



# Mission of the Community Veterinary Emergency Team to ROMANIA (RO) – BULGARIA (BG) SLOVENIA (SI) – CROATIA (HR) SERBIA (RS) – ALBANIA (AL)

## Assessment of Bluetongue situation

RO-BG: 6-10 October 2014 [CVET: P. Calistri and L. Romero]

SI-HR-RS: 16-21 November 2014 [CVET: P. Calistri and A. Pina Fonseca]

AL: 3-4 December 2014 [CVET: P. Calistri and A. Pina Fonseca]

# Terms of Reference

- To provide assistance to the scientific, technical, managerial and practical on-the-spot aspects required for the development and refinement of the control strategy for bluetongue (BT) under local conditions taking into account the relevant EU legislation and sound scientific basis. A particular attention should be given to use of vaccination as a control measure.

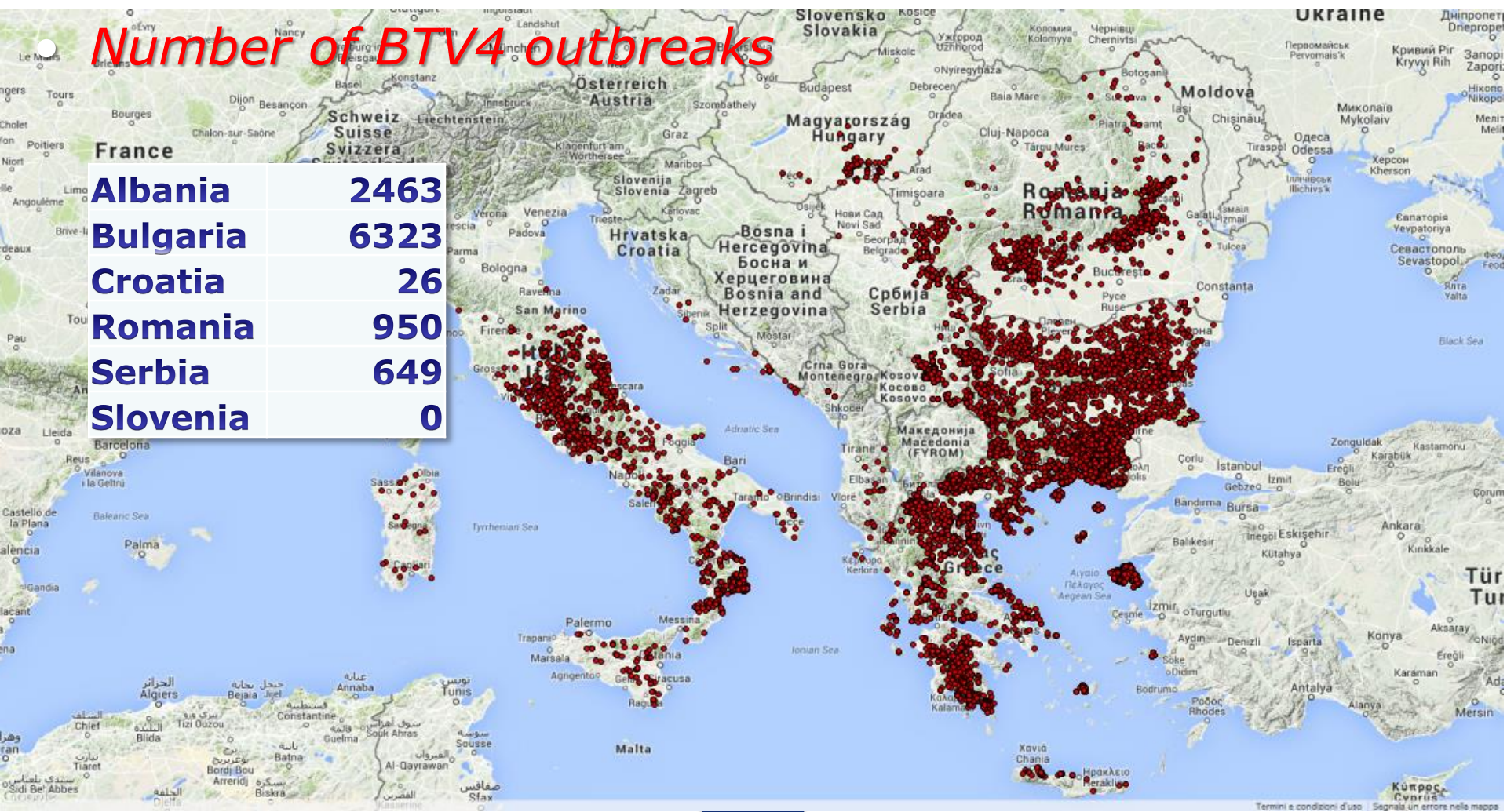


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Commission

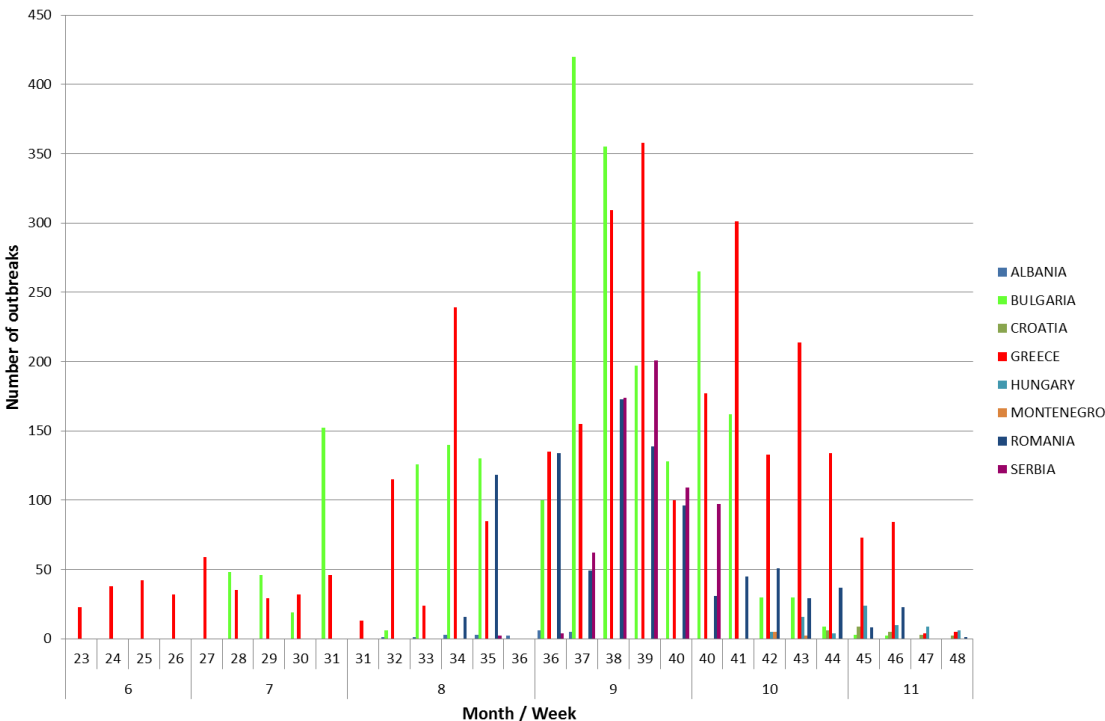
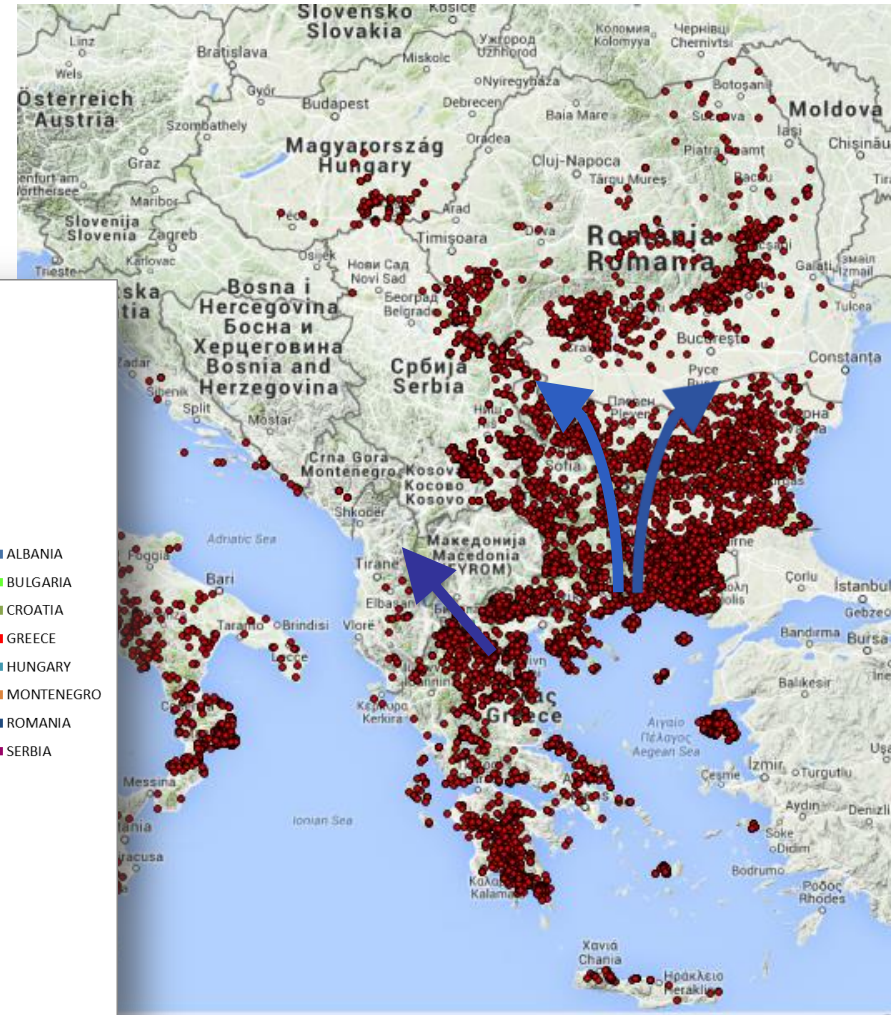
# Bluetongue situation in the area

