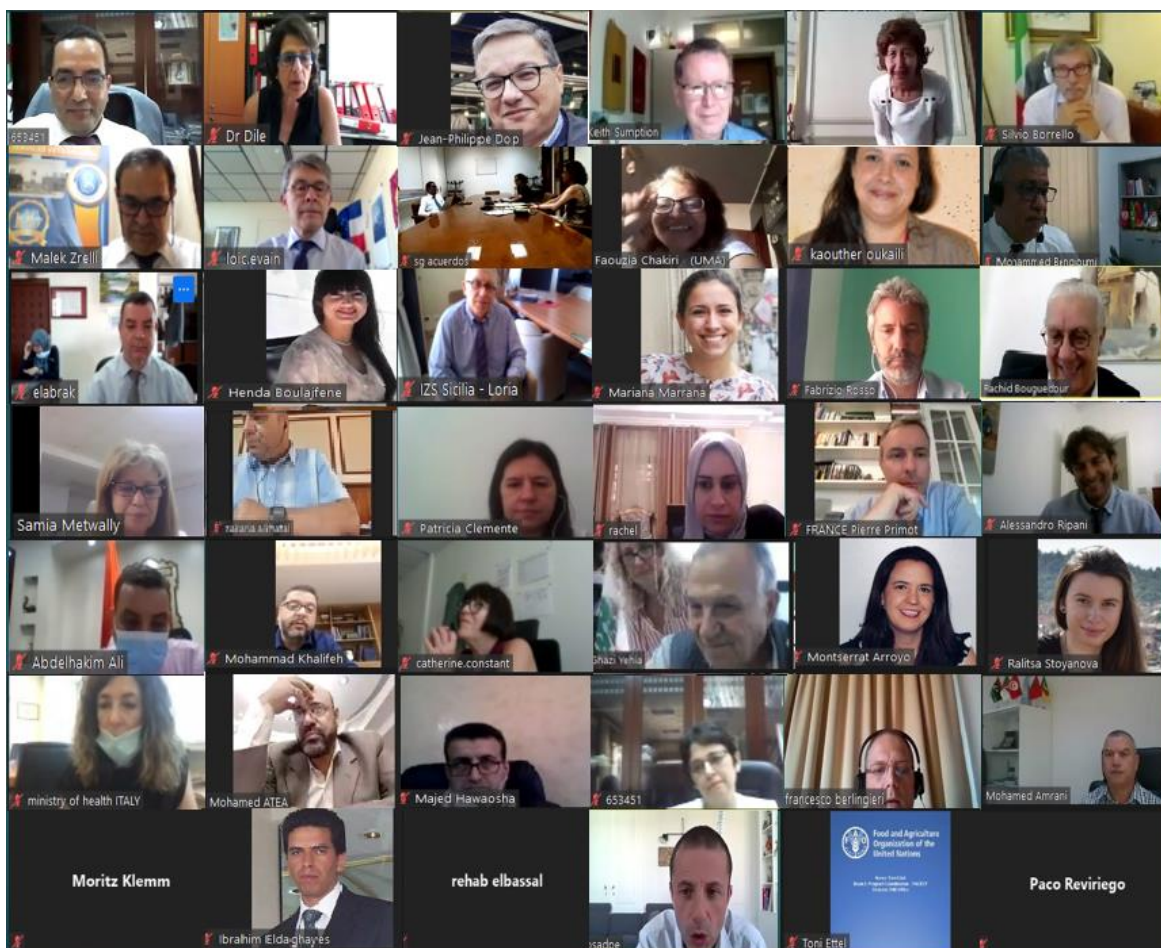




Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## REPORT 20th JPC REMESA (Video-conference) Co-chair: Algeria – Greece

24 June 2020



## Executive Summary

Due to the COVID-19 pandemics, the 20<sup>th</sup> Joint Permanent Committee meeting of the Mediterranean Animal Health Network (REMESA) was organized virtually on 24 June 2020. Forty-eight participants including the Chief Veterinary Officers of REMESA member countries or their representatives from Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Spain, Portugal and Tunisia attended the meeting. The representatives from the European Commission (DG SANTE) and the Union Maghreb Arab (UMA) also participated in the meeting. Additional institutions/organizations were invited to participate in the meeting for providing specific inputs such as EuFMD.

The meeting was co-chaired by Dr Karim Boughalem (Chief Veterinary Officer of Algeria) and Dr Chrysoula Dile (Chief Veterinary Officer of Greece).

