Chair: A. Laddomada.

All Member States were present.

Croatia attended the meeting as an observer.

A representative from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) attended the meeting during the presentation of item A.8.

A.1 **Bluetongue situation in the Member States.**

Italy presented an update on the bluetongue (BT) situation in the country, namely in Sardinia. A discussion within the Committee took place as regards the origin of the strains involved, the vaccination strategy and the efficacy of the vaccine. It was clarified that vaccination was carried out with bivalent vaccines (BTV 1 and BTV 8), while vaccination with another bivalent vaccine recently purchased (BTV 1 and BTV 4) was on-going. It was concluded that the current epidemiological situation in Sardinia should not be underestimated and it would be followed by the Committee.

A.2 **Information from Latvia on the classical swine fever situation.**

The Latvian representative made a presentation on the classical swine fever (CSF) situation in Latvia, after the recent cases in the wild boar and three outbreaks in backyard holdings. The Latvian authorities informed on the control measures implemented in accordance to Council Directive 2001/89/EC and to Commission Decision 2002/106/EC. An infected area was defined and the eradication programme for CSF in Latvia has been approved. Currently, a surveillance programme for CSF is on-going in the affected area, in wild boar and in domestic pigs. Other cases have been detected in wild boar, mainly in the same area where the first cases have been reported. The results of the surveillance and eradication activities performed were presented as well.

The Latvian representative informed that, due to the weather conditions, the first vaccination campaign could not be performed yet.
A.3 Information from Germany, Italy and the Netherlands on low pathogenic avian influenza in poultry.

The German representative gave a presentation on a low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) outbreak of the H7N7 subtype that was confirmed on 7 March 2013 in a hobby poultry holding in the commune of Lippstadt-Hörst, Landkreis Soest. On the holding a total of 14 poultry and birds are kept (chickens, geese, ducks, peacocks and one ostrich) in free-range. Investigations for avian influenza were initiated following the death of the ostrich. All birds present on the holding were culled on 6 March 2013 and cleaning and disinfection was carried out on 8 March 2013. Investigations in poultry holdings located within the restricted zone of 1-km radius established around the infected holding gave negative results. No movements of birds to other German provinces (Landkreise), other Member States or third countries could be identified. The veterinary restrictions in relation to this outbreak are expected to be lifted by 10 April 2013.

The Dutch representative gave a presentation on two LPAI outbreaks of the subtype H7N7 in poultry. The first outbreak was confirmed on 13 March 2013 in a holding keeping more than 80,000 laying hens in free range located in the commune of Lochem in the province of Gelderland. Suspicion was raised due to slight decrease in production data. The poultry was culled the same day. Cleaning and disinfection was carried out. Investigations in poultry holdings located within the restricted zone established at a 1km radius around the infected holding gave negative results and the veterinary restrictions were lifted by 4 April 2013. A second outbreak of the H7N7 virus (virus not identical to the one detected in Lochem) was detected on 19 March 2013 in the commune of Zeewolde, province Flevoland, in a holding keeping 24,000 laying hens in two sheds with access to the open.

The Italian representative gave a presentation with a compiled overview on the situation as regards LPAI in Italy during 2012/13. In 2012 a total of 16 LPAI outbreaks were identified which except for one outbreak were caused by the H5 subtype. One LPAI outbreak of H7 subtype was detected in a rural farm in Emilia Romagna region, while the LPAI outbreaks of the H5 subtype involved seven regions and 15 farms, of which 8 farms belonged to the industrial sector and seven were identified in the rural sector. In addition to EU legislation applied in all these outbreaks, the Italian Ministry of Health implemented strict measures in particular with regard to movements between farms and restocking of poultry in farms. The last outbreaks in 2012 occurred in October and all veterinary restrictions were lifted by 21 November 2012. In 2013 LPAI of the subtype H5 was confirmed on 19 February in a rural poultry holding located in the commune of Castelvetro, Modena province, Emilia Romagna Region. The control measures for avian influenza were implemented and depopulation of the poultry was finalised by 25 February 2013. However, certain other captive birds (finches, parrots) kept on the holding were exempted from culling by confining them inside a building and subjecting them to surveillance and laboratory testing as required under Union law.

