



**Meeting of the Chief Medical Officers and
Chief Veterinary Officers of the Member States**

Avian Influenza and Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Planning

Brussels, 22 September 2005

Conclusions and recommendations

1) The threats posed by Influenza viruses to animal and human health need separate but consistent and coordinated actions by veterinary and public health authorities, to ensure improved preventive measures and preparedness for crises management.

The EU should continue to work in close contact and coordination with the relevant international organizations, FAO, OIE, WHO in particular.

2) The CVOs and CMOs have been informed on the main actions undertaken by the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the European Medicine Agency in relation to the current threat posed by the avian influenza virus circulating in Asia to animal and public health.

The CVOs and CMOs have appreciated that regular exchange of views and information is taking place between the animal and public health experts of these bodies to ensure a synergistic approach and ask to be kept regularly informed on the most significant results of this work.

3) The current threat posed by highly pathogenic H5N1 Avian Influenza virus in Asia and more in general the risk that the whole world might face an influenza pandemic should induce the Member States to intensify the work to update and adapt their Avian Influenza contingency plans¹ and Pandemic preparedness plans, in coordination with the other Member States and the Commission.

While highly pathogenic avian influenza does not occur in the EU, the importance of having good national plans able to ensure from one side that in the event of an outbreak in domestic birds the disease is swiftly eradicated and from the other side that adequate protection against infection is given to people at risk such as poultry workers has been highlighted.

The CVOs and CMOs recognise that the protection of people at risk and surveillance in these groups should be adequately addressed in the national plans and welcome the work currently being carried out to develop EU guidance in this regard.

4) The CVOs and CMOs acknowledge that further efforts should be carried out at national level to improve cooperation between public and animal health surveillance systems, including both virologists and epidemiologists.

5) There is a need to enhance the support to the Avian Influenza affected countries in Asia, particularly developing countries.

6) The CMOs and CVOs acknowledge that open, transparent, clear and consistent messages should be given by animal and public health authorities to the public on the risks for animal and public health posed by Avian and Human Influenza and on the measures taken to tackle those risks. Joint approaches and technical briefings to the media can be especially helpful. Proper arrangements should be foreseen in the national plans to ensure a consistent communication strategy.

7) The CMOs and CVOs welcome further coordination meetings convened by the Commission.

¹ Approved by the Commission by Decision 2004/102/EC, as amended by Decision 2004/402/EC