



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 11 October 2018
(OR. en)

12946/18

AGRI 455
VETER 65

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	African swine fever: state of play - <i>Information from the Commission</i>

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Commission services on the above mentioned subject to be raised under "Any other business" at the session of the Council ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 15 October 2018.

African swine fever: state of play

African swine fever (ASF) is now present in ten EU Member States (see Annex – map of current EU ASF regionalisation): Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Belgium and Italy (where ASF has been present in Sardinia since 1978).

Geographically, the disease is mainly limited to the Eastern part of the EU. It is continually present in the wild boar population along the EU Eastern borders with occasional spill-overs to domestic pig holdings.

Since June 2018, however, there have been over 950 outbreaks in domestic pigs in Romania – this is unprecedented.

On 31 August, ASF was confirmed in Bulgaria in a backyard farm of 7 pigs in the Varna region, less than 100 km from the Romanian border.

On 13 September, the Belgian authorities informed the Commission that ASF had been confirmed in a wild boar found dead in the locality of Etalle (Luxembourg province). The Belgian authorities, supported by the Commission, immediately put in place all the necessary measures to prevent further spread of the disease. Legislative measures were adopted to demarcate the infected area, where veterinary restrictions apply. Commission experts from the EU Veterinary Emergency Team were immediately sent to Belgium (14-17 September) to provide on-the-spot support and assess the situation. The Belgian veterinary authorities have strengthened the level of awareness and surveillance, giving special attention to minimising the risk of disease spread. So have done the neighbouring countries.

It is essential that EU Member States ensure a high level of ASF preparedness and continue to take relevant measures, particularly concerning the management of wild boar in free areas. In July 2018, an EFSA opinion highlighted that certain measures should be implemented to reduce the risks of further outbreaks in ASF-free areas *e.g.* intensive hunting and a ban on feeding wild boar.

The recent meeting of the joint OIE/FAO Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs) in Warsaw (24-25 September) focused on disease epidemiology in wild boar. The meeting highlighted a need for efforts (*e.g.* hunting management, ban of supplementary feeding, agricultural practices) to reduce growth of the wild boar population in ASF-free areas.

Long-term management of the wild boar population and effective coordination between veterinary services, farmers, forestry management bodies and hunters is needed. Therefore, the involvement of both Ministers for agriculture and environmental issues is essential in this regard.

The Commission wishes to remind Ministers that any unilateral measure on harmonised EU veterinary matters *e.g.* an obligation to impose additional ASF testing on operators in EU Member States or unjustified restrictions that could cause unnecessary disruption to intra-EU trade (as well as additional burden and costs) go against EU legislation in this area.

EU measures have collectively been agreed as those most appropriate based on current scientific knowledge as assessed by EFSA. Unilateral measures are thus not justified. In addition, they undermine the internal market and risk to put in question our regionalisation system vis-à-vis Third Countries.

The Commission takes the opportunity to recall the importance of thoroughly enforcing EU legislation as well as measures listed in the EU ASF Strategy.

The Commissioner wishes to inform Ministers on the evolution of the disease at the meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 15 October, highlighting the importance of cooperation between Ministers of agriculture and environment on wild boar management (especially in ASF-free areas) and reminding Ministers of the legal obligations.

Annex – map of current EU ASF regionalisation

