

Updated Outbreak Assessment #6

Peste des Petits Ruminants in Eastern Europe

15 April 2025

Disease Report

Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) was detected for the first time in Greece in early July 2024 and then a week later in Romania. [Since our previous outbreak assessment on 5 February 2025](#), there have been reports of PPR in Romania for the first time since 2 September 2024 by WOA (World Organisation for Animal Health). The EUVET (European Union Veterinary Emergency Team) have also conducted a mission regarding the epidemiological situation of PPR in Romania and produced recommendations in relation to current surveillance and control measures.

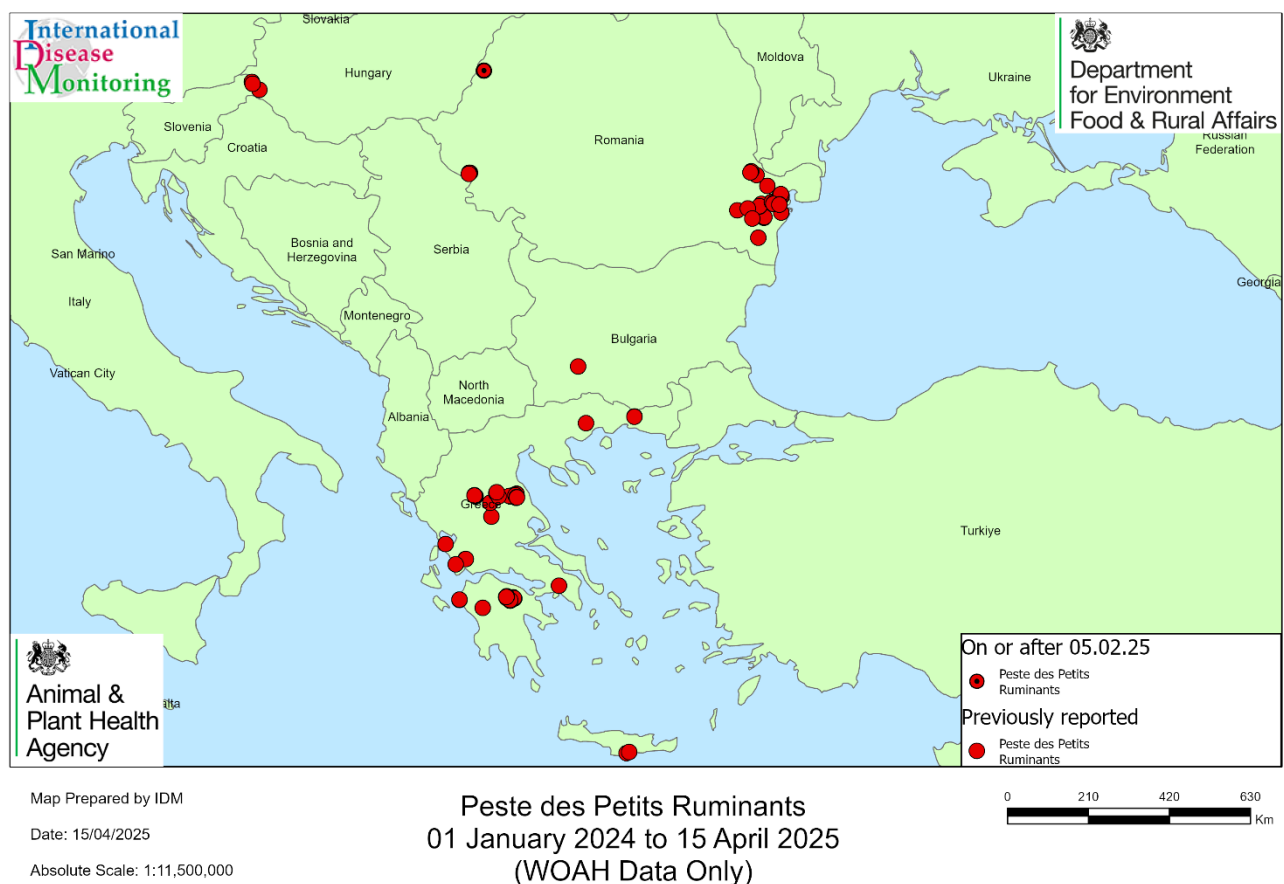


Figure 1: Map displaying outbreaks of PPR in Europe between 1 January 2024 and 15 April 2025 (WOAH data only).

