



World Organisation
for Animal Health
Founded as OIE

31st Conference of the
Regional Commission for Europe
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 30 September to 4 October 2024

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

1. Following the kind invitation of the Government of Uzbekistan, the 31st Conference of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Regional Commission for Europe was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from 30 September to 4 October 2024.
2. A total of 146 participants, comprising WOAH Delegates and representatives of 32 Members of the Region and senior officers from 8 regional and international organisations, attended the Conference. In addition, representatives of the private sector as well as private veterinary organisations from the Region and from the host country were present.

Members of the Commission: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Rep., Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, and Uzbekistan.

International/regional/national organisations: European Commission (EC), European Federation for Animal Health and Sanitary Security (*Fédération Européenne pour la Santé Animale et la Sécurité Sanitaire*, FESASS), European Commission for the Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease (EuFMD), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), World Bank (WB), and World Health Organization (WHO).

3. Dr Abrar Akbarov, Delegate of Uzbekistan, Dr Susana Pombo, President of the World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Portugal, Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, Director General, Dr Maris Balodis, President of the Regional Commission for Europe and Delegate of Latvia, Dr Budimir Plavšić, Regional Representative, Dr Mereke Taitubayev, Sub-Regional Representative for Central Asia, Dr Estelle Hamelin, Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, Dr Etienne Bonbon, President of the Code Commission, also participated in the Conference. The speakers of the two main Technical Items, namely Dr Olga Svetlana Munoz Pogoreltseva, Research Fellow at the *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie (IZS Ve) e del Molise*, for the Technical Item I, and Prof. Beatriz Martinez Lopez, Director of the Center for Animal Disease Modelling and Surveillance, for the Technical Item II, honoured the Conference with their presence.

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2024

Opening ceremony

4. The following authorities gave a welcome address:
 - Dr Bahrom Norqobilov, Chairman of Veterinary and Livestock Development;
 - Dr Susana Pombo, President of the World Assembly of Delegates and Delegate of Portugal;
 - Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, Director General, and
 - Dr Maris Balodis, President of the Regional Commission for Europe and Delegate of Latvia.
5. Delegates and participants were honoured by the opening address of the Honourable Abdulla Airpov, Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, delivered by the Chairman of the Veterinary and Livestock Development Committee, Dr Bahrom Norkobilov, during the opening ceremony.

High-level Panel on One Health Coordination

6. The panel consisted of 11 speakers, each providing a brief insight into the specific contributions and challenges of their sector in advancing One Health. These included representatives from national authorities in Uzbekistan, including the Committee on Veterinary and Livestock Development, Sanitary-Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health, Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, and the Plant Protection and Quarantine Agency; representatives from members of the Quadripartite Collaboration on One Health; the World Bank; and the President of WOA World Assembly of Delegates.
7. The following key points emerged from the panel presentations and discussions:
 - The veterinary sector plays a vital role in safeguarding animal health and welfare, which has a direct impact on public health outcomes. Veterinary professionals have key responsibilities in disease prevention, surveillance, early detection, preparedness and response, making their involvement in One Health initiatives essential.
 - Strong coordination between national health authorities, mirroring cooperation between animal, human, and environmental health sectors at regional and global levels, is needed to ensure the success of these initiatives.
 - The lessons and best practices developed in Europe, particularly through forums such as this, should serve as models for other regions. Engaging stakeholders through a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach will help ensure that One Health policies are effective and impactful at the national level.
8. Dr Chadia Wannous, One Health Senior Specialist and Global Coordinator, moderated the discussions which highlighted the main barriers to implementing the One Health approach in practice, what is needed to ensure the functionality and sustainability of the One Health approach, how these efforts can be aligned with global One Health strategies to ensure a coherent and comprehensive approach across Europe and beyond, and finally the contribution of the veterinary sector and frontline workforce to the implementation of One Health and how they can make a difference.

Approval of the Programme

9. The President of the Regional Commission presented the provisional programme, which was adopted without amendment. The final programme is available in Annex 1.

Appointment of the Conference Committee

10. In order to facilitate the appointment of the Conference Committee, the President of the Regional Commission presented to the Delegates, for their suggestions and comments, a proposal drawn up by the Bureau of the Regional Commission and the regional members of the Council, taking into account geographical representativeness.
11. The Conference Committee was elected by Delegates as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Abrar Akbarov (Uzbekistan)
Vice-Chairperson:	Dr Vasili Basiladze (Georgia)
Rapporteur General:	Dr Lojas Bogнар (Hungary)

Appointment of Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

12. In order to facilitate the appointment of the Session Chairpersons and Rapporteurs, the President of the Regional Commission presented to the Delegates, for their suggestions and comments, a proposal drawn up by the Bureau of the Regional Commission and the regional members of the Council, taking into account geographical representativeness.
13. Chairpersons and Rapporteurs were designated for the Technical Items as follows:

