



Overview of the 28th Conference of the OIE

Regional Commission for Europe

Tbilisi, Georgia , 17-21 September 2018

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

This first technical item addressed biosecurity. Conclusive answers to a questionnaire led the OIE Regional Commission for Europe to recognise the crucial importance of implementing biosecurity measures in different production systems throughout the entire region, in line with OIE Standards. The majority of the responding regional countries have a legal base for the implementation of biosecurity and enforced biosecurity plans, but only half of them have national funds to support biosecurity implementation.

European countries highlighted the relevance of awareness campaigns and training in promoting the implementation of biosecurity, a topic developed in a recent press release on the [importance of investing on biosecurity](#).

‘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 antimicrobial resistance strategy’

The outcome of this second technical item, developed by the OIE Focal Point for Veterinary Products of Ukraine, Dr Yury Kosenko, stressed that implementation of good distribution policy and good veterinary practice, with regard to antimicrobial veterinary medicinal products (AVMPs), requires national legislative support and strengthened collaboration between manufacturers, distributors, veterinarians, professional associations and Veterinary Services. Such multi-sectorial work at an international level has the potential to reduce antibiotic use and minimize/control the development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Dr Kosenko considered the development and functioning of an e-tracking system should be specified in the national legislation, written in a harmonised way, with the relevant international policies. In his opinion, an on-line application is desirable to monitor the sale and use of AVMPs: he presented the benefits and shortcomings of an e-tracking system, as well as the best practices of European countries. According to Dr Kosenko, the inclusion of information on the results of scientific research and practical experience in addressing the AMR problem in the educational curricula for all relevant professions, from initial levels to degree programmes, will lead to greater awareness of AMR among professionals.

All member countries must improve their national legislation with a view to developing the practice of rational use of antimicrobials, implementing an e-tracking system to create AVMP databases, monitoring antibiotic consumption in the veterinary sector and assessing risk factors for the development of AMR.

The recommendations adopted during the Conference regarding these Technical Items will be submitted to the OIE World Assembly in May 2019, for endorsement.

In addition, Dr Paolo Tizzani, Veterinary Epidemiologist from the OIE Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, presented the animal health situation in Europe, with a particular emphasis on African swine fever (ASF), highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), Peste des petits ruminants (PPR), as well as different aquatic animal diseases.

ASF is considered a priority in Europe: 14 countries in the Baltic and Eastern Europe have been affected. There is a deteriorating ASF situation in the region, with new countries and provinces affected since the last OIE Regional Commission for Europe in 2016. The countries have been reporting higher numbers of outbreaks in backyard pigs than in commercial pigs. **Avian Influenza** continues to pose a significant threat in Europe, with continued changing dynamic in terms of the subtypes involved, the countries affected and disease frequencies. The European region has been less affected by **PPR** with more than half of the regional members officially recognized as being free from the disease. PPR has been reported in Israel and Turkey, and Bulgaria reported PPR for the first time this year. Updated information on the animal health situation is available on the [WAHIS portal](#).

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.

Altogether, 140 participants attended, including forty-two OIE Delegates and/or representatives of the fifty-three Member Countries of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe, senior officers from regional and international organisations, representatives of the private sector, as observers, as well as the President of the OIE World Assembly of Delegates, Dr Mark Schipp, and the OIE Director General, Dr Monique Eloit. The President of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe and OIE Delegate of Latvia, Dr Maris Balodis, provided information on future regional priorities and important items for Europe in terms of animal health and welfare. He encouraged Member Countries to keep actively engaged in the OIE International Standard setting process and to promote its implementation at national level. He highlighted the importance of applying for official recognition of animal disease status.

The Regional website, which is currently being revamped, will become an essential tool for the region since it will facilitate information sharing in an attractive and user-friendly way.

Dr Maris Balodis also explained how the region is supporting the development of WAHIS+ platform, as it is considered one of the main priorities. More detailed information can be found in the [fact sheet dedicated to WAHIS+](#), available on the OIE website.



This 28th Conference was kindly hosted by the Georgian Government.

The 29th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe will be held in Italy in 2020.

Bilateral meetings held during the 28th Conference of the OIE Regional Commission for Europe



The OIE Director General took the opportunity to meet with OIE Delegates of the region and in particular, signed a **Letter of Agreement aimed at further cooperation activities between the OIE and Veterinary Services of Kazakhstan** with the OIE Delegate from Kazakhstan, Dr Tursyn Kabduldjanov, after their joint discussions on relevant issues, such as the extension of the OIE veterinary education twinning project and the

launching the OIE laboratory twinning project on PPR.



The Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, Mr Levan Davitashvili, seized this opportunity to discuss matters of current national interest with the OIE Director General. The Minister expressed great interest in the Veterinary Statutory Body (VSB) to promote the veterinary profession and upgrade veterinary services. The authorised body was well aware of the importance and need to establish the VSB, in order to safeguard health and welfare of animals through

the regulation of the educational, ethical and clinical standards for veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals. Points for the improvement of veterinary legislation was raised, as well as the stimulating demand for continuing education. The OIE Delegate from Georgia, Dr Lasha Avaliani, expressed interest in launching the OIE Laboratory Twinning Project, with the view to strengthen the capacity of veterinary laboratories. The Minister also pointed out long distance transport of animals as one of the animal welfare issues relevant to the country. Dr Monique Eloit expressed OIE readiness to give full support to the Veterinary Services in order to meet the requirements of the OIE.

■ October 2018