

Terms of Reference and working mechanism of the Regional Core Group (RCG) for Europe

updated by the WOAH Regional Commission for Europe¹

Establishment of the RCG

During the 27th Conference of the WOAH Regional Commission for Europe, held in Lisbon, Portugal, in September 2016, Member Countries of the Region discussed the revitalisation of the Taskforce, which was created at the 25th Conference of the WOAH Regional Commission, held in September 2012, in Fleesensee, Germany. During the second meeting of the Taskforce, held in Riga, Latvia, in April 2017, it was decided to rename it Regional Core Group (RCG).

The Regional Core Group is a communication and cooperation mechanism aimed at strengthening communication at regional level to better support the activities of the Regional Commission. Its main task is to better link and coordinate the work of the Bureau of the Regional Commission for Europe (the Bureau), the Council (through its regional members), the nominated subregional Members, WOAH Regional and Sub-Regional Representations and, when appropriate, WOAH Headquarters, in accordance with their relevant roles and responsibilities, in order to better meet the needs and expectations of regional Members and to facilitate regional contributions to the work of the Organisation. The RCG will also facilitate the operationalisation of WOAH activities, including trainings and capacity building programmes, to enhance communication and coordination between the WOAH and the Members in the European Region.

Functions of the RCG:

The Regional Core Group mainly aims:

- To support the Bureau in specific areas of their responsibilities in accordance with the WOAH Basic Texts and this ToRs;
- To facilitate communication between the WOAH, its institutional governing bodies (regional Council members and Bureau) and the Members of the Region (Regional Commission) and WOAH Regional and subregional Representations and when appropriate, WOAH Headquarters;
- to encourage active regional participation in WOAH events, platforms and related activities, including the biennial conferences of the WOAH Regional Commissions, annual WOAH General Session, annual Regional Commission meetings during the General Session and the Regional GF-TADs or One Health meetings; to provide timely feedback to the region on significant WOAH issues;
- to gather and present regional input to relevant WOAH forums, platforms, projects and meetings;
- To enhance regional participation in the WOAH standard-setting process for selected chapters of WOAH *Terrestrial and Aquatic Animal Health Codes* and *Manuals of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial and Aquatic Animals* of particular interest to the region and promote their adoption by the WOAH World Assembly of Delegates. The RCG may help to facilitate regional common positions on key areas of mutual regional or subregional interest and propose to support the adoption of these chapters on behalf of the 53 WOAH Member Countries of Europe during the WOAH World Assembly of Delegates. To implement the mechanism for regional participation

¹ Updated by the Regional Commission for Europe during the 92nd General Session (25 May 2025).

in WOAH standard setting process and work planning cycle, as outlined in Annexes 1 and 2;

- To raise awareness among high-level authorities of Members and partners about WOAH's activities, encourage their active participation and contribution in activities of the regional interest, and prioritize the implementation of the workplan of RCG and WOAH strategic objectives
- Members of the RCG should actively follow the regional activities of WOAH. Designated Members of the RCG should participate and contribute to specific platform activities like Animal Welfare platform, GF-TADs or regional One Health coordination mechanism and others;
- To promote active communication among all Member Countries of the region and international/regional organisations, including using a regional website with a dedicated webpage for the RCG, regional conferences, *ad hoc* meetings, focal points seminars, social media, etc.

Composition and functioning of the RCG

All members of the RCG, will be selected ensuring geographical balance.

Selection and composition of RCG Members

Elected members of RCG: The Delegates who are elected members of the Bureau (in total four) and the regional members of the Council (in total two) representing the Region are ex officio members of the RCG.

