Report on FAO-EuFMD/EC/OIE Tripartite Meeting on control of FMD and other exotic diseases in the Southern Balkans

2017

27th February 2017 - Sofia, Bulgaria

A meeting of the FAO-EuFMD/EC/OIE Tripartite on the Control of FMD and other exotic diseases in the Southern Balkans was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 27th February 2017, with the participation of representatives from the State Veterinary Services of Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, and from the EuFMD, OIE , FAO and EU Commission.

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Introduction

A meeting of the FAO-EuFMD/EC/OIE Tripartite on the Control of FMD and other exotic diseases in the Southern Balkans was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 27th February 2017, with the participation of representatives from the State Veterinary Services of Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and from the EC, FAO, EuFMD, and OIE (see **Appendix 1** for Agenda and **Appendix 2** for list of participants).

The **main objectives** of the meeting were:

- To review and discuss surveillance and control activities for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) implemented in the three countries.
- To review and discuss the epidemiological situation and the control measures implemented in the three countries for Sheep and Goat Pox (SGP), Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and other major contagious diseases.
- To agree upon priorities and expected results of the Thrace risk-based surveillance project (Component 1.3 of the EuFMD work programme, 2017-19).
- To agree upon the formalisation of the collaboration and network of cooperation between the three countries through the development of a Statement of Intentions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

1. The THRACE surveillance programme, implemented as part of the EC funded activities and managed by EuFMD, has provided an important level of confidence in the absence of FMD virus circulation in European part of Turkey (FMD free where vaccination is practiced) and absence of infection in the neighbouring areas of Greece and Bulgaria (FMD free where vaccination is not practiced).

   In addition, the programme has been important for maintenance of surveillance actions needed for early detection of Sheep and Goat Pox (SGP) and Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR). In this framework a PPR training workshop (WS) was organized and provided by Greece in October 2016 where Bulgaria and Turkey were invited. The WS was delivered by National and International experts (Dr Genevieve Libeau (CIRAD), Dr Dimitrios Dilaveris (EC), Dr Joseph Domenech (OIE), Dr Evangelia Plevraki (Veterinary Departement of Evros). While Turkey could not take part to the WS, Bulgaria attended the training, as a positive side effect of Thrace project. The WS was then followed in the next day by a meeting only for the Greek THRACE team on activities and up-coming plans of the THRACE Programme.

2. The outbreaks of SGP in Lesvos Island in Greece in December 2016 and January 2017, and the outbreaks of LSD in South-Eastern European countries, highlight the high risk of incursion and continued circulation of TADs within the common border region, and reminds about the possibility of their extensions into further EU territories. The route of introduction of SGP in Greece remains unexplained. This emphasises the importance of improving current understanding of the underlying epidemiology, particularly entry routes and persistence mechanisms, to reduce the risk of entry of FMD and other exotic infections. This also highlights the need for building up the necessary local capacity to perform effective passive surveillance and active outbreak investigation.

3. The development and implementation of the Risk-Based Strategic Plan for FMD control by the Turkish authorities starting from the first quarter of 2017 provides a cause for optimism for the improvement in the control of FMD in West Anatolia in 2017-18 and for its progression towards PCP stage 3.

4. The early detection of exotic diseases in livestock by passive surveillance is highly dependent on farmer reporting and their awareness of signs. There is clear need for improving their knowledge, assessing regulation compliance and reinforce communication to ensure confidence in this form of surveillance. New

training activities for raising awareness and for developing a framework for the formal assessment of the current sensitivity of the passive surveillance are identified as key priority areas.

5. The Thrace risk-based surveillance has been ongoing since 2013 increasing the confidence of freedom and of early detection of new incursions of FMD and application of this concept should be promoted also in other EuFMD MS where there is a need to demonstrate confidence in disease freedom.

6. Turkish Thrace areas have initiated the disease control program to achieve PPR zonal free status by 2019, vaccination has been ceased since the beginning of 2017 and control of animal movements is strictly applied.

7. There is a need for the formalisation of the scope, objectives and operational plan of the cooperation and collaboration framework between Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. The form of this agreement has been identified in a Statement of Intentions to be presented and proposed during the ExCom93 in March 2017.

