



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Directorate G - Crisis management in food, animals and plants  
**Director**

Brussels  
SANTE/G3/ZI/ng(2020)3291537

Dear Mr Walkowski,

Thank you for your letter of 11 May 2020 to the European Commission in relation to African swine fever (ASF) regionalisation measures in the west of Poland.

Please let me clarify that the two main pieces of EU legislation specific to ASF regionalisation are Council Directive 2002/60/EC<sup>1</sup>, which focuses on eradicating the disease and foresees the setting up of shorter term measures (e.g. surveillance and protection zones), and Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU<sup>2</sup>, which provides for specific control measures with more permanent regionalisation measures, in the areas that are affected by ASF (e.g. Parts I, II, III, IV).

The regionalisation set by the Directive and the Implementing Decision apply at the same time and they serve different purposes. The implementing Decision provides for measures which have restrictions applicable for a longer period of time (until the measures are lifted by the Commission) by means of a legal act amending or repealing the Decision while the minimum timeframe and the conditions for the measures set by the Directive, as you have correctly noted, are specified in the Directive itself and have a shorter time span.

The Commission, with the support of the Member States authorities, adopts ASF regionalisation measures based on EU legislation and with a cautious and science-based approach. These measures are necessary to prevent and control the spread of the disease, to eradicate it and to provide solid guaranties to other Member States and trading partners.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Directive 2002/60/EC of 27 June 2002 laying down specific provisions for the control of African swine fever and amending Directive 92/119/EEC as regards Teschen disease and African swine fever (OJ L 192, 20.7.2002, p. 27).

<sup>2</sup> Commission Implementing Decision of 9 October 2014 concerning animal health control measures relating to African swine fever in certain Member States and repealing Implementing Decision 2014/178/EU (OJ L 295, 11.10.2014, p. 63).

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While understanding the difficult situation for the pig farmers that are affected by the disease, these new high-risk restricted areas (Part I, II, III and IV) of a sufficient size are crucial in order to combat the risks associated with the spread of ASF in a proactive manner. In this way, the trade of pigs and pork from the areas that are still free from the disease can continue and the economic consequences are limited. This is the case with Poland where areas of the country are still not affected by ASF and can benefit from marketing and trading globally animals and products due to EU regionalisation policy.

The Annex of Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU is regularly reviewed by listing certain areas of the Member States concerned in Parts I to IV thereof, differentiated by the level of risk based on the epidemiological situation as regards that disease and in particular in close consultation with the competent authorities of the concerned Member State. The outcome of these exchanges is then reflected in a legal text that is presented to all Member States for the discussion in the meetings of the Standing Committee<sup>3</sup> on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed. The principles and criteria of applying to ASF regionalisation measures are publicly available on the Commission's website<sup>4</sup>.

As concerns your specific request in relation to a recent ASF outbreak in the county of Poznań, relevant areas of Poland were listed in Part I and Part III of the Annex of Commission Implementing Decision 2014/709/EU due to the proximity of ASF occurrences both in domestic and feral pigs in the surrounding areas, taking into account the overall negative epidemiological development of ASF in Poland and justifications provided by the Polish competent veterinary authority.

In particular, the latest developments of ASF in the western part of Poland (where the disease was detected in two commercial pig farms) confirms that there is still a significant risk for ASF introduction for pig farms operating in the areas where the virus is present. I believe that there is still a need to increase the efforts to ensure a high level of biosecurity and other ASF management measures in pig farms throughout the whole of Poland. This is particularly relevant taking into account an increased risk due to the expected summer peak season of the disease.

At the same time, the ASF situation in wild boar in Poland remains worrying due to a slow natural spread of that disease through the population of wild boar and due to human mediated 'jumps' of the disease in long distances. In such circumstances, after a careful risk assessment, it is necessary to consider sufficiently wider areas for establishing (or lifting) the restrictions as it could be appropriate to have a relevant and meaningful adequate area serving for the prevention, control and eradication of the disease.

On your specific concern in relation to a possible long duration of the specific Part III area, please note that the areas listed in Part III of the Annex to Decision 2014/709/EU should be maintained under restrictions until the epidemiological situation meets the criteria to revert to freedom from infection in domestic pigs. The principles of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), along with epidemiological considerations on the disease, provide some guidance on the timing and criteria to be met for recovering the

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<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/food/committees/paff\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/committees/paff_en)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ad\\_control-measures\\_asf\\_wrk-doc-sante-2015-7112.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/ad_control-measures_asf_wrk-doc-sante-2015-7112.pdf)

free status of an area formerly restricted due to ASF occurrence. As a consequence the Part III area could in principle be reverted to Part II or Part I provided that there will be no ASF outbreak in domestic pigs during the past 12 months from the last outbreak. Additional principles and criteria could be taken into account as foreseen in the EU guidance document ('Principles and criteria for geographically defining ASF regionalisation').

Based on these principles and criteria, in your particular situation in the county of Poznań (a single outbreak in a previously free area), the Commission might consider an application by the Polish competent veterinary authority to reduce a 12 months period to 3 months (if ASF epidemiological situation will not evolve further, in particular during the upcoming peak season of the disease in the summer, and relevant measures as foreseen in the EU legislation are implemented). An overall epidemiological situation of ASF of the country and justifications provided by relevant veterinary authority would have to be carefully considered.

In relation to other specific requirements (e.g. relating to the slaughterhouses and movement of pigs), I invite you to liaise with the national competent authorities in order to find any possible and feasible option referred in the EU legislation to reduce the negative impact for your businesses.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Van Goethem

C.c.: G. Rossides, A. Ojala, I. E. Prainsack-Ward (Cabinet Commissioner Kyriakides), L. Carrouée, D. Von Buxhoeveden, T. Van Cangh, P. Colombo, A. Di Giulio, A. Ramirez Vela, A.E. Fuessel, A. Gavinelli, F. Reviriego Gordejo (DG SANTE).