



# **EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines***

## **Roadshow #1**

### **Improving Calf Welfare on Farm**

#### **FINAL REPORT**



## 1 Introduction

Within the **2025–2027 Work Programme**, EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines* introduced, for the first time, the **Roadshow approach**. This initiative builds on the positive experience gained from the organisation of roadshow events across Europe in 2024 within the framework of the **CARE4DAIRY Project**. The lessons learned from that experience were systematically analysed and used to refine the format, enhance its effectiveness, and maximise its impact. In parallel, the extensive professional expertise of IZSAM in the organisation and delivery of **Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF)** courses on animal welfare was fully capitalised upon.

The first Roadshow event implemented under the EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines* framework was addressed to Italian delegates and focused on **improving calf welfare**. The event, organised by the **Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale dell’Abruzzo e del Molise (IZSAM)** with the collaboration of the **Italian Ministry of Health**, the **National Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (CRENBA)** and the **National Reference Centre for Water Buffalo Farming Hygiene and Technologies (CrenBuf)**, was held in **Brescia** at the teaching facilities of the **Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell’Emilia-Romagna (IZSLER)**, on **12–13 November, 2025**.

Within the framework of the 2025–2027 Work Programme, two further Roadshow events are planned, in France and Ireland, respectively.

## 2 Objectives

The Roadshow initiative is designed to pursue the following objectives:

- to establish and strengthen direct dialogue between the Centre and official inspectors in Member States, by jointly addressing priority topics;
- to stimulate cascade training at regional and local level;
- to identify controversial or critical issues for which the Centre could provide further support in order to strengthen the enforcement of EU legislation.

In addition, Roadshow events also represent a valuable opportunity for the implementation of other EURCAW activities, such as the production of pedagogical video materials, the identification of members of the Community of Practice, the selection of speakers for podcasts, and interviewees for the “Inspectors@work” initiative.



Image 1: In-field visit to the dairy cattle farm Società Agricola Barbiselle in Persico Dosimo (CR, Italy)

### 3 Methodologies

A Roadshow event is conceived as a **face-to-face workshop**, organised in selected Member States (one per year), with approximately 20-30 attendands per event. Participants include official inspectors, policy officers, and policy makers, identified in collaboration with the National Contact Point of the hosting country. Each workshop is supported by several EURCAW experts, who either speak the participants' native language or are assisted by professional and/or AI-assisted interpretation services, to ensure effective communication and constructive dialogue. The duration of each event is either **one full day** or **one and a half days**, depending on whether a field visit is included.

The topics addressed during each Roadshow are identified and agreed upon in advance to ensure **targeted and needs-driven support** for the beneficiaries. Wherever possible, topics are aligned with the outputs and outcomes of activities carried out by the Centre since the start of its mandate and are defined in close consultation with the National Competent Authority (NCA) of the hosting Member State, taking into account its priority needs.



For this specific event, the Centre agreed with the Italian Competent Authority, represented by the **Ministry of Health – General Direction for Animal Health**, to focus on **calf welfare**, with particular attention to the **colostrum management and provision to calves**.

To motivate participants and support an effective learning experience, an engaging approach combining multiple training methodologies is adopted, including:

- lectures, to introduce EURCAW activities and present the latest scientific knowledge related to the topic on which the Roadshow is focused on;
- interactive discussions and case studies on topics selected by the delegates;
- group discussions and plenary debates addressing future activities or priority topics for the EURCAW Work Programme;
- where feasible, a field visit, organised in collaboration with local experts, to provide hands-experience related to the topics treated.

When relevant, pre-reading materials and translated documents are provided in advance. Furthermore, a written summary of the topics discussed, issues raised, advice given and agreed follow-up actions, is provided in local language. The translated documents are uploaded to the EURCAW website.

For organisational purposes, one or more coordination meetings involving all speakers can be planned prior to the event, in order to review the agenda in detail and ensure alignment of objectives, content, and expectations.



