



Food and Agriculture
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United Nations

11th Joint Permanent Committee of the REMESA

REPORT



Algiers, Algeria – 24-25 November 2015

REMESA joint Secretariat



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Introduction

The 11th meeting of the REMESA Joint Permanent Committee (JPC) was held in Algiers (Algeria) on 24 and 25 November 2015, based on the recommendations of the 10th JPC meeting (Heraklion- Greece, 16-17 March 2015). More than twenty participants, including the CVOs or their representatives of member countries of REMESA (Algeria, Egypt, Spain, France, Portugal, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia), representatives of international (FAO, OIE) and regional (UMA, EU) organizations as well as experts from OIE reference laboratory and CIRAD participated in the work of the meeting. Four countries (Cyprus, Mauritania, Jordan and Malta) could not attend this meeting. The list of participants is attached as Appendix 2.

The JPC meeting was co-chaired by the CVOs of Greece (Dr Spiros Doudounakis) and Algeria (Dr Karim Boughalem) which assured the co-presidency of REMESA in 2015. The program of this meeting focused on foot and mouth disease (FMD), avian influenza as well as vector-borne diseases such as West Nile Fever, bluetongue and Lumpy Skin Disease. A session on the Rift Valley Fever in the region, in particular in Mauritania, was also presented.

This meeting also allowed making the state of play of the activities of the sub-networks REMESA (REPIVET, RELABSA, RECOMSA, RESEPSA). The Spanish Technology Platform for Animal Health was also presented. The agenda of the meeting is in Appendix 1. This report does not detail all the information that can be consulted from the presentations delivered during the meeting on the REMESA Site: www.remesanetwork.org.

Opening

The official opening was assured by the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and fisheries of Algeria his excellence Sid Ahmed Ferroukhi, the Deputy Director General of the OIE Dr Monique Eloit, and the FAO Animal Health and Production Officer Dr Mohammed Bengoumi. The co-chairs started the opening session by recalling the network's main objective, namely regional cooperation of veterinary services for surveillance and eradication of animal diseases through the sharing of information and the development of harmonized strategies between countries.

Dr. Monique Eloit (OIE) and Dr. Mohammed Bengoumi (FAO) thanked the Algerian Government for supporting REMESA activities and emphasized the important role of REMESA platform as an essential network to exchange and share information between countries to respond effectively to the challenges they face. A dynamic partnership between the countries of the Mediterranean region is imperative to address common challenges. The REMESA is a suitable platform, not only to harmonize surveillance, control and fighting against the priority transboundary diseases, namely FMD, PPR, rabies and avian influenza, but also for coordinating veterinary training. It was also stated that the financial support of several Member Countries and from the European Union as well as the mobilisation of international organizations during the sanitary crisis provide evidence of the relevance of this platform.



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The Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries of Algeria, welcomed the participants while emphasizing the importance of REMESA in the control and surveillance of TADs, particularly FMD.

Foot and mouth disease (FMD)

Dr Rachid Bouguedour (OIE Sub Regional Representative for North Africa) presented an overview of the situation and evolution of FMD in North Africa and the risk of becoming endemic in affected countries. He also urged the need (for North African countries) to strengthen surveillance of FMD in order to reduce its impact, especially after the occurrence of the disease in Morocco at the end of October 2015. The serotype SAT 2 was also reported in Mauritania and the risk of its spread is high with the movements of animals.

The lessons learned and difficulties encountered were presented and recommendations were issued.

Dr Xavier Pacholek (OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East) focused its presentation on the evolution of FMD in the Middle East with 5 serotypes (O, A, Asia 1, SAT 1 and 2) while stressing on the latest outbreaks in Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Israel. The roadmap developed under the project (PCP-FMD Roadmap Progress review in the Middle East), in collaboration with FAO and EUFMD was also presented.

The CVO of Algeria (Dr Karim Boughalem) presented an inventory of the situation of FMD and the vaccine strategy, highlighting a significant improvement in the country. The last outbreaks reported in Algeria back in March, 2015.