Recommendations

1. To develop a surveillance plan for PPR in the Thrace regions of Bulgaria and Greece, with the aim of providing supporting evidence for "confidence in disease freedom" as part of the THRACE programme 2017-19. This plan should support the process of building confidence in maintenance of a disease free status of Turkish Thrace if so recognised in 2019, including the development and testing of contingency plans, and identification of the surveillance needed for early detection.

2. To improve passive surveillance, with more active engagement of livestock keepers. This requires a baseline assessment of the sensitivity of the current passive surveillance in the three countries and the development of follow-up interventions to increase this sensitivity. In addition it is required to strengthen the local co-ordination framework including activities to build confidence in the capacity to respond effectively to one or more of the priority TADs.

3. To better understand the risk of circulation or extension of SGP outbreaks through studies on the likely entry routes and persistence mechanisms involved in the current outbreaks.

4. Greece raised the need for a 3rd full-time consultant (an additional field consultant) within the framework of the THRACE surveillance activities and was advised to present their request at the upcoming ExCom 93, to demonstrate the benefits that this intervention will bring to the Thrace and how this will increase confidence in disease freedom and early detection of incursion.

Acknowledgements

The Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) is gratefully acknowledged for the offer of invitation and for hosting the Meeting. The excellent support of all members of the THRACE project team in Bulgaria, Drs Petkova, Chobanov, Alexandrov, Zdravkova and Miteva to ensure a successful meeting while dealing with the recent reports of HPAI is deeply appreciated and will be remembered by all.

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

The Meeting was Chaired by Eoin Ryan, Chairman of Scientific Technical Committee (STC) of the EuFMD, Eran Raizman (FAO) and Anna-Maria Baka (OIE). The agenda was adopted without changes, except that the reports of Turkey on FMD were received together with their reports on the other exotic infections.

Item 2: Report of the THRACE project Management Meeting held in Sofia, 27th February

The Management Meeting was held in the morning of the 27th in the same venue. The most significant points for attention were that the two year funding of the THRACE project would finish on the 30th September and the management group had identified items urgently needed for delivery before project close, and to set the framework for the activities to be implemented in the upcoming biennium. The management group requested a training for the Thrace region on knowledge/skills for outbreak investigation of FMD and other exotic diseases (in particular PPR and SGP). It was also highlighted the need for a training on participatory epidemiology (PE) as a preliminary step for the implementation of a formal passive surveillance assessment to be carried out in the upcoming biennium, and as a tool to improve awareness and communication with the different stakeholders. . The management group proposed a new set up for the procurement of field and laboratory consumables to be implemented from May 2017 and to become fully operational in the up-coming biennium. The next Management Meeting was proposed to be held before the start of the upcoming biennium (tentative September 2016) in Greece (see **Appendix 3** for the Minutes of the Management Meeting).

Item 3: Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD)

Situation in Turkey

Dr Bulut reported on the FMD situation in Turkey (Appendix 4) and the control measures in place to prevent entry into Turkish Thrace.

During 2016, a total of 634 outbreaks has been recorded (in comparison to 73 in 2015, 228 in 2014 and 1189 in 2013). Serotype A was isolated in 374 outbreaks and Serotype O in 260 and both these serotypes were overall evenly distributed across all Anatolia without any apparent regional clustering.

Currently, the circulating virus strains are: Serotype O (O PanAsiaII/Qom/Kar-16), A (Asia/GVII)* and Asia1, although the latter has not been recorded since July 2015 (latest circulating strain recorded was Asia1/SINDH08). Serotype A (Asia/GVII/2015; Asia/GVII/Samsun2016) was firstly detected in October 2015 when a rapid increase in the reported outbreaks was recorded. In April 2016 a new rise in reported cases was due to an incursion of a new lineage of Serotype O (O PanAsiaII/Qom). In November 2016, a new genetic sub group of Asia/GVII was isolated in Samsun Province (Asia/GVII/Samsun2016). Vaccine matching study highlighted that this new lineage was not 100% matched by the previously isolated Asia/GVII/2015 lineage. Both lineages are therefore included in the current tetravalent vaccine that is used all across Turkey (including Thrace) since December 2015, which includes: O (O PanAsiaII/Qom), Asia1 (Asia1/SINDH08), A (Asia/GVII/2015) and A (Asia/GVII/Samsun2016). The lineage A (Iran 05/A/TUR06) antigens have ceased to be include in the vaccine since mid-2016 due to the lack of evidence of its current circulation in Turkey. The vaccine matching is carried out regularly on 10 samples that are selected with a risk-based approach and is reported to have a >6PD50 potency.