Technical Item I:	Dr Galib Abdulaliyev, Azerbaijan (Chairperson) Dr Tatjana Karačić, Croatia (Rapporteur)
Technical Item II:	Dr Ole-Herman Tronerud, Norway (Chairperson) Dr Daniela Von Blumroder, Germany (Rapporteur)

Empowering Veterinary Services, increasing visibility and modernising WOAH to face animal health challenges

14. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, WOAH Director General, addressed her first keynote speech to the Regional Commission for Europe “Empowering Veterinary Services, increasing visibility and modernising WOAH to face animal health challenges”.
15. She began her presentation by reminding the Regional Commission of what WOAH offers to its Members. She emphasised that although there is still work to be done, WOAH is currently making progress and achieving significant improvements. Among the key points highlighted by the Director General were that:
 - WOAH is the global leader in disease data collection and the development of animal health and zoonoses standards that enable early detection, control of pathogens and ensure safe international trade in animals and animal products, thereby supporting sustainable and safer animal health practices.
 - By officially recognising animal health status, WOAH facilitates safe trade, increases economic opportunities, and improves access to regional and international markets.
 - WOAH plays a vital role in sustainable economic growth, poverty alleviation, and food security by guiding and supporting the implementation of strategies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - As a key player in global health governance, WOAH works with partners to address global health challenges, particularly through frameworks such as the Quadripartite and the GF-TADs.
 - The organisation is also dedicated to building the capacity of Veterinary Services through its PVS Pathway programme, and
 - With over 800 global experts and its collaboration with the Reference Centres, WOAH develops and disseminates technical information and facilitates regional cooperation to improve global animal health.
16. Dr Soubeyran then highlighted the current challenges faced by WOAH and its Members, such as the increasing burden of vector-borne diseases, current societal demands for environmentally sustainable practices in agriculture and food production to combat climate change and protect ecosystems, growing public concern about animal welfare, the prioritisation of transparency in food supply chains and ethically sourced products, which require responsible and humane production methods. In addition, there is a growing expectation of community involvement in decision-making processes related to agricultural, animal health and environmental policies, ensuring inclusivity and consideration of diverse perspectives. All this, coupled with the fact that the 2022 WOAH Observatory report highlighted that only 7% of WOAH Members have optimal capacity. In this sense, the Director General recognised the importance of being aware of these challenges and clearly identifying them in order to efficiently adapt future actions.

17. The Director General then outlined the future actions that WAOH will take to ensure that it is ready to respond to the needs of its Members. She emphasised that WAOH is committed to ensuring that Veterinary Services can operate at optimum capacity and therefore the Organisation is ready to adapt quickly, adjust its activities and embrace new ideas and solutions by reviewing its governance, policies and activities to ensure relevant approaches to help Members meet current and future challenges.
18. She highlighted her 3 main priorities: increasing the visibility of the Organisation, strengthening the Veterinary Services and modernising WAOH.
19. Dr Soubeyran concluded by asking Members to reconsider their current level of contribution to the Organisation as the future of WAOH depends on sustainable and equitable funding and statutory contributions are the cornerstone of this foundation. She urged Members to increase their statutory contributions, where possible, to help WAOH distribute its costs more fairly.
20. Main conclusions from Dr Soubeyran's presentation were as follows:
 - WAOH is deeply committed to serving every one of its Members. To do that effectively, its need secure funding through the regular budget, to continue meeting Members' needs, fostering networks, and building capacity across all regions. Ensuring that WAOH has the necessary resources for staffing and to support its activities is essential to maintaining the ability to respond to the challenges Members face.
 - Sustainable finance for WAOH could be provided through the increasing of contributions of Members (the statutory contributions (by changing the category), and also through voluntary contributions). Also, through secondment of staff, and of course through extraordinary contributions by Members and through donors support, and
 - By increasing statutory contributions to WAOH regular budget, Members enable WAOH to support all regions equitably and expand its work in a sustainable way. This allows the Organisation to align with Members' specific needs, rather than the priorities of external financial partners.
 - The urgent need to increase the visibility of Veterinary Services, their leadership in animal health, the relevance of their work and their key contribution to global health. There is an urgent need to ensure that the voice of the Veterinary Services and the voice of WAOH is heard at a global level in all key political fora.
 - The need to better involve the Veterinary sector in the One Health agenda and to ensure cooperation of the public, animal and environmental sectors.

Host country presentation

21. Dr Abrar Akbarov, Delegate of Uzbekistan, made a brief presentation regarding Uzbekistan and its unique culture, agriculture and livestock sector.
22. He started by underlining that agriculture plays a crucial role in Uzbekistan's economy, contributing approximately 25% of GDP and employing 26% of the workforce. Livestock production accounts for over 50% of agricultural output, with Uzbekistan being the largest producer of beef, mutton, milk, poultry meat, eggs, and fish in Central Asia. More than 3 million people are directly engaged in the livestock sector, impacting the livelihoods of over 5 million citizens.
23. He provided details regarding the Veterinary Committee's work and how WAOH's collaboration has supported the country. He indicated that significant achievements have been made by Uzbekistan's Veterinary Services, notably through the successful use of the WAOH PVS Pathway Programme. Between 2007 and 2024, six PVS activities were conducted. These efforts, supported by national funds and international partners such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the French Development Agency, and from the International Agricultural Development Fund, have strengthened the country's disease control capacity and led to priority investments.

