European Medicines Agency asks the Commission to address Vulture-killing drug

Brussels, 15 December 2014

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has supported the arguments expressed by BirdLife Europe regarding the risk that the veterinary use of the drug diclofenac represents to Vultures. In their scientific opinion on diclofenac and vultures [1], EMA is asking the European Commission to act immediately and outlines a series of possible measures to avoid poisoning of vultures.

BirdLife Europe welcomes the scientific opinion issued by EMA, and urges the European Commission to implement the safest and most cost-effective measure available: a full ban on the veterinary use of diclofenac in Europe. The report of EMA supports this, as it recognises that the withdrawal of the marketing authorisations of diclofenac is the only measure that negates the risks completely, without affecting animal welfare since alternative drugs are available.

Iván Ramírez, Head of Conservation for Europe and Central Asia reacts: "The European Medicines Agency is sending the right message both to the European Commission and to FATRO, the company that currently commercialises this environmentally dangerous drug in Europe. But this is not over yet, we will remain vigilant and continue to mobilize our supporters to make sure veterinary diclofenac is out of the market. Every minute counts."

BirdLife Europe has led, in collaboration with many other environmental groups, an international campaign aiming to ban veterinary diclofenac [2]. This drug was identified as the sole reason for the massive population declines that occurred in South-East Asia, where all vulture populations suffered declines over 97% in the last two decades. The drug is now banned in a range of countries, including India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Scientific Community has also reacted strongly asking for an immediate ban [3]. Papers in world-known journals, such as Science or Nature, have supported the ban and stated that veterinary diclofenac poses an unnecessary threat for the European vulture populations.

[1] EMA Rapport

[2] BirdLife Ban diclofenac web site

[3] Articles published in peer-reviewed journals
Science news: http://news.sciencemag.org/environment/2014/03/scientists-call-spain-ban-vulture-killing-drug
Science paper: http://www.sciencemag.org/content/346/6215/1296

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