The Lebanese CVO (Dr Elias Ibrahim) described the situation of priority diseases (FMD, PPR, sheep and goat pox and LSD) in his country and the different plans adopted to combat and control these diseases.

In his presentation, the representative of Morocco (Dr Abdelwahed Douk) demonstrated the importance of passive and active disease surveillance that was able to identify an outbreak of FMD in Sidi Bennour at the end of October 2015. He recalled the measures taken to halt its spread throughout the Moroccan territory including the slaughtering of all animals in the outbreaks, the implementation of biosecurity measures, restriction of animal movements as well as peri-focal and mass vaccination. The serotype O was confirmed by the OIE / FAO reference laboratory of Pirbright. The phylogeny of the isolated virus showed that it is very close to that isolated from neighboring countries.

Dr. Riadh Mansouri (FAO Sub Regional Office for North Africa) presented the progress of FAO's technical cooperation project for emergency assistance in Tunisia to fight against this disease (TCP / TUN / 3501) including training, procurement of equipment and materials, evaluation of vaccine programs, surveillance plans and investigation of animal movements undertaken since September 2015.

Dr Jean-Luc Angot gave an update about the EuFMD (The European Commission for the control of Foot-and-Mouth disease) strategic plan and activities to support the strengthening of FMD risk based



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surveillance in several countries according to the level of risk, mainly through the support of epidemiological networks and laboratories as well as training more focused on the expertise and sharing of experiences. Dr. Fabrizio Rosso presented the Component 2.3 of the working plan of the EuFMD and the results and recommendations of the workshop "FMD Epizooties in North Africa: Towards a regional strategy based on lessons learned" held in Rabat from 24 to 26 August 2015. In conclusion, he presented the 2015-2017 work plan in support of REMESA member countries.

Dr. Rachid Bouguedour illustrated the recommendations of the various meetings (82nd General Session of the OIE in May 2014, the meeting of Maghreb CVOs in September 2014, the 9th and 10th JPC meetings respectively held in September 2014 and March 2015). He recalled the need expressed by the CVOs to establish a vaccine/antigens bank for the region. The meeting at the OIE HQ in April 2015 with experts from reference laboratories identified the main serotypes to include in the vaccine. In May 2015, during the 83rd General Session of the OIE, the participants discussed the results of the preliminary meeting on the vaccine/antigens bank for Maghreb countries. Discussions focused on the work plan of the EuFMD and vaccine/antigen bank in the region. It was announced that the call for tender could be launched in the spring 2016, as soon as the financial contribution intentions are confirmed.

During the two-day discussion it was reiterated the importance of implementing such a bank in the region. The CVO of Spain underlined that the prerequisite for this bank to be beneficial is to have a harmonized vaccination strategy between countries. He also considered crucial that an effective identification system for livestock should be developed to allow an efficient traceability of animal movements. The Representation OIE Sub Regional Representation for North Africa announced the organisation of dedicated workshops in 2016 on these items.

Dr. Monique Eloit stressed the importance of achieving a harmonized vaccination strategy between the North African countries to be in line with the requests of key donors and also be able to obtain the expected benefits from its implementation.

Based on this, Dr. Rachid Bouguedour announced the organization of a workshop dedicated to the harmonization of the vaccination strategy in North Africa during the first semester of 2016.

Regarding the implementation of an animal identification system, the CVO of Tunisia affirmed that it is costly and it is not currently among the priorities of the Tunisian government. The current priority of the government is to ensure the safety of citizens and therefore a significant amount of the budget of State is allocated to the security sector.

The representative of EuFMD (Dr Fabrizio Rosso) presented the work plan of the EuFMD in the region. This planning was considered as adopted by the CVOs of REMESA country members. He also reiterated the importance of having a harmonized vaccination regional strategy as well as a risk-based surveillance strategy in sensitive areas. Surveillance of post-vaccination to assess its effectiveness would also be necessary. A set of webinars EUFMD (training seminars via internet) was also announced for the region.



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The Spanish Animal health platform

Dr Maria Jaureguizar Redondo (Plataforma Tecnológica Española de Seguridad Animal) presented the animal health platform (Vet + i): its members, functioning, main activities and its strategy 2020 based on public / private partnership. She showed her availability for strengthening the collaboration between the platform and REMESA network.

