



**European Committee
of the Regions**

NAT/042

24th Commission meeting, 17 June 2019

DRAFT OPINION

Commission for Natural Resources (NAT)

Risks related to the spread of the ASF epidemic in Europe

Rapporteur: Sławomir Sosnowski (PL/EPP),
Member of the Lubelskie Regional Assembly

This document will be discussed at the meeting of the **Commission for Natural Resources** to be held from **11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on 17 June 2019**. To allow time for translation, any amendments must be submitted through the online tool for tabling amendments (available on the Members' Portal: <https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/>) no later than **3 p.m. (Brussels time) on 4 June 2019**. A user guide is available on <https://memportal.cor.europa.eu>.

References

(*Legislative acts*): Regulation (EU) 652/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014

Commission Implementing Decision of 15 February 2019 on the financing and the adoption of the work programme for 2019 and 2020 for the implementation of emergency measures to combat certain animal diseases and plant pests (2019/C 66/10)

Document SANTE / 7113/2015

Draft opinion of the Commission for Natural Resources (NAT) – Risks related to the spread of the ASF epidemic in Europe

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. The EU's rural development policy, which is in force until 2020, aims to help the EU's rural areas meet the wide range of economic, environmental and social challenges of the 21st century. However, the situation in Europe – in Central and Eastern Europe as well as Western Europe – concerning the African swine fever (ASF) epidemic is a threat to the environment, the economy and, most importantly, people living in rural areas and who are involved in pig production.
2. African swine fever is an international challenge. European regions should show solidarity on the threat posed by African swine fever to rural areas. The speed at which the virus has spread to its current level could lead to the collapse of the European pork market and deprive hundreds of thousands of farmers of their source of income.
3. The Committee of the Regions welcomes the work of the European Parliament and the European Commission in this regard, which concerns the current financial perspective, but believes that it is necessary to plan for additional resources in the next multiannual financial framework, including an even greater focus on research that aims to develop an effective vaccine against ASF.
4. As in the case of natural disasters, CoR members pay close attention to cross-border cooperation. In this case it will be much more difficult as it concerns the EU's external borders, but it is crucial and essential. We believe that it is necessary to act together across borders to stabilise the situation in the EU's neighbouring countries (the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus), to strengthen the EU's relations with its citizens through a richer dialogue between the EU institutions and local and regional authorities.
5. The Committee of the Regions calls for a special, dedicated cross-border grant to be allocated in order to earmark resources to activities that aim to combat ASF and that are conducted jointly by at least two countries, of which at least one is outside the EU.
6. It believes that at the national level and at the level of the European Commission, intensive discussions should be held with the above-mentioned countries on undertaking joint, coherent action in the fight against ASF and that the possibility of supporting these actions through cross-border programmes on food safety should be considered.
7. Given the significance of the problems associated with the spread of the virus and the pace thereof, the Committee considers it necessary to have even greater and more precise coordination of activities in this area at EU level.
8. The CoR calls on the Commission to analyse whether the way the "crisis" is currently being managed is appropriate and effective enough to be able to ensure that Europe is rid of the threat of this disease.
9. It calls on and encourages all stakeholders:

- a) local and regional authorities,
 - b) hunters and farmers,
 - c) veterinary services,
 - d) national authorities,
- to play an active and dynamic role in the process of combating ASF in Europe under the leadership of the EC and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).
10. It encourages local and regional authorities to disseminate information on the application of due diligence to prevent the spread of the disease, and to continue to cooperate on promoting biosecurity and to take further joint measures in the event of an outbreak in border areas. This information should be provided to anyone who owns pigs and anyone else who comes into contact with wild boars.
 11. It calls on hunters to step up epidemiological surveillance of wild fauna in the infected area and increase hunting where there is an excessive amount of wild boars.
 12. It believes that the effectiveness of the fight against the disease depends primarily on the size of the wild boar population. Action should therefore be taken to reduce the wild boar population to minimum numbers (0.5 heads/10 km²).
 13. It believes that spending should be increased and efforts should be stepped up to produce an effective ASF vaccine.
 14. It believes that farms affected by ASF should receive specific support, which should be in the form of:
 - a) reimbursement of the equivalent value of herds that were disposed of, without the imposition of additional conditions,
 - b) application of a historical subsidy mechanism for a period of five years after the cessation of production caused by depopulation of the herd,
 - c) financial assistance to re-orient farms towards another area of production,
 - d) assistance in implementing full biosecurity for farms that continue pig production,
 - e) assistance due to lost income for pig producers as a result of a destabilised pork market,
 - f) assistance for farms that want to increase pig production using biosecurity in their farms.
 15. It believes that the grant referred to in Article 5(3)(a) of Regulation 652/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council should be increased in the case of ASF to 100% in view of the economic disruption throughout the EU.
 16. It calls on the European Commission to create a general strategy to combat ASF at the Member State level that would take into account some of the global problems.

Brussels,

I. PROCEDURE

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|---|----------------------------------|
| Title | |
| References | |
| Legal basis | |
| Procedural basis | |
| Date of Council/EP referral/ Date of Commission letter | |
| Date of Bureau/President's decision | |
| Commission responsible | Commission for Natural Resources |
| Rapporteur | Sławomir Sosnowski (PL/EPP) |
| Analysis | |
| Discussed in commission | |
| Date adopted by commission | |
| Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity) | |
| Date adopted in plenary | |
| Previous Committee opinions | |
| Date of subsidiarity monitoring consultation | |
