Efficient communication at different level is crucial to ensure that all actors are permanently aware of what is occurring in the field;
- Having a well-defined veterinary legislation as well as established contingency plans, including the procedures to follow and defined roles for each actor at national level is also key to ensure emergency management;
- Encouraging regional and international approaches through network building during peace time can establish cooperative relationships which could be mobilised in face of emergency;
- The fast compensation of losses in case of outbreaks or suspicion of outbreaks is a key element for enhancing the notification of suspected cases and for the collaboration between authorities and stakeholders during crisis;
- Countries of Europe were called for a wide engagement in the review of the Chapter of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* on Official Control Programmes, which include articles on emergencies, drawn from the current guides on emergency management, such as the GEMP, and for its implementation once adopted;
- The European Commission highlighted the existence of an Emergency Veterinary Team, which can work in collaboration with emergency management Teams (including OIE and FAO experts);
- There is a need for the countries of the region to be better prepared for potential emergencies and to ensure a better collaboration and coordination between relevant sectors, including the possibility to develop a sustainable platform to facilitate regular contact;
- Members of the region are invited to take advantage of the existing tools and training opportunities provided by relevant organisations such as the OIE and the EU.

**Proposal of date and venue of the
29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe**

49. The President of the Commission asked Delegates present if any of their countries wished to host the 29th Conference of the OIE regional Commission for Europe in 2020.
50. The Delegate of Italy expressed the wish for his country to host the Conference.
51. The proposal was unanimously accepted.
52. The precise dates of the Conference will be decided during the Regional Commission meeting to be held during the General Session in 2019.
53. This proposal was also unanimously confirmed.

Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations

54. An electronic version of the draft final report was sent to all participants to facilitate the comments to the report.
55. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, explained the procedures for adopting the report and recommendations of the Conference. Delegates could submit comments or suggestions for consideration during the session dedicated to the adoption of the report. Further comments on the report received at the OIE Headquarters by 5 October 2018 would also be taken into consideration. However, the recommendations had to be adopted during the current session and could not be changed subsequently, only editing being accepted.
56. The report was adopted with minor additional modifications.
57. The two draft recommendations were adopted, with minor amendments considering participants' suggestions and discussions.

Closing ceremony

58. Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General, thanked and congratulated all the staff from the National Food Agency of Georgia for the excellent work done to ensure the success of such an important event for the region. She concluded that the conference was a great success. She thanked all participants for their participation during the week as well as for their active participation in the poster session. She thanked the speakers for their excellent work done and time devoted to the preparation of their presentations. She also thanked the host country for the interesting visit, the nice dinner offered as well as the traditional food that allowed participants to bring home wonderful memories from Georgia culture and landscape.
59. Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, reiterated his thanks and congratulations to the government of Georgia for the excellent organisation of the Conference and the warm welcome and hospitality offered to all participants.
60. Dr Maris Balodis, OIE Delegate of Latvia and President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, thanked the host country for the excellent work done for the preparation of the Conference and for the warm hospitality accorded to all participants. He also thanked Delegates for their participation to such an important event for the region.
61. Dr Lasha Avaliani, OIE Delegate of Georgia, expressed his gratitude, on behalf of his government and on his own, to all the participants, his team from the National Food Agency, the speakers and the OIE secretariat for the productive Conference. He wished participants a safe trip back home and hoped that the stay in Tbilisi was pleasant.
62. Dr Lasha Avaliani declared the Conference officially ended at 12.00 p.m.

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PROGRAMME

MONDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2018

- 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Registration of participants and distribution of documents
- 2:00 p.m. Opening ceremony
- 2:40 p.m. Approval of the Agenda and Programme
- 2:45 p.m. Group Photo / Break
- 3:15 p.m. Planning of the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan (Dr Mark Schipp, President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates and Dr Monique Eloit, OIE Director General)
- 4:00 p.m. Future regional priorities and important items for Europe (Dr Maris Balodis, President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Delegate of Latvia)
- 4:20 p.m. Financial and human resources: future sustainability of the work in Europe (Dr Ulrich Herzog, Vice-President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Delegate of Austria)
- 4:40 p.m. Discussion
- 5:00 p.m. Veterinary matters in Georgia with a focus on animal identification and registration (Dr Lasha Avaliani, OIE Delegate of Georgia)
- 5:30 p.m. Introduction to the Posters Session
- 5:45 p.m. Posters Session

TUESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2018

- 9:00 a.m. Appointment of the Conference Committee (Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and General Rapporteur)
Appointment of session chairpersons and rapporteurs (Technical items and Animal Health Situation)
- 9:15 a.m. Analysis of the Animal Health Situation in Member Countries in the region during 2017 and 2018 (Dr Paolo Tizzani, Veterinary Epidemiologist, OIE Animal Health Information and Analysis Department)
- 10:15 a.m. Discussion
- 10:45 a.m. Break

- 11:15 a.m. Recent PPR cases in Bulgaria: situation and emergency management (Dr Damyán Iliev, OIE Delegate of Bulgaria)
- 11:30 a.m. Outcomes of the FAO-OIE Global Conference on Partnering and investing for a PPR-free world (Dr Monique Eloit)
- 11:45 a.m. Recent Development in OIE Reference Laboratories and Collaborating Centres: situation in Europe (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel, Head of the OIE Science and New Technologies Department)
- 12:15 p.m. Proposal for designation of new OIE Collaborating Centres (Delegates of countries concerned)
- 12:45 p.m. Discussion
- 1:00 p.m. Lunch
- 2:15 p.m. Technical item I (with questionnaire): Application of biosecurity in different production systems at individual, country and regional levels (Dr Silvia Bellini, Head of the Unit Surveillance and Control of the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna "Bruno Ubertini* (Italy), Member of the OIE Scientific Commission)
- 3:00 p.m. Discussion
- 3:30 p.m. Break
Preparation of Recommendation No. 1 by designated small group
- 4:00 p.m. Follow up on the two recommendations adopted during the 27th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, held in September 2016 (Recommendation 1: Control and elimination of rabies in Europe: challenges and strategies for a rabies-free Europe and Recommendation 2: Lumpy skin disease: current situation in Europe and neighbouring regions and necessary control measures to halt the spread in South-East Europe): regional overview and a practical example in a Member Country (Dr Lasha Avaliani)
- 4:30 p.m. Working groups discussions on the recommendations of the Conferences of the OIE Regional Commissions
- 5:30 p.m. Working Group (Reporting)
- 6:00 p.m. End of the Session

WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2018

- 9:00 a.m. Technical item II (without questionnaire): Importance of the prescription of antimicrobial agents and control of their distribution (with a possible e-tracking system) by the Veterinary Services for a proper implementation of the antimicrobial resistance strategy (Dr Yuriy Kosenko, Head of the National agency of veterinary medicinal products and feed additives, Deputy Director of the State Scientific-Research Control Institute for veterinary medical products and food additives (Ukraine) and OIE Focal Point for Veterinary Products)
- 9:45 a.m. Discussion

- 10:15 a.m. Break
Preparation of Recommendation No. 2 by designated small group
- 10:45 a.m. Antimicrobial Use Data Collection and National Action Plan Implementation in the Region of Europe (Dr Elisabeth Erlacher-Vindel)
- 11:15 a.m. Discussion
- 11:45 a.m. Activities under the umbrella of the OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe (Dr Tomasz Grudnik, Animal Welfare Specialist, OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels)
- 12:15 a.m. Discussion
- 12:45 p.m. Lunch
- 2:15 p.m. Evolution of the OIE PVS Pathway: perspectives for Europe (Dr François Caya, Head of the OIE Regional Activities Department)
- 3:00 a.m. Discussion
- 3:30 p.m. Break
- 4:00 p.m. Discussion of recommendations
- 4:45 p.m. Proposal of date and venue of the 29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe
- 5:00 p.m. End of the Session
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner hosted by the OIE

THURSDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2018

Cultural visit and dinner offered by Georgia

FRIDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2018

- 09:00 a.m. Building a European animal disease spread model (EuFMDiS project) to assist Member Countries and the region in emergency preparedness: progress, benefits and opportunities to participate (Dr Keith Sumption, EUFMD Secretary)
- 09:20 a.m. Addressing the challenges of animal health emergency management: how to engage all interested parties at national, regional and global level to be better prepared? (panel discussion with international and regional organisations previously selected)
- 10:40 a.m. Break
- 11:00 a.m. Adoption of the Draft Final Report and Recommendations
- 11:30 a.m. Closing ceremony

**ANALYSIS OF THE ANIMAL HEALTH SITUATION
IN MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION DURING 2017 AND 2018**

(Update 2 July 2018)

*World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department,
Lina Awada, Natalja Lambergeon, Lina Mur, Paolo Tizzani, Neo Mapitse and Paula Caceres*

This report is based on information obtained from six-monthly reports, annual reports, immediate notifications and follow-up reports submitted to the OIE through the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS) by the 53 Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe up to 2 July 2018. Special attention is given to the 2017 and 2018 reporting period.

The report reviews the situation in Europe Region regarding some specific diseases notified during this period (African swine fever, infection with avian influenza viruses and infection with peste des petits ruminants virus), the epidemiological situation of aquatic diseases reported during this period and plans for the future WAHIS system and its connectivity with ADIS.

As of 2 July 2018, 96% (51/53) of OIE Member Countries in the Region had submitted their six-monthly report on terrestrial animal diseases for the first semester of 2017 and 90% (48/53) had submitted their report for the second semester; 81% (43/53) of Member Countries had submitted their six-monthly report on aquatic animal diseases for the first semester of 2017 and 75% (40/53) had submitted their report for the second semester. In addition, between 1 January 2017 and 2 July 2018, 248 immediate notifications and 1536 follow-up reports were submitted for terrestrial animal diseases and 20 immediate notifications and 50 follow-up reports for aquatic animal diseases.

1. African swine fever

African swine fever (ASF) has been successfully eradicated in some countries of Europe Region, whereas it is considered to have been endemic in Sardinia (Italy) since 1978¹. Since 2007, 14 countries² in the Baltic and Eastern Europe have been affected in at least one year by the ASF event in the Region. The disease is considered a priority in the Region, in particular within the framework of GF-TADs³ for Europe.

The recent geographical distribution of ASF in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, based on information collected through WAHIS during the period from 1 January 2017 to 2 July 2018, is shown in Figure 1. During this period, a total of 51 Members provided information on the disease, which was reported present by 22% (11/51) of them. Eight Members⁴ reported ASF present in both domestic pigs and wild boar, Romania reported ASF present in domestic pigs only, while Czech Republic and Hungary reported the disease present in wild boar only. During this period, ASF was reported by means of immediate notifications by eight countries in the Region.

The geographical distribution of the disease notably increased during this period. The first occurrence of ASF in the country was reported by three Members of the Region during this period: the disease appeared in Czech Republic in June 2017 in wild boar, in Romania in July 2017 in backyard pigs, and in Hungary in April 2018 in wild boar. Based on the information provided by the national authorities of Hungary in the immediate notification, the most likely source of infection was food waste, introduced by foreign citizens, large numbers of whom were working in industrial facilities located in the affected area. No information was provided about the sources of infection for the other introductions in the reports to the OIE. In addition, during the period from 1 January 2017 to 2 July 2018, some provinces were affected

¹ Cappai S, Rolesu S, Coccollone A, Laddomada A, Loi F. Evaluation of biological and socio-economic factors related to persistence of African swine fever in Sardinia. *Prev Vet Med.* 2018 Apr 1;152:1-11. doi: 10.1016/j.prevetmed.2018.01.004. Epub 2018 Feb 1.

² Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia and Ukraine.