Animal identification and related movements

The Algerian CVO presented the identification system and registration of cattle in Algeria (a component of the twinning project DSV Algeria /UE). This operation aims to identify and register bovine animals and farms to meet the sanitary and zootechnical needs.

Dr. Thierry Lefrançois (CIRAD) highlighted the scientific support for strategies against regional diseases compared to movements of animals. Indeed, the detection/rapid response to TADs is a major challenge faced with the different emerging factors (increased trade in animals and their products and climate change). Training sessions for veterinarians in the sub region (Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal and Tunisia) were organized in order to optimize the surveillance based on the risk linked to animal movements. He ended his presentation with the perspectives of research in developing indirect approaches to monitor animal movements (gravity and radiation models being adjusted within Vmerge) and the modeling of transmission of infectious diseases (PPR, CBPP ...) including animal movements.

Sheep Pox and PPR

Dr. Riadh Mansouri presented the report of the sub regional workshop on training and discussion on "PPR-pox in North Africa: Towards a regional strategy" held in Tunis from 5 to 7 October 2015. The workshop brought together the four focal points of the sub networks of REMESA (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania) along with the participation of international experts, FAO and OIE. He outlined the results and recommendations of different working groups. One of the key recommendations is the establishment of a strategy to fight against the two diseases based on a combined vaccination.

Valley fever (RVF)

Dr. Riadh Mansouri made a presentation on the sub regional workshop held in Tunisia on 8 and 9 October 2015. This workshop was attended by the four focal points of the sub networks of REMESA and by the experts of vector-borne diseases part of the Vmerge project supported by the European Union. It has led to an update on the research and ongoing developments on vector-borne diseases and in particular RVF (entomology, risk analysis ...). The recommendations of the participants and experts from various research institutions (CIRAD, CRESA, ANSES, IZS dell'Abruzzo e del Molise) were also presented.



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Dr. Alessandro Ripani (OIE Sub Regional Representation for North Africa) outlined the new RVF outbreaks in northwest Africa (Mauritania and Senegal) and presented the surveillance activities of the countries in the sub-region.

In conclusion, the reoccurrence of the disease in September 2015 in Mauritania is a risk factor for the entire region and surveillance activities should be maintained and strengthened.

Bluetongue (BT)

Dr. Stephanie Flauto (DGAL-France) presented the re-emergence of BT serotype 8 in France and the prospects to fight and control the disease. 95 cases were confirmed until November 2015 and the vaccination and zoning measures were applied. This strategy will be discussed at European level with the OIE.

Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)

Dr. Xavier Pacholek (OIE Regional Representation for the Middle East) presented the situation on LSD; emerging disease in the Middle East and the risk of spreading the LSD virus in the Mediterranean region after its occurrence in Cyprus in 2014 and Greece in 2015.

The representative of Greece (Dr Spiros Doudounakis) presented an update on the epidemiological situation of the disease in his country after the occurrence of LSD in August 20, 2015 in the Evros region. In addition to the measures laid out by the Directive 92/119 EEC, emergency vaccination has been implemented in all susceptible species (cattle, buffaloes) in the region of Evros.

West Nile fever (WNF)

Dr. Federica Monaco (IZS dell'Abruzzo e del Molise, OIE reference laboratory for WNF) introduced the WNF and presented its evolution in Europe and in the Mediterranean region. Entomological and serological surveillance of the disease in Italy since its first occurrence in 1998 allowed tracing its evolution in humans and animals (horses and birds).

REMESA:

In line with the expected specific objective of REMESA - namely improving the prevention and the control against major TADs and zoonoses through building national at and regional capacities, harmonization and coordination of the surveillance and control activities - Dr. Riadh Mansouri (FAO Sub regional Office for North Africa) presented the activities of four thematic sub-networks (laboratories "RELABSA", epidemiology "REPIVET", communication "RECOMSA" and socioeconomics "RESEPSA"). It was noted that a significant effort was made in strengthening the material and human capacities of countries in the region through training workshops and by providing high level of expertise as well as by supplying equipment and materials and exchange of experience and information.