*Number of BTV4 outbreaks*

<b>Albania</b>	<b>2463</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>6323</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Romania</b>	<b>950</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	<b>649</b>
<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>0</b>



# Temporal evolution of infection



# Animal populations (thousands animals)

Country	Cattle	Small ruminants
Albania	400	2,500
Bulgaria	630	1,880
Croatia	458	664
Romania	2,400	14,500
Serbia	933	1,500
Slovenia	470	136
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,291</b>	<b>21,180</b>



# Consequences of BTV spread

## *Mortality rates in species*

### *SHEEP*

*RO 1% - HR 0.2% - AL 2.9% - BG 4.5% - RS 4.6%*

### *GOATS*

*RO 0.1% - HR 0.0% - AL 0.8% - BG 1.5% - RS 1.1%*

### *CATTLE*

*RO 0.3% - HR 0.0% - AL 3.0% - BG 1.3% - RS 0.9%*

# Consequences of BTV spread

## *Movement ban*

- *No possibility to export animals (especially for RO)*
- *Movements within the country (SI, RS)*
- *Difficulties to manage the return of animals from summer grazing*

# Vectors

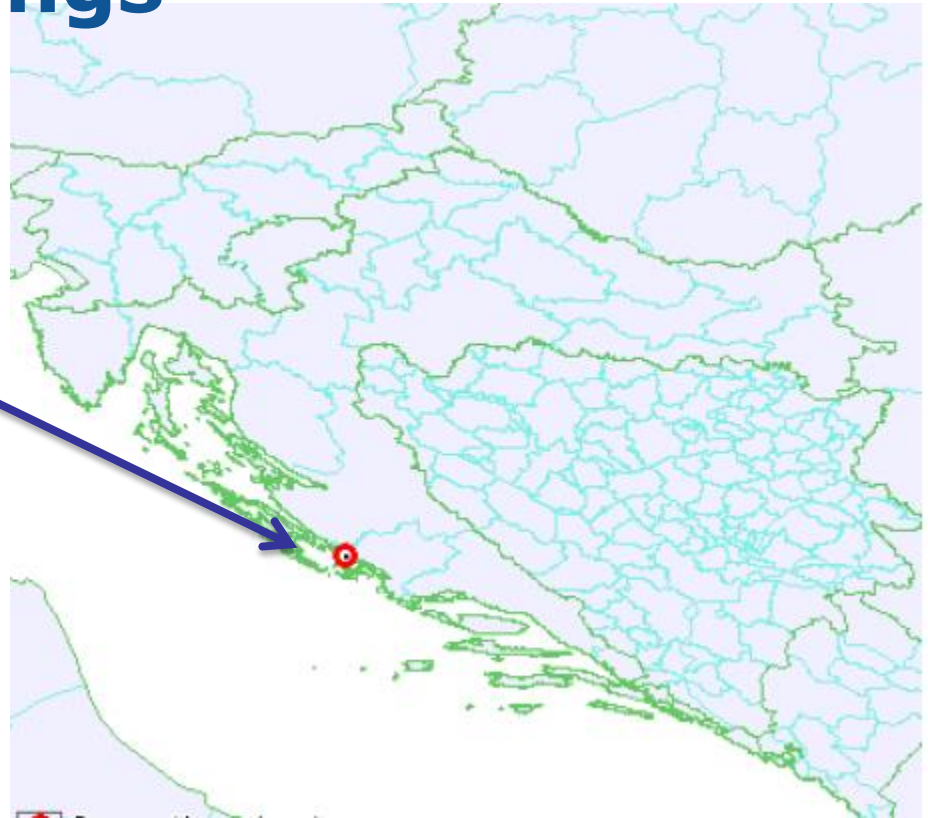
*In many countries the entomological surveillance was discontinued in the last years, but the preliminary results available seem to indicate the vector role of *Obsoletus* complex species, with a high efficiency (high infectious rate).*



## Croatia – new findings

*Very recently BTV1 infection was detected in one animal in Sibenik area*

*Further investigations are needed to verify the extension of infected area*



# Conclusions

- *The infection demonstrated a high capacity to quickly spread across the area*
- *Considering the characteristics of BTV infection and the expected low levels of animal population immunity, it is very likely that in the lack of any vaccination strategy a major BTV4 epidemic will occur in 2015*
- *Given the seasonality of vector species possibly involved (*Obsoletus complex*) it is likely to have a re-start of BTV4 transmission early in the season (May-June) with a northward spread*

## Conclusions

- *The incursion of BTV1 has been detected in Croatia, but the real extension of BTV1 infection must be still assessed.*
- *It is of paramount importance to immunize all domestic ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats) against BTV4 before the beginning of 2015 epidemic season to have the chance of reducing the virus circulation and to contrast the spread of disease.*