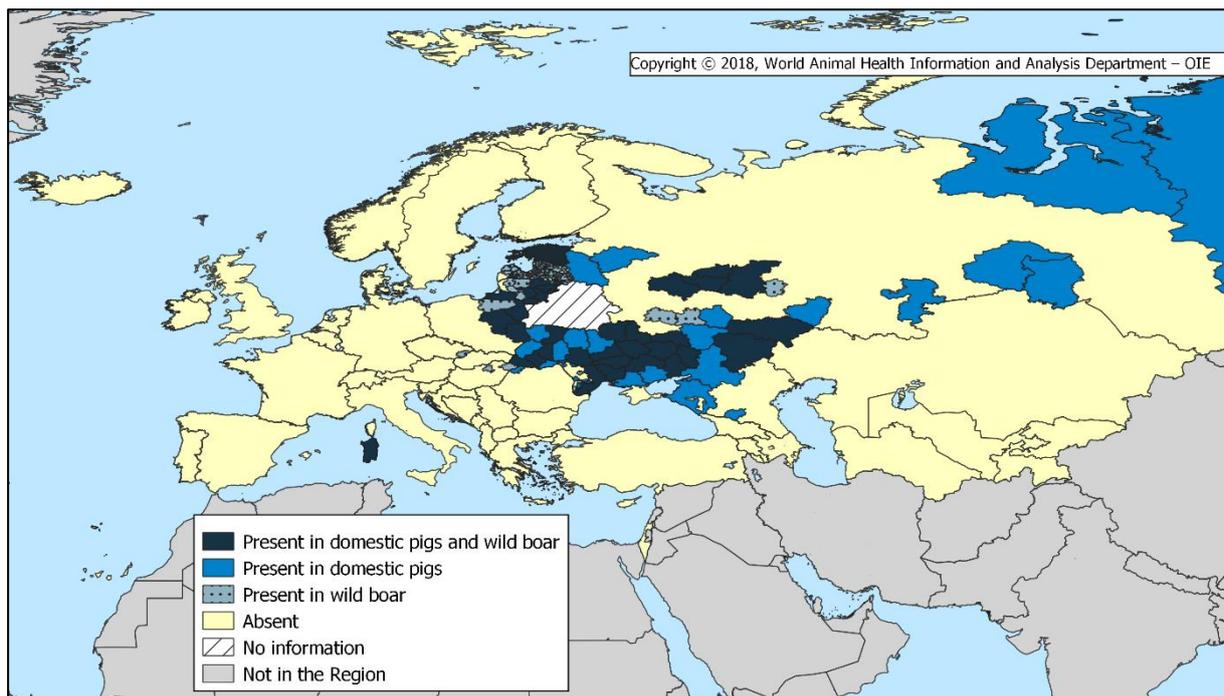
³ GF-TADs: Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Animal Diseases

⁴ Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia and Ukraine.

for the first time in Moldova, Poland, Russia and Ukraine, while recurrences of the disease were notified by Latvia.

Members are encouraged to continue their efforts to submit information in a timely fashion. In May 2018, during the 10th meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on ASF in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region under the GF-TADs umbrella, the importance of transparency was also reiterated. The Group highlighted that it was essential to ensure transparency and full compliance with requirements for reporting to the OIE, and that trust and cooperation could only be built when full access to the relevant information was provided⁵. Members with reports still outstanding for 2017 and 2018 are urged to submit them as soon as possible so that their animal health information can be updated in WAHIS and shared with the global community.

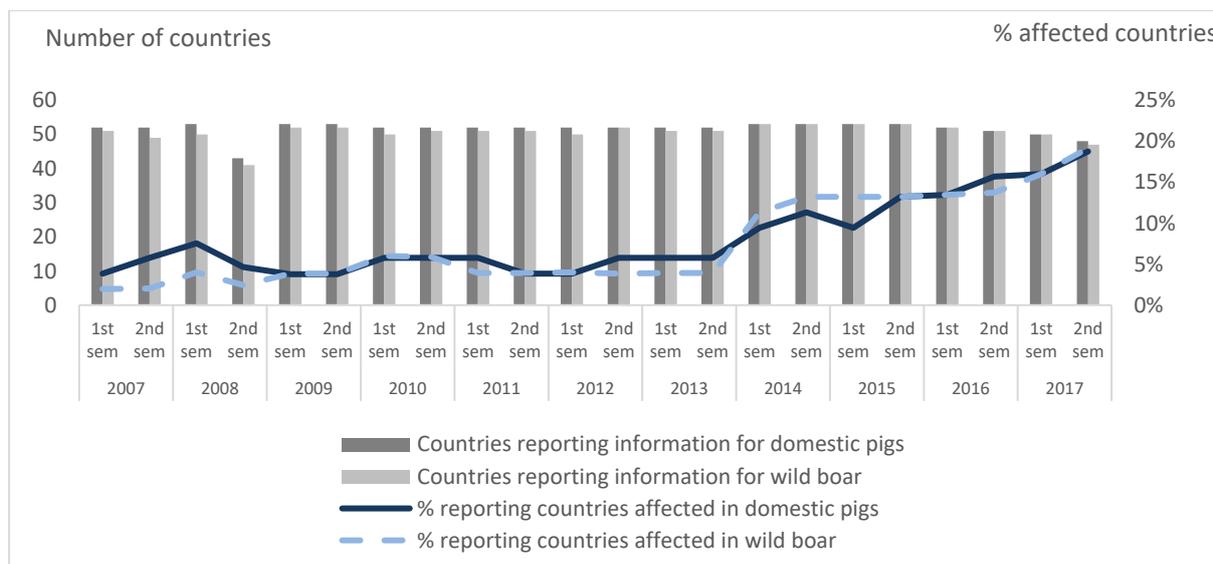
Figure 1. Distribution of ASF in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2017 and 2018 (up to 2 July 2018)



The following analysis describes the trend of the disease in the Region since 2007, the year the regional event started. Figure 2 shows that the percentage of reporting countries notifying ASF present increased from 4% in 2007 to 19% in the second semester of 2017 for domestic pigs and from 2% to 19% for wild boar during the same period. The trend in the percentage of affected countries, analysed using a generalised linear model with binomial distribution, shows a significant and positive increase during the whole period for domestic pigs (estimate: 0.08; $p < 0.001$) and for wild boar (estimate: 0.11; $p < 0.001$), indicating a deterioration of the reported regional situation during the overall period of analysis. The deterioration of the regional situation was concomitant in wild boar and in domestic pigs (Spearman's rank correlation, $\rho = 0.8$; $p < 0.001$) and the percentage of affected countries reached its maximum in 2017, which constitutes a serious concern for the Region.

⁵ Standing Group of Experts on African swine fever in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region under the GF-TADs umbrella, Tenth meeting (SGE ASF10) - Paris, France, 22 May 2018, [http://web.oie.int/RR-Europe/eng/Regprog/docs/docs/SGE%20ASF10%20\(Paris,%20May%202018\)/SGE%20ASF%2010%20\(Paris,%20May%202018\)%20-%20draft%20recs.pdf](http://web.oie.int/RR-Europe/eng/Regprog/docs/docs/SGE%20ASF10%20(Paris,%20May%202018)/SGE%20ASF%2010%20(Paris,%20May%202018)%20-%20draft%20recs.pdf)

Figure 2. Percentage of the reporting countries in Europe Region for each semester between 2009 and 2017 that notified ASF present, in domestic pigs and wild boar (data based on reports received up to 2 July 2018)



Based on the disease data notified to the OIE by the 14 affected countries through the early warning system between the start of the Regional event in April 2007 and 2 July 2018, three main categories of animals are involved in the dynamics of the disease in Europe Region: commercial pigs, backyard pigs and wild boar. Figure 3 shows the cumulated outbreaks for each animal category and the associated regional number of on-going outbreaks by month. This analysis does not include the outbreaks reported by Estonia since April 2016 and those reported by Lithuania since September 2017, as these outbreaks were exclusively reported through six-monthly reports, in which the geographical coordinates of outbreaks are not requested.

Outbreaks were categorised based on the epidemiological unit information provided by the reporting countries for each outbreak. For simplicity and considering the similarities in terms of biosecurity and management of the animals, the epidemiological unit “village” was merged with the epidemiological unit “backyard”.

Overall, more than 7300 outbreaks were notified to the OIE through the early warning system, of which about 6000 involved wild boar, 1000 occurred in backyard pigs and 320 in commercial pigs. As shown in Figure 3a, seven countries (Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine) reported outbreaks in all three animal categories during the period of analysis. It is interesting to note that, as of 2 July 2018, no outbreaks had been reported in commercial pigs by Azerbaijan, Romania (outbreaks only reported in backyard pigs) or Moldova (outbreaks only reported in backyard pigs and wild boar), while Belarus and Georgia had reported outbreaks in domestic pigs (commercial and backyard) but not in wild boar. Finally, two countries affected recently, Czech Republic and Hungary, had reported outbreaks only in wild boar. These discrepancies show the differences in disease dynamics and surveillance in the last eight years across the 14 countries involved in this regional event. Considering the 320 commercial farms affected, their size ranged from a few individuals to about 68 000 animals, with a median size of 315 animals. Overall, few big production farms were affected, and they were located mostly in Russia and Ukraine.

Figure 3b shows the number of on-going outbreaks at any time during the months since the start of the regional event, based on the dates for the start and end of outbreaks reported through the WAHIS early warning system. The figure shows that at the beginning of the event, in 2007, most outbreaks were reported in backyard pigs, by Armenia, Georgia and Russia. Between 2008 and mid-2014, 0 to 60 outbreaks were notified as on-going each month, most of the outbreaks occurring in backyard pigs; the countries affected during this period were Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Ukraine. The regional number of on-going outbreaks then changed considerably: from mid-2014 to mid-2018, the number of outbreaks on-going each month was much higher than in previous years (ranging from 75 to 820 outbreaks), with the majority of outbreaks reported in wild boar, mainly by Estonia, Latvia,

Lithuania and Poland. This apparent dynamic is highly influenced by the reporting patterns, which are a result of a combination of factors (i.e. surveillance programmes, compensation policies, seasonality, etc.).

It is also interesting to note that, consistently across the period, countries reported a higher number of outbreaks in backyard pigs than in commercial pigs. These findings are in accordance with the biology of the ASF virus (ASFv), the transmission mechanisms and historical data on ASF spread. The most effective route of transmission of ASFv is through direct contact with infected fluids (especially blood) or indirectly by ingestion of contaminated products, where the virus can survive for long periods of time⁶. These most common sources of infection (many other sources are possible but less common) should be able to be controlled by the appropriate biosecurity measures⁶. However, in small farms or backyard units, these biosecurity measures may not always be properly implemented, which may lead to the rapid spread of the virus. Figure 3b shows that, as previously reported in Sardinia⁷ and Poland⁸, ASF outbreaks present a marked seasonality in Europe Region, with a peak of outbreaks occurring in backyard farms during the summer months, followed by a peak in wild boar during the autumn/winter season, which coincides with the hunting period (and consequently the highest likelihood of detection of infected wild animals).

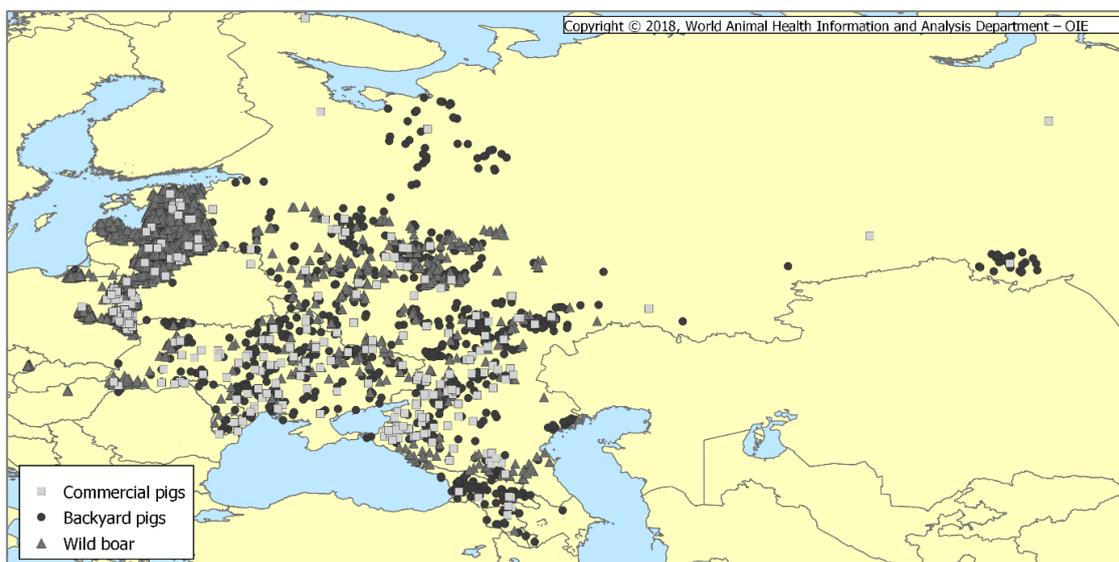
⁶ OIE Technical disease card on ASF, http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Animal_Health_in_the_World/docs/pdf/Disease_cards/AFRICAN_SWINE_FEVER.pdf

⁷ Iglesias I, Rodríguez A, Feliziani F, Rolesu S, de la Torre A. Spatio-temporal Analysis of African Swine Fever in Sardinia (2012-2014): Trends in Domestic Pigs and Wild Boar. *Transbound Emerg Dis.* 2017 Apr;64(2):656-62. doi: 10.1111/tbed.12408. Epub 2015 Sep 22.

