During the past 17 years the European Commission has carried out more than 60 audits on animal disease contingency planning in EU Member States (MS) and countries preparing to become EU MS. Several audits evaluated the actual implementation of the contingency plan during real outbreaks. The outcomes of these audits have been discussed, and experiences shared, in workshops organised by the Commission and an overview report of the most recent series is under preparation. It is evident from the published audit reports (http://ec.europa.eu/food/audits-analysis/audit_reports/index.cfm) that contingency planning has developed over time and that MS are better prepared to deal with animal disease emergencies now than when the series started. In 2017, the focus of audits will be on the implementation of legally required measures and the operability of contingency plans during recent outbreaks in the EU.

One priority area of Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety is general emergency preparedness. Within this framework a new project (2017-2019) in Directorate for Health and Food Audits and Analysis will study interdisciplinary emergency preparedness for veterinary matters in relation to disasters causing destruction of infrastructure and/or large-scale evacuation of people and animals (e.g. floods, forest fires, earthquakes, chemical accidents). Such emergency preparedness needs to establish and practice effective interoperability between several competent authorities and non-governmental organisations in order to prevent spread of zoonotic diseases and minimize negative effects on food safety, animal welfare, animal health, and feed supply. The project will be carried out in cooperation with other Commission services and will include questionnaires to all or selected MS, existing reports from simulation exercises (animal health, veterinary public health, public health), and visits to selected MS with experiences in this field. The plan is to present the results as a report and a workshop.