Discussed topics and major conclusions of the meeting are as follows:

- An overview of the major animal diseases (FMD, PPR, Rabies, Camel prion disease...) situation in the Mediterranean basin was presented. The updated epidemiological status and related activities were debated with special attention to vector-borne diseases (such as Bluetongue, WND, RFV and CCHF) for enhancing harmonized and targeted surveillance for circulating pathogens.
- The governance and functioning of REMESA after eleven years of its creation were discussed based on the results of an online questionnaire and a strategic note presented by the Secretariat. The REMESA scientific unit in Palermo presented the results of the survey performed for identifying the main constraints to establish a successful scientific networking.
- The impact of COVID-19 with three presentations on OIE tools developed in the framework of COVID-19 emergency; FAO's contributions to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and the results of the EuFMD survey on the impact of COVID-19 on veterinary services.
- Trade and welfare with a presentation on the OIE twining project between the Tunisian National Veterinary School and the Institute Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise (IZSAM) Teramo, Italy and REMESA activities on this subject.

The main recommendations of the meeting were:

- Support countries in the prevention and control of the main TADs.
- Strengthen capacities of member countries in research and management of vector-borne diseases.
- Deepen the reflection and give more time to discuss in face to face session only with the CVOs the strategic note of REMESA including work plan and budget.
- Improve digital communication of the REMESA.
- Create links with existing networks or institutions (CIHEAM...).
- Strengthen capacities of member countries on animal welfare and one health.

The date and venue of the 21<sup>th</sup> JPC meeting of REMESA will be communicated after discussion between the co-presidents and the Secretariat. The meeting was closed by remarks of the co-presidents, FAO and OIE.

All documents including presentations are available at the link:

<https://unfao.sharepoint.com/sites/RNE-External/REMESA/Forms/AllItems.aspx?viewid=cc73e596%2D9ca3%2D409a%2D822e%2Da1a8d8387104&id=%2Fsites%2FRNE%2DExternal%2FREMEMESA%2FREMEMESA%2024%2D06%2D2020%20Meeting>

## **Opening session**

The meeting was officially opened by Dr Karim Boughalem (Chief Veterinary Officer of Algeria) and Dr Chrysoula Dile (Chief Veterinary Officer of Greece) - as co-presidency of REMESA Joint Permanent Committee for 2020 – who welcomed all the participants by highlighting the importance and relevance of the REMESA network for countries sharing the Mediterranean basin, which is considered an important crossroad between African, Middle East and European countries. They recall the importance and role of the veterinary services and REMESA in the prevention and control of TADs including zoonotic diseases such ongoing Covid-19 pandemics. Dr Keith Sumption (CVO/FAO) reiterated the importance of REMESA in coordinating activities, information sharing and creating trust between countries for effective prevention and control of transboundary animal diseases. He also recognised the role of REMESA in managing many sanitary crisis in the recent past years and applauded the organisation of the Joint Permanent meeting despite the Covid-19 lockdown. Dr Dop (Deputy DG, OIE) welcomed the participants and recalled that convening together countries of this network is extremely important for the control of transboundary diseases. He also emphasised the importance of discussing the Strategic Note of REMESA and mentioned the relevance of looking at the priority diseases of the network in the context COVID-19 and other zoonotic diseases.

## **Session 1 - (Updates of events)**

The session was opened with an updates on major sanitary events occurred in the Mediterranean Region such us FMD, PPR, Avian Influenza, Rabies; Camel Prion disease...) and diseases related to climate change and vector-borne diseases such us Rift Valley fever (RVF), Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic fever (CCHF), West Nile fever (WNF), African swine fever (ASF) and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD)(details in the [PPT](#)). The recent activities of EuFMD carried out and priorities for the region were also presented. The activities of the work-plan aim at improving early warning for FAST diseases (foot-and-mouth disease and similar transboundary animal diseases) through an integrated approach in order to build strategies for improved surveillance and coordinated prevention and control (details in the [PPT](#)). The European Commission gave an overview on the compulsory cleansing and disinfection of livestock vessels and trucks returning to the European Union. Countries from North Africa and Middle East provided an update on their epidemiological situation – mainly on FMD and PPR – with relation to the recent outbreaks and serotypes incursions as well as the control measures. Algeria reminded that in 2017 they had an incursion of FMD serotype A/AFRICA/G-IV while in 2018 the country experienced the introduction of FMD serotype O/EA-3 and since March 2019, no FMD outbreaks were reported. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, the government had just achieved a vaccination campaign for cattle with bivalent vaccine (A/O). At the end of June 2020, Algeria will receive 2 million doses of FMD vaccine. For PPR, Algeria started in 2018 mass vaccination for two consecutive years as well as serological survey. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2020, 8 million sheep and goats have been vaccinated against PPR and there is a margin for reaching 20 million sheep and goats by the end of the campaign. From September 2020, there will be a second mass vaccination against PPR. Algeria also carried out mass emergency vaccination campaign against Bluetongue in high risk zones before the Aid Elkebir

