

EU NEWS

March 2025



Union Européenne des Vétérinaires Praticiens – AISBL
Union of European Veterinary Practitioners – AISBL



Dear UEVP members,

March marks important progress for the veterinary profession in Europe, with key developments at EU level in both animal health and animal welfare.

The FVE published a study on the corporatisation of companion animal veterinary care, highlighting the growing influence of corporate structures and the potential implications for daily practice. Meanwhile, antimicrobial resistance remains a core concern: EFSA's latest report outlines both progress and persistent challenges across the EU.

In the field of animal health, the EU has intensified its response to disease outbreaks across the continent. Several emergency implementing acts were adopted in March, including measures to contain sheep and goat pox in Greece, peste des petits ruminants in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania, and African swine fever in Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Germany. Additional measures target avian influenza and foot-and-mouth disease, with recent cases reported in Germany and Hungary. In this context, agriculture ministers have called for stronger European coordination and support. The FVE also hosted a webinar on preparedness and response to zoonotic avian influenza spill-over, while the EFSA published new data on its circulation.

On the animal welfare front, the debate on animal transport continues within the European Parliament. At the same time, the Commissioner in charge of animal welfare confirmed the Commission's intention to progressively phase out caged farming, sector by sector. Broader reflections are also underway regarding the use of animals in science and the strengthening of the EU's animal welfare framework

Volker MOSER, UEVP President

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PRIORITY ISSUES

Update on EMA activities

Meeting highlights from the Committee for Veterinary Medicinal Products (CVMP)

At its March [meeting](#), the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use (CVMP), the committee adopted positive opinions for marketing authorisations for 4 veterinary products:

- **Hepizovac**, a new vaccine for the active immunisation of cattle;
- **Nobilis Multiriva IBm+ND+EDS**, for the active immunisation of chickens to reduce respiratory signs, egg drop and shell defects caused by infectious bronchitis virus, and to reduce mortality and clinical signs caused by Newcastle disease virus.
- **Prevestrus vet**;
- **Prazivetin**.

In addition, the Committee also adopted positive opinions for variations requiring assessment for **Rheumocam** and for **Osumnia**.

Other CVMP positive opinions concern variations requiring assessment applications concerning quality-related changes for **Bravecto**, **Forceris**, **Gleptosil**, **Porcilis ColiClos**, **Porcilis Porcoli Diluvac Forte**, **Porcilis AR-T DF** and **Sevohale**.

The Committee adopted positive opinions for variations requiring assessment to align the product information with version 9.x of the QRD template for **Quadrisol**, **Sevohale** and **Veraflox**.

Moreover, the Committee classified 3 products:

- one product for **cats** (not intended for a limited market and not eligible for authorization under the [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/6](#)),
- one for **European seabass** (intended for a limited market and not eligible for authorisation under the [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/6](#)) and;
- one product for **Common carp** (intended for a limited market and eligible for authorisation under the [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/6](#)).

Latest news on veterinary practices

Publication of a study by the FVE on the corporatisation of companion animal veterinary care in Europe

On 19 March 2025, the FVE published [a study](#) on the corporatisation of companion animal veterinary care in Europe.

The study highlights that the companion animal veterinary care market in Europe is experiencing significant growth, in a context where half of European households own pets. This growth is accompanied by a marked trend towards the corporatisation of veterinary practices, particularly in urban areas.

The FVE notes that corporatisation offers certain advantages, such as access to more advanced veterinary treatments and better-structured career paths for young veterinarians. However, the study also raises several concerns: rising costs of care, a decline in veterinarians' professional autonomy, and reduced attractiveness of practices located in rural areas. Finally, the study reveals that corporate veterinary practices are expanding rapidly and may exert competitive pressure on independent clinics.

Latest news on antimicrobial resistance

Publication of the EFSA report on progress and challenges regarding antimicrobial resistance over the period 2022-2023

In brief: The EFSA's 2022–2023 report on antimicrobial resistance highlights high resistance in *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter coli*, alongside progress in reducing AMR in food-producing animals. Concerns remain over the rise of carbapenemase-producing *E. coli* in livestock and meat. The EFSA stresses continued efforts in antimicrobial stewardship and targeted prevention strategies across sectors.

