



20 January 2009

## MIRROR GROUPS

*Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting held on 2 December 2008 in Brussels, Belgium*

### Attendance

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#### Danish Mirror Group

[Poul Bækbo](#) (Danish pig producers)  
[Jan Dahl](#) (Danish Meat)  
[Jens Kjaer](#) (Boehringer Ingelheim)  
[Erling Kristensen](#) (The Danish Dairy Board)  
[Anne Birgitte Lundholt](#) (VIF)  
[Jan Mousing](#) (CVO)  
[Kristian Moeller](#) (Danish Veterinary Institute, Technical University of Denmark)  
[John Elmerdahl Olsen](#) (Copenhagen University)  
[Henrik Stampe Lund](#) (Danish Veterinary Institute, Technical University of Denmark)

#### French Mirror Group

[Bernard Charley](#) (INRA)  
[Jean-Christophe Audonnet](#) (MÉRIAL)

#### German & Austrian Mirror Groups

[Hermann Schobesberger](#)  
(Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety)  
[Dieter Schillinger](#) (Merial)  
[Martin Schneidereit](#) (BfT)

#### Spanish Mirror Group

[Santiago De Andrés](#) (Veterindustria)

#### UK Mirror Group

[Phil Sketchley](#)/NOAH

#### CNA representatives & invited guests

[Brendan Barnes](#) (APHA – Ireland)  
[Andreas Buehlmann](#) (SGCI – Switzerland)  
[Jose Carapeto](#) (Apifarma)  
[Barbara Freischem](#) (IFAH)  
[Witold Klawe](#) (Polprowet - Poland)  
[Luis Tavares](#) (College of Medicine Veterinarian Faculty of Lisbon)

#### Apologies

#### Dutch Mirror Group

Ministry Landbouw/[H.Maurice@minlnv.nl](mailto:H.Maurice@minlnv.nl)

#### Italian Mirror Group

[Alessandra Scagliarini](#)/Università di Bologna

#### IFAH-Europe

[Morgane Delavergne](#)  
[Declan O'Brien](#)  
[Özgür Öner](#)  
[Florentina Pardo](#) (reporting)

### Discussions and Conclusions

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#### 1. Welcome and introduction

Declan O'Brien opened the meeting by welcoming the participants to the second meeting of the Mirror Groups. He briefly reviewed the programme of events and the agenda for the meeting.

#### 2. Update on the ETPGAH and DISCONTTOOLS

Declan O'Brien updated the group on the purpose of the Mirror Groups in relation to the [ETPGAH](#). He described the structure of the ETPGAH and explained how the Mirror Groups and the ETPGAH could interact to deliver the action plan.

Declan O'Brien gave the floor to Morgane Delavergne, Project Manager for [DISCONTTOOLS](#) who recalled the primary objectives of the project, which are to create a disease database, carry out gap analysis and create a prioritisation model. In addition, the project will explore mechanisms to deploy new

technologies in the animal health research area in a timely manner. To reach these goals the DISCONTTOOLS has created five working packages to address: WG1-the effective management of the project, WG2-prioritisation of diseases, WG3- gap analysis, WG4-the identification and evaluation of new technologies, WG5- the communication on the project. Morgane Delavergne reported on the outcome of the first meetings of WGs 2, 3, 4 held in October 2008 and which will meet again in March 2009. Work packages 1-5 are supervised by the project management Board. She concluded by reviewing the main features of the project and the links between the DISCONTTOOLS, the ETPGAH and the Mirror Groups.

It was questioned whether the activities of the WGs were in line with the ETPGAH action plan, particularly as far as the model for prioritisation was concerned. Declan O'Brien confirmed that a scoring model was currently under revision and will focus on risk assessment as opposed to risk management

Dieter Schillinger reported on the different options expressed in WG2 on the methodology to be used for the prioritisation of diseases and the need to find a common solution building on previous prioritisation models.

### **3. Presentation of the National Mirror Groups (MG)**

#### **German Network Animal Health & Austrian initiative**

Dieter Schillinger presented the developments of the German Network Animal Health and Austrian initiative. He particularly mentioned the ERA-Net meeting held in January 2008 which identified areas of priorities and developed a list of diseases. He described the achievements of the German MG which had its fourth meeting in November 2008. At that meeting the group reviewed the ERA-Net tentative list of disease priorities and received a report on DISCONTTOOLS. He mentioned that the disease priorities had been made according to the experiences of the stakeholders and was focussing on emerging diseases/zoonoses. Three research areas had been identified: viral diseases, bacterial diseases and parasitological diseases. As far as the German MG membership is concerned, he indicated that producers/agricultural associations would be included once the MG has a vision and clear priorities.

With regard to Austria, Hermann Schobesberger mentioned that the initiative was launched with the ERA-Net meeting held in May 2007. The group is currently mapping research in Austria with a focus on livestock diseases. This should hopefully develop into the creation of a Mirror Group in Austria possibly in collaboration with Switzerland.