(end of July). Egypt reported that the FMD epidemiological situation is much better since there is a great reduction in outbreaks from 124 in 2017 to 18 in 2019 and 0 outbreaks until June 2020. Through massive vaccination campaign, 1.5 million cattle have been vaccinated against FMD. For PPR, Egypt reported one outbreak in the North of the country and a ring vaccination has been applied reaching 40000 sheep and goats. France reported also a confirmed imported animal case of Rabies. France confirmed several cases of coronavirus COVID-19 since February 2020. Greece reported an outbreak of ASF for the first time in backyard farm in Nigrita, in Serres Regional Unit on 5 February 2020. The following control measures were applied: (1) Ban on movements of live pigs from the Serres RU, (2) Prohibition of the movement of meat, pork, semen, ova and embryos into the Serres RU and (3) Prohibition of leaving the Serres RU without the permission of the Local Center for Disease Control for pig carcasses, meat, semen, ova, embryos, feeding stuffs, tools, other objects and waste. Italia notified to the OIE a case Low pathogenic avian influenza virus (H5N3) in the Province of Mantova on 22 June 2020. Italy implemented a surveillance plan in the North of the country with the establishment of “classyFarm” system. “ClassyFarm” is an Italian innovation tool developed by the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale of Lombardy and Emilia Romagna in cooperation with the University of Parma. It is included in the national veterinary website ([www.vetinfo.it](http://www.vetinfo.it)) and allows collecting and processing data relating to the following assessment areas mainly biosafety, animal welfare, health and production parameters, animal feeding, antimicrobial consumption and lesions found at the slaughterhouse. For Jordan, no outbreaks of FMD, PPR and Avian Influenza were reported. Along with EuFMD, they are at level 2 of the “Progressive Control Pathway for Foot-and-Mouth Disease (PCP-FMD)”. For Brucellosis, new control strategy has been adopted by reducing vaccine dose to eye drop. For MERS-COV, a surveillance program is ongoing in camels. Lebanon reported that the animal health situation is stable but vaccination campaigns were interrupted because of insufficient budget in a context where borders with Syria are considered as high risk zones due to the importance of animal movements between the two countries without specific control measures. Libya reported FMD serotype A outbreak in Enjelah, in Tarabulus district: 100 sheep infected out of 450 animals on 31 March 2020. On 19 April 2020, four additional FMD, serotype A, outbreaks were reported in the already infected Enjelah and in never before affected Egfara, both in Tarabulus district: 1 000 sheep were reported infected, 165 died, out of 3 208 animals. So far, since 31 March 2020, a total of five outbreaks, serotype A, were reported in Tarabulus district. Libya also reported a total of eight RVF outbreaks in Al Kufrah (n=5), Awbari (n=2) and Ash Shati districts since 15 January 2020. These are the first RVF events reported in Libya. The first events were observed on 12 December 2019. On 11 May 2020, one additional RVF outbreak was reported in Elhamra, in previously affected Awbari district: a total of seven sheep were sick (IgM positivity) and two died, among a susceptible population of 65 animals. These cases were detected as part of surveillance carried out for RVF in the whole country under a FAO project. Mauritania also reported a confirmed human case of Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) on 21 May 2020. The patient is a 60-year-old butcher from Tiguent, in Trarza region. Symptoms of fever, fatigue, headache and epistaxis, appeared on 02 May. The case had a history of handling meat carcasses and no recent travel history. FAO has allocated two emergency TCP projects to support to the Mauritania and Senegal in the management of CCHF. Morocco continues its vaccination campaign against FMD serotype O/EA-3 until it reaches its target of approximately 3 million cattle and 26 million goats and sheep. Morocco reported an outbreak of PPR in 3 regions: 92 goats were infected and 68 died, out of 140 susceptible animals on 07 February 2020. Morocco also stated that a national vaccination campaign against PPR and sheep pox was launched on 17 January 2020 reaching a total of 22 million sheep and goats. Portugal confirmed that the animal health situation is stable with no outbreaks notified. Portugal activated surveillance on