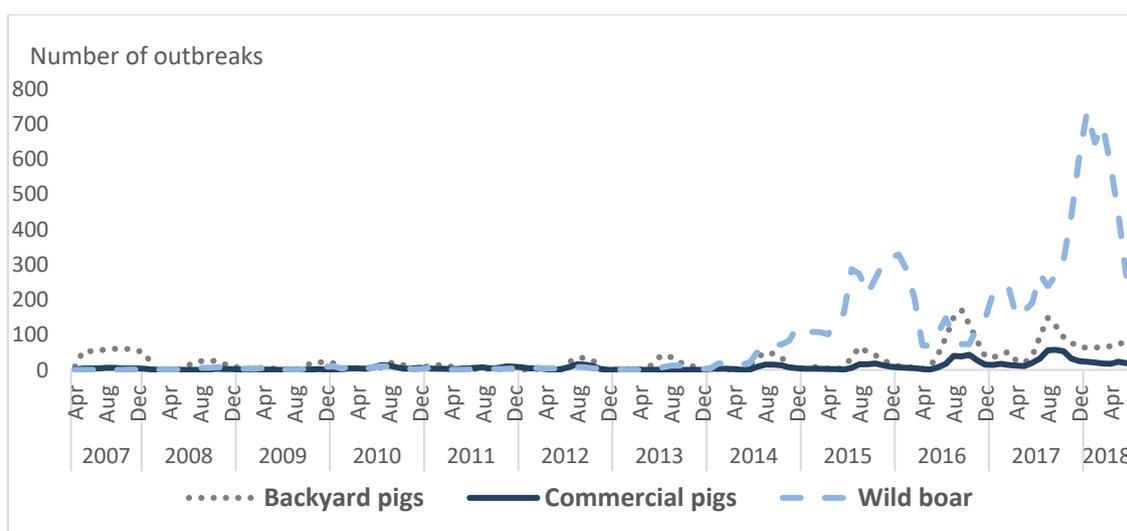
⁸ Śmietanka K, Woźniakowski G, Kozak E, Niemczuk K, Frączyk M, Bocian Ł, Kowalczyk A, Pejsak Z. African Swine Fever Epidemic, Poland, 2014-2015. *Emerg Infect Dis.* 2016 Jul;22(7):1201-7. doi: 10.3201/eid2207.151708.

Figure 3. Cumulated distribution of ASF outbreaks in Baltic and Eastern Europe Members from 2007 to 2018 (up to 2 July 2018), by animal category

a) Spatial distribution of outbreaks in the Region in the period of analysis



b) Number of on-going outbreaks in the Region, by month



The results of this analysis highlight the importance of backyard pigs and wild boar in the regional dynamics of ASF, thereby supporting the standards provided in Chapter 15.1. of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*.

With regard to ASF control in domestic pigs, whether commercial or backyard, the OIE emphasises the importance of biosecurity measures. Article 15.1.2. of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* (which provides *General criteria for the determination of the ASF status of a country, zone or compartment*) states that “the domestic and captive wild pig populations are separated by appropriate biosecurity, effectively implemented and supervised, from the wild and feral pig and African wild suid populations, based on the assessed likelihood of spread within the wild and feral pig and African wild suid populations, and surveillance in accordance with Article 15.1.31.; they are also protected from *Ornithodoros* ticks where relevant”.

With regard to backyard pigs, the Standing Group of Experts on ASF in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region under the GF-TADs umbrella, at its 10th meeting in May 2018, also highlighted some key recommendations on biosecurity. The Group emphasised that biosecurity is of crucial importance to prevent the entry and spread of ASF in pig holdings. The Group indicated that minimum biosecurity measures need to be implemented, even by smallholder pig owners. The Group highlighted the need for Veterinary Services to provide basic information to pig holders by way of appropriate communication campaigns⁵. With regard to wild boar, the Group provided recommendations on hunting practices, mainly about testing practices, transport of hunted animals and wild boar management options, based on the experience of affected countries⁵.

In conclusion, this section of the Report highlighted the deteriorating ASF situation in the Region, with new countries and provinces affected since the last Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, held in Lisbon (Portugal) in September 2016. Consistently across the years, countries have been reporting higher numbers of outbreaks in backyard pigs than in commercial pigs, and those commercial farms that have been affected are mainly small in size. This suggests a lower level of implementation of strict biosecurity measures in these types of holdings compared to large-scale commercial farms, although geographical proximity to wild boar populations may also be a factor. Since mid-2014, the number of outbreaks reported in wild boar has drastically increased. Members are urged to comply with their transparency obligations and the requirements of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, and also to follow the recommendations of the Standing Group of Experts on ASF in the Baltic and Eastern Europe region under the GF-TADs umbrella, in particular in relation to biosecurity, communication campaigns and surveillance in domestic pigs and wild boar, so that effective control can be achieved in the Region.

2. Infection with avian influenza viruses

The recent global avian influenza (AI) situation, as presented during the 86th OIE General Session in May 2018 and in the monthly “OIE Situation Report for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza” published on the OIE website⁹, indicates that AI continues to be a significant global threat to animal health and public health. The present chapter reviews the current situation in the Europe Region regarding infection with AI viruses (both highly pathogenic avian influenza [HPAI] in domestic and wild birds and low pathogenic avian influenza [LPAI] in poultry).

The classification of AI viruses as low or highly pathogenic refers to the pathogenicity of the isolate in chickens¹⁰. HPAI is notifiable to the OIE in poultry and in non-poultry birds (including wild birds), whereas LPAI is only notifiable to the OIE in poultry. Most strains of AI currently circulating in the world are mainly found in wild birds; they are not highly pathogenic in poultry and generally cause few signs of disease.

The recent geographical distribution of HPAI in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, based on information collected through WAHIS between 1 January 2017 and 2 July 2018, is shown in Figure 4 and 5. During this period, a total of 52 countries (out of 53) provided information on the disease, which was reported as present by 65% (34/52) of them. HPAI was reported present in both domestic birds and wildlife by 44% (23¹¹/52) of the reporting Members, present only in wildlife by 17% (9¹²/52) of them, and present only in domestic birds by Luxembourg.

⁹ <http://www.oie.int/en/animal-health-in-the-world/update-on-avian-influenza/2018/>

¹⁰ Chapter 10.4. of the OIE *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, http://www.oie.int/en/standard-setting/terrestrial-code/access-online/?htmfile=chapitre_avian_influenza_viruses.htm

¹¹ Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and United Kingdom

¹² Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Montenegro, Slovenia and Switzerland

During this period, the most prevalent subtype was H5N8, which was reported by 63% (33¹³/52) of the reporting Members, followed by subtypes H5N5 and H5N6, each of which was present in 19% (10¹⁴/52) of them, and lastly subtype H5N2 reported by France and Russia and subtype H5N1 reported only by France. Subtypes H5N8, H5N5 and H5N6 were reported in both poultry and wild birds, whereas subtypes H5N1 and H5N2 were only reported in poultry.

H5N8 was reported by means of immediate notifications by all the affected countries. Three countries reported the first occurrence of the disease in the country: Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), starting in January 2017 in poultry and wild birds; Lithuania, starting in February 2017 in wild birds; and Cyprus, starting in September 2017 in wild birds. All these notifications reported the detection of subtype H5N8.

LPAI in poultry was reported as present by 11% (6¹⁵/52) of the reporting Members (Figure 6). Six different subtypes were reported: H5N1 and H5N3 (by France, Germany and Italy), H5N2 (by Denmark, France, Germany and Italy), H5N5 and H5N9 (by France) as well as H7N9 (by The Netherlands). Denmark, Italy and Sweden reported subtype H5 (neuraminidase not specified) and France reported subtype H7 (neuraminidase not specified).

During the period under study, LPAI in poultry was reported by means of immediate notifications by five countries. In particular, France reported the occurrence of two new strains in the country: H7, starting in May 2017; and H5N5, starting in March 2018. The other four countries reported LPAI as either the first occurrence in a zone or a recurrence.

¹³ Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia (Former Yugoslav Republic of), Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom

¹⁴ **H5N5**: Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Serbia and Slovenia; **H5N6**: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom

¹⁵ Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden

Figure 4. Distribution of HPAI in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2017 and 2018 (up to 2 July 2018) in poultry

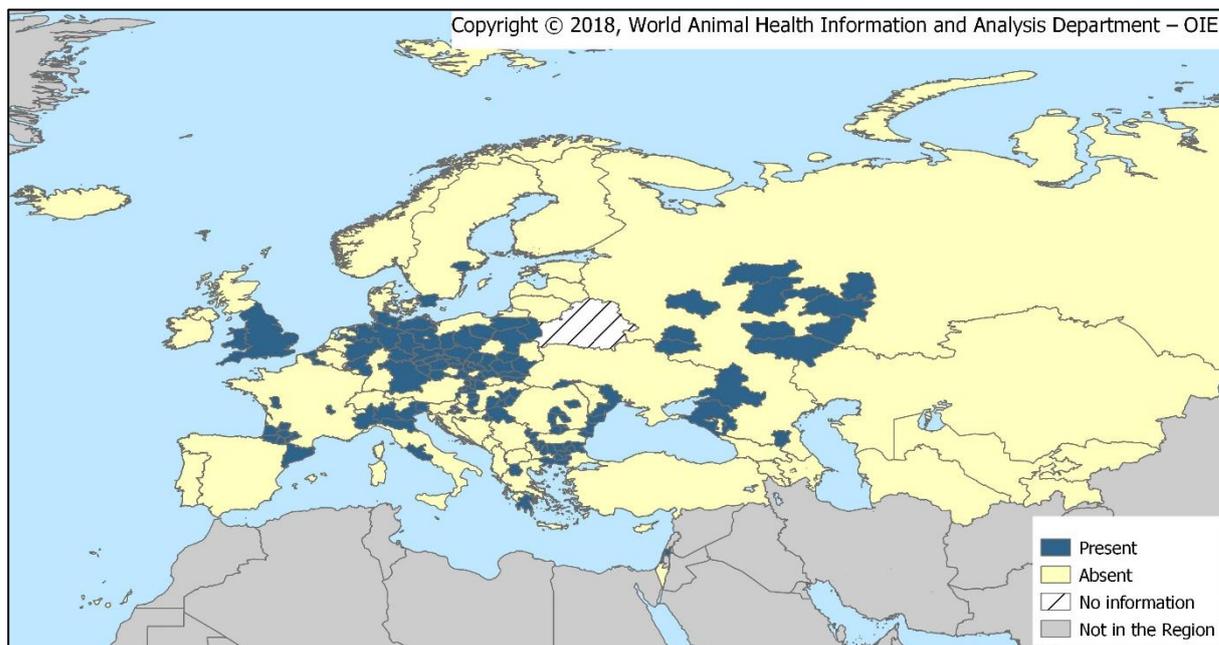


Figure 5. Distribution of HPAI in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2017 and 2018 (up to 2 July 2018) in non-poultry including wild birds

