



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Council

Subject: EU-Western-Balkans summit of veterinary services
(Budapest, 11 September 2024)
– *Information from the Presidency*

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Presidency on the above mentioned subject which will be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council meeting ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 23 September 2024.

**EU-Western Balkans summit of veterinary services
(Budapest, 11 September 2024)**

Today, there is an increasing focus on the safe supply of food. Veterinarians have a key role to play in this, both in protecting animal health and in fighting infectious diseases or inspecting meat from animals for slaughter.

In the recent period, the spread of numerous animal diseases, significant for public and animal health, as well as economy and the livelihood of the agri-food sector, has been observed on the European continent. Among them are diseases that were previously unknown or almost forgotten on the continent. In more severe cases, their effects may endanger the food self-sufficiency of an entire region or human health.

The Council Working Party of Chief Veterinary Officers was created in 1977. It has played ever since an important role in designing European veterinary legislation.

Beyond the European Union, it is also recognised, that an enhanced communication and cooperation with neighbouring countries will promote regional success in animal health control and enhance the One Health approach. In that regard, with support of ADEWB (I) Project¹, Western Balkan Chief Veterinary Officers' Forum was established in 2021.

Within this context, the Hungarian Presidency organised on 11 September a summit on vaccination as a tool, combining the two above fora. Chief Veterinary Officers of the European Union, the European Free Trade Association and the Western Balkan region shared their recent experiences using vaccination against various infectious diseases. The European Commission presented the legal framework and the possibilities to support veterinary services in Western Balkan region in order to implement vaccination campaigns. The representative of the World Animal Health Organization highlighted the need of cross-country cooperation and applauded the joint initiative.

¹ Project "EU Regional action on animal disease eradication in the Western Balkans", EuropeAid140314/DH/SER/Multi - SANTE/2018-G-046

As a conclusion of the exchanges during the summit, the Hungarian Presidency considers that joint and cooperative approaches are needed to effectively fight transboundary animal diseases and that the EU's support to capacity building of veterinary services in the close neighbourhood is highly valuable and appreciated.

In the light of the above, the Hungarian Presidency considers it important to:

- continue the enhanced cooperation among Member States and neighbourhood countries on vaccination programs
- provide administrative solutions for joint procurements and/or vaccine bank management
- continue the support provided to capacity building of veterinary services in the Western Balkan region.