Image 2: Roadshow #1 Italy – Italian CA Delegate Dr. Antonio Ferraro

## 4 Speakers, experts and facilitators

The following experts were involved:

- Silvia D'Albenzio, IZSAM, Italy
- Luigi Iannetti, IZSAM, Italy
- Michele Podaliri Vulpiani, IZSAM, Italy
- Luigi Bertocchi, CRenBA IZSLER, Italy
- Francesca Fusi, CRenBA IZSLER, Italy
- Domenico Vecchio, CRenBuf, IZSM, Italy
- Antonio Ferraro, Ministry of Health, Italy
- Evangelia Sossidou, ELGO, Greece
- Birgitta Staaf Larsson, SLU, Sweden
- Cristoph Winkler, BOKU, Austria
- Isabelle Veissier, INRAE, France
- Alison Hanlon, UCD, Ireland



**Silvia D’Albenzio (IZSAM)** also acted as **Coordinator of the event**, while **Chiara Albanello (IZSAM)** was responsible for the **training methodologies**.

In addition, **IZSLER staff** from both the **CRenBA** and the **Training Unit** contributed to the event at both **content and organisational levels**, supporting the preparation and delivery of the Roadshow.

## 5 Participants

The Roadshow event was addressed to official inspectors, policy officers, and policy makers of Regional or local Italian Competent Authorities and Istituti Zooprofilattici Sperimentali. Thirty-two experts attended the event.

## 6 General information on the development of the Roadshow event

The Roadshow event was organised as an in-person meeting in order to ensure enhanced interaction and networking among participants. The selected venue was IZSLER, which also hosts the CRenBA. This location was chosen for several reasons, including its convenient connections to Milan-area airports, the availability of a nearby farm suitable for on-site visits, and the presence of the Italian Supporting Body on Animal Welfare.

### Event delivery:

The meeting was attended by 32 representatives of regional and local Competent Authorities and of the Istituti Zooprofilattici Sperimentali.

The session opened with remarks by Giorgio Varisco, Director General of IZSLER, and Angelo Cameli, Head of the Aquatic and Terrestrial Ecosystems Laboratory, representing the Director General of IZSAM. Both highlighted the ongoing commitment and close collaboration within the network of Institutes—key factors for organising such opportunities for exchange and for their positive impact at European level. Pietro Noè then conveyed greetings from the Ministry of Health, emphasising the importance of these occasions for gathering, from the experience of Official Veterinarians across regions, critical elements that help shape priorities for the National Animal Welfare Plan.

During the first session, chaired by Silvia D’Albenzio, topics included the importance of correct colostrum administration, presented by CRenBA Head Luigi Bertocchi, and specific aspects of buffalo calf welfare, presented by Domenico Vecchio for CreNBuf.



In closing, Antonio Ferraro, Veterinary Officer of the Ministry of Health (Office 6, DGSA), highlighted key elements concerning the role of Official Veterinarians in inspection activities.

Subgroup participatory activities followed, exploring appropriate feeding, visual and tactile contact, use of environmental enrichments, and overall quality of care.

On the morning of 13 November, training continued with a visit to the dairy cattle farm Società Agricola Barbiselle in Persico Dosimo (CR), where participants observed in the field the good practices discussed the previous day, including pair housing of newborn calves and the use of nurse cows.

