



2025/2227

31.10.2025

COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2025/2227

of 27 October 2025

authorising the opening of negotiations, in the interest of the European Union, on a revision of the International Agreement and Organic Statutes, the Organic Rules, the Financial Rules and the General Rules and other texts of the World Organisation for Animal Health

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 43(2) and Article 168(4), point (b), in conjunction with Article 218(3) and (4) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1924 as the *Office International des Epizooties*. Its legal texts include the International Agreement for the creation of an Office International des Epizooties and the Organic Statutes of the Office International des Epizooties (1924), the Organic Rules of the Office International des Epizooties (1973), the Financial Rules (1987) and the General Rules of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and other texts (2011) (the 'WOAH Basic Texts'). WOAH standards on animal health and zoonoses are recognised as reference international sanitary rules under the World Trade Organization's Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement. As of 2025, the WOAH has 183 Members, including all Member States of the Union. The European Commission has observer status.
- (2) In 2023, at the turn of its centenary, the WOAH commissioned an external and independent review of its governance to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and capable of supporting an efficient, effective, and sustainable organisation into the future. The resulting report was presented and discussed at the World Assembly of Delegates of the WOAH in May 2024.
- (3) On 30 May 2024, the World Assembly of Delegates of the WOAH adopted Resolution No 12, mandating the Director-General to establish a dedicated group on governance that is inclusive of the Membership of the WOAH with representatives from each region to carry out further work to revise the WOAH Basic Texts.
- (4) A WOAH Governance Review Committee (GRC) was established in December 2024 and, in line with its Terms of Reference, consists of 16 Members from all WOAH Regions. Three of the current Members of the GRC are Member States: Austria and Ireland are among those Members representing the WOAH Region of Europe, and Cyprus is among those Members representing the WOAH Region of the Middle East. Among the Advisors of those Members are experts from Member States and from the Commission. The first GRC meeting took place in January 2025.
- (5) The GRC prepared a holistic work programme of multi-year activities and initial recommendations to support revisions to the WOAH Basic Texts, which, after validation by the WOAH Council, were presented to the World Assembly of Delegates, which adopted Resolution No 5, titled 'Work Programme of the WOAH Governance Review Committee and Initial Adjustments to Support Revisions to the WOAH Basic Texts', on 29 May 2025, with support from the Union. In line with its work programme, the GRC embarked on the first substantive phase of its work, the assessment phase, in late May 2025.
- (6) The Union has adopted harmonised measures and established a common organisation of agricultural markets for certain agricultural products of animal origin in line with Article 43(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). This involves animal keeping in agriculture production.

- (7) Animal health is an intrinsic element of Union law. Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽¹⁾ provides for animal health requirements for the movement of animals and products of animal origin within and between Member States and their entry into the Union. Importantly, pursuant to Article 168(4) TFEU, the Union is to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in that Article through adopting measures in, inter alia, the veterinary field which have as their direct objective the protection of public health in order to meet common safety concerns in the Union. Union law governing animal health and zoonoses, inter alia covers measures for transmissible animal diseases affecting animals and humans, these covering aspects of public health protection.
- (8) By means of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 and Directive 2003/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽²⁾, the Union has put in place harmonised rules governing animal health and zoonoses. That legislation includes rules on listing of animal diseases for Union intervention, measures for disease prevention, disease control and eradication, movement of animals and products of animal origin within and between the Member States and their entry into the Union, and rules for the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents.
- (9) Consequently, the matters related to animal health and welfare as part of the Common Agricultural Policy and in the veterinary field are part of the Union competence.
- (10) It is in the Union's interest to play an effective role in the work of the WOA. This will promote consistency in the Union's approach to policies falling within the remit of the WOA, and reinforce its commitment to the long-term development of global animal health and control of zoonoses, animal welfare, animal production food safety, safe international trade of animals and animal products, and food security.
- (11) The Member States and the Commission should cooperate closely during the negotiation process,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Member States that are members of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Governance Review Committee representing the WOA Region of Europe are hereby authorised to negotiate, in the interest of the Union, a revision of the International Agreement and Organic Statutes, the Organic Rules, the Financial Rules and the General Rules and other texts of the WOA within the WOA Governance Review Committee.

The negotiations shall be conducted on the basis of the negotiating directives of the Council set out in the addendum to this Decision.

Article 2

The negotiations shall be conducted in consultation with the Working Party on Animals and Veterinary Questions (Chief Veterinary Officers), which is hereby designated as the special committee within the meaning of Article 218(4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

Article 3

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Luxembourg, 27 October 2025.

For the Council

The President

J. JENSEN

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health ('Animal Health Law') (OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj>).

⁽²⁾ Directive 2003/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents, amending Council Decision 90/424/EEC and repealing Council Directive 92/117/EEC (OJ L 325, 12.12.2003, p. 31, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/99/oj>).

*Addendum***Directives for the negotiation of a revision of the Basic Texts of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)**

1. Within the framework of the Governance Review Committee (GRC) established further to Resolution No 12 adopted by the World Assembly of Delegates of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) on 30 May 2024, which provides a negotiation forum inclusive of WOAH Membership with representatives from each region, the Member States that are Members of the GRC representing the WOAH Region of Europe will represent the Union as its negotiator and aim at amendments to the WOAH Basic Texts that ensure flexibility and adaptability of governance arrangements required to effectively navigate evolving situations.
2. The negotiators shall endeavour to achieve a comprehensive negotiated outcome, which encompasses the objectives and principles outlined below, in view of revised WOAH Basic Texts that are fit-for-purpose and capable of supporting an efficient, effective, and sustainable WOAH into the future. Throughout this process, the negotiator shall consult the Working Party on Animals and Veterinary Questions (Chief Veterinary Officers and coordinate with the Commission.
3. In this regard, the negotiators should endeavour to seek to:
 - a. consolidate the mandate of WOAH and strengthen its role in matters falling within its mandate at global and regional level, while setting out specific arrangements for cooperation with relevant international organisations and non-governmental stakeholders including by taking into account the Union's One Health approach;
 - b. clarify the roles and responsibilities of the WOAH Secretariat including its Regional and Sub-Regional Representatives and that of its Members' Delegates, as well as WOAH governance bodies such as the World Assembly of Delegates, Council and Regional Commissions;
 - c. strengthen the science system of WOAH by reforming existing expert bodies, ensuring increased transparency and effectiveness in decision-making including in relation to international standard setting;
 - d. achieve active participation of Members in the work of the WOAH and increase the effective implementation of WOAH international standards by Members;
 - e. establish sound financial mechanisms that are based on transparency, fairness and solidarity, aiming at efficient use of available resources;
 - f. facilitate the process of further amending the WOAH Basic Texts to address changing needs.
4. The negotiators should endeavour to ensure that the WOAH Basic Texts are consistent with relevant Union law and policies, as well as the Union's commitments under other relevant multilateral agreements.