slaughterhouses after interruption due to COVID-19 pandemic. One Newcastle outbreak has been reported but no vaccination has been implemented. Spain confirmed that currently has no contamination of humans of the COVID-19 from mink and that these farms were put under official surveillance. Tunisia thanked warmly Libyan veterinarian services for doing excellent work in difficult conditions and for their close collaboration. A Newcastle outbreak has been reported among wild birds in Kasserine (border with Algeria). The civil society "BirdLife Tunisie" has been very active for the protection of environment and wild fauna especially the wild birds. France highlighted the importance of implementing biosecurity measures especially for preventing the introduction of ASF and avian diseases. The CVO of France also informed the audience that only seven mink farms are present in the country and were put under reinforced surveillance.

## **Session 2 - REMESA Governance:**

The Secretariat presented results of the online survey on the functioning of the REMESA network as recommended by the 19th meeting of the joint permanent committee of REMESA. The purpose of the survey was to gather input on four topics: (1) added-value of the network, (2) the web site, (3) organization and (4) functioning. A total of 12 from 15 countries replied to the questionnaire. All member countries are generally satisfied with the network because it is recognized as an integrated platform for exchange and sharing of information and knowledge and close collaboration. The 12 respondent countries are satisfied with the REMESA secretariat support and the organization of JPC meetings, availability of FAO and OIE expertise in support to member countries and good organization and coordination. The majority of CVOs prefer to keep the same frequency and duration of JPC meetings and they appreciate the proposal to organize a short meeting aside the general session of the OIE. They also stress the importance of the role of the CVOs in JPC meetings and the role of the focal points of the subnetworks to ensure the continuity of the technical work, collaboration and exchange of information in their country and with other countries of the network. Finally, the majority of countries supports the creation the establishment of special REMESA fund for reinforcing and sustaining the activities of the network. (details in the [PPT](#)).

The strategic note of the REMESA network was presented by the Secretariat recalling that REMESA is based on the commitment of the Chief Veterinary Officers of each member country and its development will surely evolve with the international health situation and the demand of its member countries.

France mentioned that the questionnaire results show that everybody is convinced of the interest of the network that should be strengthened and sustained. France added that the main issue is the development of a digitalization of the Networks including e-learning, communication and the reactivity of the website. France proposed also to mention on the strategic note that the EUFMD is a strategic partner of the network as well as several other recognised scientific centers that are committed to collaborate with the Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Sicilia (IZSSI) and the other institutions of member countries. In order to increase synergies with other Mediterranean institutions, France proposed that the secretariat strengthen collaboration with CIHEAM.

Italy reiterated its commitment to support the scientific collaboration within REMESA countries and recalled the importance of the participation and coordination of the four sub-networks in the meetings. Italy also presented some short-medium term activities/projects to be conducted in the REMESA region such as:

- on 28th September 2020 Webinar for REMESA members “rabies control: strategies for a regional approach”, (IZS delle Venezie) and experts from other countries;
- online training course on “Rabies control in the Mediterranean setting” for REMESA members in 2021;
- Webinar on vector-borne diseases

Spain considered the strategic note as a very good basis for debate and proposed to have a dedicated and restricted meeting between the CVOs (face to face meeting) for better discussing the strategic vision of the network. Spain also stressed the need for a clear budget with details contributions of countries.

Morocco supported Spain's remarks and suggested to add a paragraph on the importance of laboratories network. FAO HQ, suggested to elaborate an action plan after the validation of the strategic note with budget contributions. OIE confirmed that the strategic note requires a deeper and strategic debate between the CVOs and that are the decision makers and proposed to the REMESA secretariat to send the revised strategic note to CVOs (that takes into account the comments received from the CVOs) for further contributions and to allocate more time for its discussion /validation during the next JPC meeting.

The REMESA scientific unit in Palermo confirmed its scientific support for networking/communication. According to the majority, the main constraints to establish a successful scientific networking is the lack of proper regional coordination among laboratories, universities and researchers. For the research activities, many constraints were identified such as: (1) frustration for unsuccessful application to international calls, (2) lack of scientific experts to deliver projects and (3) lack of communication and information regarding application calls. The unit of Palermo will provide scientific support and organize training on project management. Six countries of seven declared no interest in funding experts working in the unit in Palermo. Spain is the only one who is interested and will offer a half time collaborating expert on scientific unit and will provide administrative support to the ongoing projects (details in [PPT](#)).