A.4 Declaration from the UK of the disease-free status for Oyster herpes virus of a compartment in accordance with Council Directive 2006/88/EC:
UK declared disease-free status for Oyster herpes virus of a compartment in accordance with Council Directive 2006/88/EC. This compartment covers the entire coast of the United Kingdom (incl. Guernsey) and Northern Ireland except for certain containment areas. The internet link to the submitted declaration could be found at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/marine/science/Research/aquaculture/diseases/notifiableDisease/oshvdec

A.5 Information from the Commission and exchange of views with Member States on measures to reinforce the system of issuing passports for equidae.

The Commission informed Member States about its action plan to reinforce identification of equidae. Member States informed the Commission of the problems they have encountered with the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 504/2008.

A.6 Information by the Commission on the outcome of the meeting of the Chief Veterinary Officers from Western Balkans and neighbouring Member States on animal disease eradication, 7 March 2013.

The IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) project is financed by the European Commission's (EC's) Directorate General (DG) for the Enlargement and managed by the EC's DG for Health and Consumers for the benefit of the 7 Western Balkan (WB) countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) and Kosovo.

The objectives of the project are to improve the performance and the cross border cooperation between veterinary services as regards the implementation of animal health programmes (in particular classical swine fever and rabies) and the harmonisation and coordination of eradication and control activities at regional level.

An update of the activities carried out since July 2011 divided in reporting, technical support and network building were presented, as well as the main conclusions of the meeting with the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) from the WB and Member States' neighbouring countries organised on 7th March 2013. In particular, the challenges identified on the adoption of measures at national level to consolidate the network and expand collaboration opportunities and to ensure the sustainability of the network beyond the lifetime of the Multi-Beneficiary project in September 2013.


Member States who are not fully compliant were asked by the Commission to confirm or update the figures concerning the state of implementation of group housing of sows presented in a table during the meeting. According to current data, twelve Member States are fully compliant with group housing of sows. Several Member States could report progress in achieving compliance.
**A.8** Presentation from EFSA of its scientific opinion on the risk of entry of Aethina tumida and Tropilaelaps spp. in the European Union

A representative of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) presented the recently published Scientific Opinion on the risk of entry of Aethina tumida and Tropilaelaps spp. in the EU.

The results confirm that the Union animal health import policy for live bees is effective, however it also highlights that the main risks for the introduction of the two pests in the Union are illegal or unintentional introductions of bees as well as natural movements of bees in trans boundary areas.

The Commission invited Member States to focus on and implement the recommendations provided by EFSA as the correct control procedures upon importation of live queen bees are a crucial element in avoiding the introduction of bee diseases.

**A.9** Information from the Commission on EFSA data needs for the preparation of a scientific opinion on the welfare of broilers

The Commission prepared a draft document proposing a harmonised data collection system of welfare indicators in broiler slaughterhouses, in order to help Member States to implement Article 6(2) of the Council Directive 2007/43/EC which provides that Member States shall submit to the Commission the results of a data collection of welfare indicators based on monitoring of a representative sample of broilers' flocks slaughtered during a period of one year.

The Commission has requested scientific assistance from EFSA under the provisions of Article 31 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 to evaluate whether a percentage of 1% of the total number of flocks slaughtered each year in each Member State would ensure that the proposed harmonised data collection system of welfare indicators will comply with Council Directive 2007/43/EC.

The approach was presented during this meeting and EFSA requested the Member States to sign a "Data sharing agreement", in order to address the technical assistance mandate by analysing the latest data at country level.

One Member State asked if the central competent authorities have been ever informed about this possibility, and expressed its concerns in relation to the strict deadline for the data communication (middle of May 2013).

Attendants were also informed that the Commission will shortly get in touch with their contact points, following the same approach undertaken for the Schmallenberg virus (SBV) technical assistance mandate to EFSA.

**B.1** Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on the evolution of animal diseases in the Union and in third countries.

No item raised.
B.2 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision 2010/221/EU as regards the approval of national measures for preventing the introduction of ostreid herpesvirus 1 ar (OsHV-1 μvar) into certain areas of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The Commission's representative presented a draft Implementing Decision amending Decision 2010/221/EC. The restrictions related to ostreid herpesvirus 1 μvar (OsHV-1 μvar) provided for in Decision 2010/221/EU are intended to apply only until 30 April 2013. OsHV-1 μvar is an emerging disease with many uncertainties and the surveillance programmes approved by this Decision have not yet been fully evaluated. Therefore, the period of time that Member States can put in place specific restrictions related to this disease should be prolonged for another year. Decision 2010/221/EU should therefore be amended accordingly.