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Dr. Jocelyn Mérot (OIE sub regional Representation for North Africa) presented the results and recommendations of workshops held in Tunis under the specific objectives of REMESA:

- Workshop RELABSA: implementation of biosecurity and biosafety measures in laboratories (29-30 September 2015);
- Workshop RECOMSA: seminar dedicated to the communication strategy, awareness and training on rabies for Maghreb countries (4-5 November 2015);
- Workshop REPIVET/RESEPSA: epidemiology and surveillance of animal diseases in North Africa region and part of Middle East (1-December 2, 2015).

To improve the performances provided under the context of REMESA, an online evaluation questionnaire was elaborated by FAO. The results of this questionnaire were presented and discussed on the format and contents. It was showed satisfaction and appreciation at all levels. Participants requested training needs and regular updating of REMESA web site through an effective contribution of CVOs and member countries focal points.

Avian influenza (AI)

Dr. Khaled Morsi, the representative of Egypt, presented the epidemiological situation of the disease in Egypt since February 2006. Different variants of the influenza virus (H5N1, H9N2) are circulating in the country. He outlined the control measures applied to control the spreading in the free zones.

Dr. Farag, representative of Libya, presented the situation of the disease in his country and related consequences on the poultry sector and public health. The uncontrolled import of poultry from Egypt is the source of introduction of HPAI in the Eastern region of Libya. Therefore, human and avian cases were reported. HPAI has spread to other farms and caused serious economic losses to poultry farmers and harmed public health throughout the country (4 deaths). He noted that the following problems were encountered:

- Chain of command: a major difficulty experienced was on collection of information and implementation and monitoring of contingency plan;
- Acquisition of reagents for virological and serological diagnosis and rapid tests: the budget for animal health is insufficient and the difficulty of acquiring kits due to the security situation of the country;
- Low awareness of local actors (farmers, traders and consumers) about the potential risks of HPAI on livestock and public health: a difficulty observed in the application of sanitary measures especially in backyards which constitute both a steady income for families and a potential source of viruses;
- Border sanitary control: Lack of sanitary control system at borders



The OIE sub regional Representation for North Africa presented the training workshop on Avian Influenza, its control and epidemiological surveillance. The training was organized jointly by the two sub regional FAO and OIE offices in Tunis from 11 to 13 May 2015. Thirteen Libyan participants attended this training. The experts stressed about the gravity of the supply of poultry from illegal markets and the importance of the application of biosecurity measures in poultry farms. They recommended to Libyan Veterinary Services:

- Strengthening the control in border areas and the implementation of stringent sanitary measures on the import and transit of all bird species and all categories of products from countries contaminated by Avian Influenza.

- The reinforcement of veterinary sanitary control in all industrial poultry farms, backyard and migratory birds in areas at high risk and taking samples in accordance with a well-crafted monitoring program.

Dr. Mohamed Bengoumi (FAO Sub Regional Office for North Africa) presented FAO support and tools developed for the monitoring and control of HPAI and provided an overview of the emergency project "Emergency assistance for the fight and control of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) in Libya " (TCP/LIB/3501). The project budget is over 404, 000 USD and aims to limit the spread of the disease and reduce its impact on public health and food safety. It will strengthen disease surveillance, management of outbreaks, communication and biosecurity.

Miscellaneous:

The OIE sub regional office for North Africa proposed to organize in 2017 - the first OIE Conference for the Mediterranean region referring to veterinary public health and any other subject of common interest with the participation of all stakeholders. Today, the Mediterranean region is becoming more and more a strategic economic and geopolitical corridor and can also be considered as a unique epidemiological system. About 25 countries have been identified as the main beneficiary countries. The proposed conference title was formulated: "Health Med 2017". The proposal was supported by CVOs of REMESA. More details will be provided at the next meeting of the JPC.

Next JPC:

The next JPC meeting will be held in Spain in March 2016 and co-chaired by Lebanon and Spain.