On 5 March, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has released its latest [report on antimicrobial resistance \(AMR\) in zoonotic and indicator bacteria from humans, animals, and food, covering data from 2022–2023](#). The findings highlight persistent resistance issues while also noting progress in reducing AMR in food-producing animals in several countries.

More specifically, the report states that:

- *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, particularly *Campylobacter coli*, continue to show high resistance to commonly used antimicrobials.
- In both humans and food-producing animals, *Campylobacter* strains remain highly resistant to ciprofloxacin.
- While combined resistance to critically important antimicrobials remains low overall, certain *Salmonella* serovars and *C. coli* strains exhibit concerning levels of resistance. Additionally, imported fresh poultry meat shows high resistance to third-generation cephalosporins.
- Another notable finding is the increase in carbapenemase-producing (CP) *E. coli* cases detected in pigs, cattle, poultry, and meat across seven EU countries, highlighting the need for further investigation.

Despite these challenges, the report acknowledges significant progress in reducing AMR in food-producing animals over the past decade in several Member States.

In light of these findings, the EFSA stresses the importance of a prudent approach to antimicrobial use across all sectors, including agriculture. The monitoring of *CP* bacteria is particularly critical, given that carbapenems are last-resort antibiotics for human treatment and are not authorized for food-producing animals. The report points out that, despite the progress made, it is essential to continue efforts to curb the spread of AMR in Europe and to reinforce the need for targeted prevention.

Latest news on animal health at EU level

Publication of implementing acts on emergency measures relating to sheep and goat pox in Greece

On 5 and 25 March 2025, the European Commission published two implementing acts concerning emergency measures to address successive outbreaks of sheep pox and goat pox in **Greece**.

Initial outbreaks were notified in the regional units of **Kavala** and **Phocis**, prompting the establishment of protection and surveillance zones. In the following weeks, six additional outbreaks were reported in the regional units of **Thessaloniki**, **Aetolia-Acarnania**, and **Phocis**, as well as on the **island of Samothrace** in the regional unit of **Evros**.

In response, the Commission decided to extend the ban on the movement of sheep and goats from Greece to destinations outside the country until **31 May 2025**. This measure aims to limit the spread of the disease within the EU and to third countries, while preventing disproportionate trade restrictions. The application period of the latest emergency measures has also been extended until **15 December 2025**.

Greek authorities continue to implement all necessary disease control actions, including establishment of protection and surveillance zones around the affected areas.

Publication of implementing acts laying down special control measures for African Swine Fever in Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Germany

Between 28 February and 24 March 2025, the European Commission adopted a series of implementing acts ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) introducing and revising special control measures to address new outbreaks of African swine fever (ASF) in several Member States, notably Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Germany.

In response to newly notified cases, the Commission introduced reinforced control zones in the following areas:

- **Italy:** Tuscany and Piedmont regions;
- **Latvia:** Rigas County;
- **Poland:** Pomorskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Podlaskie, Podkarpackie, Zachodniopomorskie, Świętokrzyskie, and Mazowieckie regions;
- **Slovakia:** Nitriansky, Trenčiansky and Žilinský Counties;
- **Germany:** the state of Brandenburg.

All affected Member States have taken appropriate measures, including the establishment of protection and surveillance zones.

In parallel, and based on the absence of new ASF cases and in line with the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Terrestrial Animal Health Code, the Commission revised the classification of certain areas:

- Regions without notified cases of African swine fever in the last 3 months:
 - Hessen and Rhineland-Palatinate in **Germany**;
 - Lubelskie and Zachodniopomorskie in **Poland**.
- Regions without notified cases of African swine fever in the last 12 months
 - The Emilia Romagna region in **Italy**;
 - The Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Podkarpackie, Zachodniopomorskie and Wielkopolskie Regions in **Poland**.

Publication of implementing acts on emergency measures relating to outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in certain Member States

On 28 February and 19 March 2025, the European Commission published implementing acts introducing emergency measures to address outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in various Member States. These measures include the establishment of protection and surveillance zones around the affected areas to contain the disease and prevent its spread.