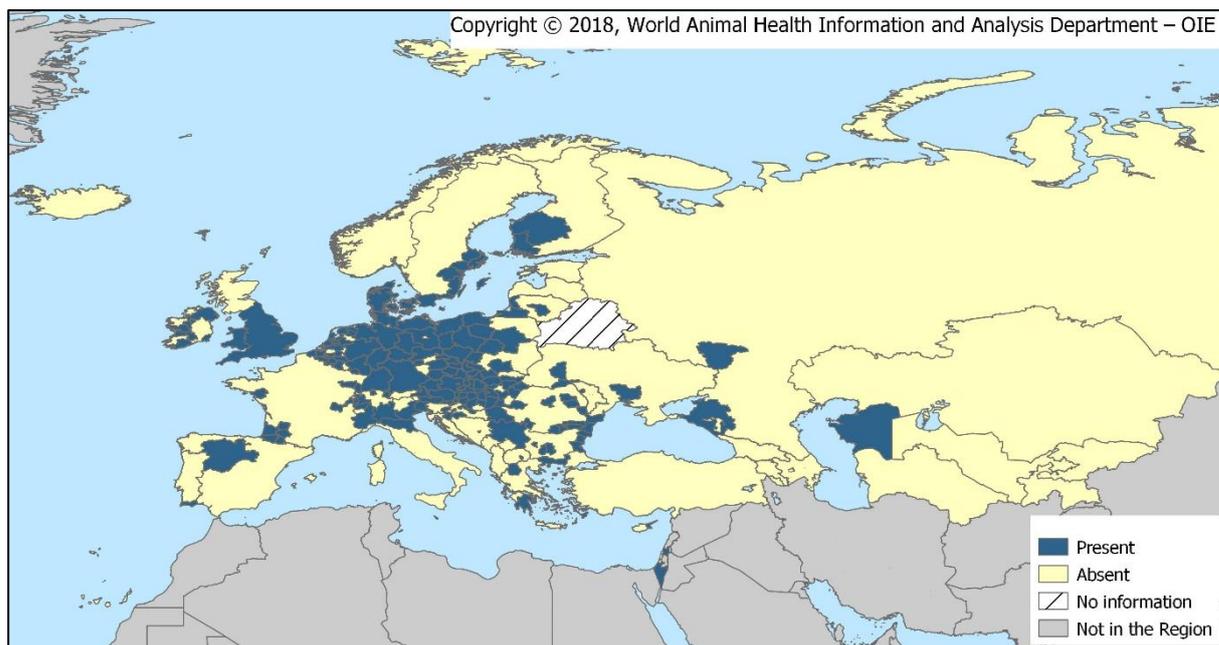
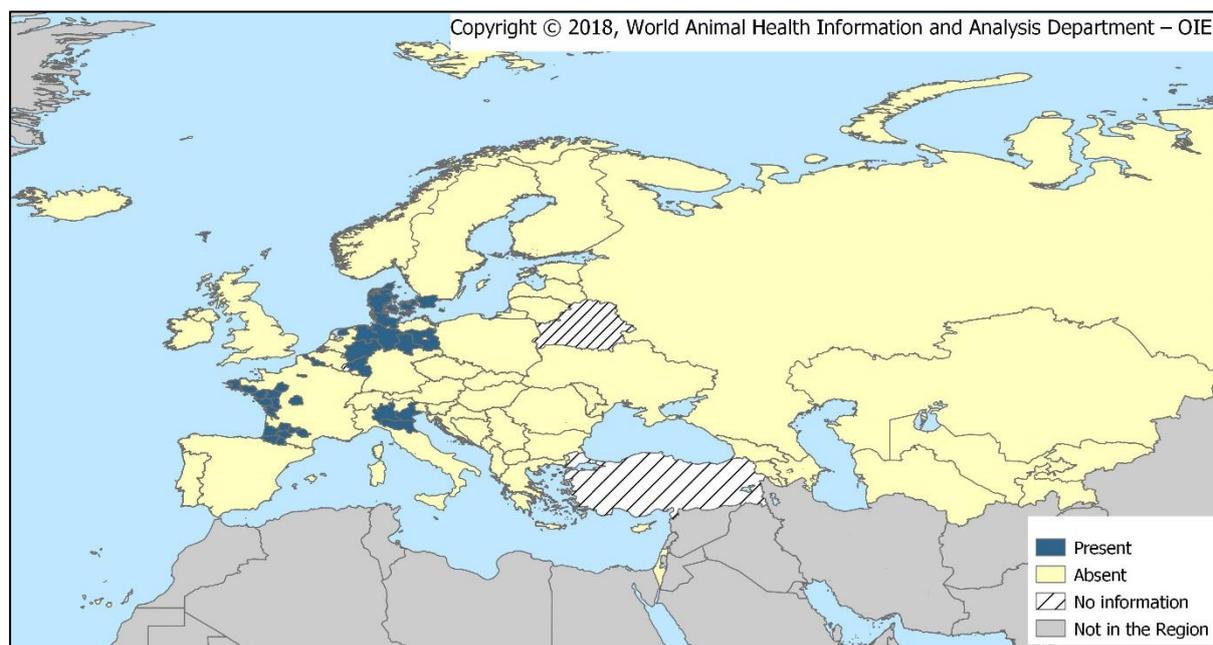
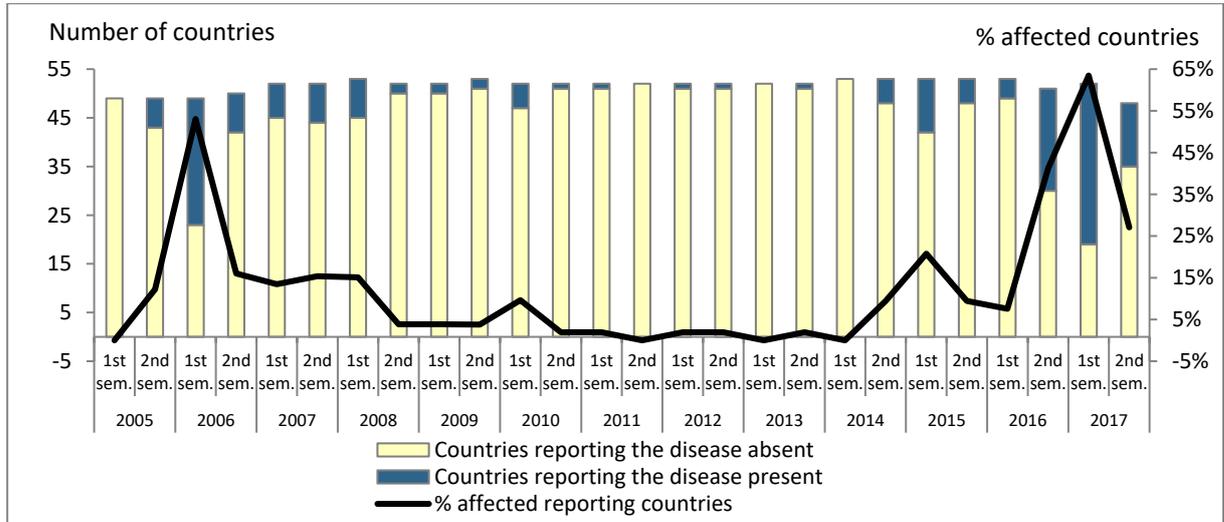


Figure 6. Distribution of LPAI in poultry in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2017 and 2018 (up to 2 July 2018)



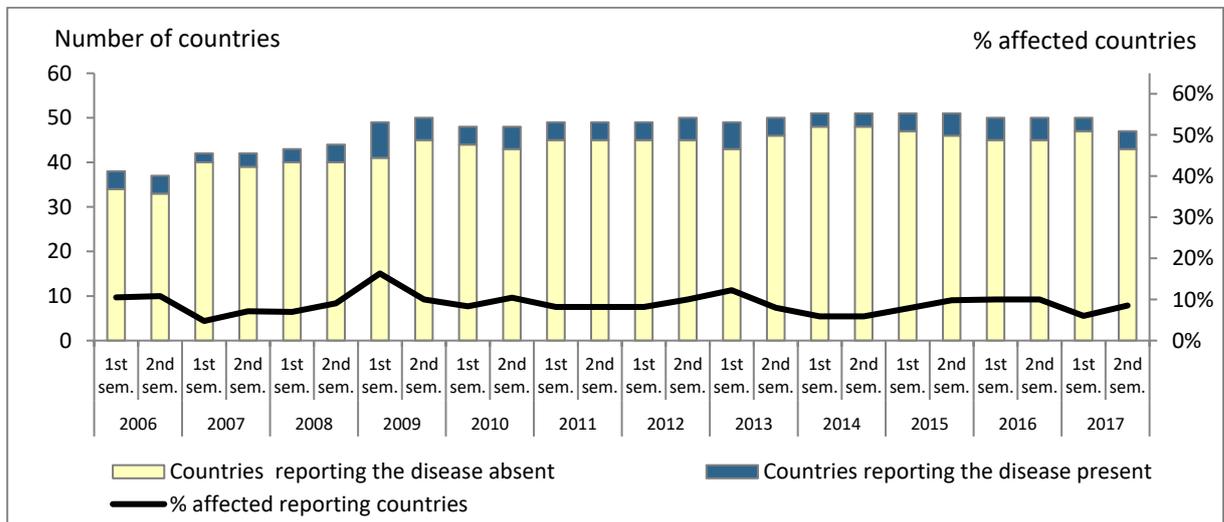
The following section describes the trend in notifications of infection with AI viruses since 2005 for HPAI in birds (2005 being the year that WAHIS started) and 2006 for LPAI in poultry (2006 being the year that the disease was included in the OIE List) to evaluate their historical evolution in the Region. From 2005 to 2017, an average of 12% of reporting countries notified the presence of HPAI per semester (Figure 7). However, large variations have been observed in this trend over the past 13 years. Initially, the percentage increased very quickly between the first semester of 2005 and the first semester of 2006 (from 0% to 53%); the percentage then declined up to the second semester of 2011 (to 0%), increasing from then on until the first semester of 2017 (63%). This trend looks very similar to the one registered for the HPAI epidemic at global level⁹. The percentage was lower in the second semester of 2017 (27%), but the results are still partial due to the lower number of reporting countries. The trend in the percentage of affected countries, analysed using a generalised linear model with binomial distribution, shows a significant and positive increase during the whole period (estimate: 0.008; $p < 0.001$), indicating a deterioration of the epidemiological status of the disease in the Region.

Figure 7. Percentage of the reporting countries and territories for each semester between 2005 and 2017 that notified HPAI present in poultry or other birds, in the Europe Region (data based on reports received up to 2 July 2018)



In contrast, the LPAI situation in poultry over the period of analysis was more stable, with a yearly average of 9% of the reporting countries and territories notifying the disease present, ranging from 5% to 12% (Figure 8). No significant trend was observed for the percentage of affected countries and territories through the period of study (generalised linear model with binomial distribution, estimate: -0.001; $p=0.6$).

Figure 8. Percentage of the reporting countries and territories for each semester between 2005 and 2017 that notified LPAI present in poultry, in the Europe Region (data based on reports received up to 2 July 2018)



The surveillance and control of AI have been historically focused on the detection and eradication of HPAI. For HPAI, early detection has been successfully based on passive surveillance, given that infection induces evident clinical signs and high mortality rates. However, for LPAI, the signs may go unnoticed by passive surveillance, as mortality is low¹⁶. Therefore, targeted surveillance (also called active surveillance) is the best approach for LPAI detection (i.e. targeted sampling of animals for diagnostic purposes)¹⁷. Since LPAI viruses can mutate into HPAI viruses (e.g. in Italy¹⁸ and Chile¹⁹), the detection and control of LPAI has assumed increasing importance, both for animal health and for public health, and it is now compulsory in the European Union (EU) area²⁰. Moreover, in 2008, the rapid mutation of an LPAI H7N7 strain to an HPAI strain in the United Kingdom, as well as other similar incursions of several different AI viruses, has highlighted the need for early detection of LPAI²¹.

