

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002019/24
to the Commission**

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Valérie Deloge (Pfe), Marie-Luce Brasier-Clain (Pfe), Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe)**
(10 October 2024)

Subject: Outbreak of bluetongue virus in southern France

EU Member States, and France in particular, are being hit by a serious bluetongue virus (BTV) epidemic.

It has reached especially alarming levels in Hauts-de-France and Bourgogne-Franche Comté, but also in Occitania.

In view of the above:

1. Will the vaccines against BTV, and serotype 8 in particular (which is not covered in France), be fully or at least partly paid for by the EU? Is the EU planning to ramp up BTV prevention and improve alerts whenever an outbreak of the virus occurs?
2. Will farmers who have lost some of their livestock be compensated for their losses and lost earnings? Will efforts be made to protect sheep species (like the Tarasconnais) that are threatened by the disease?
3. As the epidemic spread from Spain to France, what steps does the Commission intend to take to improve the exchange of health information among Member States in the future?

Supporter ⁽¹⁾

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Answer given by Ms Kyriakides on behalf of the European Commission
(27 November 2024)

1. Bluetongue (BTV) is regulated by Regulation (EU) 2016/429 ⁽¹⁾. Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1882 ⁽²⁾ categorises it as a category C disease, and hence, subject to optional eradication programmes and for which EU rules do not impose movement restrictions.

As such, EU funding, including vaccination, is not envisaged for 2024 to 2027 eradication programmes in accordance with EU rules ⁽³⁾, neither for emergency measures given that resources are allocated to control other priority diseases.

Proportionate rules for BTV prevention are laid down in Commission Delegated Regulations (EU) 2020/688 ⁽⁴⁾ and (EU) 2020/689 ⁽⁵⁾. The Commission is not planning changes in that respect.

2. The EU can provide financial support under the common market Organisation upon evidence that the market is affected by restrictions on trade, resulting from the application of veterinary measures.

Strategic Plans may provide support to mitigate the economic impact of diseases through investments. It is possible to adapt European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development 2014-2022 programmes to allow Member States to provide emergency support to farmers affected by diseases.

State aid for the prevention and control of diseases may be granted by Member States under the Block Exemption Regulation ⁽⁶⁾ or under the Agricultural Guidelines ⁽⁷⁾. Limited support can be granted under the Agricultural *de minimis* aid Regulation ⁽⁸⁾.

EU legislation in this field applies regardless of the breed.

¹ This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Aleksandar Nikolic (Pfe)

⁽¹⁾ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>

⁽²⁾ Category C disease subject to optional eradication: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2018/1882/oj

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing a programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European statistics (Single Market Programme) and the work programmes (adopted as Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 3467 of 2.6.2022 for 2023-2024) and Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 2098 of 2.8.2024 for 2025-2027).

⁽⁴⁾ http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/688/oj

⁽⁵⁾ http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/689/oj

⁽⁶⁾ Commission Regulation (EU) 2022/2472 of 14 December 2022 declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (OJ L 327, 21.12.2022, p. 1).

⁽⁷⁾ Guidelines for state aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas (OJ C 485, 21.12.2022, p. 1-90).

⁽⁸⁾ Limited support can also be granted in application of the Commission Regulation (EU) No 1408/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to *de minimis* aid in the agriculture sector (OJ L 352, 24.12.2013, p. 9).

3. BTV outbreaks are notifiable and subject to reporting through the EU Animal Disease Information System ⁽⁹⁾ apprising the Commission and competent authorities. The BTV situation is regularly discussed, including at a Standing Committee ⁽¹⁰⁾. These actions ensure the provision of up to date information to the Commission and Member States.

⁽⁹⁾ https://food.ec.europa.eu/animals/animal-diseases/animal-disease-information-system-adis_en

⁽¹⁰⁾ Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF): https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/committees/paff-committees_en