#### **Danish Mirror Group**

On behalf of all the Danish stakeholders who were present at the meeting, Kristian Moeller reviewed the organisation and process of the Danish MG and presented the ideas developed. The group which includes all stakeholders is proposing three recommendations:

- the creation of a "European academic centre for vaccine research" which would be the basis for the development (and production) of new and better vaccines in the future. This would be in line with the EU Community Animal Health Strategy (CAHS) to strengthen the scientific foundation of the CAHS.
- the establishment of a risk based and targeted animal health surveillance infrastructure at European level with the creation of a cost effective and data based animal health surveillance to access more objective and comparable information on the occurrence and dissemination of animal infectious diseases. This would also be in line with the CAHS.
- the scrutiny at European level of animal welfare threatening diseases in production animal related to "endemic infectious diseases" that would result in a common European animal health and welfare concept.

#### **French Mirror Group**

Bernard Charley and Jean-Christophe Audonnet jointly presented the developments of the French Mirror Group starting with its creation in October 2007 prompted by a request from the Ministry of Agriculture. A brief description of the members, structure and objectives of the MG was given. The main achievements of

the French MG include the creation of a specific website [www.rfsa.net](http://www.rfsa.net) which gives details on the Steering Committee composition and reports on the launch conference of October 2007. The MG has also identified 3 priorities (“orphan drugs”, BTV, FP7) which are dealt with in specific WGs. In 2009, the French MG will meet in January to review ongoing research projects on BTV. It will finalise a communication plan and action plan. It will define the first list of calls for proposals, address ongoing and new topics and develop a coordinated plan for preparing and responding to FP7 calls for proposals.

### **Italian Mirror Group**

On behalf of Alessandra Scagliarini who had to cancel her participation due to airline difficulties, Declan O'Brien presented the achievements of the Italian Mirror Group. The [ITPGAH](#) vision is finalised and available online. The benefits of the initiative have been communicated widely in national and international symposiums but some work still needs to be done to convince the government of the importance of the ETGPAH and Mirror Groups. The ITPGAH has agreed on a strategy and is developing an action plan which has identified the need to target national funding to implement the EU priorities and the need to increase national research. The action plan focuses on prioritisation and gap analysis keeping in mind the typicality and safety of food products, endemic diseases and minor species in Italy. The plan also addresses basic research and the importance of a suitable environment to enable R&D. The regulatory environment and the global perspective (Trans-boundary Animal Disease and emerging threats) have been identified as important elements. The presentation concluded by an invitation to the MGs to contribute speakers and topics for the IUPAC congress that will be held in 2010 in Rimini and will include a session on animal health. The preliminary programme will be made available shortly to the MGs members.

### **Spanish Mirror Group**

Santiago De Andrès presented the background to the creation of the Spanish Mirror Group, Vet+i. Its purpose is to improve R&D in the field of animal health in Spain and to enable the efficient transfer of research developed in Spain to get the most effective tools for controlling animal diseases. Santiago De Andrès explained the objectives of the MG and reviewed the actions that lead to its creation. He went on to present the MG's organisation chart, structure and membership. The MG will officially launch its website in December 2008 and hold the constitutive meeting of the Council, to be followed in the beginning of 2009 with the constitutive meeting of the Working Groups and the start-up of operations. Santiago De Andrès reviewed the milestones of the MG for 2009 which include the finalisation of a vision document and the organisation of a conference. In a second step, the MG will finalise its action plan and ask for an extension of its funding.

### **UK Mirror Group**

Phil Sketchley presented a progress report of the UK Mirror Group and briefly reviewed its structure and functioning (stakeholders, chair, secretariat, meetings, etc.). He explained the work achieved since the first meeting of the UK MG with the prioritisation of gaps in research and development of a priority list for exotic, endemic and zoonotic diseases. He explained the criteria established for the selection of priorities for these three types of diseases. The MG is active in communicating the initiative at national level and Phil Sketchley mentioned that the NOAH conference in February 2009 would focus on societal acceptance and the role of vaccination in animal health.

## **4. Discussion and questions**

Declan O'Brien noted the significant achievements at the ETPGAH, ERA-Net and Mirror Groups (MGs) levels and agreed on the importance of a good coordination between all players. He invited the participants to share their views.

Dieter Schillinger highlighted the variety of approaches taken by the MGs to develop their action plan and he recommended that a mechanism should be put in place to share information, avoid duplication and ensure coordination.

Jan Mousing expressed satisfaction at the good collaboration in the MGs. He recognised the need for coordination in the prioritisation and mentioned that the Commission had created a WG with CVOs to work on the issue. He agreed that zoonotic and exotics diseases should be emphasised but he advised that endemic diseases should not be forgotten. He encouraged the MGs and the ETPGAH to also look at the generic aspects of research. With regard to funding, he mentioned that 95% was coming from national sources, and coordination and collaboration at country level on a common agenda were important. He encouraged the MGs to look at the activities of the CAHS and interact with the programme. Finally he stressed the importance to consider global aspects (trade, protocols, etc.) and look at the activities going on at international level.

The group agreed that technology transfer and the identification of knowledge and expertise were important elements in the process. It discussed ways of becoming more efficient and it was suggested that this should start by having a transparent communication between the ETPGAH and the MGs and putting political pressure for an EMIDA+. It was suggested that the chairs of the MGs should meet to further discuss these issues and come up with ideas on how to collaborate. The group agreed that success would mean that MGs share information and work on common projects. The idea of working on a multistrain BTV vaccine was mentioned as a potential topic.

## **5. Closure**

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed by the secretariat as soon as possible.