The following regions have notified outbreaks of HPAI:

- The provinces of *Oost-Vlaanderen* and *East Flanders* in **Belgium**;
- The district of *Plovdiv* in **Bulgaria**;
- The *Pilsen* region in **Czechia**;
- The state of *Lower Saxony, Saxony* and *Bavaria* in **Germany**;
- The *Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Bács-Kiskun* and *Csongrád-Csanád* counties in **Hungary**;
- The *Małopolskie, Mazowieckie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Wielkopolskie, Lubuskie* and *Świętokrzyskie* voivodeships in **Poland**;
- The *Mid Ulster* district in **Northern Ireland**;
- The *Skåne* county in **Sweden**;
- The *Tulcea* county in Romania.

All affected Member States have taken the requisite disease control measures, including the establishment of protection and surveillance zones. In particular, Belgium's outbreak, located near the border with **the Netherlands**, has led to close coordination between the authorities of both countries, with surveillance extending into Dutch territory (*in the provinces of Friesland and Zeeland*).

FVE Webinar on the preparedness, prevention and control related to zoonotic avian influenza spill-over

In brief: On 27 February, the FVE hosted a webinar on the preparedness and control of zoonotic avian influenza. The discussion covered the role of veterinarians in disease management, the threat of avian influenza viruses, transmission risks, and strategies for prevention. Key points included the potential for mammal vaccination and measures to prevent HPAI from spreading to humans.

On 27 February, the FVE hosted a [webinar](#) on **preparedness, prevention, and control related to zoonotic avian influenza spill-over**.

The session was led by FVE Vice-President Jane CLARK, Professor Ian Brown OBE, and Dr. Alessandro BROGLIA from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) were present and led this webinar.

The following topics were discussed:

- The role of veterinarians in implementing evidence-based best practices to the prevent, detect, manage, and control of diseases in livestock, wildlife, and pets.
- The increasing threat of avian influenza viruses, their potential to adapt to humans, and the risk of future pandemics.
- The transmission of avian influenza from birds to humans and other mammals, the factors driving virus evolution, and strategies to enhance disease mitigation through improved prevention and intervention.
- The virus's mutations and its potential spread to humans, alongside recommendations for both animal and public health sectors.

The potential role of vaccination in mammals and available measures to curb the risk of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) spreading to humans and triggering a new pandemic.

EFSA publication on avian influenza circulation between December 2024 and March 2025

On 21 March 2025, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published [a report](#) on the circulation of avian influenza between December 2024 and March 2025.

EFSA noted a "*significant increase*" in virus detections in wild birds in recent months, following the "*exceptionally low*" numbers recorded in 2023-2024. This situation, which is expected to continue "*for several years*", is accompanied by an increase in outbreaks in poultry breeding.

As a result, EFSA recommends several measures:

- Do not establish poultry farms near wetland areas and reduce farm density in these regions;
- Maintain high biosecurity standards;
- Implement preventive vaccination and enforce confinement orders based on risks or confinement systems that keep poultry indoors, while maintaining high welfare standards.

Additionally, in the outbreaks where mortality rates have been reported, these ranged from 0.01% to 24.7% in poultry and from 0.6% to 75.5% in ducks and geese. EFSA clarified that rates exceeding 5% may indicate late detection. Finally, the genotype associated with 90% of poultry outbreaks since October 2024 is EA2023-DI, according to EFSA.

Publication of an implementing act on emergency measures relating to foot and mouth disease in Hungary

On 11 March, the European Commission published an [implementing act](#) outlining emergency measures in response to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease confirmed on 6 March in the county of **Győr-Moson-Sopron in Hungary**, near the border with Slovakia.

The following measures have been established:

- Protection and surveillance zones are in place in the county of **Győr-Moson-Sopron in Hungary** until 10 April 2025.
- Surveillance zones include the **Dunajská** and **Komárno** districts in **Slovakia**, until 10 April 2025.

The European Commission has committed to reassessing the measures applicable to regulated zones to prevent unnecessary trade disruptions within the Union and to avoid unjustified trade restrictions imposed by third countries.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease: European agriculture ministers call for stronger European union support

On 24 March 2025, European agriculture ministers responded to the recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease.