The draft Decision was discussed with positive reaction from Member States. Due to the urgency for the change of date, it will be presented for an opinion at the next meeting of this Committee on 16 April.

Vote postponed

B.3 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision amending Decision 2012/362/EU concerning a financial contribution by the Union to certain Member States to support voluntary surveillance studies on honeybee colony losses as regards the period of applicability.

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision. A number of Member States taking part to the voluntary surveillance studies have expressed the need to postpone the end date of 30 June 2013 based on the fact that depending from the location of the Member States and from the seasonal conditions, it could be impossible to end the program within that date.

In order to make it possible for all Member States taking part to the surveillance studies on honeybee losses to conclude the third round of visits in summer, it is opportune to postpone the end date provided for in Decision 2012/362/EU to the 30th of September 2012.

Vote taken: unanimous in favour.

B.4 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision establishing the financial contribution by the Union to the expenditure incurred in the context of the emergency vaccination plans against bluetongue in Belgium in 2007 and 2008.

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision and explained that the final contribution from the Union to the expenditure incurred by Belgium for the emergency vaccination against bluetongue in 2007/2008 is hereby fixed at 7,881,826.95 euro. A balance of 3,606.95 euro remains to be paid.
Vote taken: unanimous in favour.

B.5 **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision establishing the financial contribution by the Union to the expenditure incurred in the context of the emergency vaccination plans against bluetongue in Denmark in 2007 and 2008.**

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision and explained that the final contribution from the Union to the expenditure incurred by Denmark for the emergency vaccination against bluetongue in 2007/2008 is hereby fixed at 3,061,529.48 euro. A balance of 2,261,529.48 euro remains to be paid.

Vote taken: unanimous in favour.

B.6 **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision establishing the financial contribution by the Union to the expenditure incurred in the context of the emergency vaccination plans against bluetongue in Portugal in 2007 and 2008.**

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision and explained that the final contribution from the Union to the expenditure incurred by Portugal for the emergency vaccination against bluetongue in 2007/2008 is hereby fixed at 2,986,419.35 euro. A balance of 38,396.08 euro remains to be paid.

Vote taken: unanimous in favour.

B.7 **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision establishing the financial contribution by the Union to the expenditure incurred in the context of the emergency measures taken to combat avian influenza in Spain in 2009.**

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision and explained that the final contribution from the Union to the expenditure incurred by Spain for the emergency measures taken against avian influenza by Spain in 2009 is hereby fixed at 877,910.62 euro.

Vote taken: unanimous in favour.

B.8 **Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Regulation on the model identification documents for the non-commercial movement of dogs, cats and ferrets, the establishment of a list of territories and third countries and the model declarations attesting certain conditions provided for in Regulation (EU) No xxx/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.**


The proposal establishes the model declarations for young dogs, cats and ferrets, the model passport issued in Member States and in certain territories and third
Member States were asked to submit their comments before the next committee in May. The intention is to present this draft for vote in June.

**Vote postponed**


The Commission's representative presented the draft Regulation aiming at repealing obsolete acts which were adopted to facilitate the transition to the arrangements of Regulation (EC) No 998/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council or have been reviewed and included in the Regulation repealing Regulation (EC) No 998/2003.

Member States were asked to submit their comments before the next committee in May. The intention is to present this draft for vote in June.

**Vote postponed**

### B.10 Exchange of views and possible opinion of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2013 work programme on IT tools in the field of food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision and explained that the EU contribution towards IT activities in 2013 is hereby fixed at EUR 4,889,000 for the animal health area, at EUR 1,350,000 for the plant health area and at EUR 1,051,000 for the feed and food control area. Despite the commitment from the European Commission to provide the "Schema Directeur" on the IT activities agreed upon by the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumers, (DG SANCO) management and to organise an IT working group, the Netherlands were not in a position to vote in favour and finally abstained.