Nominated members of RCG: To ensure balanced representation, RCG members will be selected from different European sub-regions. These sub-regions are defined on an ad-hoc basis by the elected members of the RCG, based on factors such as political affiliation (e.g. EU and EAEU) and geographical, epidemiological and trade considerations. A detailed breakdown of the sub-regions and their respective RCG membership allocations is provided in Annex 3, also listed here with number of Member countries belonging to each sub-region:

- o Members from the European Union (27),
- o Members of the Eurasian Economic Union (5),
- o Members from Western Europe, non-EU members (8),
- o Members from South-eastern Europe, non-EU, non-EAEU members (7),
- o Members from Western Eurasia, non-EAEU members, including the Caucasus countries (6).

Nomination process

Members (Delegates) within each sub-region will nominate their representative(s) to the RCG through a consensus-based process. The RCG Secretariat will provide technical support and guidance for this process. The Delegates will then communicate their nomination(s) to the RCG Secretariat and Bureau.

Term limits and rotation

RCG members serve three-year terms. A rotation system for nominations is recommended to ensure regular turnover and new perspectives.

Changes in RCG membership

If there is a change of Delegate in a nominated Member of the RCG, the RCG will be updated accordingly. For elected Members, replacements will be determined through election by the World Assembly during the General Session. In cases where a nominated Delegate is unable to serve, the sub-region will consult and select a new representative to be nominated to the RCG.

Communication and transparency

The composition of the RCG will be communicated to the Regional Commission for Europe to ensure

transparency and accountability.

RCG Members should maintain regular communication regularly with the other WOAH Member Countries in their geographical areas.

Other provisions on composition

The European Commission take part as observers.

President could invite experts from other organisation to dedicated sessions and specific meetings.

Roles and responsibilities

The President of the WOAH Regional Commission for Europe is the chairperson of the RCG.

The WOAH Regional Representative for Europe act as the Secretariat of the RCG. In this role, he/she must ensure the effective functioning of the RCG Secretariat in collaboration with WOAH Headquarters and Sub-Regional representatives, and the functioning of the RCG in close coordination with the Bureau and the President.

The Secretariat of the RCG will be in charge, upon agreement with the chair of the RCG, of organising all administrative matters pertaining to the RCG meetings including preparing draft minutes of meetings.

Meetings

The RCG will hold two meetings (autumn and spring) prior to the General Session. If funds available, meetings can be hosted by one of the RCG members on a rotating basis. The hosting country should provide the possibility of virtual participation. A third meeting will be organised during the WOAH General Session, prior to the meeting of the Regional Commission, to validate relevant positions, revise documents and materials and to coordinate discussions related to the adoption of new standards.

The RCG may convene a special meeting if necessary to discuss or consult on a specific WOAH matter (e.g. consideration of the development of strategic documents).

The working language in the RCG meetings is English, with simultaneous Russian interpretation when funding is available. All relevant documents will be made available in English and will be translated in Russian as needed. Alternatively, WOAH technical and administrative staff from the Regional- and Sub-Regional Representations will provide *ad hoc* consecutive interpretation and translation into Russian as needed during RCG meetings.

Regional Work Plan Framework

In order to better support the coordination of activities in the region, the WOAH Regional Commission for Europe (through the Regional Core Group) will develop a multiannual Regional work plan Framework to guide the prioritisation of activities within the Region, aligned to the WOAH global Strategic Plan.

The WOAH Regional Commission for Europe will approve the multiannual Regional Work Plan Framework, in compliance with the WOAH global Strategic Plan, and the following should be considered:

