



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels,

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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Austrian Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Commission proposal for a Council Directive to amend Directive 2000/75 as regards vaccination against bluetongue {COM (2010) 666}, in which it expressed reservations as regards the possibility to use live vaccines.

The Commission takes note of the concerns of the Austrian Bundesrat and agrees that if live attenuated vaccines are used, appropriate precautionary measures need to be taken. However, the Commission considers that EU legislation should not exclude the possible use of live attenuated vaccines under certain circumstances, such as following the introduction of a new bluetongue virus serotype against which inactivated vaccines are not available.

In response to the possible risk of local circulation of the vaccine virus, the Commission proposal requires for Member States that decide to make use of live vaccines to demarcate a protection zone (consisting of at least the vaccination area), and a surveillance zone of at least 50 km around the protection zone. The possible risk is therefore minimised in this way.

Finally, it should be underlined that it is in the discretion of Member States to decide whether or not to make use of live attenuated vaccines, as was noted by the Austrian Bundesrat.

The Commission remains available to provide any further information on these issues if needed.

Yours faithfully,

*Ms Susanne Neuwirth
President of the
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