

Avian influenza : Commission and Member States to discuss latest situation and future actions

The European Commission is hosting a coordination meeting of Member States' senior communicable disease authorities in Luxembourg today, to discuss avian influenza and national pandemic preparedness. Representatives from the World Health Organisation (WHO), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) will also be present at the meeting. At the top of the agenda is a discussion on the avian influenza situation in Turkey and other affected countries. Participants will receive an update on the situation regarding outbreaks of the H5N1 virus in birds in Turkey, as well as the latest epidemiological information on the human cases reported over the past weeks. Feedback will be provided by the international team of experts sent to Turkey by the Commission/OIE/FAO, ECDC and WHO to investigate the disease situation in birds and the means by which the H5N1 virus was transmitted to humans. During the meeting, Member States will have the opportunity to outline measures they are taking, or intend to take, in response to the current avian flu situation, in particular in terms of the heightened surveillance for infected birds, both within and at their borders. Also up for discussion are future preventative and preparatory actions that may be taken at EU level in relation to a possible human flu pandemic, including the potential establishment of an EU stockpile of antivirals and further discussions with vaccine manufacturers on meeting Member States' needs. For more information, see:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/influenza/index.cfm