

Agenda: day one 7th!

Time	Presentations	Chair: Giuseppe Ru, Gabriele Vaccari
13:00	Welcome and opening	M. Gabriella Perrotta (Italian Ministry of Health) (online), Umberto Agrimi (ISS), Gabriele Vaccari (ISS)
13:15	EURL TSE Work programme 2025-2027: what done, what to do	Giuseppe Ru (EURL-TSE)
13:30	Discriminatory Western Blot in Small Ruminants (DS25) and bovine (DB25) EQA: results of the 2025 rounds	Laura Pirisinu (EURL-TSE)
14:00	PRNP genotyping in sheep (GS25) and goat (GG25) EQA: results of the 2025 rounds	Barbara Chiappini (EURL-TSE)
14:20	Forthcoming 2026 rounds: Discriminatory Western Blot in Small Ruminants (DS26), PRNP Genotyping in sheep (GS26) and goats (GG26)	Clarissa Ferreri (EURL-TSE)
14:40	The 2024 TSE EUSR and an update on 2025 surveillance	Sean Ashe (EFSA)
15:10 – 15:25 Informal poster viewing with coffee break		
15:25	Atypical BSE in the natural host – an update 12-month post inoculation	Sonja Ernst (NRL Germany)
15:45	Epidemiological situation with respect to BSE and scrapie in Poland	Mirosław Polak (NRL Poland)
16:05	The EraBSE project: general description and focus on the specific genetic activity.	Katy Moazami-Goudarzi (INRAE) (online)
16:25	Preliminary results from the PeXPTPrionGoat project: Genetic Diversity of PRNP Gene in Portuguese Goat	Leonor Orge (NRL Portugal)
16:45	New insights on 222 from the ScResGoats ICRAD project	Michele Di Bari (EURL-TSE)
17:05	Discussion & wrap up of the day	Giuseppe Ru, Gabriele Vaccari (EURL-TSE)

Greetings from the
DEPT. OF HUMAN HEALTH, ANIMAL HEALTH, AND
THE ECOSYSTEM (ONE HEALTH)
Italian Ministry of Health

Dr. Maria Gabriella Perrotta

Greetings from the
Director of the Department of
Food Safety, Nutrition, and
Veterinary Public Health, **ISS**

Dr. Umberto Agrimi

Welcome from the
Director of the Department of
Food Safety, Nutrition, and
Veterinary Public Health, **ISS**
Dr. Gabriele Vaccari

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EURL TSE

past and future work programmes
what done, what to do

Giuseppe Ru, EURL-TSE



Achievements under the 2023-2024 work plan

Laboratory Methods & Technical Capacity

Overall increase in available laboratory methods across most domains in 2024

Expansion of publicly documented methods (guidance, validation details on EURL platforms)

New methods development remained limited, but

Greater focus on improving and refining existing methods in 2024

Proficiency Testing (PTs)

Stable or slightly increased number of PTs organised in 2024

High participation from NRLs maintained

Consistently high success rates, indicating strong laboratory performance across Member States

Training & Workshops

Increase in number of participants in workshops and meetings in 2024 (Joint meeting with EUR-AP)

Continued **strong engagement with NRL network**

Collaboration & Networking

Growth in collaboration activities with external organisations

Reinforced integration with EU and international scientific networks

Scientific Outputs & Knowledge Development

Increase in technical/scientific studies and materials produced or updated

Continued **support to harmonisation and knowledge sharing**

The 2025-2027 3-year work plan

- Approved by the EC
- Currently ongoing
- Activities progressing as planned:
 - AVAILABILITY AND USE OF HIGH-QUALITY METHODS
 - SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO NRLs
 - SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO EC
 - REAGENTS AND REFERENCE COLLECTIONS
- It will be necessary to comply with the new legislative provisions on surveillance (transition to the strategies of the World Organisation for Animal Health, WOAHA): a likely (drastic?) reduction in the volume of rapid tests, and the possibility of laboratory closures

SUBMISSION FORM: DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION
(Annex 1 – Description of the action (part B))

SMP-FOOD-2025-EURL-EURC-PJG-IBA 2025-2027

Activities of the EU Reference Laboratories and EU Reference Centres in 2025-2027

Applicant shall provide information on each question contained in the Form.

The **information** filled in the Form, **shall be clear, concise, consistent and complete.**

For questions on the information requested in this Form, please contact: HADEA-EURL@ec.europa.eu

For questions on the [eGRANTS](#) Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Applicant - COORDINATOR (Name of EURL)	EURL for TRANSMISSIBLE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHIES (TSES)
Topic	Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies
Implementation period	01/01/2025 – 31/12/2027

CONTACT PERSON for the programme :

Name	Giuseppe Ru
Function	Director of the European Reference Laboratory for TSEs
E-mail	giuseppe.ru@izsto.it

ASSOCIATED PARTNER 1
(Name)

Contact person :	Istituto Superiore di Sanità
e-mail :	Gabriele Vaccari
	gabriele.vaccari@iss.it

outline

- the latest EQAs
- beyond the EQAs
- the agenda of this meeting
- announcement: the 2026 EURL annual meeting

the EQAs started in late 2025

The 2025 round of External Quality Assessments (EQA)