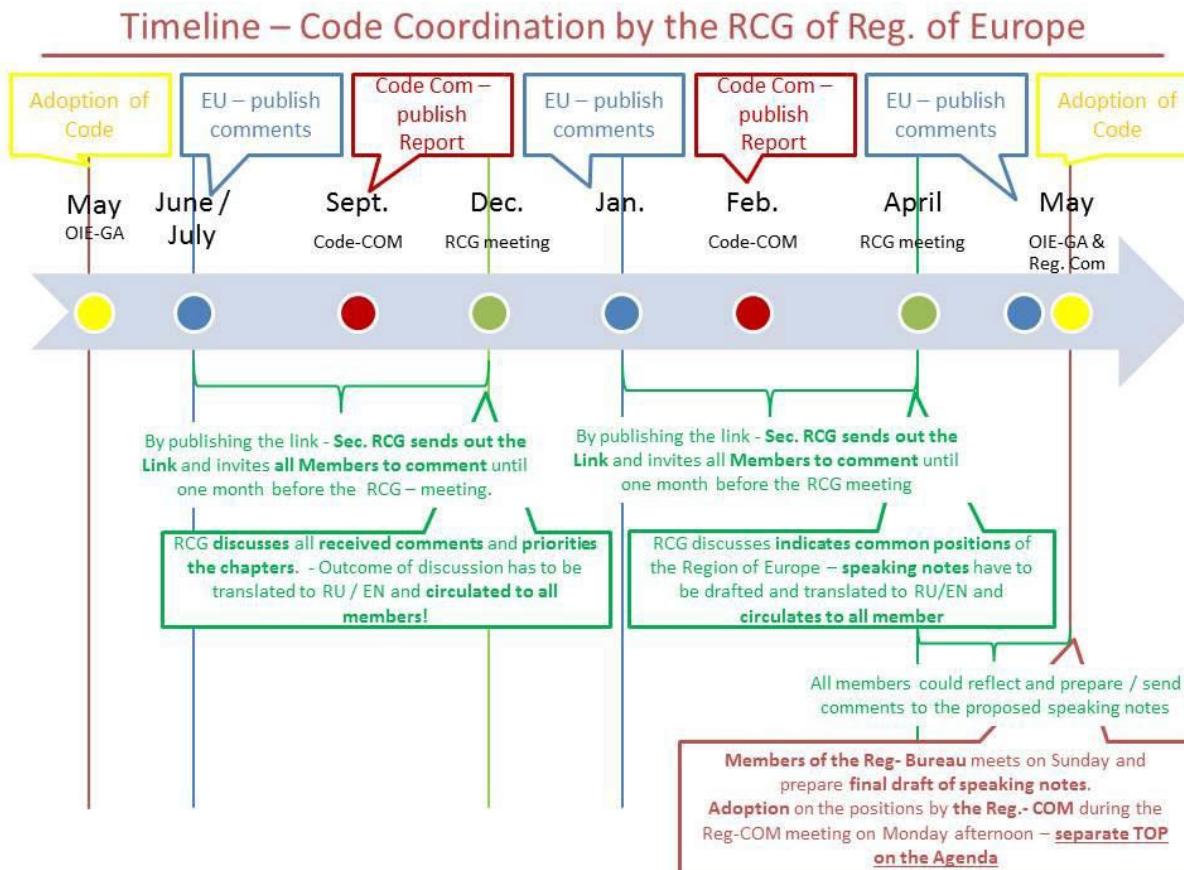
- The Regional Work Plan Framework aims at supporting the Bureau of the WOAH Regional Commission for Europe in complying with its functions, as described in the WOAH Basic Texts.
- The Regional Work Plan Framework should integrate all WOAH Activities in the Region of Europe including different platform activities like GF-TADs Europe, Animal welfare Platform, One Health workplan, etc.

- The WOAH Regional and Subregional Representatives of Europe, in accordance with Basic text, prepare the draft of a 2 year regional workplan of WOAH in September/October every year. Before the approval of this workplan by the Director General of WOAH, the RCG will discuss how contribute to the strategic orientation of the draft workplan of WOAH. In December the workplan for next year(s) is approved DG.
- The staff of the WOAH Regional- and Sub-Regional Representations will role out the activities of the 2-year workplan and report to the RCG during the regular RCG Meetings.
- The Regional Work Plan Framework of the Regional Commission and the work plan of WOAH-Europe (broken into annual work plan for that very year) are published on WOAH regional website. The Secretariat inform all regional Delegates by email about the publication.