Considering the above, the reporting of targeted surveillance or screening for LPAI in the Europe Region between 2006 and 2017 was analysed, as well as the trend of the number of outbreaks reported through the years in affected countries. The yearly percentage of reporting countries in the Region notifying targeted surveillance or screening for LPAI increased from 25% in 2006 to 63% in 2017. The trend, analysed using a generalised linear model with binomial distribution, shows a significant annual increase in percentage of countries implementing targeted surveillance during the whole period (estimate: 0.141; $p < 0.001$). Based on this estimate, the odds ratio was calculated to be OR = 1.15 (95%CI= [1.10-1.21]), meaning that each year, the odds²² for the application of targeted surveillance increases of 1.15. This result suggests that countries have become more aware of and sensitized to the importance of targeted surveillance for LPAI detection with years and that this activity has been implemented in the great majority of countries of the Region in recent years.

In addition, the yearly number of outbreaks in affected countries of the Region from 2006 to 2017 was computed. Fourteen countries²³ reported the occurrence of LPAI in poultry in the Region at least once during the period, with yearly outbreak incidence ranging from 1 to 37. Only six²⁴ of these countries provided complete quantitative data for the entire period of analysis. The trend of the yearly overall Regional outbreak incidence could therefore not be analysed.

The results presented in this section show two different dynamics for AI viruses (HPAI vs LPAI) in the Region. As indicated in the report presented at the OIE General Session in May 2018, HPAI is characterised by an acute episode with an epizootic crisis followed by period of complete disease eradication, while the analysis performed here reveals a different dynamic for LPAI with a more stable percentage of countries affected.

¹⁶ Spickler AR, Trampel DW, Roth JA. The onset of virus shedding and clinical signs in chickens infected with high-pathogenicity and low-pathogenicity avian influenza viruses. *Avian Pathology: Journal of the WVPA* 2008;37(6): 555–77.

¹⁷ European Commission. Commission Decision 2010/367/EC of 25 June 2010 on the implementation by Member States of surveillance programmes for avian influenza in poultry and wild birds. pp. 22–24. *Official Journal of the European Union*. L 166, 1.7.2010.

¹⁸ Marangon S, Capua I, Rossi E, Ferrè N, Dalla Pozza M, et al. The control of avian influenza in areas at risk: The Italian experience 1997–2003. In: Schrijver R, Koch G, editors. *Avian Influenza: prevention and control*. Kluwer Academic Publishers: 2005. pp. 33–39.

¹⁹ Suarez DL, Senne DA, Banks J, Brown IH, Essen SC, et al. Recombination resulting in virulence shift in avian influenza outbreak, Chile. *Emerg Infect Dis* 2004;10(4): 693–9.

²⁰ European Council. Council directive 2005/94/EC of 20 December 2005 on community measures for the control of avian influenza and repealing directive 92/40/EEC. 16 p. *Official Journal of the European Union* L 10, 14.01.2006.

²¹ Gonzales JL, Elbers ARW, Bouma A, Koch G, de Wit JJ, et al. Low-pathogenic notifiable avian influenza serosurveillance and the risk of infection in poultry - a critical review of the European Union active surveillance programme (2005–2007). *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses* 2010;4(2):91–9.

²² The odds of an event of interest occurring is defined by odds = $p/(1-p)$ where p is the probability of the event occurring.

²³ Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Turkey and United Kingdom

²⁴ Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and Portugal

Europe Region has been affected by several HPAI epidemics in recent years: the H5N1 epidemic (2005–2006), the H5N8 epidemic (2014–2015) and, currently, the new wave of H5N8 that has caused, since 2016, the largest HPAI epidemic in the Region, with 63% of countries being affected. In contrast to the limited number of outbreaks and low mortality observed during the previous H5N8 epidemic (2014–2015), this second wave has caused a significantly higher number of outbreaks and significantly higher mortality. Veterinary Services in the Region are encouraged to maintain a high level of prevention and control measures, including strengthened biosecurity for poultry holdings and enhanced surveillance. On the other hand, a small number of countries regularly reported the occurrence of LPAI each semester.

The findings reported in this section demonstrate that AI continues to pose a significant threat to Europe Region, with a continuous changing dynamic in terms of the subtypes involved, the countries affected and disease frequencies.

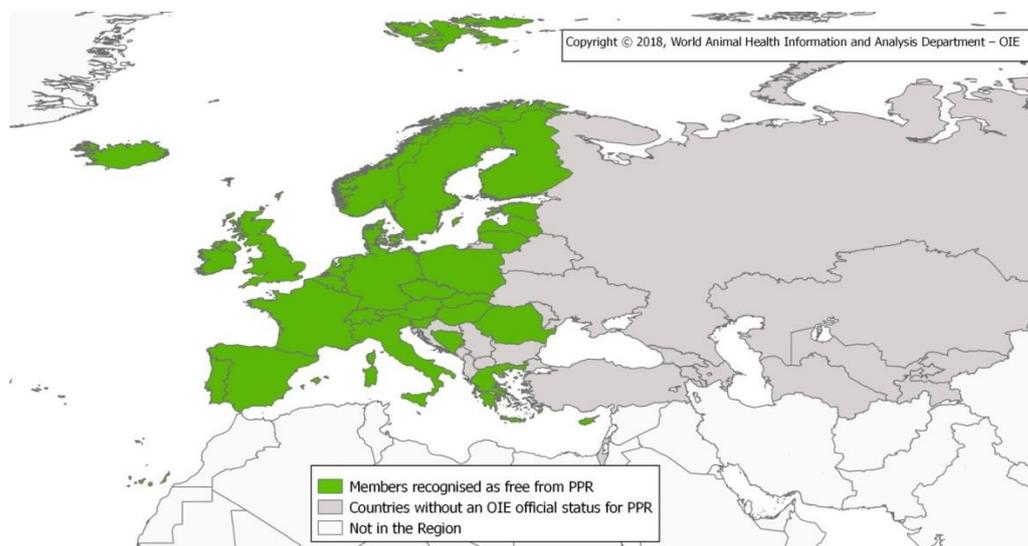
In this perspective, WAHIS is an essential tool to monitor the evolution of the disease in the Region and throughout the world, to alert countries to the occurrence of exceptional events, and to produce OIE's monthly global situation report to support understanding of this ongoing, complex, and highly dynamic epizootic.

The future integration between the new WAHIS platform (WAHIS+) and the European Animal Disease Notification System (ADNS) will help to improve still further countries' transparency and data accessibility, and will contribute to a rapid, effective regional and global response to the threat posed by AI.

3. Infection with peste des petits ruminants virus

While peste des petits ruminants (PPR) is widespread in Africa, Asia and Middle East, the Europe Region has been less affected by the disease, with more than half (58%) of the Members in the Region officially recognised as free from PPR according to the provisions of Chapter 14.7. of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and Resolution No. 28 (86th General Session of World Assembly, May 2018) (Figure 9).

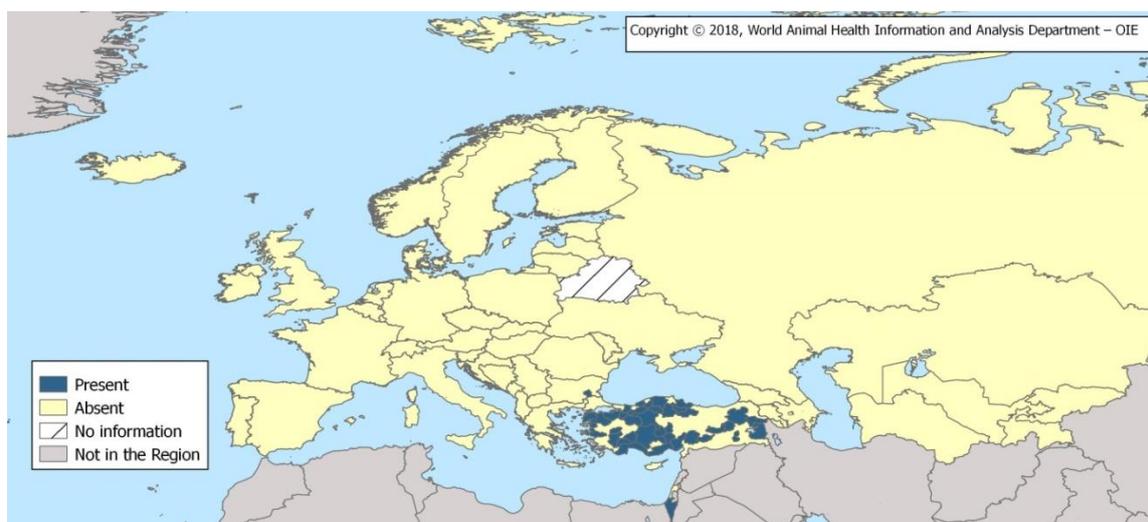
Figure 9. Europe Region: OIE Members' official PPR status (as of May 2018)



The recent geographical distribution of PPR in the Region, based on information collected through WAHIS during the period from 1 January 2017 to 2 July 2018, is shown in Figure 10. During this period, a total of 51 countries provided information on the disease, which was reported present by Bulgaria, Israel and Turkey. Specifically, PPR has been reported present to the OIE by Israel (constantly then sporadically) and Turkey (constantly) since the 1990s, whereas Bulgaria reported PPR for the first time in 2018. During the period from 1 January 2017 to 2 July 2018, PPR was reported by means of immediate notifications by Bulgaria and Israel.

The disease has recently reached the territory of the European Union when Bulgaria, as stated above, reported the first occurrence of the disease in the country, which started in June 2018. The first outbreak affected three herds of small ruminants located in the region of Yambol, in the South-Eastern part of the country. Following the first detection of the disease (where clinical signs were observed) and laboratory confirmation by PCR, strict control and eradication measures were applied in the country in accordance with EU Directive 92/119/EEC. These measures include stamping out of infected herds, preventive culling of other small ruminants in affected villages, establishment of protection and surveillance zones, movement restrictions and intensified surveillance in the municipalities located along the border of the country with third countries not free from PPR. Contrary to the situation observed during the first introduction of PPR in Georgia in 2016, at this stage no vaccination has been applied in Bulgaria to control the PPR outbreaks.

Figure 10. Distribution of PPR in Members of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2017 and 2018 (up to 2 July 2018)



In conclusion, this section has highlighted the first occurrence of the disease in Bulgaria, in June 2018, an event of major significance in a Region mostly free from the disease, and in the context of the Global Control and Eradication Strategy, endorsed by the World Assembly of Delegates of the OIE through the adoption of Resolution No. 25 at the 84th OIE General Session. This event marks an expansion of the spatial distribution of the disease and poses a threat to the Region.

Intensive surveillance as well as strict control and eradication measures, mostly based on culling strategies and destruction of animal products, have been applied in the affected area and are recommended to continue in order to avoid the spread of the disease to further territories. All countries in the Region are encouraged to intensify their preventive measures and awareness, in order to prevent the introduction of the virus. In that sense, the realization of contingency planning activities, including risk assessments to identify potential vulnerabilities for entry and exposure, disease control planning, pre-emptive market authorisation of vaccines (even if such an approach may not be the preferred control strategy, but in recognition of the possible need to re-evaluate stamping out activities based on epidemiological, economic or political considerations), and simulation exercises (including their communication to the OIE) is highly recommended to be prepared in case of PPR introduction.

In view of the PPR global eradication goal by 2030, Members with PPR free status are urged to keep making all the necessary efforts to maintain freedom, and those that do not currently have OIE-recognised PPR free status are encouraged to implement all the necessary measures and, when appropriate, apply for an official recognition of PPR free status, as per OIE standards.

4. Aquatic animal disease situation

This section presents an overview of information on aquatic animal diseases in Europe Region, including the evolution of aquatic animal disease reporting and the current aquatic animal health situation (in 2017 and 2018 [up to 2 July]), focusing on the three most commonly reported aquatic animal diseases in the Region: infection with koi herpesvirus, infection with viral haemorrhagic septicaemia virus and infection with *Aphanomyces astaci* [crayfish plague].