24. The expansion of animal product exports has also been notable, with over 20 types of products being exported to more than 45 countries.
25. Uzbekistan's disease control capacity is regarded as excellent, with extensive and solid disease control programmes, advanced epidemiological surveillance, and good border inspection posts. Additionally, Uzbekistan was recently awarded funding by the Pandemic Fund, which will support a new PVS mission in 2025 to re-evaluate the performance of Veterinary Services. This evaluation will monitor progress in disease prevention, control, and emergency response.
26. The Regional Commission for Europe welcomed the presentation and progress made by Uzbekistan to improve its Veterinary Services and thanked Dr Abrar Akbarov for his presentation.

Technical item I (with questionnaire):

Pandemic preparedness in Europe: the role of Animal Health and Veterinary Services in One Health and pandemic preparedness

27. Technical Item I, entitled "*Pandemic preparedness in Europe: the role of Animal Health and Veterinary Services in One Health and pandemic preparedness*", presented by Dr Olga Svetlana Munoz Pogoreltseva, Researcher, *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie*, along with the interactive discussion facilitated by Dr Chadia Wannous, One Health Senior Specialist and Global Coordinator, prompted some discussions among participants, allowing the Regional Commission for Europe to elaborate a recommendation in accordance with the WOAHP General Rules. Final recommendation available in Annex 2.

ADIS-WAHIS presentation

28. Dr Bernard Van Goethem and Dr Peter Melens, Deputy Head of World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department, provided an update on the progress with the pilot on interconnection between the EU Animal Disease Notification System and WOAHP's World Animal Health Information System.
29. They explained that five Members contributed to this pilot (Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Latvia and Spain). Currently three of these countries (Denmark, Netherlands, Latvia) are actually using ADIS as a one portal for notifications to ADIS and WAHIS. A rigorous testing phase was implemented prior to going live and a governance agreement was signed between both organisations. Transition to interconnection may have a temporary impact on events showing in WAHIS. It is therefore imperative that EU members communicate clearly on this with their stakeholders to avoid misunderstandings.
30. Dr Melens invited Delegates to inform EU and WOAHP if they want to become part of the next wave of interconnections.

WAHIS: what has changed, and what is in it for you

31. Dr Jenny Hutchison, Head of the World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department (WAHIAD), delivered a presentation on the latest enhancements of the World Animal Health Information System (WAHIS), and the reporting situation of European Members.
32. She provided a context of African Swine fever (ASF) reporting in Europe to support a panel discussion regarding use of WAHIS and reporting practices with particular emphasis on the use of stable events.
33. Six panellists (Azerbaijan, Croatia, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, and Latvia) participated in the discussion. Panellists agreed that:
 - WAHIS and its official information is extremely important to support their decision-making, including but not limited to trade.
 - WAHIS is also important for decisions related to the prevention of transboundary spread of diseases, and for allocation of resources for surveillance and preparedness.

- Panellists reflected on the burden of reporting rapidly-moving events with many outbreaks.
- They described the advantages and disadvantages of reporting events as stable. Panellists asked for clarification of the definition of 'stable event'.
- Subsequent discussion emphasised the need to enable bulk upload and download of WAHIS event and outbreak information.

**WOAH Standards Setting Process panel discussion:
Aquatic Code and Manual, Terrestrial Code and Manual**

34. Dr Etienne Bonbon and Dr Emmanuel Couacy-Hymann, Presidents of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission and the Biological Standards Commission respectively, presented an update of the work plans of these Specialist Commissions following their meetings in September 2024, with a special focus on the priority work, in particular on the texts to be circulated for comments, ongoing work, and new work to be started soon.
35. They also reminded Members of the key principles for ensuring effective participation by Members, as well as where all relevant information is made available to Members and other interested parties.
36. The Presidents discussed with Members of the Regional Commission about potential topics of interest and priorities for the Region. Among the points highlighted there were:
 - That it is key for Members to engage in the standards setting process, not only to make comments, but also to provide ideas, priorities, new topics, and expertise.
 - Transparency, allowing to see comments from other Members is much appreciated.
 - One Health and Zoonoses have been identified as priorities by the Region and therefore it was noted that it is important for WOAHA to update the relevant Chapters on Zoonoses as it is key to show the One Health community that WOAHA is on top of the One Health issues and to ensure that the voice of the Veterinary Services is well understood.
 - In the case of new requests from Members, the standards development process needs to be taken into account; standards take time to validate, so WOAHA needs to be ready to find solutions to meet members' needs.
37. Dr Etienne Bonbon and Dr Emmanuel Couacy-Hymann undertook to inform their respective Specialist Commission at their next meeting of the points raised during the discussion, for consideration in the discussion of their work plans.

WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2024

**Technical item II (without questionnaire):
Advancements in the Veterinary Services through Digitalisation (Data Management,
Veterinary Information Systems, Big Data, Meta Language, Artificial Intelligence)**

38. Technical Item II, entitled “Advancements in the Veterinary Services through Digitalisation (Data Management, Veterinary Information Systems, Big Data, Meta Language, Artificial Intelligence)”, presented by Prof. Beatriz Martinez-Lopez, Director of the Center for Animal Disease Modeling and Surveillance, University of California, Davis, prompted interesting discussions among participants, allowing the Regional Commission for Europe to elaborate a recommendation in accordance with the WOAHA General Rules. Final recommendation available in Annex 3.

The PVS Information System: Objectives, access to, and use of PVS data

39. Ms Barbara Alessandrini, Head of WOAAH Capacity Building Department, provided all the conference participants with a training session aiming at appreciating how the PVS (Performance of Veterinary Services) Information System can support Veterinary Services' efforts to develop investment cases and strategic plans for performance maintenance and improvement.
40. A simulation exercise supported by a role-play based on a likely scenario (newly appointed Delegate requested to showcase priorities and strategic investment needs for disease surveillance and prevention to the Ministry of Agriculture) and consisting in accessing to data and evidence to defend investment cases for Veterinary Services, involved the audience divided into two main roles: the role of Delegate and the one of a Partner/Donor.
41. A "fake" training environment was built under the PVS Information System and put at disposal of the participants so that all could practice on how to extract the relevant information needed to define the "Tryland" country priorities and negotiate to obtain support and investments.
42. Eighty-one per cent of participants evaluated that access to the Information System data will improve their capacity to use the recommendations included in the PVS Evaluation report.

Disaster management: Examples of country management (Greece and Kazakhstan) and communication and social media during disasters

43. Dr Estelle Hamelin, WOAAH Sub-Regional Representative in Brussels, moderated the session, which aimed to provide the Regional Commission with information on disaster communication management, focusing on the role of social media in disaster communication, challenges and effective use of social media, including some examples from Greece and Kazakhstan on country disaster management models and best practices.
44. Ms Daria Ortiz Suardy, from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (EU DG ECHO), opened the session by highlighting the key role of social media in ensuring clear, timely and transparent communication during disasters. Social media is used to provide real-time updates, engage with affected communities and share critical information about relief efforts. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are key to quickly disseminating information and raising awareness of humanitarian aid.
45. Social media are particularly useful for their ability to quickly reach a wide audience, including affected populations and international observers. Thus, Ms Ortiz Suardy stressed that to ensure good communication during disasters, it is key to be fast, clear, keep information short and simple, be human, exclusive and creative.
46. Finally, the participants had the opportunity to listen to examples and experiences from Greece and Kazakhstan, which allowed the Regional Commission to conclude that all WOAAH Members vulnerable to natural disasters (hot and dry climate in summer, floods in winter) can benefit from the WOAAH guidelines and be supported by the WOAAH Animal Welfare Platform.

Feedback from the Observatory regarding Europe region: A focus on the use, challenges and impact of zoning and compartmentalisation

47. Dr Caroline Paquier, Senior programme manager for the Observatory, presented the indicators assessing the level of implementation for Zoning and Compartmentalisation from the [2022 Monitoring report](#) and the results in relation with trade of its first thematic study "[Use, challenges and impact of zoning](#)".
48. She explained that the monitoring indicators are not intended to demonstrate facts, but they can still give an overall picture of the situation regarding the use of zoning and compartmentalisation.

49. Finally, Dr Paquier mentioned that the analysis of the thematic study suggests that zoning could be more widely used to benefit from its positive impact on disease control and trade. It also identifies factors that facilitate zones acceptance, such as bilateral trade relations, proper implementation of WOAHS standard and WOAHS tools that provide space for Members to demonstrate their transparency, e.g. timely notification through WAHIS, recognition of official status, self-declaration, PVS.

Discussion of recommendations

50. Draft Recommendations 1 and 2 on the two Technical Items of the Conference were presented to participants and put forward for discussion. Both draft recommendations will be submitted for adoption at the Friday session with amendments as per participants' suggestions and discussions.
51. Following adoption by the Regional Commission, the Recommendations will be submitted for endorsement by the World Assembly of Delegates in May 2025. Once endorsed by the Assembly, they will serve as an important guideline for Members of the Regional Commission for Europe, as well as for the Organisation as a whole.

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2024

Cultural visit

52. Participants greatly appreciated the cultural visit and university tour organised for the day by the host country. Sincere thanks were expressed to the organisers for their warm welcome and hospitality.
53. The day-long activities provided a unique opportunity for all participants to share knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the rich cultural and intellectual heritage of Uzbekistan. It also provided networking opportunities among the Regional Commission Members and key WOAHS partners.

FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 2024

Wildlife framework: engaging discussions and collecting feedback for a wildlife strategy and health programme adapted to Members needs-Interactive Session

54. Ms Sophie Muset, WOAHS Wildlife Programme Manager, and Dr Claire Cayol, Project Officer for Wildlife Health Information, provided details regarding the Wildlife Health programme, its objectives and ways to achieve them.
55. They highlighted the development and review process of the WOAHS Wildlife Health Framework (WHF), which was designed to support wildlife health management as part of the One Health approach. WOAHS Members, through surveys and consultations, have actively contributed to shaping this framework, showing strong engagement. The WHF is a critical component of broader health surveillance systems, focusing on wildlife health throughout the supply chain.
56. Among the key milestones there are the Members' consultations in 2020 and 2022–2023, with significant input from WOAHS Delegates and the adoption of Resolution #31, which underscores the importance of wildlife health in achieving One Health resilience.
57. Finally, the team informed that WOAHS was preparing the next phase of the Wildlife Health programme [2026-2030], involving review of the strategy, Logic model, and the achievements of the implementation programme.

58. They underlined that Members' opinions and priorities will be key to guide the next Wildlife Health Strategy ensuring that the framework remains aligned with Members' needs and effectively supports wildlife health and surveillance efforts globally.
59. Dr Chadia Wannous moderated a consultation session which aimed at getting Delegates' opinions about the WOH Wildlife Health Framework's achievements, confirm Delegates' engagement and support in the next WOH Wildlife Health Strategy, and collect Delegates' priorities for the next WOH Wildlife Health Strategy.

Presentation on the New Standards Navigation tool

60. Dr Ronald Mora, Scientific Officer of the WOH Standards Department, presented the new WOH Standards Navigation Tool, which should be launched before the end of the year.
61. He explained that this new tool is in line with the 7th Strategic Plan Framework, as it is in line with the objectives of digital transformation and innovation, strengthening global health security, and using technology to support Members.
62. Dr Mora explained that the tool will provide a single point of access to WOH standards with an intuitive search and filter system for easy navigation of WOH's terrestrial and aquatic codes and manuals. It will allow users to visualise recommendations for safe international trade by commodity. And, in the case of WOH internal use, it will provide a dedicated platform to centralise and efficiently manage and update WOH International Standards following the adoption of new or revised texts by the WOH General Assembly.
63. He also commented that this tool offers potential for future integration with other WOH tools to enhance data usage and cross-referencing of standards data with other organisational platforms. It also opens up new opportunities for data analysis and insight, allowing long inaccessible data to be used to improve understanding and standardisation of data elements within the standards.
64. Dr Mora concluded the presentation with a demonstration of the tool and how to navigate through it.
65. The Regional Commission welcomed the progress made by WOH to facilitate the Standards navigation making them more accessible and manageable.

Conference conclusions and Adoption of Recommendations

66. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran presented the Recommendations to the Delegates, including all the comments made during the discussion session. She explained the procedures for the adoption of recommendations, stressing that they must be adopted during the current session and cannot be amended subsequently, only editing being accepted.
67. The two draft recommendations were unanimously adopted and will be published along with the final report.
68. Dr Soubeyran then summarised the main conclusions of the conference, recognising that the interactive and fruitful exchanges during the week had enabled WOH to better understand the needs and challenges of its Members, which would be key in adapting the organisation's activities and shaping its future strategies. She hoped that the week's discussions would also enable Members to understand the need for active engagement with WOH, including in terms of financial sustainability.

Proposal of date and venue of the 32nd Conference of the Regional Commission

69. The President of the Regional Commission asked the Delegates present if any of them wished to host the 32nd Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe in 2026.
70. He mentioned that he would like to propose his own country to host the next Conference.
71. The Regional Commission welcomed Latvia's proposal to host the next Conference.
72. This proposal will be confirmed at the Regional Commission meeting in May 2025 and submitted to the World Assembly of Delegates for formal endorsement.
73. Exact dates will then be decided in consultation with WOAHA Director General.