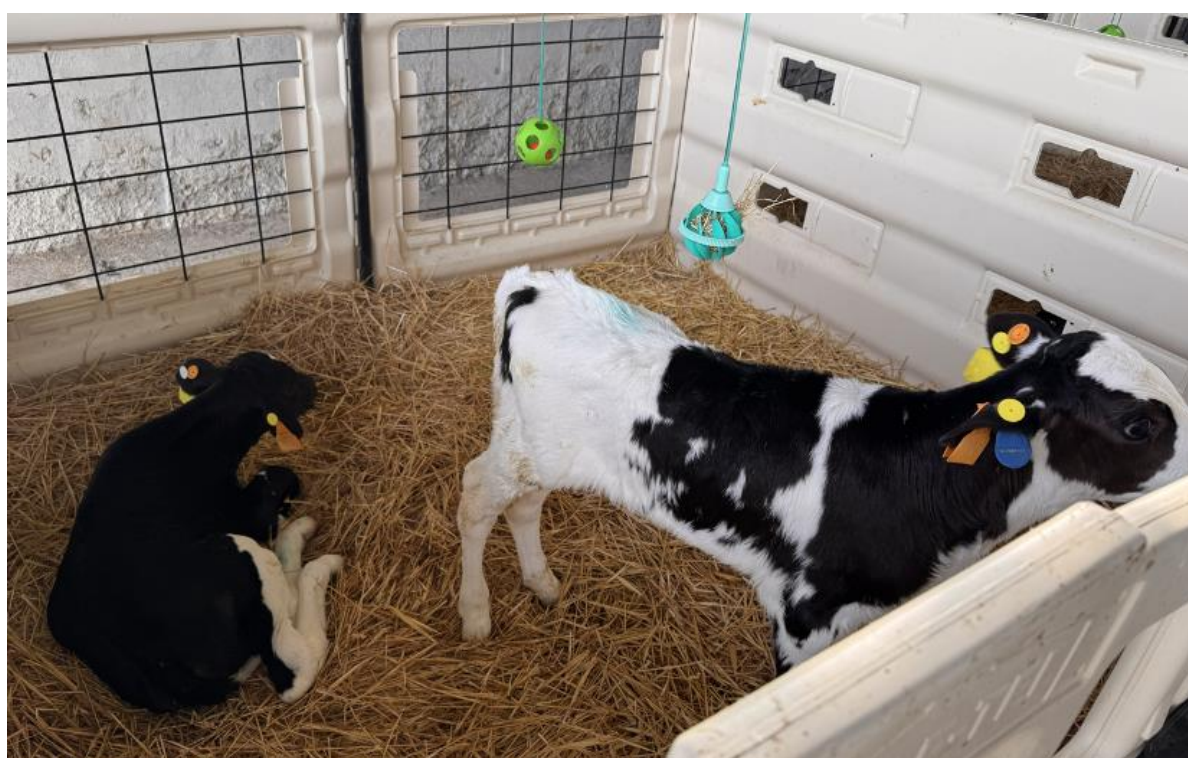


Image 3: Roadshow #1 Italy – In-field visit

## 7 Training materials and attendance certificates

The training agenda, all presentations in PDF format and the attendance certificates were uploaded to the IZSAM eLearning Platform: <https://elearning.izs.it/>

Participants received detailed instructions on how to access and download the materials. Completion of the satisfaction questionnaire was a mandatory requirement for the issuance of the attendance certificate.



## 8 Evaluation

At the conclusion of the Roadshow, participants were invited to assess their level of satisfaction by completing a dedicated evaluation form made available through the IZSAM eLearning Platform.

The evaluation results are based on the analysis of 18 completed questionnaires. Overall, feedback was unanimously positive: all respondents expressed satisfaction with the event and rated it favorably.

The general level of satisfaction was high across all evaluated dimensions. In particular, the item “Overall standard of the meeting” achieved a weighted average score of 4.6 out of 5, with 67% of respondents assigning the highest possible rating.

D1: Overall standard of the meeting

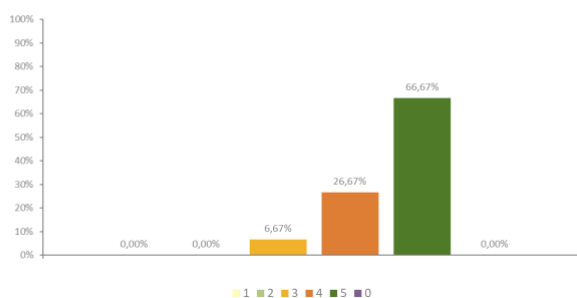
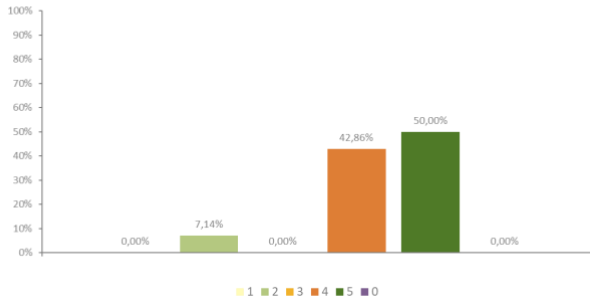


Image 6: Satisfaction results/1

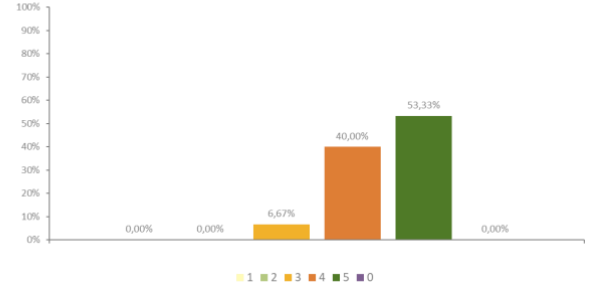
Key qualitative aspects of the Roadshow, namely “Quality of speeches”, “Appropriateness of the presentations”, “Appropriateness of the supporting documents”, “Level of language used and speed of delivery”, and “Level of engagement of the speakers with participants”, all received weighted average scores exceeding 4.6. These results reflect strong appreciation of both the content and the delivery of the sessions.