In 2017, infection with *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*, which is a fungal disease that is threatening the biodiversity of amphibian populations around the world, was included in the OIE-list of aquatic animal diseases. Additional information can be found in the Technical Card on the disease prepared by OIE²⁵. Prior to being an OIE-listed disease, the presence of the disease had been notified to the OIE through the annual report for wildlife in Chile, The Netherlands and The United Kingdom. However, the pathogen, which is considered to have originated from Asia and have potentially been introduced into Europe through the pet trade, has been recorded in more European countries, leading in some of them to a dramatic decline of the fire salamander (*Salamandra salamandra*) populations²⁶. Considering the threat that this fungus poses to biodiversity, and that this is now an OIE-listed disease, countries have an obligation to report the occurrence (presence or absence) of this pathogen in their next six-monthly aquatic reports, as well as through the early warning system, if relevant.

Evaluation of reporting on aquatic animal diseases

Compliance by Members of the Europe Region with reporting requirements on aquatic animal diseases was evaluated in two ways: by analysing the evolution of the reporting trend of six-monthly reports on aquatic animals (since 2012), and by assessing the timeliness of reporting of exceptional events through the early warning system.

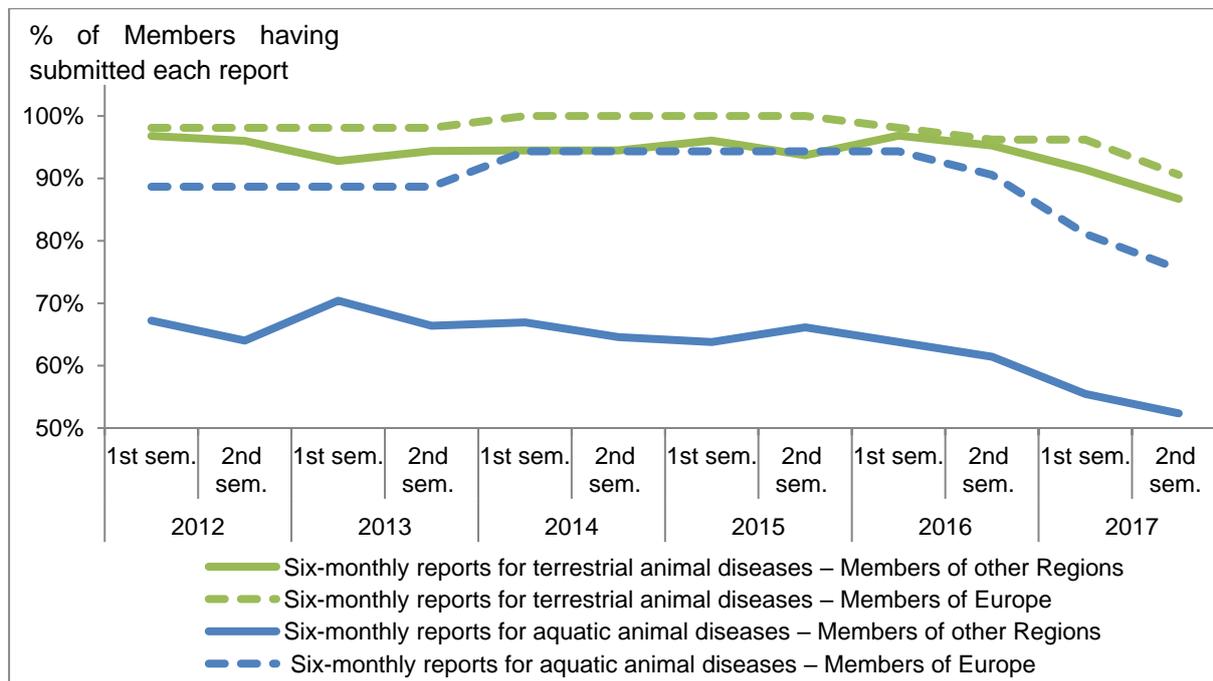
The trend in the percentage of Members submitting six-monthly reports on aquatic animal diseases was evaluated for the period 2012–2017 (2012 being the first year in which information on aquatic animal diseases and information on terrestrial animal diseases was submitted in separate reports). In order to evaluate compliance in the Region with the requirements for aquatic animal disease reporting, the trend was compared: (i) between Europe Region and other Regions; and (ii) between “aquatic” reports and “terrestrial” reports.

As shown in Figure 11, compliance with the requirements for submitting aquatic reports was much higher in Europe Region than in the other Regions (on average, 89% of Members of Europe Region submitted their aquatic reports per semester vs 64% for Members of other Regions). Even if compliance for aquatic reports was the highest in the Europe Region, it has always been lower (at 89% on average) than for terrestrial reports (average of 98% per semester). However, for a short period (2014 to the first semester of 2016), aquatic reporting per semester (average of 94%) almost reached the level of terrestrial reporting. For the year 2017, the percentage of aquatic animal reports submitted is still well below the average for the previous years, especially for the second semester, a situation that also exists for terrestrial animal reports. However, the results for 2017 are still partial as some Members have not yet submitted their reports. By the end of 2018, it is expected that the final percentages for 2017 will reach the same level as in 2016.

²⁵ http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/International_Standard_Setting/docs/pdf/A_BSAL_Disease_card.pdf

²⁶ Spitzen-van der Sluijs A, Martel A, Asselberghs J, et al. Expanding Distribution of Lethal Amphibian Fungus *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* in Europe. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*. 2016;22(7):1286-1288. doi:10.3201/eid2207.160109.

Figure 11: Temporal evolution of reporting compliance by Members of the Europe Region and by Members of other Regions: submission of 6-monthly reports for terrestrial and aquatic OIE-listed diseases (data based on reports submitted up to 2 July 2018)



A brief analysis of the timeliness of reporting of exceptional sanitary events was performed to compare terrestrial and aquatic animal disease events in Europe Region in 2017 and 2018 (up to 2 July). For this analysis, the reporting time was estimated as the number days from the start of the event to the submission of the report to the OIE.

The results of this analysis revealed that aquatic animal disease events in the Europe Region were reported with a significant delay when compared to terrestrial animal disease events (Wilcoxon rank test, p-value <0.001). Specifically, the median number of days from the start of the event to the submission of the immediate notification to the OIE was 7 days for terrestrial diseases and 33 days for aquatic diseases.

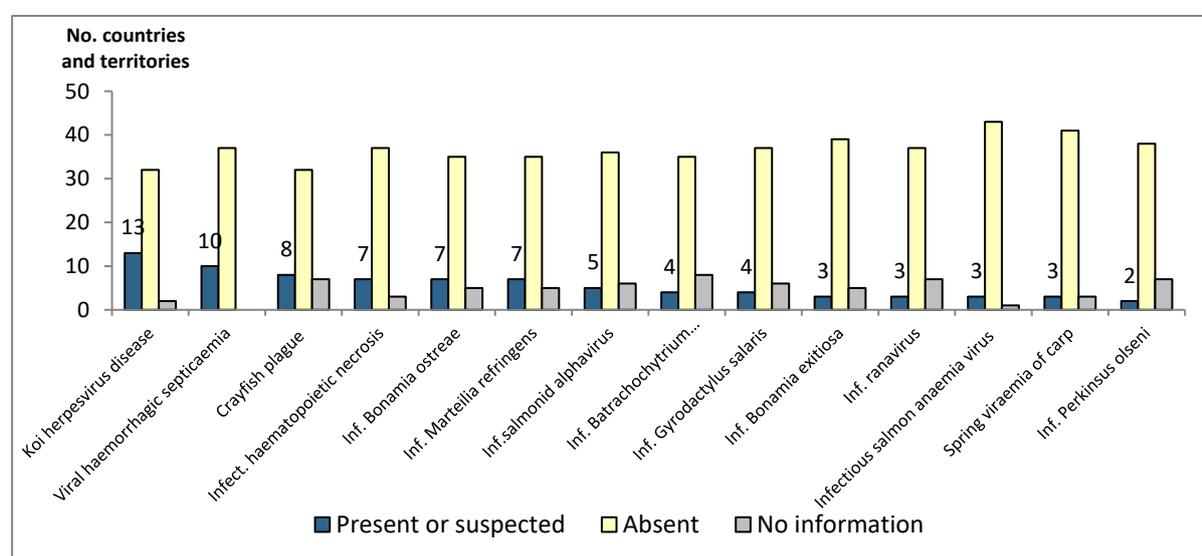
This time includes all the steps from disease occurrence to reporting to the OIE, namely sampling, testing, confirmation and communication of the results to the Competent Authorities. It is important to consider that numerous factors can account for delays between the start of a given event and its confirmation, including difficulties in detecting clinical signs, sampling, sample transportation or laboratory confirmation, among others. Although Members are encouraged to reduce this time as far as possible, the variety of countries' capacities and of disease manifestation should be considered.

Current aquatic animal health situation in Europe Region

Based on the six-monthly reports submitted to the OIE by Members in the Europe Region in 2017 and 2018 (up to 2 July 2018), among all the records (one record for each listed aquatic disease for any given reporting country), the majority referred to disease absence in the country (81% of records were “Disease absent”), followed by 13% with “No information” and 6% with “Disease present”. Interestingly, the lack of information (“No information” records) was not homogenously distributed among the OIE-listed aquatic animal diseases (28 in 2017), as almost 40% of these records were concentrated in only six diseases²⁷ (five of them affecting crustaceans and one affecting amphibians). This finding could also reflect differences in surveillance between aquatic animal species.

On the other hand, only half of the aquatic animal listed diseases were present in the Region (i.e. at least one country affected in Europe Region). As shown in Figure 12, the majority of the diseases reported as “present” affected a very limited number of countries, as there were only six diseases that affected more than five countries. Similarly, the number of diseases present per country was quite low, seven being the highest number of diseases reported as present in a single country.

Figure 12. Status reporting of OIE-listed aquatic animal diseases present in Europe Region for 2017 and 2018 (data based on reports received up to 2 July 2018)



During the period from 1 January 2017 to 2 July 2018, 20 immediate notifications were submitted to the OIE relating to the occurrence of nine different aquatic diseases in 12 countries from Europe Region. Notably, the first occurrence of the disease in the country was reported for: infection with *Aphanomyces invadans* (epizootic ulcerative syndrome) in the United Kingdom (January 2018); infection with infectious haematopoietic necrosis virus in Estonia (May 2018), Finland (November 2017) and Macedonia (Former Yug. Rep. of) (March 2018); and infection with *Marteilia refringens* in Norway (February 2017).

Description of the situation regarding the three most commonly reported diseases

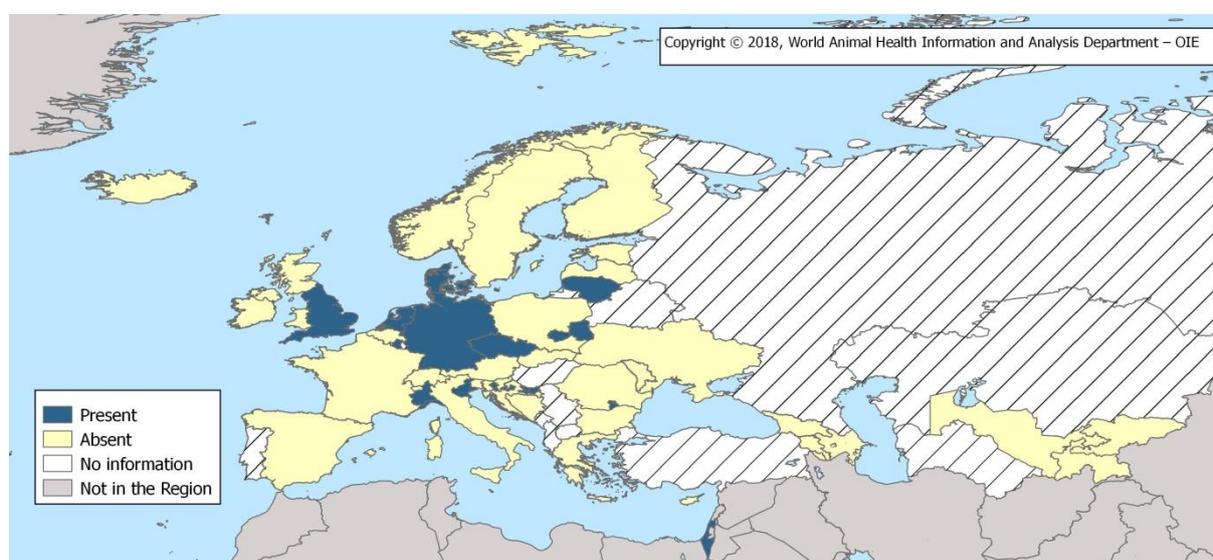
The three diseases with the widest distribution in the Region were selected for a more detailed analysis.

