



Redefining EU policy for Vector-borne diseases?

DG SANTE/G2

FESASS General Assembly

28 March 2025

Introduction

- Are ‘vector-borne diseases’ (‘VBDs’) a ‘category of diseases’?
- Common characteristics, common issues, for different pathogens, different hosts and different impacts
- Based on impacts / risks = EU listing / categories / rules
- Need for **more / better**?... Need for more **knowledge**

'Background' of VBDs in EU

Faster, Further, Stronger...

Epidemiological trends of VBDs

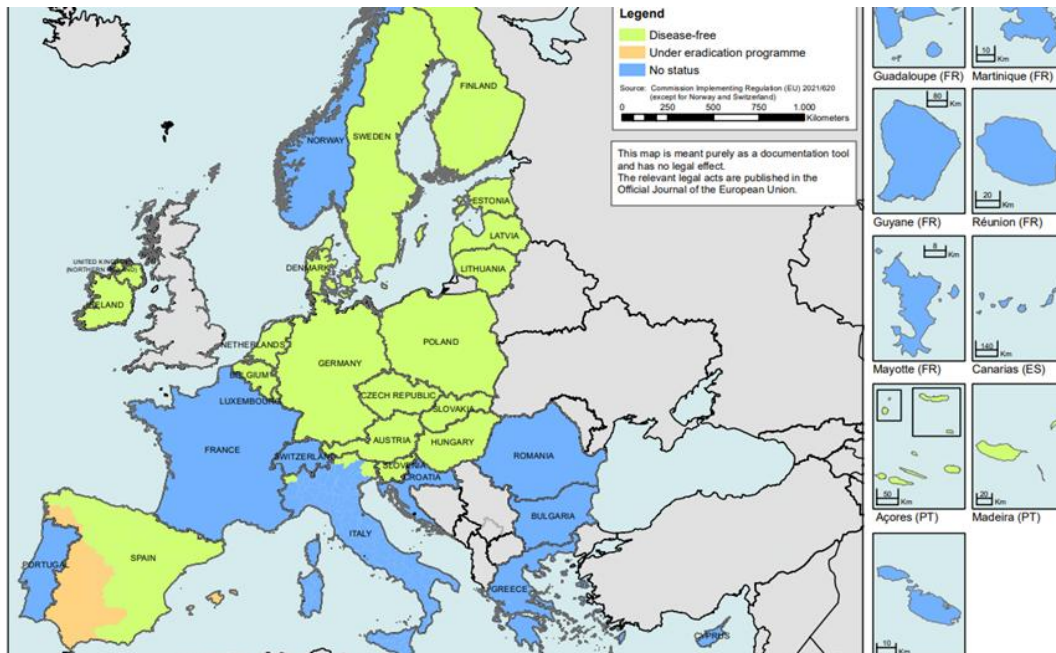
- In the last two decades, the EU has been significantly affected by various diseases of animals transmitted by arthropod vectors, such as mosquitoes (e.g. West Nile fever), flies (e.g. lumpy skin disease), ticks (e.g. Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever) or biting midges/culicoides (e.g. bluetongue, epizootic haemorrhagic disease)
- The EU is also at risk of a wide range of serious VBDs such as Rift Valley fever or African horse sickness