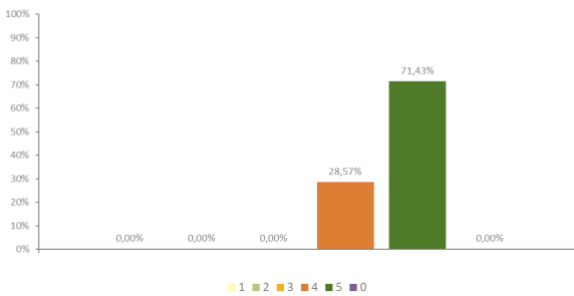
**D2: Fulfillment of the expectations**



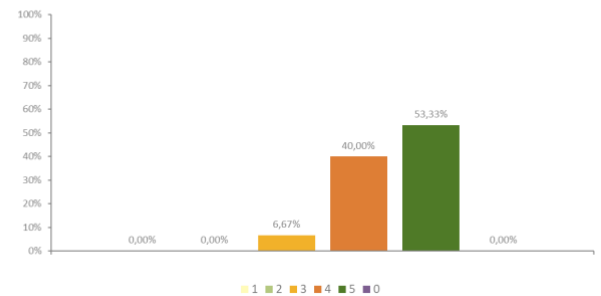
**D3: Achievement of aims and objectives declared**



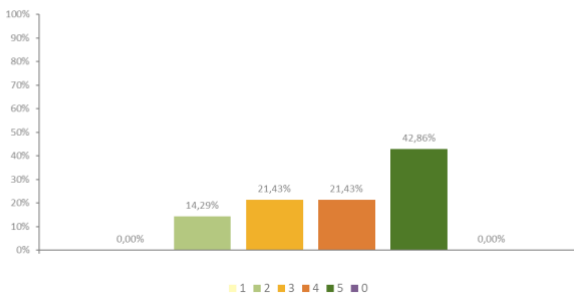
**D4: Quality of speeches**



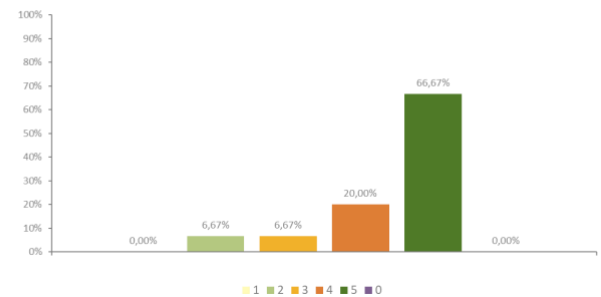
**D5: Time reserved to presentations**



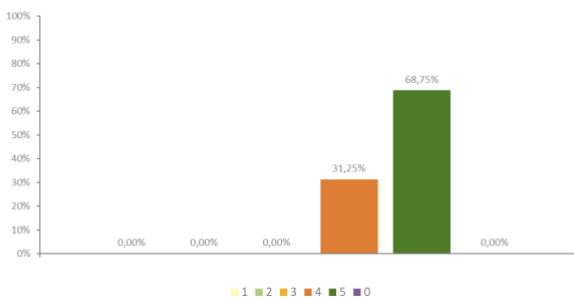
**D6: Time reserved to questions/discussion sessions**



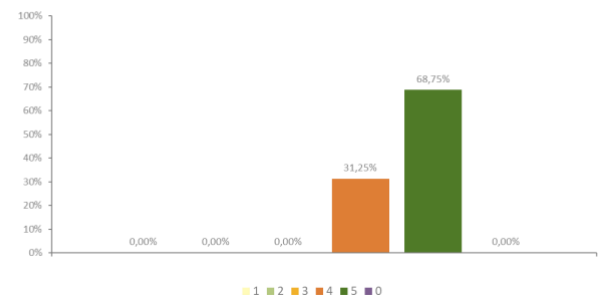
**D7: Efficacy and usefulness of the in field visit**



