



**Report of the 4th meeting of the REMESA Joint Permanent Committee (JPC)  
20th & 21st October 2011, Roma, Italy.**

**Date** : 20 & 21 October 2011  
**Venue** : Italian Ministry of Health – *Via di Ribotta, 5, Rome - Italie*  
**Organization** : Secretariat of the Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Health.  
**Participants** : **CVOs of** Algeria, Spain, France, Italy, Morocco and Tunisia and the representatives of FAO (HQ & Tunis), OIE (HQ & Tunis), AMU and UE. CVOs from Egypt, Mauritania and Portugal could not participate due to administrative issues. Representative of AU-IBAR was not able to attend. Libya was not represented. (see participants list attached)

Agenda items	Decision	Implementation
Website REMESA	Place the flags of countries REMESA on the homepage and logos FAO and OIE	FAO Tunis
	Submit a page showing all the contributors to REMESA	URC proposal
	Add links to other sites	URC
	Resend the site manual to all the CVOs	FAO Tunis
Funding REMESA	Integrate, when possible, an "coordination" line in the budgeting of activities of technical projects relevant to REMESA	Member countries, FAO, OIE
	Lead a discussion on technical activities to be undertaken in the framework of REMESA, of interest to donors	JPC members
	Establish a financial report for each meeting stating the total and details of contributions	JPC Secretariat
	The members and observers self-finance their participation to the JPC meetings	Decision to be endorsed at the next meeting of the JPC
Activities carried out	Provided for each activity or project a summary sheet with description and timetable of the activity	OIE, FAO
Plans	The action plan is rename strategic framework, with no expiry date	
	Presentation of actions at the next meeting	FAO, OIE, other organizations and countries
Draft MoU	Identify areas for signature by the CVOs and those that require a ministerial signature. Have a final document for discussion at the next meeting	OIE (M. Eloit) and FAO (J. Lubroth) and the FAO Legal Office
Enlargement	Discussion on the terms of enlargement and the future status of countries or groups joining the REMESA at the next meeting.	JPC members
Meetings of the JPC	Organization of two meetings per year and maintaining JPC co-chair	
	Date and place of next meeting to be fixed <u>before</u>	Co-Chairs 2012 (CVOs French

The meeting was under the presidency of Dr Romano Marabelli (CVO, Italia) and Dr Abdelhak Ben Younes (CVO, Tunisia), REMESA co-presidents for 2011.

*PS: The presentations and documents distributed to participants, included in these minutes are posted on the website at REMESA ([www.REMESAnetwork.org](http://www.REMESAnetwork.org)) under "Meetings REMESA."*

### Session 1: Official Opening

The Italian CVO (co-chair):

- Address the greetings of the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Health who could not be present.
- Excuse countries absent
- Explained through some examples why animal health in the Mediterranean area remains a major concern and especially for the moment for his country and Europe,
- Recalls the important changes in the countries of North Africa and highlights their impact on neighboring countries, especially Europe.
- States that, partly because of the financial crisis, European countries have started thinking about the targeting of resources to allocate to different subjects, and the strategy needed to be defined for this purpose.
- Indicates that the restructuring of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) also requires that the EU should define a strategy for animal health.

The Tunisian CVO (co-chair):

- Thanks the Italian authorities for hosting the meeting.
- Welcomes the implementation of REMESA which he had already participated in 2009.
- Also emphasizes the need to define a strategy for REMESA.
- Confirms the involvement of Tunisia in the REMESA.

Dr Eloit, OIE:

- Thanks the Italian authorities.
- Recalls that the REMESA is an ambitious project.
- Stressed that this meeting should address very important issues: MoU, financing, conditions of expansion to other countries and other stakeholders that the veterinary services.
- Stresses that the program of activities must take into account recent developments in the region and that the JPC should evaluate whether the recommendations made in 2010 are still relevant.

Dr Lubroth, FAO:

- Also thanked the Italian authorities and the presidents of REMESA.
- Confirms that the REMESA is a great idea and a project of great importance for the people of the region, the improvement of animal health could reduce poverty and improve public health.
- Confirms that developments in North Africa and the global economic crisis must be taken into account.
- Regrets not having seen during previous meetings the synergies that should allow REMESA.
- Points out that many European countries believe in the importance of REMESA; non-members of REMESA could contribute financially to the network.

- Regrets not having received from the CVOs all necessary support to defend the REMESA to the donors during the crisis due to movement of animals from Libya.
- Stresses the importance of good communication within the REMESA.

