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Subject: Council conclusions on biosecurity, an overall concept with a unitary approach for protecting animal health in the EU
- *Council conclusions (18 June 2019)*

Delegations will find in Annex the Council conclusions on the above-mentioned subject adopted by the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 18 June 2019.

**Council conclusions
on biosecurity, an overall concept with a unitary approach
for protecting animal health in the EU**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- (1) RECALLS that outbreaks of transmissible animal diseases can have very severe economic and social consequences which, in addition to hampering agriculture and trade, often affect also other sectors like tourism. This is particularly true of transboundary animal diseases (TADs), such as foot-and-mouth disease and African swine fever, which have the potential to spread very rapidly, irrespective of national borders, and which, in the case of zoonotic TADs such as certain types of highly pathogenic avian influenza, can pose a serious risk also to the human health.
- (2) NOTES that in order to reduce the negative consequences of TADs to a minimum, all efforts should be made to prevent their introduction into the EU territory or, in the case of TADs already present, to prevent their spread and to eradicate them.
- (3) In order to reach those aims, STRONGLY EMPHASISES the key role of biosecurity, which should be seen not only as the concrete management and physical measures designed to reduce the risk of TADs at the farm level, but also as a wider concept, as a strategic and holistic approach to managing relevant risks.
- (4) HIGHLY APPRECIATES the long-standing and successful work of Member States and the Commission to combat TADs.

- (5) NOTES with concern, however, that despite all efforts, the presence of TADs in neighbouring third countries and in territories of the EU's trading partners represents a constant risk of their incursion or re-incursion into the Member States, and therefore STRESSES the need for vigilance and continuous and targeted efforts to ensure a sufficient level of protection.
- (6) Consequently, UNDERLINES the need to ensure a sufficient protection capacity against TADs at the relevant points of entry of animals and goods into the EU.
- (7) NOTES that TADs may be introduced and spread not only through the movement of animals, but also through infected goods or means of transport, even over long distances.
- (8) RECALLS the responsibility of all operators and animal professionals, including transporters, to minimise the risk of the spread of TADs through their activities and UNDERLINES, in particular, the primary responsibility of operators for carrying out biosecurity measures.
- (9) RECALLS that many TADs also affect wild animal populations, and that actors such as hunters, birdwatchers and forest management and nature protection organisations can therefore play a very important role in their detection and control.
- (10) EMPHASISES the need for information sharing and cooperation between all relevant actors, public or private.

- (11) For the above reasons, STRESSES the importance of an integrated approach to biosecurity and of the involvement and cooperation of all relevant sectors.
- (12) UNDERLINES the need to educate relevant stakeholders and the general public in order to make them aware of the risks of spreading TADs through their activities, and to encourage them to adopt attitudes and behaviour that reduce those risks.
- (13) RECALLS the importance of an integrated concept of biosecurity to protect against TADs for society as a whole and RECOGNISES that sufficient financial resources are needed to ensure that it can function properly and efficiently, given that investing in prevention is better than spending on curing.
- (14) WELCOMES and ENCOURAGES the continuous cooperation and solidarity between Member States and the Commission, recalling that the intensity of infection pressure on different Member States is not always the same, due to their geographical situation and other factors, but that effective prevention and control of TADs are always in the interest of the EU as a whole.

CALLS UPON Member States and the Commission to:

- (15) ENCOURAGE AND FACILITATE the coordination and cooperation of all relevant sectors to prevent the introduction and spreading of TADs within and between Member States, in order to strengthen an intersectorial and integrated approach to biosecurity;
- (16) ENSURE a sufficient biosecurity capacity at national and EU level;
- (17) ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT the collection, compilation and sharing of essential epidemiological data on TADs with the aim to identify pathways of introduction and spreading of TADs and to improve the ways to eradicate and prevent them.
- (18) IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT appropriate ways of mitigating in the long term the risk posed by the human factor, including through proper communication guidance and awareness campaigns aimed at all stakeholders (professionals, travellers, hunters, consumers) and the general public;
- (19) IDENTIFY AND MAKE AVAILABLE incentives and financial resources to encourage and support the implementation of the essential elements and activities of an integrated biosecurity concept established at national and EU level.