Epidemiological trends of VBDs

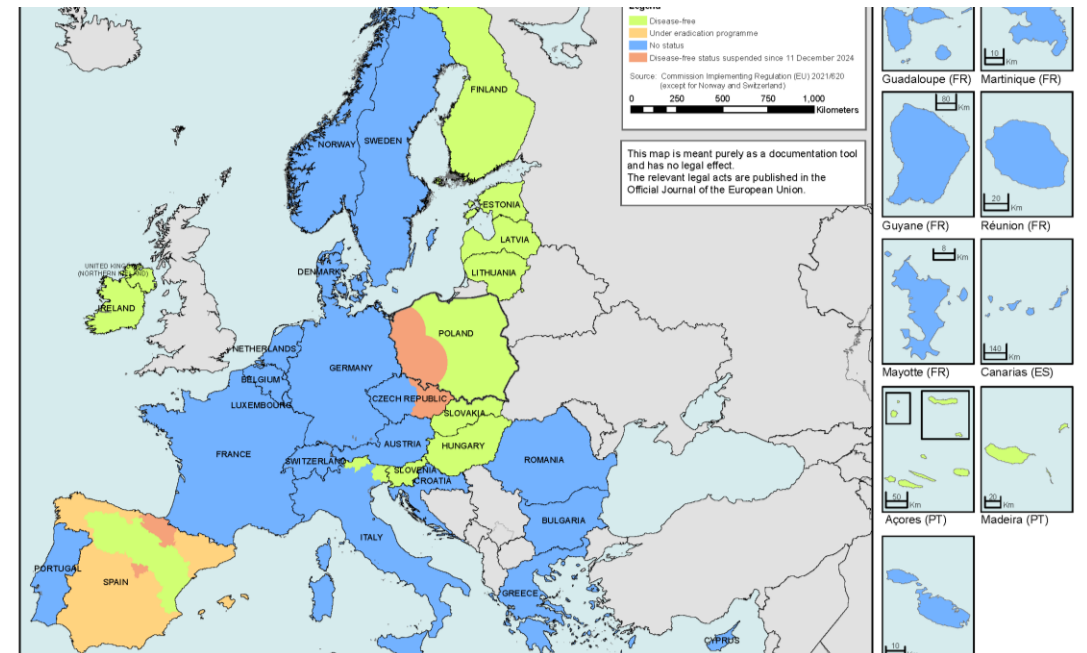
- Recent data and epidemiological events show the increase of such VBDs either in the vicinity of the EU, in EU trading partners, or within the EU, concomitant with the progressive widening of the geographical extent of competent vectors such as culicoides and mosquitoes, some of them being able to transmit zoonotic pathogenic agents (e.g. Aedes and sandflies)

BTV-epidemiological situation: CIR (EU) 2021/620: BTV free areas/areas with an approved eradication programme/no status

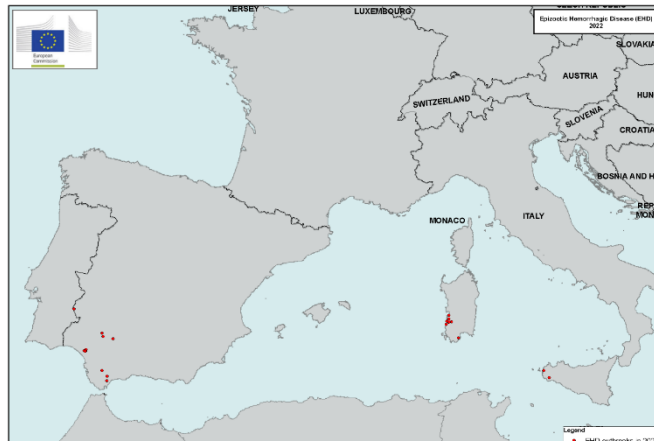
September 2023, before BTV 3



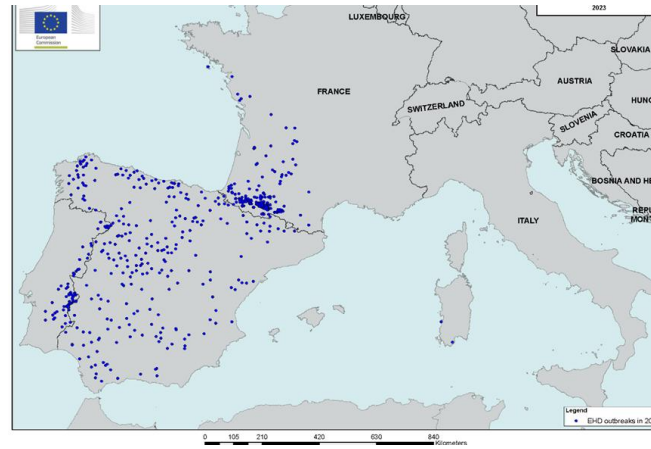
December 2024 BTV 3, BTV 4 and BTV 8 evolution



