

**Question for written answer E-006260/2018 to the Commission - Rule 130
Miguel Viegas (GUE/NGL) – (12.12.2018)**

Subject: African swine fever and the wild boar population

African swine fever (ASF) has spread to the European continent with more cases recorded in recent months. Since July 2017, there have been around 4 000 cases in 11 European countries, including Italy, Estonia, Ukraine, Russia and Hungary. The disease continues to spread quickly, at more than 200 km/year.

ASF is an enormous threat with devastating impacts on pork exports. Experts say that in the next few years the virus could even reach Portugal, with potentially catastrophic consequences and effects for pig farmers and a potential loss of millions of euros for the Portuguese economy.

The disease is mainly spread by wild boars, the populations of which continue to grow at an uncontrolled rate in Portugal and in Europe. Any ASF control and prevention strategy cannot disregard this element.

Therefore, in the context of programmes to prevent and combat this disease, what concrete steps and guidelines have the European health authorities taken to control and screen wild boar populations in Europe?

Answer given by Mr Andriukaitis on behalf of the European Commission (12.2.2019)

On the basis of scientific advice from the European Food Safety Authority¹ it appears that African Swine Fever (ASF) has spread in the EU through two distinct spread processes: continuous wild boar-mediated spread through wild boar populations, for which the speed of propagation is notably slower than for some other infectious diseases; and human-mediated translocations leading to the establishment of new ASF clusters distant from areas of previous ASF occurrence.

A clear strategic approach to the management of ASF, which includes specific measures for wild boar, has been agreed at EU level² and is continuously updated. Several initiatives have been promoted to control the spread of the disease like e.g. a specific factsheet addressed to hunters³. To enhance the coordination between animal health and environmental policies the Commission organised a meeting in December 2018 with the Ministers of Agriculture and of the Environment to discuss a long-term strategy for wild boar populations in the EU⁴. In addition, a workshop for hunters was organised by the Commission and the European Federation for Hunting and Conservation on 30 January 2019⁵. The event, which has taken place at one of the EU's biggest hunting fairs in Dortmund, Germany, aimed to promote further coordination with hunters.

From the financial perspective, the EU has been providing support since the start of the ASF epidemic to Member States affected by the disease, or considered to be at risk, in terms of support for wild boar

¹ Epidemiological analyses of African swine fever in the European Union (November 2017 until November 2018) (published on 29 November 2018); Scientific opinion on African swine fever in wild boar (published on 11 July 2018); Scientific Report on Epidemiological analyses of African swine fever in the Baltic States and Poland (published on 7 November 2017); Simulation-based investigation of ASF spread and control in wildlife without consideration of human non-compliance to biosecurity (published on 7 November 2017); Epidemiological analyses on African swine fever in the Baltic countries and Poland (published on 23 March 2017); Scientific opinion on African swine fever (published on 14 July 2015).

² https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ad_control-measures_asf_wrk-doc-sante-2015-7113.pdf

³ https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ad_control-measures_asf_factsheet_hunters_en.pdf

⁴ This Ministerial conference took place on 19 December 2018 in Brussels. The speeches, presentations and the concluding statement from the ministerial conference are available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/asf/conference_en

⁵ <https://www.face.eu/2019/01/high-level-conference-on-preparing-european-hunters-to-eradicate-african-swine-fever-asf-30-jan-2019-dortmund/>

management measures. The eligible costs are laid down in EU legislation¹ and further elaborated in relevant guidelines²³⁴ on EU funded veterinary programmes and emergency measures.

¹ Regulation (EU) No 652/2014 (OJ L 189, 27.6.2014, p. 1–32)

² Guidelines for Member States for EU funding of veterinary programmes

³ Guidelines for the Union co-funded programmes of eradication, control and surveillance of animal diseases and zoonoses for the years 2018-2020 (update for 2019-2020)

⁴ Guidelines for Member States for EU funding of veterinary emergency measures