10 different Proficiency Tests (PT) have been run:

- 2 Screening: **Rapid test** for BSE and for scrapie (RB25, RS25)
- 4 Confirmatory: **Immunoblot** for BSE and scrapie (WB25, WS25) & **PrP immunohistochemistry technical** (IT25) and **interpretation** (II25)
- 2 Discriminatory: **Discriminatory western blot** in bovine (DB25) and **Discriminatory western blot** in small ruminants (DS25)
- 2 Genotyping: **PRNP genotyping** in sheep and in goats (GS25, GG25)

The 2025 round

EQA	EQA description	Applying countries / readers	Period of material distribution	successful NRLs
RB25	BSE screening rapid test	29	24 November	29
RS25	Scrapie screening rapid test	30	24 November	30
WB25	BSE confirmatory immunoblot	22	24 November	22
WS25	Scrapie confirmatory immunoblot	23	24 November	23
II25	Immunohistochemistry Interpretation	40	December	33
IT25	Immunohistochemistry Technical	19	15 October	18
DB25	Discriminatory western blot in bovine	12	27 October	12
DS25	Discriminatory western blot in small ruminants	17	27 October	17
GS25	PRNP sheep genotyping	24	29 September	23
GG25	PRNP goat genotyping	14	29 September	13

On average a large number of participants

The 2025 round

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DS25	Discriminatory western blot in small ruminants	17	27 October	17
GS25	PRNP sheep genotyping	24	29 September	23
GG25	PRNP goat genotyping	14	29 September	13

Launched between September and December

The 2025 round

EQA	EQA description	Applying countries / readers	Period of material distribution	successful NRLs
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DS25	Discriminatory western blot in small ruminants	17	27 October	
GS25	PRNP sheep genotyping	24	29 September	
GG25	PRNP goat genotyping	14	29 September	

Results presented in the following presentations

The new round

News in the following presentations...

Beyond the EQAs

- As usual, the 2025-2026 was a period of **assistance and dialogue** with the NRLs. The following countries requested help or an exchanged views:

2025: Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Sweden

2026: Germany, Spain

- Lab safety:** the NRL network paper published, you are the coauthors!

- Atypical BSE reference tissues propagation:**
updates over the meeting

Lab safety: the NRL network paper published, you are the coauthors!

Group member of Colleagues of the European Network of National Reference Laboratories for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

The list of consortium members is: Alexandra Bastian (Austria), Severine Matthijs (Belgium), Dafina Atanasova (Bulgaria), Karmen Branovic Cakanic (Croatia), Sotiria Georgiadou (Cyprus), Petr Václavěk (Czech Republic), Tim Kåre Jensen (Denmark), Katrin Peik (Estonia), Sirkka-Liisa Korpenfelt (Finland), Thierry Baron (France), Christine Fast (Germany), Vaia Palaska (Greece), Peter Malik (Hungary), Stefania Thorgeirsdottir (Iceland), Ann Sharpe (Ireland), Maria Caramelli (Italy), Inga Pigiņka-Vjačeslavova (Latvia), Laura Krivko (Latvia), Marta Lizuma (Latvia), Viktoras Maskaliovas (Lithuania), Susan Chircop (Malta), Lucien van Keulen (Netherlands), Sylvie Benestad (Norway), Mirosław Polak (Poland), Maria Leonor Orge (Portugal), Igor Djadjovski (Republic of North Macedonia), Florica Barbuceanu (Romania), Daniela Korytarova (Slovakia), Kristina Tekavec (Slovenia), Alba Marín Moreno (Spain), Viktor Ahlberg (Sweden), Torsten Seuberlich (Switzerland).



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State of the art in biosafety at the European National Reference Laboratories for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

M. Begovoeva¹, R. Nonno², M. Mazza^{1*}, E. Bozzetta¹, G. Ru¹ and
Colleagues of the European Network of National Reference
Laboratories for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies

¹Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale del Piemonte, Liguria e Valle d'Aosta, Torino, Italy, ²Istituto
Superiore di Sanità, Roma, Italy

Introduction: Laboratory technicians handling material containing or potentially infected with prions are exposed to the occupational risk of contracting infectious forms of Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease. The occurrence of three fatalities among laboratory personnel with a history of occupational exposure to bovine spongiform encephalopathy has highlighted the need for greater attention to the correct implementation of biosafety procedures in laboratories that handle prions.

Methods: The European Reference Laboratory for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (EURL-TSE) carried out a survey to review biosafety procedures currently adopted by the 31 National Reference Laboratories for TSEs (NRLs), stimulate discussion among laboratory directors, and define future actions aimed at reducing the risk of occupational exposure among laboratory personnel.

Results: The survey showed that 83.9% of laboratories adhered to TSE-specific biosafety guidelines, and 61.3% had conducted a biosafety risk assessment, while the biosafety level of the facilities had been determined in 93.5% of cases. In addition, 83.9% reported implementing staff biosafety training protocols, and 77.4% had procedures addressing the risk associated with sharp or pointed tools. Most laboratories had established biosafety procedures for ELISA and western blot assays, whereas fewer had protocols for pathology and immunohistochemistry. Among the three facilities performing experimental inoculations, only two indicated having specific biosafety measures in place.