The current vaccination strategy in Thrace includes two vaccinations per year for large ruminants (LR) and one vaccination per year for small ruminants (SR). Booster vaccination of young animals is now implemented for all calves through a state subsidization scheme for farmers. The vaccine coverage in Thrace in 2016 was reported to be 97%. In Anatolia, vaccination campaign targets LR twice per year, currently achieving a >90% coverage, and booster vaccination is now also applied routinely. For SR, vaccination in East and South-East Turkey is only applied following risk assessment, for example those identified as hotspots for transmission and seasonal movements across Provincial borders. In West Anatolia the longer term plan is to achieve freedom and the control strategy is currently being improved in order to progress into PCP Stage 3 by 2019.

In the Thrace region, the control of animal movements from Anatolia is rigorously enforced, and additional measures applied relating to Kurban festival movements. The control strategy forbids movements from Anatolia to Thrace at any time (checkpoint are established on hotspots on road/harbours). However, there is an exception during the Kurban Festival when livestock movements are allowed under OIE rules from Anatolia to Thrace. These animals (mostly represented by SR) must have been identified 6 months in advance and undertake an active

surveillance (NSP testing). In 2016 about 10-35% of the tested animals for movement permission had a positive NSP result. In case of NSP negative result a movement permit can be issued if additional conditions are met: *(i)* animal is ID tagged, *(ii)* it received at least 2 vaccinations, *(iii)* it did not show clinical disease and was not moved during the previous 3 months and *(iv)* no outbreaks have been recorded in the area 1 month prior to the mobilisation. Upon arrival in the Istanbul metropolitan area these animals are then traded only within temporary markets (specifically established for the Kurban periods). If animals are not sold they are not allowed to move anywhere else and are bought by the State to be slaughtered for human consumption anyway. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether the livestock that are moved to Thrace for the Kurban festival are tested or not for other disease other than FMD.

The risk-based surveillance programme in Thrace prioritises the high risk area of the Istanbul Province within the Turkish Thrace. In this area 114 epidemilogical units are examined: 111 villages (randomly selected) and 3 slaughterhouses are included in the programme. Surveillance activities and targets have a 3-month cycle during which these epi-units are assessed. Serological testing (statistical target: detect a 25% prevalence among animals of each and every epidemiological unit, with a 95% level of confidence) is carried out in each of the epi-unit (114) where 11 samples from vaccinated bovines and/or sheep-goats are collected for laboratory testing. In addition, an annual sero-surveillance is conducted to substantiate freedom from FMD, for the OIE.

The clinical surveillance (statistical target: detect a 5% prevalence of FMD clinical signs among susceptible animals of each epidemiological unit with a 95% level of confidence) is carried out in the 111 epi-units (excluding the 3 abattoirs), where clinical examination is performed on at least 60 randomly selected animals per epi-unit.

In the low risk area of Thrace (Provinces of Çanakkale, Edirne, Kirklareli and Tekirdağ) clinical surveillance is carried out in a total of 171 epi-units where 60 animals are clinically examined (statistical target: detect a herd prevalence of 25% and prevalence within the herds of 10% with a 95% level of confidence).

Situation in Greece

In Greece the surveillance for FMD follows the framework of the cycle surveillance plans under the THRACE programme. The statistical target is to detect a 10% prevalence of FMD clinical signs and a 5% serological prevalence among susceptible animals of each epidemiological unit, with a 95% level of confidence.

In the Evros Region an additional active surveillance system for sentinel cattle farms has been put in place: 50 farmers have been recruited and trained to conduct clinical examinations (both for FMD and LSD) of their herds/flocks once a week and call a dedicated automatic landline designed to report the results of the examination and in direct contact with the Thrace field consultant (compliance is about 30%).

Situation in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria, the surveillance for FMD follows the framework of the cycle surveillance plans under the THRACE programme. The statistical target is to detect a 15% prevalence of FMD clinical signs and a 5% serological prevalence among susceptible animals of each epidemiological unit, with a 95% level of confidence.