**D9: Appropriateness of the presentations**

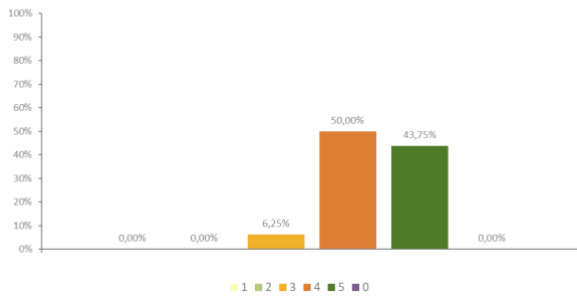


**D10: Appropriateness of the documents used**

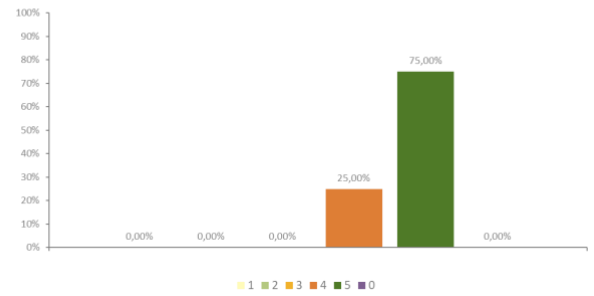




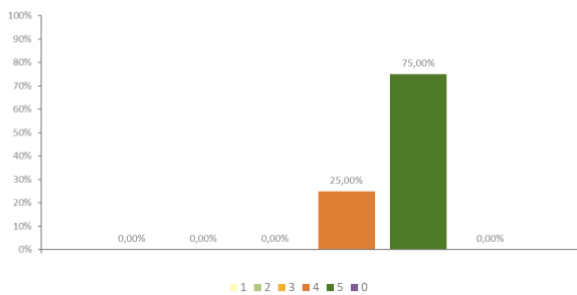
D11: Degree of relevance to your everyday work



D13: Level of language used and the speed of delivery



D14: Level of engagement of the speakers with the participants



D15: Interaction among the participants

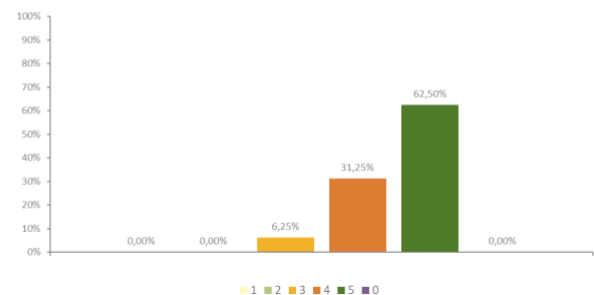
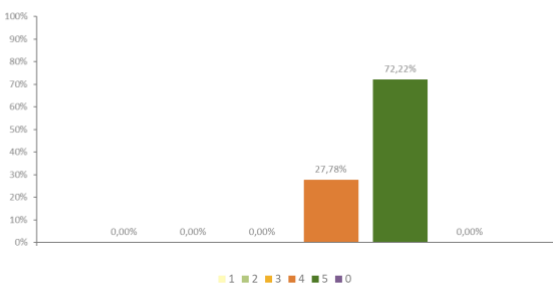


Image 7: Satisfaction results/2

The logistical and contextual elements of the event were also evaluated very positively. The “Conference venue/meeting room” and “Networking” opportunities obtained weighted average scores of 4.72 and 4.67 respectively, indicating that both the physical setting and opportunities for interaction were well received.

D19: Conference venue/meeting room



D21: Networking

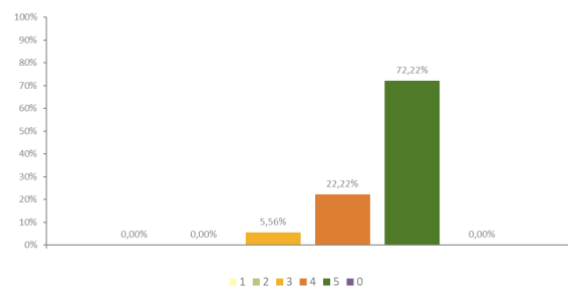
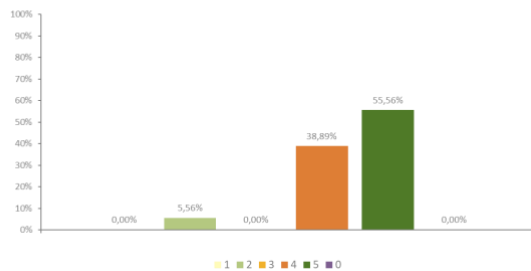


Image 8: Satisfaction results/3

Most organisational aspects, including “Catering (meals provided)” and the “Social dinner”, were rated positively as well, with average scores above 4.4 and 3.7, respectively.