Slovakia and **Hungary**, which are currently affected by the outbreak, have requested "*technical and financial*" support from the European Commission to "*minimize the damage and preserve trade with third countries*", some of which have suspended their imports.

This request has been supported by several states, including **Germany**, which itself was affected by foot-and-mouth disease in January. Germany has stated that it has sent vaccine doses to Hungary and is ready to provide them to Slovakia.

Hungary, for its part, has stated that it has implemented measures "*beyond those prescribed*" by the EU, including depopulating affected farms and establishing regulated zones around the outbreaks. Hungary also raised concerns about restrictions imposed by several third countries on its exports of live animals and their products, "*particularly for pigs and ruminants*", warning that these restrictions would lead to "*unpredictable economic losses*".

Slovenia emphasized the importance of vaccine banks "*for the future*" and the need for sufficient European co-financing for veterinary measures, "*whether emergency or planned*".

Portugal advocated for the development of a "*European vaccination strategy*", while **Denmark** highlighted the need to "examine the funding of veterinary measures" and "*align it with the CAP budget*".

These requests echo those [made](#) by **France** and **Spain** in October 2024.

Publication of implementing acts concerning emergency measures relating to infection with *peste des petits ruminants* virus in Bulgaria and Romania

Between 11 March and 25 March 2025, the European Commission published a series of implementing acts introducing emergency measures to address outbreaks of *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) virus in **Bulgaria and Romania** ([here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)).

These measures aim to contain the disease and prevent its further spread, with the establishment of protection and surveillance zones around the affected areas:

In **Bulgaria**, the following regions have been affected:

- *Velinograd municipality and Pazardzhik region.*

Bulgaria has committed to taking necessary measures to combat the disease, including the establishment of protection and surveillance zones.

In **Romania**, the affected regions include:

- Protection and surveillance zones: *Cefa, Gepiu, Husasău de Tinca, Mădăras, Nojorid, and Sânnicolau Român.*
- Surveillance-only zones: *Batăr, Biharia, Borș, Cetariu, Ciumeghiu, Girișu de Criș, Hidișelu de Sus, Holod, Lăzăreni, Oradea, Oșorhei, Paleu, Salonta, Sânmartin, Sântandrei, Tinca, Toboliu, and Tulca.*

The European Commission expressed concerns over the risk of further spread, particularly as the outbreak occurred several months after the last reported case in Romania and after restrictive measures had been lifted. On 25 March 2025, the European Commission extended the emergency measures in Romania, which include:

- Prohibition on the movement of goats and sheep from protection, surveillance, and regulated zones to destinations outside the designated areas until **10 April 2025**.

Ban on the movement of goats and sheep from Romania to other EU Member States until **9 June 2025**.

Publication of implementing acts concerning the approval of national measures to limit the impact of aquatic animal diseases

On 28 February, the European Commission adopted a [implementing act](#) regrading certain national measures aimed at limiting the impact of diseases affecting aquatic animals and clarifying the list of species which are susceptible to these diseases.

From now on, national authorities will no longer implement national specific measures to prevent the introduction, or to control the spread, of diseases in the following geographical areas:

- In **France**, the zone Durançole and the compartments FR 72261001 and FR 72294001 are no longer considered free from **KHV**.

- **In Denmark**, compartments 103647 and 117789 are no longer considered free from both **bacterial kidney disease (BKD)** and **infectious pancreatic necrosis (IPN)** while compartment 104106 is no longer free from **IPN**. Additionally, Denmark has notified the Commission that compartment 122491 no longer has been an eradication programme for **BKD**.
- **Also in Denmark**, an eradication programme for BKD has been successfully completed for compartment 106314.

These areas have therefore been removed from the lists of territories benefiting from specific protective measures.

Finally, Denmark has launched an eradication programme for **BKD** in compartments 83138 and 103606. These areas will therefore be added to the list of compartments under surveillance, and measures will be taken to limit the spread of the disease.