In addition to the surveillance programme under the Thrace Programme (sero-surveillance in SR, clinical examination schedule, the wildlife serology/virology and abattoir inspections) provide a very high level of confidence in early detection and the absence of virus circulation. A new independent programme protective measures against multiple TADs is also starting in 2017 for the prevention of incursion and capacity building for preparedness and early response.

Discussion

The delegations of Greece and Bulgaria commended Turkey for the plan in West Anatolia progressing into PCP Stage 3 by 2019. Anna-Maria Baka (OIE) highlighted the need for expanding the current THRACE surveillance plan and implement an overall surveillance system to be in operation countrywide for Bulgaria and Greece, which can provide an early warning system to report suspect cases throughout the entire value chain and substantiate the countries' official FMD free status. She also reported that the OIE is planning to convene an ad hoc group to review alternatives for surveillance for demonstration of freedom from FMD and recovery periods, and that the EuFMD experience in THRACE could represent a valuable source of input and co-operation. GR advanced the request for an extra field consultant to achieve the required surveillance targets in the Evros Region.

Item 4: surveillance for PPR, SGP and other exotic viruses

Situation in Turkey

SGP: compared to 2013-14, nationally there is a declining trend in 2015 and 2016 with 70 and 54 outbreaks reported, respectively. However, most outbreaks were localised in the west of Anatolia (particularly the Mediterranean Region). The trend in Thrace followed the national pattern with the number of outbreaks gradually declining: 3 outbreaks were reported in 2016, compared to 11 in 2015 (1 in Edirne and 2 in Tekirdağ Provinces). No outbreak have been reported in 2017 up to date. In case of outbreak confirmation routine control measures include movement restrictions, quarantine, ring vaccination, serological testing and biosecurity measures within outbreak areas. According to the current vaccination policy in Anatolia, following outbreak confirmation SR will vaccinated in outbreaks zone (3 times in a 2 year period). Conversely, all SR are vaccinated throughout Thrace, and in 2016 the reported coverage was 100%; the vaccination is carried out before autumn and winter, seasons considered at higher risk and displaying the greatest incidence of the disease throughout the rest of the country.

PPR: 49 outbreaks were reported in 2016 (compared to 69 in 2015), mainly in west Anatolia. In Thrace the last outbreak was in 2013 and, currently, retrieval of vaccination (with control of animal movement) has started with the objective to achieve zonal freedom in THRACE by 2019. In Anatolia, a strategy plan has been implemented since 2016 for regional progressive eradication of the disease by 2023. This includes routine control measures in case of outbreak, movement restriction and quarantine. The vaccination policy requires ring vaccination (all animals being vaccinated in response to outbreaks) and, as protective propose, the vaccination of all new born and unvaccinated adults in the remaining area (current vaccination coverage is 80%). The unvaccinated animal are not allowed for movement.

Thrace areas have initiated the disease control program to achieve zonal free status by 2019, vaccination has been ceased and control of animal movements strictly applied. Clinical surveillance on quarterly basis is carried out in 61 epi-units randomly selected where 30 animals are selected for clinical examination. Sero-surveillance is in the process of being designed and implemented during 2017.

Situation in Greece

SGP: a total of 4 outbreaks have been recently reported in Levsos Island, 3 in December 2016 and 1 in January 2017 (latest previous outbreak were confirmed in 2015). During these 4 recent outbreaks only sheep seemed to be affected (although also goats were in the herds). Stamping out in all the 4 mixed herds was carried out, 3km protection zones and 10km surveillance zone were established for 21 days, with the relevant movement restrictions and surveillance activities. Nevertheless, measures were applied not only in the protection/surveillance zones but also in the entire Island in order to prevent spread to the rest of the country.

PPR: in Evros Region passive surveillance led to the identification of 10 clinical suspicions that were subsequently tested in 2016 (5 sheep and 5 goats) which then confirmed as Orf cases. Awareness campaigns have been carried out for farmers in Evros Region (posters and leaflets) and a workshop was held in Alexandroupoli in October 2016 with local authorities and the veterinary services (the workshop was also attended by BG veterinary authorities).