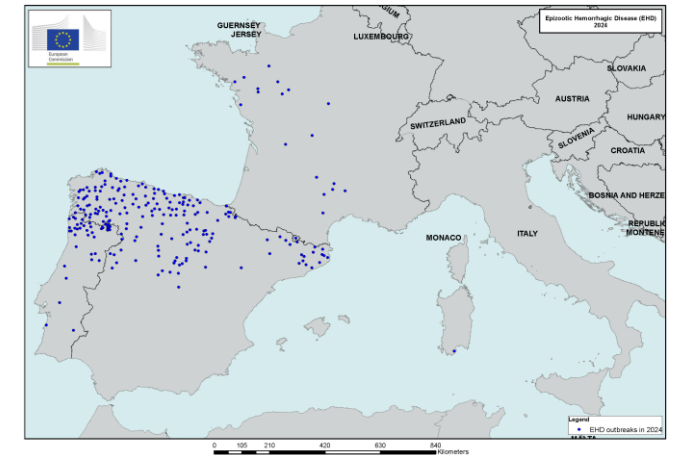
EHD-epidemiological situation (ADIS maps)



2022



2023



2024

EU Policy on VBDs

In a nutshell...

EU policy and state of play for VBDs

- Since 2018, twelve VBDs have been listed under the Animal Health Law and categorized by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2018/1882 under various categories of listed diseases, depending on the level of intervention and the measures taken at EU level, and with reference to their vector species and their host species
- Those disease largely differ one from another, in terms of pathogenic agents, host species, vector species, as well as in terms of impact and zoonotic potential.
- However, it may be relevant to consider them together as regards their specificity of being vector borne and what this entails in terms of risk assessment and risk management, in view of the rapid evolution of the geographic distribution of vectors concerned. All of them may provoke severe clinical signs.

EU listed VBDs

Pathogen - agent	A	B	C	D	E	Vector group	Pathogen present in EU	Vector(s) present in EU	Zoonotic potential	Animal Hosts (ppal)
RVFV	x			x	x	Culicoides	No (never)	Yes	Yes	Ruminants
BTV			x	x	x	Culicoides	Yes (serotypes)	Yes	No	Ruminants
EHDV				x	x	Culicoides	Yes	Yes	No	Ruminants
Surra				x	x	Tabanidae/Culicidae*	Unsure	Yes	Unclear	Large Ungulates
JEV					x	Culicidae	No (never)	Yes	Yes	Swine
WNV					x	Culicidae	Yes	Yes	Yes	Birds, Equids (dead end)
LSDV	x			x	x	Haematophagous arthropods*	No (no more)	Yes	No	Bovine
AHSV	x			x	x	Culicoides	No (no more)	Yes	No	Equids
EIA				x	x	Tabanidae*	Yes	Yes	No	Equids
VEE				x	x	Culicidae	No (never)	Yes (?)	Yes	Equids, birds
EEE / WEE					x	Culicidae	No (~ never)	Yes	Yes	Equids (dead end), birds
ASFV	x			x	x	Ornithodoros erraticus	Yes	Yes	No	Swine

EU policy and state of play for VBDs

- EU policy adapted to the events, the risks and MSs priorities
- MSs have different tools to use
- Vaccines are a most important tool, integrated in EU rules, now also for all category A diseases
- **Efforts are needed to better understand the evolution of the VBDs and the available (or needed) prevention and control tools**
- This will help adapting even more the rules

Assessment: EFSA

Get to the sources...

More/better data – knowledge – science

- In April 2017, at the request of DG SANTE, EFSA published a scientific opinion on 36 VBDs, assessing their risk of introduction into the EU through movement of livestock or pets. This was considered a first screening, and it was already at that time recommended in the assessment that it should be updated
- In January 2020, also at the request of DG SANTE, and following reports of occurrence of the disease in North Africa, EFSA published a scientific opinion on epidemiological update and risk of introduction of Rift Valley fever (RVF) into Europe

Non listed VBDs!...