Romania

The first PPR outbreak in Romania was confirmed on 15 July 2024 ([PPR in Greece and Romania](#)). Since our last assessment on 5 February, one outbreak has been reported by WOA. This occurred in Bihor County, western Romania, about 12km away from the Hungarian border. This is the first report of PPR in Bihor County. The outbreak was reported to WOA on 6 March, involving a farm housing 664 sheep, of which included adult female sheep, adult male rams, young sheep and lambs.

From a recent [PAFF presentation](#), on 3 March, three sheep died and three showed clinical signs such as loss of appetite, dyspnoea (shortness of breath) and lethargy. Local authorities were subsequently notified, after which samples were collected, and movement restrictions were imposed. On 5 March, samples were confirmed positive by RT-PCR. Control measures such as stamping out, tracings, disinfection, movement controls, zoning, and surveillance were implemented according to regulations outlined in Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687. The farm also contained a livestock assembly centre, which was empty at the time of the outbreak. An epidemiological investigation discovered that between 1 January and 28 February 2025, animals from 45 holdings from different counties in Romania had been at the animal assembly centre. In the same period, 11 sheep had been introduced to the sheep holding from Bihor County and Arad County. Clinical checks on all tracings revealed no signs of PPR. Random sampling from some contact holdings returned negative RT-PCR and ELISA tests. Other measures included a temporary suspension on certification of live small ruminants from affected regions for intracommunity trade until epidemiological investigations are complete.

On 27 February 2025, a buyer purchased 223 sheep for slaughter from a farm, accompanied by their personal veterinarian. During transport to the slaughterhouse in the evening, one died and was subsequently tested for PPR. Following positive PCR results on 28 February, authorities inspected the farm of origin and found no clinical signs of PPR, although 22 sheep were reported to be old and in poor condition. Over the weekend, three of the older sheep died, they and were sampled and tested positive for PPR. From the remaining herd of about 600 animals, nine healthy sheep were randomly tested from three different stables, covering different categories of sheep on the farm, and tested positive for PPR both on RT-PCR and ELISA.

The Romanian authorities traced all animals that had moved onto the farm since 1 December 2024, originating from eight counties, and reported no clinical signs of PPR. These counties include Bihor, Sălaj, Timiș, Tulcea, Cluj, Satu Mare and Arad. Previous outbreaks of PPR occurred in Timiș and Tulcea in mid to late 2024.

The EU has also undertaken a EUVET mission to advise Romania with recommendations for PPR on surveillance, control measures and epidemiological investigations. The mission found delays in the culling of animals in 2024, not all tracings of farms were sampled (only clinically observed) and noted that only a few infected animals displayed clinical symptoms. The EUVET recommended that Romania implements targeted serological

surveillance, including random sampling of healthy animals, even in areas not affected by PPR, due to the presence of asymptomatic positives. [Symptoms of PPR](#) include sudden onset of depression, fever, discharges from the eyes and nose, sores in the mouth, disturbed breathing and cough, foul-smelling diarrhoea and death. PPR has several differential diagnosis including rinderpest, FMD (foot and mouth disease), bluetongue, CCPP (Contagious caprine pleuropneumonia) and Orf. While younger sheep often show more severe symptoms, older sheep may be affected when co-infected with other pathogens. Romania did not specify the age of the nine sheep that tested positive but showed no clinical symptoms, but it underscores that not all sheep may exhibit clinical signs of the disease.

