

VP(14)1848:1 – DA/mvs

Mr Tonio Borg
Commissioner
European Commission
200, rue de la Loi
BE-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 7th March 2014

Re: Outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in Poland and Lithuania

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to you with reference to recent developments concerning the outbreak of African Swine Fever in Poland and Lithuania and the trade restrictions put in place by the Russian Federation.

It seems that the virus in Lithuania originated in Georgia and reached EU territory from neighbouring non-EU countries where the disease was not contained. Currently, only four cases of ASF in wild boars have been detected in the EU in comparison with more than 350 outbreaks reported to the OIE by Russia since 2007. Nevertheless, EU producers are now suffering the consequences of the ineffective control and eradication techniques adopted by neighbouring non-EU countries to combat this disease.

The further spread of the disease into the EU would have a significant impact on both the internal market and external trade of pigmeat products. Therefore, we are in favour of strengthening cooperation and allocating further resources and technical and financial support to neighbouring countries in order to effectively eradicate the disease in these countries.

In addition, it is important to ensure that EU producers, who are implementing control and preventative measures in the regions affected, are adequately compensated, to deal with any economic consequences at farm level. We believe that the pig sector in the European Union is already in a difficult situation due to the high volatility of the feed market and the introduction of new welfare requirements.

We believe that the Commission acted appropriately to prevent the introduction of African Swine Fever into the EU and adopted fitting measures to contain and regionalise this disease following the confirmed cases in Lithuania and Poland. In the current difficult situation it is important to work closely with the Russian authorities to find as quick as possible a solution that satisfies all trade partners.

Furthermore, Copa-Cogeca supports the Commission's efforts to find an EU solution and to adopt a regionalisation approach that would exclude as few EU regions as possible and that remains in line with WTO/SPS rules and the principles of the World Organisation for Animal Health. The Russian Federation has been a full WTO member since 2012. We must ensure that we are able to maintain open dialogue with our trade partners, such as the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, we would also welcome intensifying negotiations with Russia through high-level contacts.

Finally, I would like to thank you and your services for your constructive cooperation. For your information, a copy of this letter has been sent to your colleague Dacian Cioloş, Commissioner of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Yours faithfully,

Pekka Pesonen
Secretary General