Aino virus

Akabane virus

Alkhurma Haemorrhagic fever

Babesiosis

Banja

Borreliosis

Bovine Ephemeral Fever

Cache Valley virus

Chuzan Palyam

Chikungunya

Coxiella burnetii (Q-fever)

CCHF

Equine encephalosis

GETAH

Heartwater (Cowdriosis)

Hepatozoonosis

Highland J Virus

Kotonkan

Leishmaniosis

Main Drain Virus

Middelburg virus

Nairobi

Oropouche virus

Pappataci fever (sandfly fever)

Parapox

Peruvian horse sickness

Plague (Yersinia pestis)

Ross river fever

Schmallenberg virus

Shuni virus

Sindbis

St. Louis encephalitis virus

Togoto virus

TBE

Trypanosomosis (tse-tse)

Tularaemia (Francisella tularensis)

Trench fever (Bartonella spp.)

Vesicular Stomatitis virus

Wesselbron virus

Yellow fever

Yunnan Orbivirus

Zika virus

Usutu

More/better data – knowledge – science

- It is relevant to ask support from EFSA and the relevant EU Reference Laboratories, **to analyse the situation and get scientific advice assessing animal health risks linked with VBDs.** The scientific advice should address in particular the **likelihood of introduction of new VBDs in the EU and of spread of VBDs currently affecting the EU**, the role of the climate evolution in this introduction or spread, and the potential evolution of the virulence or transmissibility of those VBDs.
- This piece of scientific advice should **propose options to mitigate the risks of introduction and to address the suitable surveillance, prevention and control of VBDs in the EU, including through vaccination**

Terms of Reference of the Mandate

- provide a mapping / horizon scanning / compilation / description of the VBDs that are currently listed in the EU AHL, as well as some other VBDs not listed but formerly assessed and **deemed to have a potential impact** and therefore **deserving attention**
- provide a mapping / horizon scanning / compilation / description in the EU **and neighbouring countries** of the currently known, as well as potential new, **vectors competent** for listed and non-listed VBDs
- provide a mapping / horizon scanning / compilation / description of the currently available **surveillance, prevention and control measures** for listed and non-listed VBDs in the EU; this includes the collection of data on **the efficacy of these measures** (e.g. vaccination, biocidal treatments or repellents, animal treatments or insect nets or other husbandry practices)

Terms of Reference of the Mandate

- describe the **potential pathways** for listed and non-listed VBDs currently present in the EU to spread, and those not currently present in the EU to be introduced, including via intra EU movements or entry into the EU of animals, products animal origin, plant material or means of transport, equipment, packaging materials, transport water and feed and fodder and other material, carrying viruses and/or vectors;
- monitor **the geographic spread and potential impact** of listed and non-listed VBDs already circulating in the EU, considering among others their transmissibility (per se or linked to vector activity), virulence and zoonotic potential.

Terms of Reference of the Mandate

- Assess the **probability of introduction** of listed and non-listed VBDs identified; describe possible options to prevent such introduction
- Assess the **extent of spread** of listed and non-listed VBDs in the previously free EU Member States, after local transmission has taken place;
- Assess **the impact of the introduction** and potential further spread of listed and non-listed VBDs during one year after the introduction
- Critically assess the **currently available risk mitigation measures** for VBDs in the EU, in particular different **biosecurity and surveillance systems, regionalisation, and vaccination tools**;
- Assess **the need for the development of these and further measures** within the EU, notably to enable **safe intra-EU movements** of animals from affected or non-affected areas

Conclusion

- We have tools (regulatory or not)
- We need more (available or not)
- For that we need to know (search and find)
- Once we know we may adapt (agility of rules)
- Until then: do with what we have

Questions?

You have 10 minutes...