Due to the upcoming religious holidays of Easter and Eid al-Adha approaching, authorities expect increased livestock numbers, production, and movement, heightening the risk of disease spread. Most of these exports from Romania are destined for Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Algeria and the United Arab Emirates.

Hungary

Since the initial report of PPR in Hungary on 27 January 2025 in Zala county, and 2 further outbreaks on 5 February, no additional reports of PPR in Hungary have been reported.

According to a recent PAFF Presentation, the EU Reference Laboratory (EURL) conducted phylogenetic analysis which found the virus to be closely related to genome sequences from Romania, Greece and Bulgaria. These belong to lineage IV, one of four lineages of PPR, in a clade grouping sequences which also includes strains from North and East Africa and the 2016 outbreak in Georgia.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria reported a single outbreak of PPR in Velingrad, Southern Bulgaria to WOA on 2 December 2024. There have been no further outbreaks reported since. The outbreak involved three herds with a total of 1,769 animals housed together (see '[Bulgarian Food Safety Agency identified an outbreak of sheep plague \(PPR\) in Velingrad](#)'). The Bulgarian authorities implemented control measures including a 7 km safety zone around the outbreak and a 10 km monitored zone including nearby villages. The movement of small ruminants in the entire area was restricted (see '[An outbreak of sheep plague was discovered in Velingrad](#)').

According to PAFF Presentations, the Bulgarian authorities have also established a further restricted zone. As of 18 March 2025, there have been no further suspicions from clinical examinations in the restriction zone. There have also been no further positive samples taken within the 5km protection zone.

Implications for Great Britain

While the numbers of reported outbreaks of PPR in Bulgaria, Greece and Hungary have decreased to zero since our last update in February, PPR still appears to be circulating at low levels in Romania as cases continue to be detected in flocks via active surveillance, indicating possible undetected spread.

Transport of live infected animals is the main risk factor for spread of PPR, although germinal products and products of animal origin including meat and milk may present a risk. Although, there are no data to suggest any imports of live animals and germinal products to Great Britain, and the import into Great Britain of unpackaged meat products and milk from Romania and Greece has been banned since August 2024.

The emergence of PPR in eastern Europe is still a developing situation and there could yet be further spread in Romania and Hungary, and spread to other EU Member States, particularly since the outbreaks in Hungary are close to the borders with Slovenia and Croatia. There are also concerns that outbreaks may be going undetected, which increases the risk of disease spread within and outside of affected countries.

Due to the ongoing foot and mouth disease (FMD) situation in parts of Europe, there are restrictions in place on commercial and personal imports of live animals, germplasm, fresh meat, meat products, milk and milk products, animal-by-products, and hay and straw from the entire territories of Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and parts of Germany. From 12 April, it will be illegal for travellers to bring cattle, sheep, goat, and pig meat, as well as dairy products, from EU countries into Great Britain for personal use.

Due to the presence of PPR, Great Britain has suspended the imports of sheep and goat commodities from Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania. This includes, live animals, germplasm, raw milk and raw milk products, untreated wool and hair, and fresh or chilled (untreated) skins and hides.

The risk of PPR introduction to Great Britain as a result of these ongoing outbreaks in eastern Europe is therefore maintained at **very low**, and we are monitoring the situation closely.

Conclusion

Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) has been reported in Romania for the first time in 2025, near the Hungarian border. In 2025, Hungary is the only other European country to report cases. In late 2024, PPR spread throughout Greece, Bulgaria and Romania. While Greece and Bulgaria appear to have controlled the spread of PPR with no further reports since November and December, respectively, recent detections in Hungary and more recently in Romania suggests PPR is still circulating at low levels.

The EUVETs recommendations indicate PPR may be spreading undetected in Romania, due to a lack of clinical signs, especially in older sheep. Implementing active surveillance

with random sampling of healthy animals of all ages across Romania was recommended to benefit the rapid early detection and response to PPR.

The risk level of entry of PPR into Great Britain is still assessed to be **very low**.

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

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