## Session 2

1. Validation of the agenda: Update on the draft *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) was postponed to Friday to allow the presence of experts from the FAO Legal Office. The agenda is adopted with this change.
2. Validation of the minutes of the 3rd meeting (Algiers, February 2011): in the absence of comments, the minutes are approved.
3. REMESA site: at the request of the JPC, the URC FAO / OIE met to propose changes in the site designed and made available to the network by FAO (<http://www.REMESAnetwork.org>). FAO presents the minutes of the meeting. The discussions focus on the home page of the site and the procedure for the presentation of the contributors to REMESA. It is recalled that all countries can and are encouraged to put on the site all the information they have and that are of interest for the network. The site is very important because it is the primary tool for communication among members and to the outside.

## Decisions

- For better visibility, place the flags of all countries REMESA on the home page, and logos FAO and OIE as RCU: immediate action.
  - Propose a new page showing all the contributors REMESA, depending on the size and nature of their contribution: Proposal to be sent electronically for approval.
  - Add links to other sites.
  - Resent the manual to all the CVOs.
4. Reflections on the creation of a fund REMESA: FAO recalled the discussions conducted during the previous JPC, reviewed the major advantages but also difficulties in establishing a fund and proposed to start the discussion around three themes: i) the purpose of the fund, ii) the fund's resources iii) the status, governance and management arrangements. Finally, the FAO Commission for the Fight against Desert Locust in the Western Region (CLCPRO) was cited as an example.

## Discussion

Participants agreed on the need to identify funding sources for both the technical activities of the network than for Coordination (JPC meetings and sub-networks). The latter being difficult to finance as such, several participants recommended that the budgets of activities or technical projects include an online "coordination". The institutionalization of financing through the establishment of a fund from national budgets in spite of its interest in ensuring the sustainability of the network is not a preferred option at this stage. Indeed: i) the process and too complex, ii) it is better to build on existing structures and mechanisms and avoid creating new ones, duplicating existing ones, iii) at present, visibility and REMESA's record is not sufficiently consolidated to allow to convince decision makers to set up such a recurring funding.

Funding for the network is currently mainly provided by European countries. Participants want the North African countries show their commitment and their involvement in the network by contributing financially. To this end, the Algerian CVO said that self-financing by the countries of North Africa for participation in JPC was not a problem.

## Decisions

- Member countries, FAO and OIE should whenever possible include a line "coordination" in the budgeting of technical activities and projects relevant to REMESA.
- Lead a discussion on technical activities to be undertaken as part of REMESA which could be of interest to donors
- Establish (Secretariat) a financial report at the end of each meeting stating the total contributions
- To demonstrate to donors the commitment of countries, the principle of self-financing by the members and observers attending meetings of the JPC is approved. Due to the number of absent members at the meeting, the decision will be finally endorsed at the next meeting of the JPC.

### **Session 3: outstanding animal health events of interest to the REMESA; actions - decisions taken by countries or organizations of interest to the REMESA (national coordination, strategic actions REMESA cooperation between countries, twinning)**

Participants were asked to write and upload to the website (<http://www.REMESAnetwork.org>) a file containing the main points of their intervention.

#### 1. Health Events

**Tunisia :** due Libyan events, large movements of people and livestock to Tunisia took place. Thanks to the mobilization of veterinary services, private veterinarians and students, control and vaccination of cattle have been made to reduce the risk of introducing diseases (Libya had reported cases of FMD shortly before the start of the year, requiring special vigilance). The second phase of the national immunization program is in progress. Currently the movements of animals are observed in the direction back to the Libyan.

**Algeria:** there were only few entries of animals from Libya to Algeria. Conversely, there have been many requests for supplying Libya with sheep products. Algeria has responded favorably.

**Morocco:** Cases of Bluetongue have been notified. 374 outbreaks of sheep pox were found despite widespread vaccination. A vaccination campaign against PPR at the borders is maintained. 7600 horses have been vaccinated against West Nile fever (FVN). A vaccine is pending and a procedure for the voluntary vaccination is being drafted. Morocco, send a written note.

**UMA:** Representative recalls the special meeting of the North African Veterinary Committee held in Rabat in June. A letter of request for support in the fight against FMD and PPR had been sent to the FAO. There was no positive response at this stage.

**FAO** states that a project proposal was prepared and submitted to donors without success for now. It is recalled that little information was provided by countries to support this request.

**France:** two outbreaks of Newcastle disease have been reported as well as a case of rabies imported from Morocco. No cases of bluetongue have been reported in 2011. The CVO evokes the

events of bee and oysters mortality. He emphasizes the organization of the States General of health that need to mobilize actors in animal industry, work on the revision of the mandate on health and the creation of a mutual fund health.

