

## Updated Outbreak Assessment #2

# Peste des petits ruminants in Greece and the Black Sea Basin

24 July 2024

### Disease report

In our [preliminary outbreak assessment dated 17 July 2024](#), the first outbreaks of Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) in Greece were documented with 3 reports in mixed sheep and goat herds in Kastraki (Thessaly and Central Greece). This was only the second time that PPR has been detected in the European Union, the first being in [Bulgaria in 2018](#). On 16 July 2024, Greece reported 2 further outbreaks in the same region. Since then, Greece has reported not only 3 more outbreaks in Kastraki but also spread into sheep herds in 2 new regions further east taking the total number of outbreaks (to 24 July 2024) to 13 (view the PPR map). Furthermore, in a marked new development, PPR has been detected on the Black Sea coast of Romania with 6 outbreaks in goats and sheep.



Map Prepared by IDM

Date: 26/07/2024

Absolute Scale: 1:24,255,412

Peste de Petits Ruminants  
January 2023 to July 2024  
(WOAH Data Only)

0 450 900 1,350  
Km

Map of PPR across Europe from January 2023 to July 2024. The red dots are previously reported outbreaks. The red dots with a black centre are outbreaks reported on or after 17 July 2024.

## Situation assessment

The first outbreak of PPR in Romania was detected on 15 July 2024 in a sheep fattening farm in Tulcea near the Black Sea coast and reported by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) on the 20 July 2024. There were 2,028 cases and deaths in the herd of 51,119 sheep. The origin of the introduction is unknown or uncertain at this stage ([Platforme bulletin on 23 July 2024](#)). This has been followed by another 5 outbreaks also near the Black Sea coast reported by WOAH. Of these, 4 are also in Tulcea and one is slightly further south in neighbouring Constanta. The total number of outbreaks to 24 July 2024 in Romania is therefore 6, of which 4 are farms and 2 are backyard premises. In one of the backyard premises 132 of the 424 goats died.

Since our previous report, there have been 10 more outbreaks of PPR in sheep and goats in the region of Thessaly and Central Greece taking the total to 13 in Greece. Of these 3 were in Kastraki around where the first 3 outbreaks were detected.

However there has been spread eastwards with a cluster of 6 outbreaks around a new region including:

- Domeniko,
- Mesochori
- Amouri

The first outbreak in this new cluster was in Domeniko and detected on the 17 July 2024 involving a farm with 410 sheep with 50 clinical cases and 9 deaths. In addition, there has been one outbreak further east still on a sheep farm in Chimadi detected on the 21 July 2024 with 30 clinical cases in a herd of 322 sheep. The most recent outbreak in Kastraki detected on the 17 July 2024 involved a mixed flock of 11 sheep and goats with 5 clinical cases. The other 2 outbreaks in Kastraki were in a herd of 183 goats detected on 16 July 2024 and a mixed herd of 560 sheep and goats detected on 15 July 2024.

According to Reuters (2024) more than 16,500 goats and sheep have been tested in Greece for PPR (to 22 July 2024) and 2,500 animals have been culled, all in the affected farms in the regions of Larissa and Trikala. An additional 12,000 animals in Greece are to be tested by 26 July 2024 with more than 100 vets in the public sector and the army deployed. Goat and sheep slaughtering is banned across the wider region of Thessaly until 26 July 2024 (Reuters 2024). The source of the outbreak in Greece is still being determined.

Romania and Greece represent the second and third largest sheep herds in the EU27 (excluding Türkiye), with 10.2 and 7.3 million head respectively, behind Spain (13.6

million). These countries also have the first and third largest goat herds with 2.3 and 1.3 million head respectively ([Eurostat year 2023](#)).

Ruminant production in the Black Sea Basin (including Romania and Türkiye) is critical for national economies and the subsistence of rural populations (Arede and others. 2023). The ruminant sector was restructured following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Ruminant health was hindered by informal animal trade as a result of economic factors, insufficient support for the development of formal trade, and socio-cultural drivers (Arede and others. 2023). In the Caucasus and Türkiye, where diseases were present, improvements to ruminant health were driven by access to trading opportunities (Arede and others. 2023).

Trade to Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) in live sheep and goats from Romania is allowed although restrictions are currently being put in place. However, there have been no consignments of live sheep or goats or the semen or embryos of such species from Greece or from Romania (from 1 May 2024 to 23 July 2024) to Great Britain. Imports from Greece of live sheep and goats and ovine and caprine germplasm are currently prohibited to Great Britain following an outbreak of sheep pox and goat pox in Greece in October 2023.

There is a general lack of evidence about PPR survival in raw meat and milk (Clarke and others, 2018). Although there have been 93 consignments of pasteurised milk and milk products imported to Great Britain from Romania, there have been no consignments of raw or unpasteurised milk and milk products from 1 May 2024 to 23 July 2024. However, there have been 33 consignments (241,620 kg) of meat and meat products from sheep and goats from Romania between 1 May 2024 and 22 July 2024.

In addition, there have been 24 consignments (262,667 kg) of colostrum from sheep and goats (unknown if pasteurised or heat treated) mainly intended for human consumption from Romania. Chilled and fresh hides and skins are under a safeguard measure, suspending the entry to Great Britain from Greece and in the near future from Romania (with none imported from Romania from 1 May 2024 to 23 July 2024). Since livestock and germinal products are the main risk factors for PPR it is concluded that the risk to Great Britain is negligible.

## **Conclusion**

Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) has been reported for the first time in Romania with an outbreak in a large sheep herd on 15 July 2024 followed by 5 further outbreaks on the 21 and 22 July 2024. The total number of outbreaks in Romania to 24 July 2024 is 6, all near the Black Sea coast.

PPR is continuing to spread in Greece with 6 outbreaks in sheep in a new location around Domeniko in Thessaly and Central Greece and 3 more outbreaks in Kastraki. There was also one outbreak in sheep in a new region further east taking the total number of outbreaks in Greece to 13 (to 24 July 2024).

Live animals and germinal products are the main risk factors for PPR. The risk of PPR introduction to Great Britain as a result of these outbreaks in Romania and Greece is considered negligible as there are no data to suggest any imports of live animals and germinal products to Great Britain.

We will continue to monitor the situation, as this is an important exotic disease which will be a concern for the European Union in terms of its ability to spread and the impact on livestock.

## Authors

Megan Arter-Hazzard

Dr Paul Gale

Dr Sonny Bacigalupo

## References

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Clarke BD, Islam MR, Yusuf MA, Mahapatra M, Parida S. 2018. Molecular detection, isolation and characterization of Peste-des-petits ruminants virus from goat milk from outbreaks in Bangladesh and its implication for eradication strategy. *Transbound Emerg Dis.*;65(6):1597-1604. doi:10.1111/tbed.12911

Reuters (2024) [Greece tests thousands of animals after 'goat plague' outbreak](#)



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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at [iadm@apha.gov.uk](mailto:iadm@apha.gov.uk)