Discussions within the civil dialogue group on animal production: trade agreements and management of animal diseases

The Civil Dialogue Group (CDG) on Animal Production brings together the European Commission and several European stakeholders such as [AnimalHealth Europe](#), [Eurogroup for Animals](#) and [Copa-Cogeca](#). Its aim is to encourage regular dialogue, share information and collect feedback to support the Commission's policy work.

A meeting of the group was held on 12 March. Discussions focused in particular on the following topics:

- Update on trade agreement between the European Union and Mercosur, as well as the trade agreement with Mexico;
- Update on sanitary and economic consequences of *peste des petits ruminants*, as well as sheep pox and goat pox;
- Support provided under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to promote coexistence between livestock farmers and large carnivores.

The meeting minutes will be made publicly available at a later date.

Finally, Denmark has launched an eradication programme for **BKD** in compartments 83138 and 103606. These areas will therefore be added to the list of compartments under surveillance, and measures will be taken to limit the spread of the disease.

OTHER ISSUES

Latest news on animal welfare at EU level

Publication of a handbook on the human-animal bond co-written by FECAVA and FVE

On 25 March, a handbook titled "*The Human-Animal Bond Handbook: best practices to advance global initiatives and policies that benefit human and animal health*" was presented at an event held in the European Parliament, calling for the human-animal bond to be recognized as a public policy priority across Europe.

Co-written by [Zoetis](#) in collaboration with the [Human Animal Bond Research Institute \(HABRI\)](#), [FECAVA](#) and [FVE](#) this handbook provides “*concrete examples to help policymakers build more inclusive societies for companion animals and their owners*”.

Based on a [2024 report](#) highlighting the benefits of companion animals for physical and mental health—from reducing childhood anxiety to promoting healthy aging—the handbook recommends several key measures:

- **Removing barriers** to pet ownership by reforming restrictive housing policies and adapting workplace regulations to create more pet-friendly environments.

Improving access to veterinary care to ensure all animals receive necessary medical attention. The handbook particularly emphasizes solutions such as supporting veterinarians in rural areas and implementing pet insurance programs.

Publication of a study on animal welfare in transport: challenges and gaps in the application of EU regulations

On 27 March 2025, the [study](#) “*Animal Welfare During Transport: Update on the Implementation of Council Regulation*” was published. Commissioned by the European Parliament, it assesses the enforcement of [regulations on the protection of animals during transport](#), focusing on fitness for transport and data recording.

The analysis highlights persistent compliance challenges, particularly regarding the transport conditions of vulnerable animals such as unweaned calves and end-of-career animals.

While some positive practices have been observed, enforcement remains inconsistent, with significant gaps identified in inspection procedures, documentation practices, and the assessment of animal fitness for transport.

The findings underscore the need for clearer regulatory definitions, improved coordination between authorities, and more harmonized inspection and data recording procedures.

European Commission responds to incidents at EU external borders

On 10 March, the European Commission [responded](#) to a [question](#) submitted by several MEPs from different political groups (The Left, Greens/EFA, S&D, Renew, P/E), regarding the **mistreatment of animals during live transport to third countries at the EU’s external borders**.

In its reply, the Commission explained that under current EU animal health rules, live animals cannot re-enter the EU if the destination country is not authorised to export animals to the EU due to its sanitary status. This is why certain consignments ended up being stuck between borders, with serious consequences for the animals' welfare.

Following two major incidents in autumn 2024, the Commission reminded Member States of their responsibility to ensure that transport conditions and health requirements are respected until the animals reach their final destination.

Although current legislation – and the upcoming reform under discussion – does not prohibit the export of live animals to third countries, national authorities must check that journeys are properly planned, including for emergency situations, and must reject any transport if animal welfare cannot be guaranteed throughout the journey.

Lastly, the Commission noted that it is working closely with Member States and Turkish authorities to establish a procedure aimed at preventing such incidents from happening again in the future.

Key updates on the text on animal transport in the European Parliament

In brief: Published on 3 March, the European Parliament's draft report on animal transport provides for stricter rules on journey duration, transport conditions, and veterinary inspections. The text has given rise to debate as to its economic impact on the sector.