Closing ceremony

74. Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, thanked Uzbekistan for being an excellent host and for the warm welcome accorded to the participants, making their stay in Samarkand pleasant and memorable.
75. She particularly thanked His Excellency the Prime Minister for his support of the Conference, which was key to ensure its success, and for giving her the opportunity to visit him and exchange views on Uzbekistan and WOAHA cooperation.
76. She thanked Dr Bahromjon Norqobilov, the Chairman of the State Committee for Veterinary and Livestock Development, and Dr Abrar Akbarov, WOAHA Delegate, for hosting this very important event for the Region and for all the warm welcome extended to the participants during the four days and for all the efforts made to ensure its success.
77. Finally, she thanked everyone who had made this conference a success, the speakers, the Delegates, the interpreters, and all WOAHA team.
78. In conclusion, she reiterated that WOAHA will continue to work to ensure that its programmes remain relevant and responsive to the expectations of its Members, and reminded everyone that feedback from Delegates is vital to WOAHA in order to ensure that it is better able to respond to the needs of its Members.
79. Dr Abrar Akbarov, Delegate of Uzbekistan, on behalf of his Government and himself, thanked all participants for their active participation in the week's discussions and activities, the speakers, the organisers and the WOAHA team for the productive conference. He wished the participants a safe journey home and hoped that they would have enjoyed their stay in Samarkand.
80. Dr Maris Balodis, President of the Regional Commission for Europe and Delegate of Latvia, reiterated his thanks and congratulations to the Government of Uzbekistan for the excellent organisation of the Conference and the warm welcome and hospitality extended to all participants.
81. He declared the Conference officially closed at 12:30 p.m.



31st Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from 30 September to 4 October 2024

PROGRAMME

SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2024

Arrival of participants

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

- 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Arrival of participants / Conference registration and distribution of material
- 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. **SIDE EVENT:** 2nd GF-TADs Standing Group of Experts on HPAI
(Chairperson: Dr Bernard Van-Goethem, EU/ DG SANTE)
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch break
- 2:00 p.m. Opening ceremony
- 3:30 p.m. Group Photo/ Break
- 4:00 p.m. High-level One Health Panel: President of WOA World Assembly of Delegates, Representatives of national authorities on public health, animal health, environmental protection of Uzbekistan, Representative of World Bank, Vice-president of the Regional Commission of WOA for Europe, Representatives of the regional Quadripartite in Europe (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA)
- 5:00 p.m. Open posters session
- 5:30 p.m. Official reception hosted by Uzbekistan on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of WOA
- 7:30 p.m. End of the day

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER 2024

- 9:00 a.m. Opening, Approval of the Programme
Appointment of the Conference Committee
(Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, General Rapporteur)
Appointment of session chairpersons and rapporteurs
(Technical items)
- 9:10 a.m. Empowering Veterinary Services, increasing visibility and modernising WOA to face animal health challenges (Dr Emmanuelle Soubeyran, WOA Director General)
- 9:40 a.m. Discussion
- 10:10 a.m. Host country presentation (Dr Abrar Akbarov, WOA Delegate of Uzbekistan)
- 10:40 a.m. Break
- 11:10 a.m. Technical Item I (with questionnaire): Pandemic preparedness in Europe: the role of Animal Health and Veterinary Services in One Health and pandemic preparedness (Dr Olga Svetlana Munoz Pogoreltseva, Researcher, *Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale delle Venezie*)

11:50 a.m.	Interactive discussion on the Technical Item I (Facilitator: Dr Chadia Wannous, One Health Senior Specialist and Global Coordinator)
12:30 p.m.	ADIS-WAHIS presentation (Dr Bernard Van Goethem and Dr Peter Melens, Deputy Head of World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department)
1:00 p.m.	Lunch <i>Preparation of Recommendation No. 1 by a designated small group</i>
2:00 p.m.	WAHIS: what has changed, and what is in it for you (presentation and panel discussion) (Dr Jenny Hutchison, Head of World Animal Health Information and Analysis Department)
3:00 p.m.	WOAH Standards Setting Process panel discussion: Aquatic Code and Manual, Terrestrial Code and Manual (Prof Emanuelle Couacy, President of the Biological Standards Commission, and Dr Etienne Bonbon, President of the Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission)
4:00 p.m.	Break
4:30 p.m.	SIDE EVENT: 10th GF-TADs Regional Steering Committee for Europe (Chairperson: Dr Bernard Van Goethem, EU SANTE)
6:30 p.m.	End of the day

WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2024

9:00 a.m.	Technical item II (without questionnaire): Advancements in the Veterinary Services through Digitalisation (Data Management, Veterinary Information Systems, Big Data, Meta Language, Artificial Intelligence) (Prof. Beatriz Martinez-Lopez, Director of the Center for Animal Disease Modeling and Surveillance, University of California, Davis)
9:45 a.m.	Discussion
10:15 a.m.	Break <i>Preparation of Recommendation No. 2 by designated small group</i>
10:45 a.m.	The PVS Information System: Objectives, access to, and use of PVS data (Ms Barbara Alessandrini, Head of WOAHA Capacity Building Department) (<i>all participants should bring their computer/tablet to this session</i>)
12:45 p.m.	Lunch
2:00 p.m.	Disaster management: Examples of country management (Greece and Kazakhstan) and communication and social media during disasters (Ms Daria Ortiz Suardy, EU DG ECHO) (Facilitator: Dr Estelle Hamelin, Subregional Representative in Brussels)
3:00 p.m.	Discussion
3:15 p.m.	Feedback from the Observatory regarding Europe region: A focus on the use, challenges and impact of zoning and compartmentalisation (Dr Caroline Paquier, Senior Programme Manager, WOAHA Observatory, Data Integration Department) (virtual presentation)
3:45 p.m.	Discussion
4:00 p.m.	Break
4:30 p.m.	Discussion of recommendations Nos. 1 and 2
5:30 p.m.	Selection of the New composition of the RCG
6:00 p.m.	End of the Session