### **Session 3 - (Covid-19)**

Dr. Mariana Marrana; (Preparedness and Resilience Department of OIE) delivered a presentation on OIE tools developed in the framework of COVID-19 emergency (details in [PPT](#)). She focused on the following topics: (1) OIE Incident Management Approach: COVID-19 response and work streams, (2) New tools related to the COVID-19 emergency and (3) Impact of COVID-19 in driving future work programs at the OIE.

Mohamed Amrani; (FAO/SNE) gave an overview on FAO contributions to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 (details in [PPT](#)). He stated that FAO mainly contributes to the following topics: (1) support developing countries to anticipate and mitigate the pandemic's impacts on their populations' food security and livelihoods, (2) discussions on mitigating COVID-19's impacts on global food trade and markets and (3) support countries and research institutions in ongoing investigations to identify potential animal hosts of the virus and reduce spillover effects to humans.

EuFMD presented the results of the short survey on the impact of COVID-19 control measures in North Africa, Middle East on FAST disease surveillance and control (details in [EuFMD COVID-19 Survey: NA-ME 002](#) [PPT](#)) including movement restrictions and lockdown, FAST disease surveillance and control programs, animal health reference laboratory capacity, risk of introduction and silent spread of fast diseases and management of outbreaks.

The representative of EU stated that:

- The importance of COVID and the link with animals is relative; so far this is still a human disease. Findings are circumstantial and related to local conditions.
- Nonetheless in the EU several initiatives on surveillance in animals have started in several countries (e.g. France and Spain).
- The Commission has been actively contributing to the work of the OIE on COVID as mentioned earlier by Dr Mariana Marrana.
- In terms of notification we must recall that this is not an OIE listed disease and several uncertainties exist on the role played by animals.
- Nonetheless several EU MS have been reporting on COVID in animals --> a summary on the current status quo can be seen in the OIE COVID Q & A in the section where it refers to the animals that can be affected.

#### **SESSION 4 - "IMPACT OF ANIMAL WELFARE ON TRADE":**

Tunisia presented "the OIE twinning on animal welfare" between the "Institute Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell'Abruzzo e del Molise (IZSAM) Teramo", Italy and the "National School of Veterinary Medicine (ENMV) Sidi Thabet" in Tunis. The CVO of Tunisia confirmed that the 2019-2030 strategy of the Tunisian Veterinary Services elaborated in collaboration with FAO constitutes a roadmap towards improvement of the veterinary services based on a clear vision and monitoring and evaluation system (details in [PPT](#)). This strategy refers to international standards, "One Health" concept and respect of animal welfare. Such twinning represent an opportunity to define priority actions, especially identification of animal welfare gaps along the livestock value chains (production, transportation, slaughtering, management and control of animal diseases including stamping out and stray dog population control...).

OIE NA presented "the importance of animal welfare in the REMESA region" especially during negotiation between Mediterranean countries for trading animals. The secretariat considers REMESA the right platform where discussing this thematic either for dialogue or to provide technical assistance. France also highlighted the concerns related to animal exported outside of the European Union and mentioned the animal welfare as priority issue in the Strategic Note.

The OIE representative for Middle East also highlighted the importance of debating animal welfare in REMESA because also countries in Middle East have to increase their standards.

Morocco confirms that despite the Covid-19 lockdown, the VS continue their strategic duties including surveillance and control of animal diseases, quality control of food and control at borders. Some adaptations were introduced including digitalization of the control at borders with EU. In addition, two vaccination campaigns against PPR and FMD were implemented.

OIE Middle-East added some comments on animal welfare, experienced in Middle East since 2017-2018-2019, six sessions of training of trainers on animal welfare for transportation. It was a very successful session and very important. It has a good impact on trade and could be regulated by member countries. It is worth it to be taken into consideration in REMESA activities.

#### **Divers**

The CVO of Italy (Dr Borrello) announced his upcoming retirement and took the opportunity to thank all the colleagues of REMESA network for the fruitful collaboration had over the past years. Dr Rachid Bouguedour and Dr Mohammed Bengoumi thanked Dr Borrello for his strong

commitment showed in REMESA in order to increase the activities of the network and hopes that the REMESA network will continue to benefit from his extensive experience.

**Recommendations:**

- Enhance digitalization of REMESA including the update of the website, e-learning and exchange of information.
- Organize regular virtual meeting for technical issues.
- Allocate more time for face to face discussing strategic issues of REMESA.
- Deepen the reflection and give more time to discuss the strategic note of REMESA that should include an action plan and budget.
- Create links with existing networks.
- Strengthen scientific collaboration between Mediterranean Institutions.

