



Standing Group of Experts on LSD in South-East Europe under the GF-TADs umbrella

Eighth meeting (SGE LSD8) Paris, France, 28 May 2019

REPORT

Summary

The Eighth meeting of the Standing Group of Experts on Lumpy Skin Disease in South East Europe (SGE LSD8) took place in Paris on 28 May 2019, as a side event of the 87th General Session of the OIE. Member countries reported on the latest LSD epidemiological situation and measures in their territories.

The favourable LSD situation in SE Europe, observed since 2018, continues in 2019 too. No new outbreaks have been reported to date in the Balkans Region. In Turkey, 3 outbreaks have been confirmed since the beginning of the year in the Eastern and North Eastern parts of Anatolia only. LSD annual vaccination is now taking place only in countries affected by LSD in the past (cease of LSD preventive vaccination).

The SGE LSD9 meeting will take place in Athens, Greece, on 16 and 17 October 2019.

Minutes

A large number of participants attended the meeting of the SGE LSD8, including representatives of 16 of the 21 members of the SGE LSD for South-East Europe, and many observers.

Opening remarks

The President welcomed the participants. He rejoiced that no outbreak had been notified until that day in 2019, offering the perspective of having 2 years in a row with no LSD in the Balkans. He reminded the participants that Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have now stopped preventive vaccination, while Serbia is now implementing partial vaccination in the Northern part of the country, in accordance with the conclusions of the SGE LSD7 in Ohrid. The other members should focus on the completion of their LSD vaccination campaigns, as planned. All countries must remain vigilant for any LSD recurrence.

Updates from the member countries of the SGE LSD present during the meeting

Austria: no vaccination and no more stockpile of vaccine in the country. The future will depend on the evolution of LSD in the sub-region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: preventive vaccination has officially ceased in 2018. The remaining doses of vaccine still present in the country have now expired.

Bulgaria: the vaccination of the whole cattle population is ongoing in the country. The completion rate of the vaccination campaign is around 60% to date, it will be completed soon. Received 200.000 doses from the national stocks of Hungary to use them before expiry. Needs for annual vaccination campaign amount at 800.000 doses per year.

Croatia: preventive vaccination stopped in 2018. There is no stock of vaccines left in the country. Active surveillance is ongoing in high risk areas.

Cyprus: no outbreak record in the country, no vaccination.

Greece: there's been no outbreak in the country since August 2017. Vaccination is ongoing this year and will continue next year. The availability of vaccine is satisfactory.

Hungary: there is no more vaccine left in the country, after the last stock was given to Bulgaria. The future will depend on the evolution of LSD in the sub-region.

Kosovo*: vaccination has started with private veterinarians and is going well. No cases of LSD so far.

Montenegro: vaccination has started 10 days ago. There's been no case since 2016. It is the 4th consecutive year that Montenegro is implementing vaccination against LSD.

North Macedonia: no outbreak in 2019. The vaccination campaign started on 18 March, with 78% of the cattle now already vaccinated. The expected date of finalisation of the campaign is June 14.

Romania: no outbreak nor suspicion so far. Passive surveillance is ongoing throughout the country while active surveillance is implemented in zones with a higher epidemiological risk. No vaccination is being carried out and there is no stockpile of vaccine in Romania.

Russia: the spatial pattern of LSD in the country shifted north-eastwards since 2017. 42 outbreaks were documented in 2017, 63 in 2018 (mainly distributed along the border of the Russian Federation with Kazakhstan). A sheep pox-based vaccine is being used since 2016 in affected regions of the Northern Caucasus and Southern Federal districts, with a coverage close to 100% and good results: significant decline in the number of outbreaks in 2017 and no new cases in vaccinated regions in 2018. 8 million cattle will be vaccinated in 2019.

Serbia: no outbreak nor suspicion in the country since 2016. Vaccination in 2019 applies to cattle of all ages in the South, and only to calves older than 6 months and imported cattle in the North of the country. The campaign was launched on 1 April, with a completion rate of 20% to date. The vaccine has been made available via a public procurement for 600.000 doses.

Slovenia: no outbreak in the country. Clinical surveillance is ongoing along the border with Croatia.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

Turkey: 17 million animals are to be vaccinated during the 2019 campaign, which started on 1 January with a heterologous vaccine used throughout the country (5x sheep dose administered to 95% of the cattle, and 3x the dose to the 5% remaining cattle).

Only 3 outbreaks have been confirmed so far in 2019, all in the North-Eastern part of Anatolia.

A project has been launched with the EU to supply the Turkish Thrace region with homologous vaccine and the Anatolia Region with heterologous vaccine in 2020.

Eventually, Armenia (not formally a member of the SGE LSD) explained that there was no outbreak of LSD in the country. 650000 cattle have been vaccinated each year since 2016, along the borders with the 4 neighbouring countries, using the same heterologous vaccine and protocol as in Russia (10x sheep dose administered to cattle).

Update from the European Commission on EU LSD activities

EU LSD vaccine bank: 3 countries have already received LSD vaccine grants in 2019 (North Macedonia, Kosovo* and Montenegro) and one more shipment is in progress (Albania). The remaining capacity (physical stock + future orders) is around 3 million doses.

EU reimbursement for the cost of vaccines used in 2018-2019 is available for vaccines purchased by national funds or donated from stocks of other countries (conditions apply). The procedures were explained and discussed after the meeting with the countries involved.

EFSA's latest LSD report has been published on 21 March 2019: "[Lumpy skin disease III. Data collection and analysis](#)".

Overview of LSD occurrence and control in South-East Europe

Dr Dimitrios Dilaveris, European Commission, presented the historical perspective of LSD in the world since 2005, and more specifically in the sub region since 2015. The evolution of the epidemiological situation of LSD in the Balkan region demonstrates the efficiency of mass vaccination, including preventive vaccination, as coordinated under the GF-TADs initiative with the active support of the European Commission. There has been no outbreak of LSD in the whole sub-region in 2018 and until this day in 2019. Disengagement from vaccination has already started in an orderly manner. Croatia has stopped preventive vaccination since the beginning of 2018 and is now free from any LSD restriction at EU level.

Next SGE LSD meeting

The ninth meeting of the SGE LSD will be kindly hosted by Greece in Athens, on 16 (full day) and 17 (morning only) October 2019. The meeting will review the situation after the current vaccine campaign and summer season, with a view to consider further disengagement from LSD vaccination in the sub-region.