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Report of the 11th JPC meeting REMESA

Algiers (Algeria) - 24-25 November 2015

Co-chair: Algeria-Greece

SESSION	DECISIONS- RECOMMENDATIONS
FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to pursue the control measures undertaken by the Maghreb veterinary services to control the disease; - The EuFMD will continue to strengthen the capacity of veterinary services as part of its partnership with the REMESA; - OIE office in Tunis will organize a workshop to develop a harmonized vaccination strategy in North Africa.
Avian Influenza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribution of the FAO / OIE in the disease control: achievements and perspectives; - to strengthen the vigilance of REMESA countries for Avian Influenza by setting up a surveillance system for the avian influenza viruses (H5, H7 and H9) and for responding to any incursion; - The implementation of the FAO support project to Libya.
Vector-borne diseases: RVF/BT/WNF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to support research concerning the identification of the vectors potentially playing a role in the transmission of these diseases in the countries of REMESA; - to strengthen cooperation with the Vmerge project.
Lumpy skin disease (LSD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to strengthen awareness and surveillance of the disease; - to develop a regional strategy for prevention and control.
Sheep Pox/PPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to explore the possibility of developing joint strategies to target sheep pox and PPR; - to develop sub-regional strategy to fight against PPR in line with the global FAO / OIE strategy on the disease.
Rabies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The European Commission has confirmed that a budget amounting to € 1.5 million is expected to strengthen the fight against rabies in sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa.
Identification / animal movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The establishment of formal and informal mapping of animal movements in the region; Essential step to control transboundary diseases; - to discuss and develop the regional strategy of animal identification; The OIE office in Tunis will organize a workshop to discuss animal identification in North Africa, including small ruminants.
REMESA / Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -to share information concerning the implementation training activities of official veterinarians within REMESA -to strengthen the sub networks of REMESA (REPIVET, RELABSA, RECOMSA and RESEPSA) and to ensure a commitment and effective contribution of the focal points in the management of subnetworks including the use of new communication technologies and in the sharing information in their countries; -the regular updating of the website is an effective contribution of member countries.
Next meeting	Spain, 2016 (date to be determined).



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Program of the 11th JPC REMESA

Algiers, Algeria – 24-25 November 2015

Day 1: Tuesday 24 November 2015

Time	Theme / Speaker
Opening Session: presidency Greece	
09:00 - 09:30	<p>Official Opening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome of participants - Representative of the Ministry of Agriculture (Algeria) - Representatives of the co-presidency (Algeria and Greece) - Representatives of FAO and OIE
Session 1: presidency Algeria	
09:30 - 11:00	Approval of the agenda (5 minutes)
	<p><u>Session on Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) (part 1):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of the FMD activities in the North African region since the 2014/2015 epidemic - (R. Bouguedour - OIE) - (15 minutes) - Presentations from the countries about the latest developments and perspectives: CVO of Algeria (10 minutes) - CVO of Libya (10 minutes) - CVO of Morocco (10 minutes) - CVO of Tunisia (10 minutes)- CVO of Lebanon (10 minutes)-CVO of Egypt (10 minutes) <p>Discussion</p>
11:00 - 11:30	<i>Coffee-break (video prepared by ENSV, France, will be displayed)</i>
Session 2: presidency Algeria	
11:30 - 13:00	<p><u>Session on FMD (part 2):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview on FAO emergency support to Tunisia for the control of FMD - (R. Mansouri-FAO) (15 minutes) - Workshop EuFMD - REMESA : Epizooties FMD in North Africa: Towards a regional strategy based on lessons learned. Rabat (Morocco), 24-26 August 2015. (15 minutes) (J.L. Angot and F. Rosso- EuFMD/FAO) - State of the play on the progress of the OIE Regional vaccine bank and discussion of the concept note prepared during the preliminary technical meeting in Paris in April 2015 – what's next? (OIE Tunis) (15 minutes) - EuFMD Working plan in the North African region (F. Rosso -EuFMD) (15 minutes) <p>Discussion and conclusions</p>
	13:00-14:30
Session 3: presidency Algeria	
14:30 - 15:30	<p><u>Session on other relevant topics in relation to animal diseases control:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evolution of FMD in the Middle East (X. Pacholek-OIE) (15 minutes) - Experience of the ongoing EU twinning project with Algeria – especially in relation to animal identification (Dr K. Boughalem, CVO Algeria) (15 minutes) - Spanish Technological Platform Vet+i-(Maria Jaureguizar Redondo -Spain) – 15 minutes - Scientific support for regional disease control strategies in relation to animal movements - (T. Lefrançois,