**Annexes**

1. Agenda of the meeting
2. List of participants
3. Strategic note



**Annex 1: Agenda of the 20<sup>th</sup> JPC/REMESA**  
**co-chair : Algeria – Greece**  
**Video-conference**

24 June 2020																
Time	Theme / Speaker															
<b>Opening Session: Presidency Algeria</b>																
10:00-10:15	<p>SESSION – WELCOMING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-presidents: Dr Karim Boughalem (CVO Algeria) and Chrysoula Dile (CVO Greece)</li> <li>- Representatives of FAO and OIE</li> </ul>															
<b>Presidency Algeria</b>																
10:15-10:20	<b>Approval of the agenda</b>															
10:20-11:30	<p><b><u>SESSION - UPDATES OF EVENTS:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Updates on major events occurred in the Mediterranean Region (sanitary, OIE projects/initiatives) – Dr Rachid Bouguedour (OIE Sub regional Representation for North Africa) – 10 minutes</li> <li>- Countries updates (each country has the possibility to share any relevant major updates about sanitary events):</li> </ul> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 40px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Algeria</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Cyprus</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Egypt</td> <td style="text-align: center;">France</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Greece</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Italy</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Jordan</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Lebanon</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Libya</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Malta</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Mauritania</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Morocco</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Portugal</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Spain</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Tunisia</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EuFMD support to REMESA: activities carried out and priorities for the region– EuFMD – 15 minutes</li> <li>- Compulsory cleansing and disinfection of livestock vessels and trucks returning to the Union – Francesco Berlingieri (EC): 5 minutes</li> </ul> <p>Discussion</p>	Algeria	Cyprus	Egypt	France	Greece	Italy	Jordan	Lebanon	Libya	Malta	Mauritania	Morocco	Portugal	Spain	Tunisia
Algeria	Cyprus	Egypt	France	Greece												
Italy	Jordan	Lebanon	Libya	Malta												
Mauritania	Morocco	Portugal	Spain	Tunisia												
<b>Presidency Algeria</b>																
11:30-12:45	<p><b><u>SESSION ON “REMESA GOVERNANCE”:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Survey – FAO/OIE (Secretariat) -10 minutes</li> <li>○ Strategic Note – Secretariat FAO/OIE – 10 minutes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Feedback of the questionnaire sent by RCU Palermo Dr Guido Loria - Responsable of Diagnostic area - 5 minutes</li> <li>• RCU Palermo - activities ongoing and next steps (Dr Silvio Borrello - CVO, Director general) - 5 minutes</li> <li>• Next steps and operational activities on priority disease (s) (OIE HQ) – 5 minutes</li> </ul> <p>Discussion</p>															
<b>Presidency Greece</b>																
12:45-13:30	<p><b><u>SESSION ON “COVID-19”:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OIE tools developed in the framework of Covid-19 emergency – (Dr Mariana Marrana, OIE HQ) - 10 minutes</li> <li>• FAO activities in support to countries to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 – (Dr Amrani Mohamed, FAO/SNE) -10 minutes</li> <li>• EuFMD survey about the impact of COVID-19 on the activities of Veterinary Services – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Impact of Covid-19 on trade – 5 minutes</li> </ul> <p>Discussion</p>															
13:30-13:50	<p><b><u>SESSION ON “IMPACT OF ANIMAL WELFARE ON TRADE”:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of animal welfare in the REMESA region (Dr Alessandro Ripani, OIE Tunis – 5 minutes)</li> <li>• Tunisia: presentation of the OIE twinning on animal welfare (Tunisia - 5 minutes)</li> </ul> <p>Discussion</p>															
13:50-14:00	wrap up and closing remarks															

## Annex 2: List of participants

Country/ Organization	Name and Surname	Function	E-mail
Algeria	Ahmed Chawki El Karim Boughalem	General Director of Veterinary Services (CVO)	<a href="mailto:boughalemk@yahoo.fr">boughalemk@yahoo.fr</a>
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### Note Stratégique sur le REMESA

#### Historique et contexte :

Le REMESA s'est inscrit à sa création dans le contexte global des initiatives du Processus de Barcelone pour un partenariat méditerranéen et du projet de création de l'Union pour la Méditerranée lancé à Paris le 13 juillet 2008.