Situation in Bulgaria

For SGP and PPR an equivalent surveillance programme is in place including clinical examinations of small ruminants on a monthly basis in the South bordering regions. In addition, a serological surveillance for PPR in the South bordering regions is carried out. A new surveillance programme initiated by the EC (jointly involving BG and GR) for the control of TADs will be also implemented starting in 2018.

Bulgaria presented the current High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) situation. The 1st outbreak was confirmed on the 19th of December 2016 and at the date of the meeting 14 Regions are affected (out of 28 regions) by a total of 82 confirmed outbreaks: 68 in domestic poultry, 13 in wild birds and 1 in Sofia zoo (galliformes, waterfowl). Among the outbreaks in domestic poultry 53 were commercial farms (51 duck and 2 laying hens farms). Emergency and eradication measures pursuant to Council Directive 2005/94/EC on Community measures for the control of avian influenza are currently implemented.

Discussion

The origin of the SGP outbreaks in Levsos Island has not been clearly identified, obvious suspicion leads to illegal animal movements although other routes might not be ruled out. Alf Füssel (EC) highlighted the importance of the epidemiology under these findings particularly in tracing back the origin as this might represent a potential

route of incursion for other exotic diseases. Sotiria Antoniou (GR) highlighted the importance for increasing the knowledge and skills on PPR among the veterinary services in Greece asking for specific training for THRACE focused on PPR.

Item 5: Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)

Reporting on the LSD situation was not specifically part of the discussion of the Tripartite Meeting on control of FMD and other exotic diseases. Nevertheless, reports on the LSD situation in Turkey and Bulgaria were provided by Dr Naci Bulut and Dr Tsviatko Alexandrov, respectively (Appendices 4 and 5).

Situation in Turkey

In Turkey, after the wide spreading of the disease in 2014-15, during 2016 a total of 54 outbreaks were recorded in Anatolia. These outbreaks were predominantly localised in Aegean Region and East Anatolia although outbreaks were also reported in West and central Anatolia. In Turkish Thrace during 2016 4 outbreaks were recorded in Edirne Province (no outbreaks recorded as for January and February 2017). Means by massive vaccination and the other control measures, it has been currently occurred in limited area in which it has been related to more likely insect activity.

Control measures include movement restrictions, quarantine and outbreak investigations. The vaccination policy in which SGP vaccine produced by the Pendik Institute and two private companies' implements a blank vaccination. Coverage was reported to be between 50 and 100% of large ruminants, depending on the Regions of the country and in 2016 10,214,719 cattle were vaccinated.

Surveillance for LSD in Thrace targets 236 epi-units randomly selected every quarterly cycle (43 of which in the Istanbul Province). The number of epi-units in each Province was identified proportionally to the total number of epi-units present in that specific Province. In each epi-unit 60 animals are clinically examined for LSD.

Situation in Bulgaria

In Bulgaria LSD incursion in 2016 (13th April first confirmed outbreak) had a dramatic evolution with a total of 217 confirmed outbreaks until the date of the last confirmed outbreak (1st of August). A total of 366 cattle showed clinical signs but 2814 bovines were included in the affected herds across 17 Regions. The outbreaks affected mostly small holdings (70% had <10 animals) with low biosecurity. Vaccination was carried out in 3 rounds for a total of about 800,000 doses deployed progressively from the outbreak areas towards the rest of the country and 2 weeks after the end of the campaign no new outbreak were identified. The implemented control measures included total stamping-out of affected herds (with immediate compensation), restriction zone and movement control across the whole country and intensified clinical surveillance. Vector control over vector biotopes (along main rivers, valley and paddy fields) is being carried out.

The vaccination policy for 2017 is to cover the whole susceptible population (835,000 doses commissioned). Active surveillance is currently performed in vectors and the virus was isolated from ticks (*Hyalomma marginatum*, *Rhipicephalus bursa*) and flies (*Tabanus spodopterus*). Interestingly, up to date wildlife surveillance (collection of saliva from red deer) demonstrated no evidence of infection with LSDV also in areas were the disease was present in the cattle population.

Discussion

The factors behind the higher susceptibility of smallholder farms to LSD outbreaks in Bulgaria are linked to the lower biosecurity standards and the Bulgarian delegation highlighted that a key measure to reduce the risk seemed to be the regular application of insect repellent.