7:30 p.m. Official dinner hosted by WOAH

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER 2024

Cultural visit organised by Uzbekistan

Official dinner hosted by Uzbekistan

FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 2024

09:00 a.m.	Wildlife framework: engaging discussions and collecting feedback for a wildlife strategy and health programme adapted to Members needs-Interactive Session (Ms Sophie Muset, Wildlife Health Programme Manager) (virtual presentation) (Facilitator: Dr Chadia Wannous)
10:00 a.m.	Presentation on the New Standards Navigation tool (Dr Ronald Mora, Scientific Officer, WOAH Standards Department) (virtual presentation)
11:00 a.m.	Break
11:30 a.m.	Conference conclusions and Adoption of Recommendations
12:15 p.m.	Proposal of date and venue of the 32nd Conference of the Regional Commission
12:30 p.m.	Closing ceremony
1:00 p.m.	End of the Conference/Lunch

31st Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe
Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from 30 September to 4 October 2024

Final

Recommendation No. 1

**The role of Animal Health and Veterinary Services in One Health
and pandemic prevention and preparedness**

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Members of the Europe region recognise the importance of the One Health (OH) approach including its crucial role in pandemic prevention and preparedness;
2. Members of the Europe region are engaged in advancing the OH approach through various means and mechanisms, and they are working to further develop it to address health threats at the animal-human-environment interface taking into account Climate Change;
3. The Regional One Health Coordination Mechanism was established in 2021 by the Regional Quadripartite organisations (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOA) to support Members in the implementation of the One Health approach, supported by scientific advice from the One Health High Level Expert Panel;
4. The WOA Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway being one of the selection criteria for the scoring of applications of the Pandemic Fund hosted by the World Bank;
5. The One Health Joint Plan of Action and its implementation guide, is a collaborative, participatory effort among the Quadripartite organisations, to strengthen country-level collaboration, communication, capacity building, and coordination equally across all sectors responsible for addressing health concerns at the human-animal-environment interface;
6. The UN General Assembly political declaration adopted in September 2023 calling for strengthening high-level international coordination allowing Members commitment to better prevent, prepare for and respond to pandemics;
7. Supportive political environment and legislative structure at national, regional and global levels, as well as adequate financial support, are key for the successful implementation of the OH approach;
8. Operationalisation of OH requires leadership from animal, human, and environment sectors; with meaningful involvement of civil society and academia, including collaboration with sub-regional, regional, and global partners. It also requires inter-ministerial cooperation and data sharing as well as coordinated research.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Governments of WOAHA Members provide political support and engagement to the OH approach by:
 - a. Promoting the OH approach through advocacy for policies that integrate OH principles and communication campaigns for the general public based on concrete challenges/examples;
 - b. Supporting the development of the relevant legal framework to ensure a solid legal foundation for the application of the OH approach that encourages intersectoral collaboration, information sharing and the representation of relevant sectors and stakeholders;
 - c. Considering the creation or strengthening of existing OH national coordination mechanisms or OH platform that facilitate coordination, collaboration and active participation among relevant sectors and stakeholders.
 - d. Providing sufficient and sustainable funding appropriately allocated, alongside other relevant stakeholders and donors, between sectors (public, animal and environmental health) and taking into account risk-based prioritised actions.

2. National Veterinary Services of WOAHA Members:
 - a. Advocate for political support and engagement for the OH approach and more specifically for the critical role of Veterinary Services in this approach;
 - b. Raise awareness on the importance of the OH approach to foster and create trust with the different stakeholders involved. Including government officials, health and environment professionals, veterinarians, researchers, private sector and civil society organisations to facilitate the operationalisation of the OH approach at national level;
 - c. Take advantage of the [OH operational tools](#) available to help countries operationalise OH and of the support provided by WOAHA as well as other partners of the Quadripartite to promote, coordinate, communicate and develop the OH approach;
 - d. Identify and build on the existing established mechanisms, structures, and networks that could be used as a basis to adopt and implement the OH approach at national level;
 - e. Invest in capacity building and training initiatives to enhance the skills, competencies and knowledge of the veterinary workforce to implement the OH approach;
 - f. Establish comprehensive and coordinated monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress and the impact of the implementation of OH initiatives;
 - g. Ensure risk-based prioritisation of actions highlighted in the OH Joint Plan of Action in accordance with the country's priorities and improve financing and coordination strategies for its effective implementation;
 - h. Promote and participate in global and regional initiatives creating common knowledge through capacity building or sharing experiences and developing a transboundary OH approach.

3. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH):

- a. Continue to prioritise work ensuring that the voice of the animal health sector and Veterinary Services is heard in all relevant political fora in which the global health governance is discussed;
- b. Seek support to develop economic data-driven arguments to convince governments and donors of the return of investment of the OH approach and that the cost of inaction is much higher than the cost of prevention;
- c. Continue promoting strong multisectoral collaboration at all levels (global, regional and national), through the Quadripartite Collaboration on OH, supported by the scientific advice of One Health High Level Expert Panel;
- d. Continue to provide support to Members through the PVS Pathway, and the OH specific workshops, the [IHR-PVS National Bridging Workshops](#) (NBWs), and other OH operational tools developed under the [Tripartite Zoonosis Guide](#) to facilitate implementation of the OH approach at national level;
- e. Develop training programmes for Veterinary Services on OH including practical case studies and simulation exercises, in collaboration with members of the Quadripartite including the WHO Academy.



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Recommendation No. 2

Advancements in the Veterinary Services through Digitalisation (Data Management, Veterinary Information Systems, Big Data, Meta Language, Artificial Intelligence)

CONSIDERING THAT:

1. Data in animal health and veterinary epidemiology do exist and are collected, however, they are largely under-utilised or not available in practice. They are often handled in isolation, with minimal to no communication between the different sectors involved, and there are significant challenges throughout the process, from data availability and collection, to analysis and the generation of meaningful insights;
2. The vast amount of animal health data generated daily, and big data analytics, can represent a revolution in the way we approach disease control and epidemiological surveillance;
3. Advances in genomics, sensors and information technologies are enabling more detailed and accurate characterisation of animal health;
4. Precision Veterinary Epidemiology is a concept that uses multi-level animal health data to better understand disease dynamics in a population and to design more cost-effective systems for surveillance, early detection and rapid control of animal diseases;
5. Digitalisation can bring great value to Veterinary Services, helping them to increase efficiency and sustainability of livestock production with a smaller ecological footprint, reduce environmental impact and improve disease prevention and management at local, regional and global levels;
6. There are certainly some challenges, but there is also a tremendous opportunity for Veterinary Services to use available computational tools to significantly improve animal health;
7. The legal framework for data management is comprised of a variety of laws, regulations, and guidelines that govern how data is collected, stored, processed, shared, and protected depending on the intended use for the data collection process. It aims to ensure that organisations handle data responsibly, securely, and transparently;
8. The legal framework for data management is complex and continually evolving, reflecting growing concerns over data privacy, security, and ethical use. Veterinary Services and Organisations must ensure they stay compliant with both international and national laws by adopting appropriate data management practices, policies, and governance frameworks, acknowledging the cost to generate and collect data and the potential beneficiaries of processed data.

THE REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

RECOMMENDS THAT:

1. Governments of WOAAH Members include animal health and welfare dimension in the relevant overarching policies related to digital transformation including from the perspective of legal framework for data management and link animal, human and environmental health data to support OH implementation.
2. Veterinary Services of WOAAH Members:
 - a. Sensitise high level authorities about the importance of allocating resources to enhance the quality, harmonisation, and security of data collection processes. This includes ensuring that data sets are well-documented with metadata and data dictionaries, enabling proper sharing, merging, and comparison;
 - b. Consider expanding the scope of their expertise to subjects related to proper management of data;
 - c. Develop IT systems and legal framework for data collection and analysis and share data among the Members of the Region using the existing tools to facilitate risk assessment, risk communication and decision making;
 - d. Act as a catalyst for digitisation in agriculture and aquaculture to improve data collection and assisting with data interpretation in particular through support of public private partnership involving multidisciplinary teams from academia, including data scientists and IT engineering, and private sectors;
 - e. With the support of WOAAH and its partners, share experiences on development of:
 - i. new artificial intelligence (AI) approaches and machine learning (ML) algorithms specifically adapted to animal health data.
 - ii. user-friendly tools to monitor, visualise, assess and generate "interpretable" alerts on risks in real time, digital optimisation of processes related to epidemiological investigations or certification, and to facilitate risk communication.
 - f. Use data from PVS Information System to identify priorities for improvement and advocate for resources and investments.
3. The World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH):
 - a. Keep promoting the digitalisation of Veterinary Services and develop policy and guidelines for the equitable and inclusive access of digitalisation tools to the Veterinary Services, including those in low-resource settings;
 - b. Support exchange of practices and impact assessment of the development and operation of tools for the integration and interpretation of animal health and welfare directly or indirectly related data, including generation and collection of these data;
 - c. Consider expanding its veterinary education support to include digitalisation;
 - d. Continue to pursue its own digital transformation, which was prioritised and initiated during the 7th Strategic Plan;
 - e. Consider, together with its partners and all relevant stakeholders, the development of animal health data collection harmonisation and interoperability frameworks, clear case definitions, metadata and data dictionaries.