On 3 March, the European Parliament published its [draft report on the regulation of animal transport](#). The text addresses several key aspects, including journey duration, transport conditions (temperature and available space), exports to third countries, sanctions, and the transport of aquatic species.

One of the main points of debate within the European Parliament is the balance between stricter animal welfare requirements and the economic impact on farmers and transporters. While some consider the Commission's proposal insufficiently ambitious, others are concerned about the additional costs it could impose on the sector.

Additionally, the draft report suggests adjustments to the implementation of the new rules, such as the use of GPS tracking tools for trucks, mandatory driver training, specific measures for injured animals, and an evaluation of the regulation every five years after its entry into force.

On 19 March 2025, MEPs from the Committees on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) and Transport and Tourism (TRAN) examined the text and held an [exchange](#) of views on it. During the debate, all political groups expressed their intention to table a significant number of amendments to the draft text.

The main points discussed included:

- **Transport duration:** Several MEPs emphasised the importance of reducing journey times to limit stress on animals.
- **Space available for animals:** Discussions focused on the need to increase the allocated space to allow animals to move and feed properly.
- **Temperature thresholds:** The introduction of stricter temperature limits was raised as a means to better safeguard animal welfare. However, this proposal met with reservations, particularly from representatives of countries frequently experiencing high temperatures, who warned against "*excessive restrictions on transport periods*".
- **Presence of a veterinarian during loading and unloading:** [This proposal divided MEPs, with some considering it unnecessary.](#)
- **Transport of animal carcasses:** This alternative, aimed at reducing animal suffering, also triggered disagreements among political groups.

- **Better enforcement of existing rules:** There was broad consensus on the need to improve the implementation of EU legislation at national level.
- **Training for drivers:** This measure was unanimously welcomed as a key lever to improve transport conditions.

Next steps:

- MEPs are now expected to propose changes to the draft text in the form of amendments. These will then be discussed and voted on in committee.
- Once adopted in committee, the report will have to be voted on in plenary session to become the official position of the European Parliament.

In parallel, on 5 March, the European Parliament's "[Sustainable Livestock Farming](#)" intergroup organized a debate on the subject. Several stakeholders expressed concerns about the economic impacts of the text. A representative from the [Pork Institute \(Ifip\)](#) notably warned about **a possible increase in transport costs due to the requirement for a veterinary inspection at each loading**.

Exchanges of views at the European Parliament with the EU Commissioner in charge of animal welfare

On 13 March, the European Commissioner for Health and Animal Welfare, Olivér VÁRHELYI, took part in an [exchange of views](#) at the European Parliament on the issue of animal welfare. The Commissioner was questioned by the Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals and MEPs from all political groups.

On this occasion, several MEPs voiced concerns over the European Commission's failure to deliver on its promised legislative proposals, particularly regarding improved standards for farm animals and slaughter practices, and the introduction of animal welfare labelling on food products.

In addition, the following points were addressed during the discussions:

- **End the Cage Age:** In response to the "End the Cage Age" European Citizens' Initiative, Commissioner reiterated the Commission's commitment to phasing out caged farming. He explained that changes will be introduced progressively, sector by sector, rather than through a blanket ban.
- **Animals in science:** He underlined the role of upcoming biotechnology legislation to promote alternatives to animal testing in scientific research.
- **Stricter implementation of existing measures:** The Commissioner stress the importance of better enforcement of existing EU legislation on animal welfare at national level to improve compliance and animal protection across Europe.
- **Illegal pet trade:** He pledged to working with all stakeholders to dismantle what he described as a "*clear criminal network*".
- **Concerns over imported animal products :** In response to concerns about imports, he assured MEPs that the Commission is engaging with countries such as Uruguay and Argentina to ensure compliance EU-equivalent animal welfare standards.

- **Dialogue on animal welfare:** The Commission is preparing a dialogue to draft legislative proposals on animal welfare. A public call for contributions and further targeted consultations and surveys will be organized.

The EBAF (European Board on Agriculture and Food)- including Eurogroup for Animals and Copa-Cogeca - as well as the EU Platform on Animal will be notably consulted as part of this process.

With the support of



info@euralia.eu