²⁷ Acute hepatopancreatic necrosis disease, Infection with *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, Infection with *Hepatobacter penaei* (Necrotising hepatopancreatitis), Infection with infectious hypodermal and haematopoietic necrosis, Infection with infectious myonecrosis, Infection with *Macrobrachium rosenbergii nodavirus* (White tail disease).

Infection with koi herpesvirus, a disease that affects carp (common carp and other varieties, including koi carp and ghost carp), has spread to many countries around the globe, mainly through trade of koi carp for the purpose of aquaculture, food and the ornamental trade²⁸. This was the aquatic disease most widely distributed in Europe Region during the period of study (from 1st January 2017 to 2nd July 2018), being reported as present in aquaculture populations in 13 countries in the Region²⁹ (and in wild populations in The Netherlands). As shown in Figure 13, the disease was reported as present mainly in Central Europe, as well as in Israel, where the disease was first discovered in 1998³⁰. The quality of information for this aquatic disease was good, as only two of the countries that submitted the six-monthly reports had no information about the disease status in their countries.

During this period, koi herpesvirus was reported through immediate notifications following the recurrence of the disease in three countries: Belgium in June 2017; Italy in July 2017 and Romania (first event started in May 2016 but reported in March 2017, and second event in May 2018).

Figure 13. Distribution of infection with koi herpesvirus in Europe Region in 2017 and 2018 (data based on reports received up to 2 July 2018)



Infection with viral haemorrhagic septicaemia virus (VHS) was the second most widely distributed aquatic animal disease in Europe Region during this period, affecting 10 countries³¹ (all in aquaculture). VHS, which affects a wide range of farmed and wild fish species around the world, has only been reported in farmed rainbow trout in Europe Region. Considering that trout is the second highest produced aquaculture species in the EU³², VHS is considered one of the most serious viral diseases in this sector in the Europe Region. During this period, all the countries that submitted six-monthly reports on aquatic animal diseases, reported a known situation (absence or presence) for this disease in aquaculture fish, reflecting the importance of this disease in aquaculture.

²⁸ EFSA AHAW Panel (EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare). Scientific Opinion on the assessment of listing and categorisation of animal diseases within the framework of the Animal Health Law (Regulation (EU) No 2016/429): Koi herpes virus disease (KHV). EFSA Journal 2017;15(7):4907, 35 pp. <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2017.4907>

²⁹ Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and United Kingdom

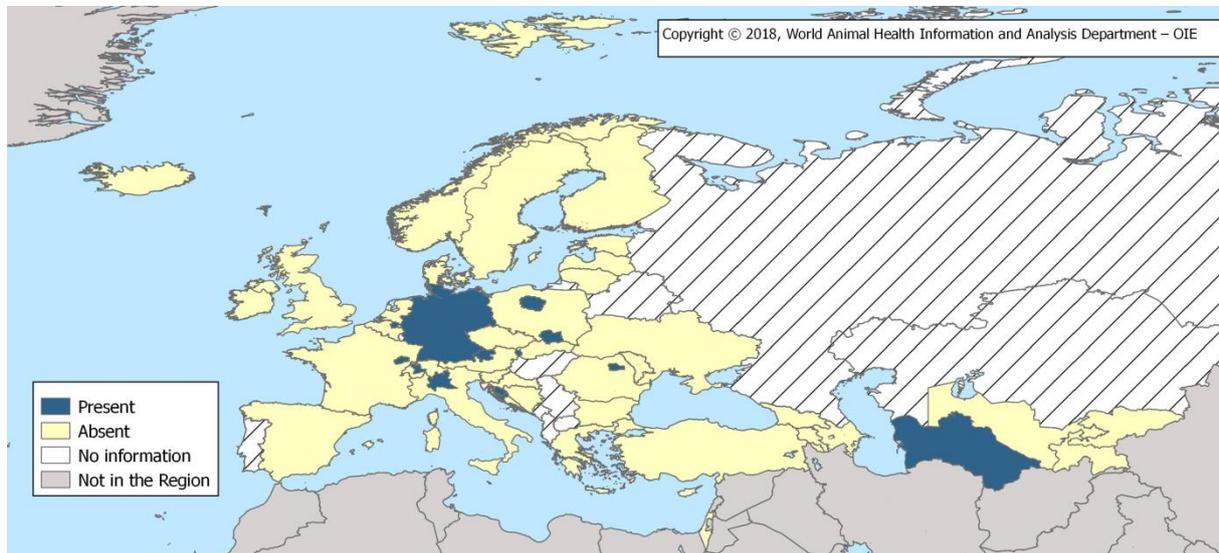
³⁰ http://www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Health_standards/aahm/current/chapitre_koi_herpesvirus.pdf

³¹ Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland and Turkmenistan

³² European Commission. Fact-sheet. Farmed in the EU. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/inseparable/en/farmed-eu#quicktabs-farming_in_the_eu_en=4

As shown in Figure 14, the disease was reported present during this period in Central Europe, as well as in France, Italy, Romania and Turkmenistan. VHS was reported through immediate notifications due to the recurrence of the disease during this period in two countries: Italy in February 2018 and Slovakia in May 2017.

Figure 14. Distribution of VHS in Europe Region in 2017 and 2018 (data based on reports received up to 2 July 2018)

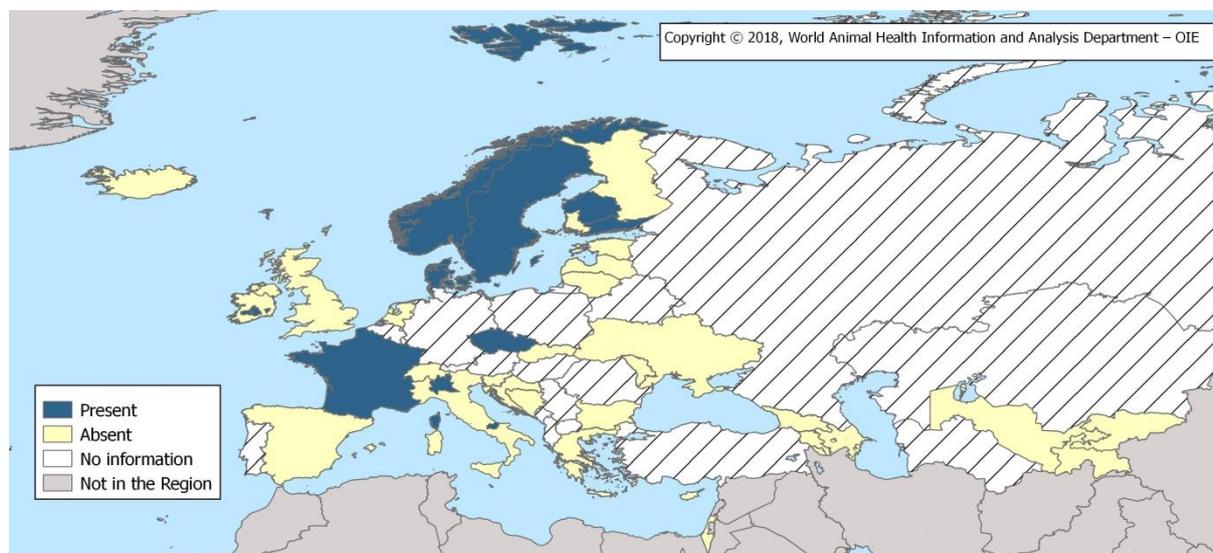


Infection with *Aphanomyces astaci* (crayfish plague) was the third most widely distributed aquatic animal disease during the period 1 January 2017 to 2 July 2018 in the Europe Region. In contrast to the previous two diseases, crayfish plague has primarily occurred in wild populations, affecting crayfish in eight countries of Europe Region³³. Italy was the only country that reported crayfish plague present in aquaculture during this period (Figure 15). For this disease, less information was available, as seven of the countries that submitted aquatic six-monthly reports did not have any information about the occurrence of the disease in their countries.

Only one country reported crayfish plague through immediate notifications during this period: Ireland reported the recurrence of the disease in May 2017 with two outbreaks that were considered resolved one month later. Unfortunately, more outbreaks were detected in July 2017 and, in January 2018, the country reported that as the disease situation was now considered sufficiently stable, information would be notified in the future only in six-monthly reports.

³³ Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway and Sweden

Figure 15. Distribution of Infection with *Aphanomyces astaci* (crayfish plague) in Europe Region in 2017 and 2018 (data based on reports received up to 2 July 2018)



In recent years, Members in the Europe Region have fulfilled their reporting obligations to the OIE with a high level of compliance, although reporting for aquatic animal diseases has continued to be slightly lower than reporting for terrestrial animal diseases. In addition, the submission of notifications of exceptional events involving aquatic animal diseases was considerably delayed when compared to notifications involving terrestrial animal diseases.

Half of all the OIE-listed aquatic animal diseases were reported as present in the Region during the period from 1 January 2017 to 2 July 2018, and the ones reported as present were restricted to a limited number of countries. This fact, together with the lack of information predominantly in some diseases of crustaceans, indicates a potential bias of reporting, which could be highly influenced by level of surveillance activities and the resources invested in the sector. Among the diseases present, infection with koi herpesvirus affecting carp, VHS of trout and crayfish plague were the ones with the widest distribution in the Region and largest number of reports to the OIE.

Since 2018, infection with *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* has become a disease notifiable to the OIE. Members now have an obligation to report disease information for this pathogenic agent to inform the international community of its distribution, so that the necessary preventive measures can be applied. In addition, Members are encouraged to make use of the training workshops for Focal Points regularly organised by the OIE, the e-learning tool on WAHIS and the OIE network of Reference Centres to improve aquatic disease reporting in the Region, and to comply with their legal obligations in this regard.

5. WAHIS + and interconnectivity with ADIS

General background:

Ensuring transparency of the global animal disease situation is a core mission of the OIE and is furthermore identified as a strategic objective in the OIE's Sixth Strategic Plan for the period 2016–2020. This strategic objective, 'Ensuring Trust through Transparency and Communication', recognises the importance of timely reporting of animal disease events and scientific and public information on the state of animal health and animal welfare worldwide. To contribute to the fulfilment of this objective, the OIE has embarked on a ten-year process of modernising the OIE World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), taking into account new technologies and societal needs.

To ensure timely reporting of animal diseases by Members in the European Union (EU), the OIE signed on 7 October 2014 a Contribution Agreement with the European Commission for 'Actions in the area of Animal Disease Information System V1' and, in April 2016, an IT company was contracted and began to work with the OIE for the first three stages of the project (inception, elaboration and construction). The goal of this project is to develop an animal disease information system (ADIS) that will provide focal points with one-time data entry for EU and OIE notification obligations.

Progress on deliverables

The ADIS project advancement and progress towards development of deliverables are on track at 90% level. A no cost extension was agreed in April 2018 to extend the implementation period until 31 December 2019. An ADIS internal test version is scheduled to be available by mid-2018 and, in line with the foreseen activities of the Contribution Agreement, the OIE will provide support to test the functionalities of ADIS to allow for harmonisation of the specifications of ADIS and WAHIS+ and to ensure that the WAHIS+ and ADIS systems can communicate with each other and that the requirements of both organisations are met.