Statement from the Netherlands:

"The Netherlands has abstained from voting on the Commission Implementing Decision on the financing of the 2013 work programme on IT tools in the field of food safety, animal health, animal welfare and plant health, because, according to the Netherlands:
- more information should be given by the Commission to all of the Member States on the content of the different projects of the 2013 working programme, especially where it concerns new developments or where budgets are substantially changed;
- each year, a summarizing report should be provided to the Member States on the results of the work programme of the past year;
- in future, Work Programmes should be discussed with the Member States at an earlier stage."
Vote taken: qualified majority by 332 votes in favour, 13 votes abstained.

C.1 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision implementing Directive 2006/88/EC as regards requirements for surveillance and diagnostic methods.

The Commission's representative presented the draft Implementing Decision and explained that it has been discussed at a working group meeting. All aquaculture diseases listed as relevant in Directive 2006/88/EC have been described in detail. The document has reached a stage where it needs to be fine-tuned and finalised only and Member States were encouraged to communicate their comments. To give an extra month of time to the aquaculture specialists, the formal vote is foreseen in June 2013.

C.2 Exchange of views of the Committee on a draft Commission Implementing Decision concerning a financial contribution by the Union to the emergency vaccination plan against classical swine fever in Latvia and Belarus and for the implementation of surveillance measures in Latvia and Lithuania in the context of the emergency measures taken to combat this disease.

On 20 November 2012 Latvia notified two primary cases of classical swine fever in feral pigs in Dagda and Zilupe counties, very close to the border with Belarus and Russia. Commission Implementing Decision 2013/90/EU of 18 February 2013 approved the plan presented by Latvia for the eradication of classical swine fever and the emergency vaccination of feral pigs.

In accordance to the provisions laid down in Council Decision 2009/470/EC on expenditure in the veterinary field, the Commission presented a draft for the co-financing of the emergency measures taken in Latvia including the emergency vaccination of feral pigs covering as well a 50-km buffer zone in Belarusian territories along the Latvian border.

The draft Implementing Decision includes co-financing measures to support for surveillance activities and epidemiological surveys based in serological and virological laboratory tests for classical swine fever virus in backyard holdings and feral pigs in the surroundings of the infected area within Latvia, Belarus and as well as Lithuania.

M.1 Information from the Commission on the situation as regards human infection with influenza A(H7N9) virus in China. (Document SANCO/7038/2013)

The Commission's representative informed that on 31 March 2013 the Chinese authorities announced the identification of a novel Influenza A (H7N9) virus in humans in seriously ill patients. As of 9 April a total of 24 cases with seven deaths have occurred in Eastern China in Shanghai and the neighbouring provinces of Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejiang. No epidemiological link is established between those human cases and no bird die-offs have been seen. The virus is of low pathogenicity for poultry and the source of infection for humans in the animal reservoir remains unclear.
Currently there is no sustained human-to-human transmission. EU public health sector is alerted, sharing information with the World Health Organisation (WHO). The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is carrying out risk assessments. China reports cases in animals to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). Virus positive results were obtained from chickens or environmental samples taken at live bird markets. Chinese ministry of Agriculture is implementing a surveillance programme in chickens, pigeons, and waterfowl in live bird markets, poultry holdings, at slaughter, wild bird habitats and also samples from pig holdings and abattoirs.

EU legislation on surveillance and control measures for low pathogenic virus avian influenza and on contingency plans for the practical implementation on how to deal with low pathogenic avian influenza outbreaks in poultry and other captive birds are in place. Robust diagnosis must be ensured to be able to detect the novel avian influenza strain H7N9, if it should be introduced into the EU. The EU Reference Laboratory for avian influenza is therefore examining the diagnostic methods currently used for testing for avian influenza. The utility of the PCR testing is confirmed while for the full suitability of serological testing further validation is required.

M.2 Information from Estonia on the rabies situation.

Estonia informed the Committee that it has declared its territory free from rabies to the OIE as 2 years have elapsed since the disease was last detected.

This is a result of the successful implementation of EU co-financed oral rabies vaccination since 2006. Estonia maintains buffer zones along the borders with infected neighbouring countries as the risk of reintroduction is significant. A bilateral cooperation with the Russian Federation (Pskov region) for the implementation of oral vaccination along the common borders in the Russian territory is envisaged to reduce this risk.