

# StopASF campaign: involvement of hunters in pilot countries

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## Abstract

The Stop ASF campaign aiming at raising awareness on African Swine Fever (ASF), has broadened its scope to include hunters as key target for communication actions. Five pilot areas, namely North Macedonia, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia and North-western Italy have been selected for Enetwild Consortium to involve hunters in communication actions. Communication material has been distributed to hunting managers and hunters in the 5 pilot areas in association with the start of the 2023/2024 hunting season. Selected communication material included adhesive stickers (15 cm in diameter) informing on the importance of reporting carcasses of dead wild boars. An online survey aimed at assessing hunters' knowledge on ASF, developed by EFSA was distributed and supported through the Enetwild Consortium to target countries.

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## 1 Identification of contacts in target countries

The EFSA communication campaign STOPASF, whose primary goal is raise awareness on African Swine Fever (ASF), had focused primarily on pig farmers and since 2023 it has broaden its scope to include hunters as key target for communication actions. The communication campaign is based on the key concepts of prevention, detection and reporting. The involvement of hunters for this communication strategy to be effective is fundamental a they are primary stakeholders whose actions directly influence wild boar and wild boar associated risks for ASF persistence and spread. Hunters, which are coordinated at local and national level by hunting associations, have unique skills which can be essential to animal Health Authorities to detect, monitor and control ASF and have the primary role of implementing population control plans which are essential in rapidly increasing population as wild boar.

EFSA requested Enetwild to actively engage hunters (OC/EFSA/BIOHAW/2022/01 Subcontract 01, Deliverable 7.3) in 2 pilot countries, namely North Macedonia and Romania. Following interest from members of the Enetwild consortium, the pilot was extended to involve three further areas: Croatia, Slovenia and Northern Italy (Piedmont Region).

### 1.1 North Macedonia

The primary contact of Enetwild for dissemination activities in North Macedonia is the Hunting Federation of North Macedonia (HFM) represented by Mrs. Lidija Fajdiga (contact: lidija.fajdiga@gmail.com). HFM is not directly a partner of Enetwild, but is a long standing member of the European Observatory of wildlife. Hunting in North Macedonia is locally managed through 266 hunting districts, of which 256 are in concession and are managed by 70 legal entities. HFM acted as facilitator to reach hunting managers (70) and which are estimated to reach 26000 hunters.

### 1.2 Romania

The primary contact of for dissemination in Romania is Prof. Andrei Mihalca, who's also a partner of the Consortium. The communication material is expected to reach 60000 hunters organized through three main hunting associations: Romsilva, General Hunters Associations from Romania (AGVPS) Federation of private hunting associations.

### 1.3 Croatia

Prof. Nikica Sprem, Enetwild partner and Faculty member of the University of Zagreb (UniZg) acted as reference contact for STOPASF campaign in Croatia. The Croatian Hunting Federation, acted as main disseminator of communication material toward an expected number of 55,000 hunters.

### 1.4 Slovenia

Prof. Bostjan Pokorny, Enetwild partner and member of the Faculty of Environmental Protection (FVO) acted as reference contact for STOPASF campaign in Slovenia. The Hunters

Association of Slovenia, acted as main disseminator of communication material toward an expected number of 22000 hunters.

## 1.5 Northern Italy

Prof. Ezio Ferroglio, Enetwild coordinator acted as reference contact for STOPASF campaign in Piedmont Region by providing communication material to the 37 hunting management units of Piedmont Region (Northwestern Italy and NUT2 involved in ASF outbreak since January 2022).

## 2 Informative material distribution

STopASF Communication material was provided directly by EFSA to pilot countries in the case on Romania and North Macedonia. In the case of Slovenia, Croatia and North-western Italy the material was printed by the Enetwild Consortium following a template provided by EFSA (Fig 1)



Fig. 1 Graphical example of disseminated material in pilot areas

For all countries, the communication material was forwarded from the national contact point to individual hunting management units. Hunting managers have/or are distributing the material in conjunction with the animal allocation activities which are annually carried out at the beginning of each hunting season.

### 3 Follow up on distribution activities

Each hunting association/management unit confirmed the correct reception of the material and they are currently distributing the stickers during hunting management activities.