With the target to announce its first release in May 2019, the WAHIS+ project was structured in phases to initially focus on ensuring the development of major core functionalities. More specifically, this includes: a new local report to facilitate the notification process to the OIE, an immediate notification and follow-up reporting module and a six-monthly report module, as well as their respective interfaces. In addition, establishing smooth interfacing and interconnection with regional systems, such as ADIS, will be addressed during the same period: the ADIS platform will be designed to feed the immediate notification and follow-up reporting module of the WAHIS+ platform through the automatic transfer of outbreak reports. However, the six-monthly and annual reports will have to be fully entered in WAHIS+.

The second release of WAHIS+ will occur in December 2019. Additional modules of the core functionalities will be developed, such as: annual report, wild annual report, e-learning system and smartphone application.

WAHIS+ will have a state-of-the-art mapping solution with map interaction, detailed and synthetic data display forms and performance. Maps will be included in numerous application pages, some showing data such as outbreak location, affected species, analytics indicators in various forms and risk perimeters (zoning and compartmentalisation).

A key focus of WAHIS+ will be the development of dynamic, interactive, ergonomic dashboards with integrated analytical capabilities and the possibility to extract data in a wide range of formats (i.e. PDF, Excel, CSV and as an image).

Sopra Steria, an internationally recognised IT development company was engaged in April 2018 to undertake the development of the WAHIS+ project. This IT company has extensive experience in the development of complex information technology solutions with a global reach and involving public goods. Sopra Steria is developing WAHIS+ through agile methodology, which is iterative and will ensure a quick delivery of functional components and visible results for May 2019.

In addition, teams are currently working on: (i) establishing the design layout (ergonomic, functional and technical navigation standards – graphic charter); (ii) establishing functional interfaces and management rules based on the high-level business requirements; (iii) outlining the data model; and (iv) establishing the functional modalities for data migration. The data model will be shared with the ADIS design team to ensure effective interconnectivity between both systems.

Key users' engagement

The key users' involvement from the early stages of the project is crucial for the development of a sustainable system that can respond to user needs and expectations. The WAHIS+ team is currently working on setting up the Key Users Committee, which will be composed of selected users (OIE national Focal Points for Animal Disease Notification, for Aquatic Animal Diseases, and for Wildlife Animal Diseases), as well as OIE scientific experts who have expressed an interest in the evolution of WAHIS.

These selected key users will represent the interests and views of the WAHIS+ end users and will (i) undertake end-user testing and provide feedback during the development of the WAHIS+ modules; (ii) provide recurrent business and functional feedback to the WAHIS+ project management team; (iii) ensure that the project deliverables are relevant to end users; (iv) verify that any evidence gaps are addressed; and (v) guarantee a long-term collaborative and sustainable approach on the part of the membership. This Committee will be particularly engaged during the development of core business functional modules (September 2018 to December 2019). Meetings will be organised through remote access (e.g. videoconference).

Interconnection of WAHIS+ and ADIS

According to the planning schedule of the WAHIS+ project, interoperability with other systems will start to be developed in 2020, except with the ADIS system, which will be done in phase 1 of the WAHIS+ project.

The ADIS system will provide a single data entry point for the various animal disease information systems currently maintained by the European Commission and also provide one-time data entry to the OIE WAHIS system. The goal of this interconnection is to simplify the animal disease notification process to allow EU Member States to fulfil their legal obligations in terms of EU and OIE notifications via one-time data entry.

Since 2016, the OIE's World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department has been working in close coordination and collaboration with the European Commission's Directorate General for Health & Food Safety (DG SANTE) to ensure that the required technical and project management for the creation of the ADIS platform is implemented. The work done to develop ADIS during the past two years has created a strong baseline for the creation of WAHIS+ modules for immediate notifications and follow-up reports.

Moreover, and throughout the ADIS project lifespan, the OIE has worked in close collaboration with experts from EU Member States responsible for notifying to both ADNS, the EU Animal Disease Notification System, and WAHIS in order to provide feedback and ensure that both of the systems being developed will meet user needs.

The ultimate goal for the next 9 months is to launch both systems after the OIE General Session in May 2019 and cease to work with the current versions of ADNS and WAHIS.

Recommendation No. 1

Application of biosecurity in different production systems at individual, country and regional levels

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Biosecurity represents a key measure contributing to the prevention and control of all diseases of livestock and animal welfare, with private sector benefits at both the individual and commercial farming level, as well as public sector benefits at individual and collective, national and regional levels;
2. The current edition of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code has provisions only for *Biosecurity procedures in poultry production* (Chapter 6.5) and the Aquatic Animal Health Code has no provision on biosecurity;
3. Although non-commercial farms may be a dead end in terms of disease spread, backyard units can contribute to spread of diseases.

And considering that, based on the response to the questionnaire provided to the Delegates of the Regional Commission for Europe in preparation of this technical item:

4. The vast majority of the responding countries have a legal basis for the implementation of livestock biosecurity and have biosecurity plans that are enforced;
5. Biosecurity plans in the region mainly cover commercial poultry and pig farms and these have been strengthened in response to the recent epidemics of avian influenza and African swine fever;
6. The priority diseases that biosecurity requirements and plans cover are avian influenza, African swine fever, salmonellosis, tuberculosis, and aquatic animal diseases, among others;
7. Biosecurity plans in aquaculture appear to be of a high level where they exist;
8. Disease control tools such as vaccination, minimising contact at the wildlife interface, disease surveillance in both wildlife and at-risk domestic populations, and culling of wild animals are means enabling prevention, early detection, and reduced spread of diseases between wild and domestic animals;
9. The level of control of biosecurity, as a means to reduce the use of antimicrobial agents, is variable in the Region;
10. Farmers and hunters are the stakeholders with whom collaboration has most frequently been established to implement or improve biosecurity;

11. Awareness campaigns and capacity building activities are relevant tools for promoting the implementation of biosecurity at individual and collective, country and regional levels; and
12. Insufficient budget, difficulty in maintaining biosecurity over time, lack of human resources, and limited expertise are the main factors adversely affecting the ability of Veterinary Services and industry working together to apply biosecurity.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities advocate with their animal production industries, including small commercial farms, for increasing awareness for and investment in biosecurity;
2. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities consider establishing a unit or function to support the field implementation of biosecurity, when relevant;
3. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities encourage the establishment of a Collaborating Centre on biosecurity in the Region, which could provide support to and coordinate capacity-building activities on biosecurity to Member Countries;
4. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities, in close collaboration with private sector, assess and share lessons learned and best practices on biosecurity, including activities targeting aquatic animals;
5. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities, in close collaboration with animal production industries, provide guidance to farmers regarding biosecurity and animal disease prevention and control, including in relation to good husbandry practices and vaccination, with a view to reduce the need for the use of antimicrobial agents, thus contributing to the prevention of antimicrobial resistance;
6. The Standing Group of Experts on ASF under the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), supported by the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels, pursue the activities undertaken, especially in relation to biosecurity in commercial and non-commercial farms, and in hunting grounds; the guidelines developed be largely publicise through appropriate channels and use, as appropriate, as background for other diseases;
7. The OIE develop further guidance on biosecurity aligned with the relevant sections of both *Terrestrial and Aquatic Codes* and consider the development of templates for biosecurity planning in collaboration with relevant partners;
8. The OIE include greater reference to biosecurity in the development of the 7th Edition of the PVS Tool (terrestrial and aquatic);
9. The OIE collect and publish on the regional website examples of best practices in biosecurity; and
10. The OIE and its Member Countries, when developing communication materials and engaging dialogue with the industrial sector, consider the contribution of the relevant expertise needed to address the socio-cultural and socio-economical aspects of biosecurity...

Recommendation No. 2

**Importance of the prescription of antimicrobial agents and control of their distribution
(with a possible e-tracking system) by the Veterinary Services for a proper implementation of
the antimicrobial resistance strategy**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a serious threat to human health, animal health and welfare, plant health, and also to the environment and food security throughout the world and cannot be successfully tackled without multi-sectoral cooperation;
2. The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the World Health Organization (WHO) are working closely together with the Codex Alimentarius Commission to ensure the development and implementation of global strategies and measures designed to restrict the development and spread of AMR, and contribute to the fulfilment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals;
3. The Tripartite (FAO/OIE/WHO) alliance has recently been strengthened through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with a strong focus on tackling AMR;
4. Modern advances in information technology have led to the development of e-tracking systems that can be used to monitor the entire chain of antimicrobial agents' circulation;
5. The OIE provides its Member Countries with standards, assistance and leadership with regard to their policies on strengthening and harmonising their surveillance systems on the use of antimicrobial agents in animals and it supports their efforts to implement science-based international standards;
6. OIE Member Countries need to share their experience and work together to address the problem of combating AMR and promote the prudent use of antimicrobials in human and veterinary medicine; and
7. The OIE is organising the "Second Global Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance – *Putting Standards into Practice*", to be held in Marrakesh (Morocco) from 29 to 31 October 2018.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Member Countries strengthen their national legislation with the aim of implementing the OIE Strategy on AMR and the Prudent Use of Antimicrobials, adopted in the form of Resolution No. 36 by the OIE World Assembly of Delegates at the 84th General Session of the OIE in 2016;
2. Member Countries develop, approve and implement national action plans for AMR in human and veterinary medicine under the "One Health" approach, taking into account multi-sectoral and multinational experience and aligned with the Global Action Plan developed by WHO and formally endorsed by OIE and FAO;

3. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities, in collaboration with other relevant Competent Authorities, foster awareness and understanding of the problem of AMR, strengthen knowledge and ensure, as much as possible, surveillance of all steps of antimicrobial use, including their manufacture, distribution, storage and application and the disposal of unused antimicrobials;
4. Member Countries' Veterinary Services follow the recommendations in the OIE List of Antimicrobial Agents of Veterinary Importance, in particular regarding restrictions on the use of fluoroquinolones, third and fourth generation cephalosporins and colistin, and refrain the use of antimicrobial agents of critical importance as growth promoters in absence of risk assessment;
5. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities promote a strong collaboration between veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals, and farmers in order to implement the principles of good animal health/husbandry practices, including biosecurity, to reduce the need for antimicrobials and take steps to ensure that, when their use is unavoidable, they are used in a responsible and prudent manner in accordance with relevant international standards, including Chapter 6.10 of the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code* and Chapter 6.2 of the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*;
6. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities implement the principles of good distribution practice to improve the monitoring of amounts of antimicrobial veterinary medicinal products (AVMPs) sold at national level, using, wherever possible, an e-tracking system or other forms of data collection in accordance with the requirements of the European Surveillance of Veterinary Antimicrobial Consumption (ESVAC) and the OIE Annual Report on Antimicrobial Agents Intended for Use in Animals;
7. Member Countries' Veterinary Authorities pursue the implementation of a veterinary prescription-only based distribution system for antimicrobials, including those intended for use in both food-producing animals and companion animals, so as to improve or maximise as far as possible the traceability of antimicrobial distribution;
8. OIE Delegates nominate their national Focal Point for Veterinary Products if they have not already done so, encourage their Focal Point's active participation in OIE capacity-building activities, and take advantage of their expertise to support the implementation of national AMR-related activities in collaboration with all interested parties;
9. Member Countries take advantage of the upcoming OIE Global Conference to update their knowledge and, in preparation for the OIE Seventh Strategic Plan, to contribute to the future work of the OIE on AMR;
10. The OIE collect and publish, on the OIE regional website, examples of AMR-related best practices, particularly on the use of e-tracking systems, and highlighting the consequences of overuse and misuse of antimicrobial agents;
11. The OIE, in the development of the model curricula for veterinary paraprofessionals, ensure that the role of veterinary paraprofessionals in the responsible and prudent use of antimicrobial agents, be well addressed; and
12. In future activities undertaken under the PVS Pathway, the OIE provide its Member Countries with tools and capacity-building activities with a greater focus on AMR.