Discussion: Despite the overall positive results, the survey showed that biosafety procedures are applied heterogeneously across the NRLs. The EURL-TSE will further encourage the full implementation of specific biosafety procedures to address the gaps identified by the survey. The EURL-TSE has created a digital repository of guidelines and bibliographical sources on the subject. It also initiated biannual virtual meetings to discuss critical issues emerged from the survey and to encourage the mutual exchange of experiences and good practices between NRLs Directors.

KEYWORDS

biosafety, BSE, CJD, occupational risk, prions, TSE

Lab safety main results:

- 83.9% of laboratories adhered to TSE-specific biosafety guidelines,
- 61.3% had conducted a biosafety risk assessment,
- 93.5% defined biosafety levels of facilities
- 83.9% reported implementing staff biosafety training protocols
- 77.4% had procedures addressing the risk associated with sharp or pointed tools.
- most laboratories had established biosafety procedures for ELISA and western blot assays
- fewer had protocols for pathology and immunohistochemistry.



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- Atypical BSE reference tissues propagation:** updates over the meeting

Highlights from the agenda

EQA
feedback

today

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Highlights from the agenda

EQA feedback

Day 2	8 th May 2026	
Time	Presentations	Chair: Giuseppe Ru, Gabriele Vaccari
09:00	Recent EFSA outputs on TSEs	Sean Ashe (EFSA)
09:30	Updates on the WOAH activities in the field of TSE	Natalie Moyaen (WOAH) (online)
10:00	Rapid Tests EQA (RB & RS): results of the 2025 round and forthcoming 2026 round	Daniela Loprevite (online) (EURL-TSE)
10:25 – 10:40 Informal poster viewing with coffee break		
10:50	Confirmatory immunoblotting (WB & WS): results of the 2025 round and forthcoming 2026 round	Maria Mazza (online) (EURL-TSE)
11:05	Rapid and confirmatory tests: issues & news	Maria Mazza (online) (EURL-TSE)
11:20	PrP Immunohistochemistry Technical EQA	Barbara Iulini (EURL-TSE)
11:35	Histopathology interpretation EQA	Barbara Iulini (EURL-TSE)
11:50	EU-wide collaboration on PrP genetics in sheep with AS: updates	Romolo Nonno (EURL-TSE)
12:05	TSEs challenges in the coming years	Angel Ortiz Pelaez (online)
12:30	Discussion & wrap up of the day	All
13:30	End of the works and Lunch	
14:00		

tomorrow

Highlights from the agenda

today

EFSA updates

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Highlights from the agenda

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09:30	Updates on the wOAH activities in the field of TSE	Natale Moya (wOAH) (online)
10:00	Rapid Tests EQA (RB & RS): results of the 2025 round and forthcoming 2026 round	Daniela Loprevite (online) (EURL-TSE)
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12:30	Discussion & wrap up of the day	All
13:30	End of the works and Lunch	
14:00		

EFSA

tomorrow

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WOAH

tomorrow

Highlights from the agenda

today

Ongoing
scientific
projects
on TSEs

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16:05	The EraBSE project: general description and focus on the specific genetic activity.	Katy Moazami-Goudarzi (INRAE) (online)
16:25	Preliminary results from the PeXPTPrionGoat project: Genetic Diversity of PRNP Gene in Portuguese Goat	Leonor Orge (NRL Portugal)
16:45	New insights on 222 from the ScResGoats ICRAD project	Michele Di Bari (EURL-TSE)
17:05	Discussion & wrap up of the day	Giuseppe Ru, Gabriele Vaccari (EURL-TSE)

Highlights from the agenda

Day 2 8th May 2026		
Time	Presentations	
09:00	Recent EFSA outputs on TSEs	Chair: Giuseppe Ru, Gabriele Vaccari Sean Ashe (EFSA)
09:30	Updates on the WOAHA activities in the field of TSE	Natalie Moyen (WOAHA) (online)
10:00	Rapid Tests EQA (RB & RS): results of the 2025 round and forthcoming 2026 round	Daniela Loprevite (online) (EURL-TSE)
10:25 – 10:40 Informal poster viewing with coffee break		
10:50	Confirmatory immunoblotting (WB & WS): results of the 2025 round and forthcoming 2026 round	Maria Mazza (online) (EURL-TSE)
11:05	Rapid and confirmatory tests: issues & news	Maria Mazza (online) (EURL-TSE)
11:20	PrP Immunohistochemistry Technical EQA	Barbara Iulini (EURL-TSE)
11:35	Histopathology interpretation EQA	Barbara Iulini (EURL-TSE)
11:50	EU-wide collaboration on PrP genetics in sheep with AS: updates	Romolo Nonno (EURL-TSE)
12:05	TSEs challenges in the coming years	Angel Ortiz Pelaez (online)
12:30	Discussion & wrap up of the day	All
13:30	End of the works and Lunch	
14:00		

AS coll.

tomorrow

Highlights from the agenda

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Future?

tomorrow

Next year: back to Torino