Budget allocation

Cost related to RCG meetings may be covered by WOAH when funds available.

Annex I – Description of the mechanism for participation in the WOAH Standard Setting Process by the Region of Europe, under facilitation of the Regional Core Group



Annex II – Yearly activities of the Regional Core Group

January	February	March	April	May	June
			RCG – Meeting physical / Virtual	RCG during GA	
	WOAH Council Meeting	Publication of the relevant GS documents	Publication of Report & WOAH HQ Webinars Spec. COMs	General Session	Start Changing the Code Chapters
Publication of EU Code Position				REG COM Meeting during GA	
			Virtual Exchange to Code Changes RCG		
July	August	September	October	November	December
		Draft of the 2 year <u>workplan</u>	RCG – Meeting physical		Approval by DG
		WOAH Council Meeting	Final discussion Budget f. Activities of 2 years	Publication of the report of the specialist Commissions	
		REGIONAL Conference of REG COM (every 2 years)			
					Virtual Exchange to Code Changes

Annex III – Regional Subgroups of Members

	EU members
1	Austria
2	Belgium
3	Bulgaria
4	Croatia
5	Cyprus
6	Czech Republic
7	Denmark
8	Estonia
9	Finland
10	France
11	Germany
12	Greece
13	Hungary
14	Ireland
15	Italy
16	Latvia
17	Lithuania
18	Luxembourg
19	Malta
20	Netherlands
21	Poland
22	Portugal
23	Romania
24	Slovakia
25	Slovenia
26	Spain
27	Sweden
	Western European, non-EU
28	Andorra
29	Iceland
30	Liechtenstein
31	Israel
32	Norway
33	San Marino
34	Switzerland
35	The UK
	South Eastern Europe, (non-EU)
36	Albania

37	Bosnia and Herzegovina
38	Montenegro
39	North Macedonia
40	Serbia
41	Moldova
42	Ukraine
	Eurasian Economic Union (EEAU)
43	Armenia
44	Belarus
45	Kazakhstan
46	Kyrgyzstan
47	Russia
	Western Eurasia (excluding EEAU, including Caucasus)
48	Azerbaijan
49	Georgia
50	Turkey
51	Tajikistan
52	Turkmenistan
53	Uzbekistan

RCG membership allocations

RCG-Europe composition (2025)	Members	RCG composition
a. Elected Delegates		
1. Bureau	4	4
2. Council	2	2
	<i>Subtotal= 6</i>	
b. Nominated Delegates		
1. EU members	27	3
2. Western European, non-EU	8	1
3. South-Eastern Europe (non-EU, non-EEAU)	7	1
4. Eurasian Economic Union (EEAU)	5	1
5. Western Eurasia (excluding EEAU, including Caucasus)	6	1
	53	<i>Subtotal= 7</i>
TOTAL	53	13

RCG membership composition (May 2025 – May 2027)

RCC-Europe composition (2025)	Members	RCG composition	Delegates, elected or nominated
a. Elected Delegates			
1. Bureau	4	4	Dr Maris Balodis (Latvia) Dr Ulrich Herzog (Austria) Dr Galib Abdulaliyev (Azerbaijan) Dr Keti Margariti (Albania)
2. Council	2	2	Dr Susana Pombo (Portugal) Dr Cristine Middlemiss (The United Kingdom)
b. Nominated Delegates			
1. EU members	27	3	Dr Herman Claeys (Belgium) Dr June Fanning (Ireland) Dr Vaidotas Kiudulas (Lithuania)
2. Western European, non-EU	8	1	Dr Laurant Monnerat (Switzerland)
3. South-Eastern Europe (non-EU, non-EAEU)	7	1	Dr Sasa Boskovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
4. Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)	5	1	Dr Konstantin Savenkov (Russian Federation)
5. Western Eurasia (excluding EAEU, including Caucasus)	6	1	Dr Abrar Akbarov (Uzbekistan)
TOTAL	53		13