En 2009, les chefs des services vétérinaires de 10 pays de la région occidentale de la Méditerranée (Algérie, Espagne, France, Italie, Libye, Maroc, Mauritanie, Portugal, Tunisie) réunis à Alger ont donc décidé de créer - lors de la réunion organisée par la FAO à Alger du 8 au 10 février 2009 - un cadre commun de travail et de coopération, pour le développement et la mise en œuvre de projets et programmes régionaux de santé animale : le Réseau Méditerranéen de Santé Animale (REMESA). Cette décision fût entérinée lors de la 77ème Session Générale de l'OIE tenue à Paris, le 27 mai 2009.

Lors de la Sixième réunion du Comité Permanent Conjoint (CPC) du REMESA tenu à Montpellier (France), les 12 et 13 novembre 2012, un « Cadre de Coopération » pour la création et le développement du REMESA a été signé par les Chefs des Services Vétérinaires des pays fondateurs. L'OIE et la FAO qui ont aussi été moteurs dès le début de ce processus ont été également signataires de cet accord. Ce document traduit la volonté commune des pays de donner un cadre juridique, une continuité et une visibilité au REMESA, pour prévenir et lutter contre les maladies animales transfrontalières dans la région méditerranéenne. (Le « Cadre de Coopération » est joint à cette Note Stratégique). La plate-forme du REMESA est structurée à deux niveaux :

1. le Comité Permanent Conjoint (CPC) composé des Chefs des Services Vétérinaires et de représentants de l'OIE et de la FAO pour la prise des décisions politiques et techniques ; et
2. les quatre sous-réseaux thématiques, à savoir, les laboratoires (RELABSA), l'épidémiologie (REPIVET), la communication (RECOMSA) et la socio-économie (RESEPSA) pour permettre la mise en œuvre des décisions du CPC et le travail technique des experts.

Des observateurs permanents (représentants de l'Union du Maghreb arabe et de la Commission européenne) font partie du CPC et sont consultés au cours du processus décisionnel.

En 2014, les chefs des services vétérinaires de Malte, Chypre, la Grèce, la Jordanie et le Liban se sont joints au réseau.

**L'objectif général** du REMESA reste l'amélioration de la santé publique vétérinaire dans le bassin méditerranéen et l'harmonisation et la coordination des activités de surveillance et de contrôle ainsi que la facilitation des échanges d'animaux et de produits animaux entre les pays du REMESA à travers la prévention et la lutte contre les principales maladies animales transfrontalières et les zoonoses par le renforcement des compétences et des capacités nationales et régionales des Services Vétérinaires. Cet objectif doit être atteint à travers plusieurs **actions spécifiques**, à savoir:

- *Faciliter l'accès, les échanges et le partage d'informations d'une façon régulière.*
- *Améliorer la surveillance épidémiologique.*
- *Renforcer les mesures de prévention et de lutte.*
- *Mutualiser les efforts de préparation des plans d'intervention d'urgence.*
- *Développer et harmoniser les stratégies de lutte et les plans d'intervention d'urgence.*
- *Faciliter la collaboration entre les centres de recherche, les laboratoires et les universités.*

- *Agir comme interface centrale pour faciliter la mobilisation des ressources humaines, matérielles et financières, ainsi que la communication avec les institutions.*
- *Permettre un dialogue direct entre les pays membres pour éviter des barrières sanitaires injustifiées et faciliter le commerce dans la région méditerranéenne.*

La notion de réseau régional de santé animale est fondée sur le regroupement de plusieurs pays, et a pour objectif l'harmonisation des méthodes de surveillance et de lutte et le renforcement des dispositifs nationaux, sans pour autant se substituer à leur fonctionnement. Les maladies d'intérêt prioritaire dans les pays de l'Afrique du Nord et du Moyen-Orient, sont : la rage, la peste des petits ruminants (PPR), la brucellose, la fièvre catarrhale ovine (FCO), la clavelée, la tuberculose, la fièvre aphteuse, la leishmaniose, la fièvre de la vallée du Rift et la peste équine. Dans les pays de l'Europe du Sud, la santé animale est menacée par le risque de diffusion de maladies (fièvre aphteuse, l'influenza aviaire (IA), PPR, rage, lumpy skin disease (LSD) ...), compte tenu de la proximité géographique avec l'Afrique du Nord qui eux même sont menacés par les risques de certaines maladies à partir de l'Europe (IA, LSD, FCO...). Par ailleurs, tous ces pays sont confrontés à des problématiques de surveillance et de lutte contre les maladies vectorielles liées au réchauffement climatique.