**Spain:** an outbreak of bluetongue (serotype 1) and two foci of West Nile were reported in 2011. Surveillance of RVF has been strengthened but there was no positive serology. Brucellosis has almost disappeared and the prevalence of tuberculosis was reduced to 0.8%. Bee mortality is also a cause for concern in Spain.

**Italy:** FWN clinical cases were reported (96 equine cases including 8 deaths), African swine fever in Sardinia persists, particularly in connection with the farming method (free-range) and dourine related to illegal movement breeding has been notified. As far as bees are concerned, Italy set up a system for identifying bee farms.

## 2. Activities of interest to REMESA

**France:** a consortium France / Italy / Spain won the tender on the EU institutional twinning / Centre national animal health monitoring Tunisia (CNVZ). The future advisor presented the objectives of the twinning. A presentation by France Vétérinaire International (FVI) in charge of uniting the French offers for veterinary expertise abroad was made.

### **European Union:**

- The Commission states that the Commission will fund (in 2012 and 2013) the participation of laboratories from North Africa to the inter-laboratory testing conducted by the reference laboratories of the European Union (LRUE). The Commission is studying the possibility of financing also their participation in other European activities such as technical workshops of the reference networks. There is no LRUE for RVF and PPR.
- Training activities on rabies and PPR (diagnosis and control) for Francophone countries will be held in 2012 in the framework of *Better Training for Safer Food* (BTSF).
- It is recalled that Tunisia also contributes to the EU Twinning / CNVZ by financing part of the logistics.
- The Commission is also alert to the phenomena of decay and death of bees.
- Regarding the regional approach, the Commission (DG SANCO and DEVCO) is considering funding a regional project on diseases deemed as priorities by the REMESA. TAIEX Seminar with Mediterranean countries which was also attended by FAO and the OIE was held in September. The main points are:
  - Calls upon countries to share reports on the PVS;
  - Request the OIE to conduct a comparative study of PVS;
  - Proposed organization of a regional seminar on animal identification;
  - Writing by the Commission a mandate to the EFSA on a risk assessment for some diseases in the region of North Africa;
  - Ability to fund the twinning in the region;
  - Work towards the harmonization of surveillance methodologies;
  - Provision of the Mediterranean countries of the TRACES system (management of movements of animals and animal products).

### **Session 4: Presentation by the OIE and FAO activities carried out in 2011 as part of REMESA**

The regional representation of the OIE for North Africa and the FAO-ECTAD unit to North Africa presented the activities within the (or contributing to) Action Plan REMESA (presentations are attached).

Two new documents developed by the URC FAO / OIE were presented to participants:

- The list of activities carried out by FAO and the OIE jointly by the two organizations.

- The correlation table between activities and objectives of the Action Plan.

### **Discussion**

- Some members welcomed the significant change in the coordination between FAO and OIE, in Tunis.
- The new documents were deemed of interest.

### **Decisions**

In addition, the JPC requires organizations to provide for each activity or project summary sheet with description and schedule of the activity.

## **Session 5: Presentation by the OIE and FAO of intervention plans of the sub-networks**

The OIE and FAO presented their proposed activities for the coming months and jointly submitted for discussion the concerted and coordinated actions between the two organizations on issues of importance (such as RVF).

No objections or reservations are made on the proposals. Several other conditions are then described by the CVOs, such interest may, in addition to RVF: FMD, PPR, bluetongue, avian influenza, among others.

The importance of conducting operations against rabies is underscored by the three North African CVOs present: dog control, strengthening medical prophylaxis, depth epidemiological investigations in the field and importance of cross-border cooperation.

The CVO Italian emphasizes the importance of cross-border cooperation and stressed the need to prioritize actions to be taken while remaining operational.

### **Decisions**

- The action plan (including objectives are general and still relevant) is transformed into a strategic framework, with no expiry date: however, it can be changed whenever required by the JPC.
- FAO, OIE and countries present the actions at the next meeting.

## **Item scheduled and postponed the day before: Memorandum of understanding: discussion on the text and follow-up**

Ms. Pardo & Bullon from the Legal Office of FAO (who wrote the first draft/ working document) are present to clarify certain legal issues.

France, which had previously provided comments (included in the version presented) makes some additional remarks.

### **Discussion**

- Signatories to the document: to maintain an operational while minimizing legal risks, the signatories will be the CVOs. It is necessary to identify areas that could legally against this decision and evaluate the appropriateness of maintaining them.
- The OIE reminds the usefulness of a document signed by the countries, the OIE and the FAO (all members of the JPC) but does not comment on the nature of this document (MoU, *gentleman's agreement* ...)