D18: Catering (meals provided)



D20: Social dinner

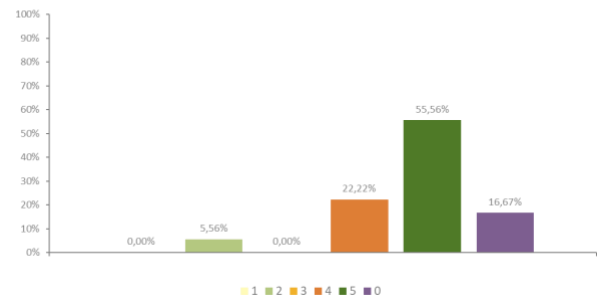


Image 9: Satisfaction results/4

Areas identified for improvement primarily concerned the allocation of additional discussion time following the in-field visit. Participants highlighted the value of more in-depth exchanges to further analyse observations and to cross-check them against the indicators and thematic factsheets produced by EURCAW. This feedback will be taken into consideration in the planning of future Roadshows.

## 9 Conclusions

The first Roadshow organised by EURCAW *Ruminants & Equines* within the framework of the 2025–2027 Work Programme can be considered a well-structured and strategically relevant initiative that achieved its core objectives. The event successfully established and strengthened direct dialogue between the Centre and Italian official inspectors, fostered the exchange of practical experience, and stimulated interest in cascade training at regional and local level. The high level of satisfaction expressed by participants, together with the strong engagement observed during plenary sessions, subgroup discussions and the in-field visit, confirms the effectiveness of the Roadshow model as a participatory and practice-oriented training approach.

The combination of scientific input, regulatory perspective and field observation—particularly with regard to colostrum management and calf welfare practices—proved to be methodologically sound and well aligned with the needs expressed by the Italian Competent Authority.

The proactive involvement of participants in thematic discussions, significantly enhanced engagement in the learning process and strengthened professional networking across regions and institutions. This aspect proved to be particularly strategic. Following the Roadshow, it was decided to pilot a dedicated Italian section within the Centre’s online Community of Practice, moderated by Francesca Fusi (CRenBA–IZSLER). The objective is to provide a structured and continuous discussion platform for the Italian participants,



enabling them to further explore the topics addressed during the event, exchange practical experiences, and share inspection-related challenges and solutions.

The initiative is conceived not as a closed group but as a scalable forum, progressively open to other interested official inspectors at national level. In this way, the Roadshow moves beyond a stand-alone training event and evolves into a sustained capacity-building process, ensuring continuity of dialogue, consolidation of learning outcomes, and long-term impact on the harmonised enforcement of animal welfare legislation.

At the same time, several constructive points for improvement emerged. In particular, while the overall duration of the event was sufficient to deliver the planned content, strict adherence to the time schedule limited the opportunity for more in-depth discussion, especially following the farm visit. Participants clearly expressed the need for additional structured time to analyse field observations against EURCAW indicators and thematic factsheets. Extending the first day or allocating a dedicated debriefing session with an appropriate time slot would further strengthen future editions.

Despite these areas for refinement, the Roadshow clearly demonstrated its value as a scalable and repeatable training model. It validated a format that effectively combines expert input, participatory methodologies, field application and structured feedback collection. The experience gained provides a solid operational foundation for the upcoming Roadshow events foreseen in the Work Programme.

Building on this positive experience, future Roadshows will be organised in line with the 2025–2027 Work Programme, which foresees the following activities:

- 2026 – Roadshow #2 in France
- 2027 – Roadshow #3 in Ireland

In light of the positive outcomes achieved, the Centre has also reflected on the potential advantages of aligning the 2027 Roadshow with the Competent Authorities (CA) meeting planned in France in the same year. DG SANTE will be consulted to assess whether organising two Roadshows in 2027 would be feasible and appropriate, considering that the respective target audiences differ.