Les priorités du REMESA évolueront sûrement avec la conjoncture sanitaire internationale mais aussi avec la demande de ses pays membres ; cette adaptation doit se faire sans perdre de vue les enjeux d'une Méditerranée bénéficiant d'une bonne situation sur le plan sanitaire et dynamique dans les échanges entre les différents pays membres, dans une relation de confiance mutuelle. En outre, les projections des experts montrent que la méditerranée constitue une zone sensible en termes de changement climatique dans le futur. Ces changements affecteront inévitablement la société à travers des répercussions sur la production alimentaire et la sécurité sanitaire des aliments, la santé publique vétérinaire et la sécurité humaine (en termes d'impacts d'événements extrêmes et de conflits sociétaux).

Parmi les défis, il ne faut pas omettre les risques biologiques liés notamment aux activités terroristes qui sont des sujets d'actualité d'autant que plusieurs initiatives ont été entamées sur ce thème ces dernières années par différents partenaires en vue d'aider à stabiliser la région.

Le Réseau Méditerranéen de Santé Animale se fonde sur les Services Vétérinaires de chacun des pays adhérant à ses objectifs, et constitue une structure dans laquelle des programmes et projets régionaux pourront trouver leur ancrage. L'échelon régional ne se substitue pas à l'indispensable travail de fond qui doit être conduit dans chaque pays, qui demeurera souverain quant aux décisions en matière de surveillance épidémiologique, de lutte ou de partage d'informations sanitaires en dehors de ses frontières.

Par ailleurs, il faut veiller à la bonne coordination entre les activités du REMESA et les initiatives régionales œuvrant dans le même domaine, à l'exemple des orientations des GF-TADs régionaux respectifs pour les maladies relevant du GF-TAD global ou d'un des deux GF-TADs régionaux.

Ainsi, les échanges d'informations sur la santé animale, la prévention et le contrôle des maladies animales et la surveillance épidémiologique doivent rester une priorité du REMESA.

Cependant, d'autres sujets seront sûrement inscrits à l'ordre du jour du REMESA pour les prochaines années, pour lesquels les Services Vétérinaires doivent jouer un rôle prédominant tels que le développement du commerce d'animaux et de produits d'origine animale qui doit bénéficier d'une attention particulière ainsi que la résistance aux antimicrobiens et la préparation aux situations d'urgence (épizootiques et non épizootiques), etc.

En raison des nouveaux défis qui apparaissent en Méditerranée,

1. le REMESA bénéficiera d'un soutien scientifique renforcé de la part de l'IZSSI et des autres centres
2. les pays membres du REMESA confirment leurs engagements afin de renforcer les activités du réseau et de continuer à émettre des recommandations appropriées.

Les décisions suivantes sont ainsi proposées aux CVOs:

- Les CVOs restent les piliers du réseau et il leur est vivement recommandé de participer personnellement aux réunions du CPC. Leur absence doit être exceptionnelle.
- Les réunions du CPC doivent être limitées aux CVO (ou à leurs représentants dûment mandatés) et aux observateurs permanents afin d'accroître l'efficacité de la réunion et de protéger la confidentialité de certains sujets. Toutefois, des participations ad hoc pourraient être envisagées en fonction de l'actualité des sujets.
- Sécuriser le budget du REMESA pour assurer la pérennité du réseau.
- Augmenter la visibilité du réseau en utilisant des canaux politiques (par exemple les ambassades ; les délégations de l'UE, les organisations internationales).
- Augmenter la visibilité du réseau avec l'amélioration du site web qui devrait être plus interactif, attractif et utile.
- Participation active de tous les pays membres du REMESA; non seulement lors des réunions du CPC, mais également au cours de l'année par le biais d'interactions avec le Secrétariat du REMESA ou d'autres pays.
- Réaffirmer et réviser régulièrement les sujets prioritaires pour le REMESA en tenant compte des plus-values spécifiques du réseau et de ses ressources potentielles.
- Augmenter les synergies dans la région en créant des ponts avec les partenaires concernés de la région méditerranéenne, considérés comme complémentaires pour atteindre les objectifs du REMESA (par exemple OMS, CIHEAM...).
- Certains engagements bénéficieront du soutien scientifique de l'Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Sicilia (IZSS), en coordination avec les autres institutions de l'Italie et d'autres pays de la région.
- La révision des maladies prioritaires à la lumière des tendances épidémiologiques des dernières années et des projections.
- L'éventuelle réorganisation, la gestion et le suivi des réunions techniques des 4 sous-réseaux du REMESA : REPIVET, RELABSA, RECOMSA et RESEPSA.
- L'optimisation des activités de recherche menées dans le bassin méditerranéen afin d'améliorer la surveillance des maladies et la capacité des laboratoires de santé publique vétérinaire.