### **Decisions**

OIE (Mr. Eloit) and FAO (J. Lubroth) are asked to identify, in consultation with the Legal Office of FAO, points for a signature by the CVOs and those that require a ministerial signature. The goal is to have a position in late 2011 on the content and level of signature, and a finalized document (in French and English), for discussion at the next meeting.

## **Session 6**

### **1. Progress report on the REMESA: Strengths and Weaknesses**

FAO provides a first exchange of individual perception of the participants about the strengths and weaknesses of the REMESA, and to identify practical ways for improvement. *See results in a table next page.*

## **Main comments**

1. The lack of visibility of REMESA with other organizations and donors is detrimental. The role of RECOMSA in increasing the visibility must be defined.
2. The OIE stresses the importance of this participatory exercise as it demonstrates the interest of the country members of REMESA.
3. It would be desirable to establish a methodology for measuring the impact of activities by organizations and countries.
4. The CVO from Algeria regrets, in cases of emergency, the lack of reactivity (donors, international organizations). It suggests an initial discussion to establish a "procedure REMESA" that would address this concern.
5. FAO said that FAO unit of Tunis is an emergency unit, not just dedicated to animal health. In a crisis, the approach (needs assessment and response) could be expanded (at the risk to food security, for example), allowing a greater attention from the donor community.

### **2. Enlargement of REMESA**

There was no formal application: Greece would be interested (information CVO Spanish), Malta and Cyprus could be interested too (CVO Italian).

Requested by the FAO, AU-IBAR has expressed interest but was not able to attend the meeting.

Other interested parties could be contacted, as FESASS, European Federation for Animal Health and Food Safety (CVO French).

The OIE stresses that need to differentiate the various enlargements (country, others) and considered in the drafting of the MoU.

## **Decisions**

- The terms of enlargement and the future status of countries or groups joining the REMESA (members, observers, ...) will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **Session 7: Date and place of next meetings, formal closure**

The next meeting will be held in the first half of 2012, with co-chair by Morocco / France. The secretariat of REMESA will be transferred to the OIE on 31 December 2011, for a period of two years.

## **Decisions**

- The principles of organizing two meetings of the JPC per year and maintain a co-chair are selected.
- The date and place of next meeting will be determined by the 2012co-president before January 31, 2012.



**Table : Results of Session 6 : REMESA progress report**

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coordination (share)</li> <li>• exchange of information, think tank</li> <li>• knowledge between CVOs, technicians</li> <li>• increase in relations between countries</li> <li>• shared vision, common will work together, the strategic plan, motivation focal point to work together</li> <li>• prioritization</li> <li>• concrete results</li> <li>• ownership of REMESA, recognized as regional network</li> <li>• trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lack of common policy of common strategy</li> <li>• inadequate financing mechanism</li> <li>• weak participation of members and partners</li> <li>• lack of initiative by members</li> <li>• lack of visibility</li> <li>• weak coordination between FAO OIE</li> <li>• lack of fluidity of exchange</li> <li>• inadequate of results</li> <li>• lack of visibility of current projects in developing countries</li> <li>• no clear role of REMESA</li> <li>• enlargement</li> <li>• legal status not defined</li> <li>• lack prioritization</li> <li>• method of work</li> <li>• RECOMSA useless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make project plans on site</li> <li>• developing communication strategy</li> <li>• more information exchange between focal points</li> <li>• lead by a country on a theme</li> <li>• more precisely presenting the results obtained</li> <li>• submit concrete actions to associate members outside north Africa (ex RVF)</li> <li>• in Tunis, FAO OIE must coordinate more</li> <li>• establishing a decisions committee between JPC</li> <li>• activities report REMESA</li> <li>• list of JPC decisions with concrete actions</li> <li>• support communication for breeders and veterinarians in south REMESA countries for disease diagnostic</li> <li>• present REMESA to human health networks</li> <li>• speeding the legal status and formalization of the MoU</li> <li>• know each other better, set role</li> <li>• FAO OIE should promote only joint activities</li> <li>• communicate what is done</li> <li>• ask for contribution by donors and international organizations</li> <li>• concrete actions (FMD, rage)</li> <li>• involving private vets</li> <li>• FAO OIE must respect their mandate</li> <li>• not to multiply the focal point(ex communication)</li> <li>• regular meeting between FAO OIE and reporting</li> <li>• define indicators: impact indicators, indicators of activity</li> <li>• have a permanent secretariat in each country</li> </ul>