- *Laboratory capacities and skills are in general adequate in the countries but further improvements are needed in some countries (especially for entomology).*

# Recommendations

- *The possible extension of BTV1 infection must be urgently assessed along the coast of Croatia, Montenegro and Albania, by serological surveys (also using serum samples already available in the labs)*
- *A multiannual vaccination strategy is needed to achieve the BTV eradication and re-gain the free status.*
- *Also Slovenia should perform vaccination given the high risk posed by close outbreaks and as a mean to restore animal movement.*
- *Technical and financial support from Europe is of paramount importance for the success of this vaccination strategy.*

# Recommendations

- *Vaccination plan should be coupled by serological and entomological surveillance in place.*
- *Serological surveillance should have the objectives of:*
  - **Monitoring the BTV4 circulation and the efficacy of vaccination programme**
  - **Detecting incursion of any other serotype (esp. BTV1)**
- *Entomological surveillance is needed to:*
  - **Identify the main vector species**
  - **Assess the seasonality of vectors**
  - **Complement the other surveillance activities in detecting of BTV circulation**

# Recommendations

- *Technical and scientific supports are needed for the National Veterinary Institutes, to increase their diagnostic capabilities and to enforce skills and knowledge for Culicoides surveillance.*
- *IZSAM OIE BT Reference Laboratory has already given its availability to support diagnostic laboratories of the area.*

# Recommendations

- *A supranational approach involving all Balkan countries is strongly recommended. In this regard the establishment of a BT network for the Balkan countries (similar the former "BTNet"), could facilitate the harmonization of surveillance actions all over the area.*
- *The new BTNet for Balkans should take advantage of the previous networking experience and be revised according to the new epidemiological situation, to reduce unnecessary administrative burden.*

# Acknowledgements

*We want to thank all colleagues from Albania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania, Serbia for their wonderful hospitality and the openness they demonstrated to work with us during missions.*

# Thank you very much