In table 1 we reported the allocation of communication material to selected stakeholders:

Country	Association	National point of contact
Romania	Romsilva	USAMVCN
	General Hunters Associations from Romania (AGVPS)	
	Federation of private hunting associations	
North Macedonia	Hunting Federation of North Macedonia	Direct contact
Slovenia	Hunters Association of Slovenia	FVO
Croatia	Croatian Hunting Federation	UniZg
Northern Italy	Compensorio Alpino To4	UNITO
	Compensorio Alpino CN1	
	Compensorio Alpino To1	
	Compensorio Alpino To2	
	Compensorio Alpino To3	
	Compensorio Alpino To5	
	Compensorio Alpino CN2	
	Compensorio Alpino CN3	
	Compensorio Alpino CN4	
	Compensorio Alpino CN5	
	Compensorio Alpino CN6	
	Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Torino 1 e 2	
	Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Torino3	
	Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Torino4	
	Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Torino5	
Compensorio Alpino VC1		
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Alessandria 3		
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Alessandria 4		

Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Alessandria 1
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Alessandria 2
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Novara 1 e 2
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Vercelli 1 e 2
Comprensorio Alpino VCO1
Comprensorio Alpino VCO2
Comprensorio Alpino VCO3
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Cuneo 1
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Cuneo 2
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Cuneo 3
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Cuneo 4
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Cuneo 5
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Asti 1
Ambito Territoriale di Caccia Asti 2

## 4 Online survey dissemination

EFSA requested Enetwild's support in disseminating to hunters (through hunting associations) an online survey aimed at assessing their perspective on ASF in their respective countries. The questionnaire was communicated to National contacts on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and it will remain open until October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

The target countries and the respective national contacts are reported in Table 2

**Table 2. National contact for target countries**

Country	National contact	Institute
Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska	Dragan Gacic/ Bostjan Pokorny	University of Belgrade/ Faculty of Environmental Protection
Serbia		
Slovenia	Bostjan Pokorny	Faculty of Environmental Protection
Bulgaria	Ferroglio Ezio	University of Torino
Albania		
Grecia		
Slovakia		
Kosovo		
Montenegro		
Czech Republic	David Modry	Czech Technical University in Prague

Croatia	Nikica Sprem	University of Zagreb
Hungary	Sándor Csányi	Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences
North Macedonia	Lidija Fajdiga	Hunting Federation of North Macedonia
Poland	Tomasz Podgorsky	Polish Mammal Research Institute
Latvia		
Lithuania		
Romania	Andrei Mihalca	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca

The survey was disseminated through direct contacts with national hunting associations and/or social media accounts of relevant stakeholders.

**Table 3. Targeted National and local associations**

Country	Local association contacted
Albania	Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA)
Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska	Hunters Association of Republika Srpska Association of Hunters Organizations in BiH Hunters Association of Herceg Bosna
Serbia	Hunters Association of Serbia sent link to 60 local hunters associations Hunters Association of Central Serbia Hunters Association of Southeastern Serbia Hunters Association of Vojvodina
Slovenia	Hunters Association of Slovenia
Bulgaria	Union Of Hunters and Anglers in Bulgaria (UHAB)
Grecia	Hellenic Hunters Association
Slovakia	Slovak Hunting Union
Kosovo	Hunting specialized newsgroups
Montenegro	Hunting association of Montenegro
Czech Republic	Czech hunting Association (55 000 members)
Croatia	Croatian Hunting Association network forwarded the survey to 22 county associations
Hungary	Hungarian Hunters Chamber
North Macedonia	Hunting Federation of North Macedonia
Poland	National Hunters' Association 49 regional hunting associations 89 hunting clubs
Latvia	National hunting association 4 hunting clubs
Lithuania	Lithuanian hunters' and anglers' Association 48 regional hunting associations 19 hunting clubs
Romania	155 Local hunter's associations 2 federation of hunters' associations Wildlife diseases departments of Veterinary Faculties 3 Facebook groups for hunters and veterinarians (total 19000 members)

Where social media or website were available to national or local Hunters' Association the survey was also shared through these channels. Links to which it is available are reported below:

[www.efsa.europa.eu/publications](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/publications)



- Hungary: webpage and social media of the Hungarian Hunters Chamber

<https://omvk.hu/hir/kerdoives-felmeres-az-asp-rol>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=361751982847296&set=a.2398944448366384>

- Serbia: web pages of 2 sub-national Hunters associations

Hunters Association of Central Serbia: <https://www.lovackisavez.rs/>

Hunters Association of Southeastern Serbia <https://www.lsjis.rs/>

- Bosnia Herzegovina and Republika Srpska:

Hunters Association of Republika Srpska <https://lovcir.com/aktivnosti/anketa-poznavanje-problematike-africka-kuga-svinja/37995/>

- Czech Republic: web page of the Czech hunting Association

<https://www.myslivo.cz/Pro-myslivoce/Aktuality/Pomozte-s-pruzkumem>