	<p>CIRAD) – 15 minutes</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions</p>
15:30-16:00	<p><u>Session on vector born disease and Poxvirus (Part 1):</u></p> <p>Updated activities on the Regional Workshops on vector born disease and Poxvirus:</p> <p>1... Report of the Regional Workshop on "PPR-Sheep pox in North Africa: Towards a regional strategy" Tunis, 5-7 October 2015 (R. Mansouri-FAO) (15 minutes)</p> <p>2... Report of the Regional Workshop on "Epidemiology of the Valley Fever (RVF): Monitoring and contingency plan" Tunis, 8-9 October 2015 (R. Mansouri-FAO) (15 minutes)</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions</p>
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee-break (video prepared by ENSV, France, will be displayed)
16:30-18:00	<p>Session on vector born disease and Poxvirus (Part 2):</p> <p><u>Bluetongue virus (BTV-8) in France:</u></p> <p>1. Re-emergence of BTV8 in France: updated situation and perspectives (Dr Stéphanie Flauto-DGAL) (20 minutes)</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions</p> <p><u>Updated activities on LSD:</u></p> <p>1... Overview on Lumpy skin disease in the Mediterranean region (LSD) - (X. Pacholek OIE) (15 minutes)</p> <p>2... Overview on Lumpy skin disease situation in Greece (S. Doudounakis- CVO of Greece) (15 minutes)</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions</p> <p><u>Updated activities on West Nile Fever:</u></p> <p>2... Overview on West Nile Fever in the Mediterranean basin - (F. Monaco - OIE Reference Laboratory, IZS Teramo) (20 minutes)</p> <p>3... Round table discussion about the activities in place in the REMESA countries in relation to West Nile Fever (20 minutes)</p> <p>Discussion and conclusions</p>
20:00	Official dinner

Day 2: Wednesday 25 November 2015	
Time	Theme / Speaker
Session 4: presidency Greece	
09:00 – 10:25	<p><u>Session on sub-networks of REMESA:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updated activities REMESA sub networks - (J. Mérot - OIE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o RELABSA workshop: implementation of biosecurity and biosafety measures in laboratories - 29-30 September 2015 - Tunisia; (5 minutes) o RECOMSA rabies communication seminar - 4-5 November 2015 –Tunisia ; (5 minutes) o REPIVET- RESEPSA workshop: epidemiology and surveillance of animal diseases - 1-2 December 2015 – Tunisia (5 minutes) - Online questionnaire Report (R. Mansouri -FAO) (10 minutes) - Recommendations of the RELABSA, REPIVET, RECOMSA and RESEPSA meetings -6 October 2015, 2015-Tunisia (R. Mansouri -FAO) (10 minutes)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Updating about the REMESA website (10 minutes) <p>Discussion and Recommendations</p>
10:25 - 10:55	Coffee-break (video prepared by ENSV, France, will be displayed)
Session 5: presidency Greece	
10:55 – 11:50	<p><u>Session on Avian Influenza (AI):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentations from Egypt and Libya about their updated epidemiological situation (10 minutes each country) - Report of the Workshop "Strengthening the capacity of Libyan veterinary services to the control of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza" (Tunis 11-13 / 05/2015) (A. Ripani -OIE) (10 minutes) - Overview on FAO emergency support to Libya for the control of HPAI - (M. Bengoumi-FAO) (10 minutes) <p>Discussion and conclusions</p>
Session 6: presidency Greece	
11: 50-12:30	<p>Other communications and conclusions remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Date and place of next meeting - Presidency
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00	Closure of the meeting