Appendix 1

AGENDA

Day 1 - Monday		
14:30 – 17:00	FMD surveillance and control measures in the common border regions of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey (THRACE programme)	
	Chair: *EuFMD*	
14:30- 14:45	Short summary on the activities and outcomes of the THRACE Component in 2016	**EuFMD**
14:45 - 15:00	**Current confidence in FMD freedom – results of the THRACE surveillance programme**	**EuFMD**
15:00 - 15:30	Upcoming plans (Passive Surveillance Sensitivity and THRACE training plans, SimEx WS, Cross-border Simulation Exercise in Thrace, PPR surveillance within the THRACE programme)	**Feedback Report from THRACE Management Committee meeting**
15:30 - 16:00	Discussion on format of the agreement on activities – Draft "Statement of Intentions"	EuFMD
16:00 - 16:15	Report on Surveillance activities in Greece (FMD, SGP, PPR)	Greece
16:15 - 16:30	Report on Surveillance activities in Bulgaria (FMD, SGP, PPR)	Bulgaria
16:30 – 17:00	FMD surveillance and control measures in Turkish Thrace, with special attention on vaccination Vaccination and other measures in 2016 Expected vaccination program in 2017 Change in risk management: change in virus strains/genetic shift and crossing points at Bosphorous	Turkey
17:00 – 17:20	FMD situation in Turkey (Anatolia): *Chair OIE*	
17:00 – 17:20	Overall FMD situation and vaccination programme, Change in strategy planned for 2017-2020 & Support, training or other assistance needed	Turkey
17:20 – 18:00	Update on the situation with SGP and PPR: *Chair FAO*	
	Overall SGP and PPR situation in 2016-17, and vaccination programme, strategy planned for 2017-2020	**Turkey**
18:00	Close	

Appendix 2

List of participants - Management and tripartite meeting

Name	Institution	email
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Appendix 3

Minutes of the Thrace management meeting (27th February 2017)

The meeting started with a summary of the Component 1.3 of the EuFMD work-plan describing the specific outputs of the component (1.3.1, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.3.4). A summary of the activities carried out since the last management meeting was then presented, including the surveillance activities, their results and the outcomes of the model used for the estimation of the confidence of freedom from FMD in the Thrace Region. Confidence of freedom was discussed and shortcomings in data collection and management were addressed and corrective action were identified (see outcome 4 below).

The Main outcomes of the Management meeting:

1. **Up-coming activities**
   a) Cross-border Simulation-Exercise in Thrace: before end of the current biennium (tentative June 2017) possibly joining other activities of other Balkan countries (under Component 1.4);
   b) Training on participatory epidemiology (PE) for passive surveillance assessment and communication/awareness: workshop (WS) to be carried out in the period between May and September 2017;
   c) Training on knowledge/skills for FMD outbreak investigation (OI) before the end of the biennium (tentative June or September 2017); interest for training in OI for PPR and SGP has also been highlighted as a request for the next biennium.

   These activities can be combined to each other or coupled with other activities under Components of the Working Plan.

2. **Renewal of National consultant's contracts (May 2017) and change of consultant:**
   a) BG will reduce the number of consultants from 6 to 3 (3 contracts will not be renewed in May and a new consultant will be hired and tasks will be re-distributed among the 3 consultants);
   b) GR raised the request for an additional field consultant for the Evros Region, and was advised to propose this addition at the upcoming Executive Committee (March 2017);
   c) TR will not change the composition of the National consultant's.

3. **Procurement of equipment and consumables:**
   a) Starting from May 2017 field and lab consumables will be managed by direct-procurement from the National consultant's (new Terms of Reference of the contracts for the National Consultants will include specific responsibility to keep storage records and manage the local procurement); diagnostics kits will still be procured centrally and shipped to each country.

4. **Surveillance activities and model outcomes:**
   a) GR presented surveillance activities in Thrace and the shortcoming due to lack of a field consultant during the last cycle in 2016; a newly recruited field consultant started from the 1st of February 2017 and activities are back to normality;
   b) TR and BG proposed to present their FMD surveillance activity in the afternoon of the same day during the Thrace Tripartite meeting in the afternoon and this was welcome by all the participants

Given the number of up-coming activities and co-operation required, the next Management meeting has been agreed to be held before the end of the current biennium (tentative September 2017) and GR offered to host the meeting proposing Alexandroupoli as a suitable location.