Regional Platform on animal welfare for Europe

Update and next action plan for 2027 - 2029

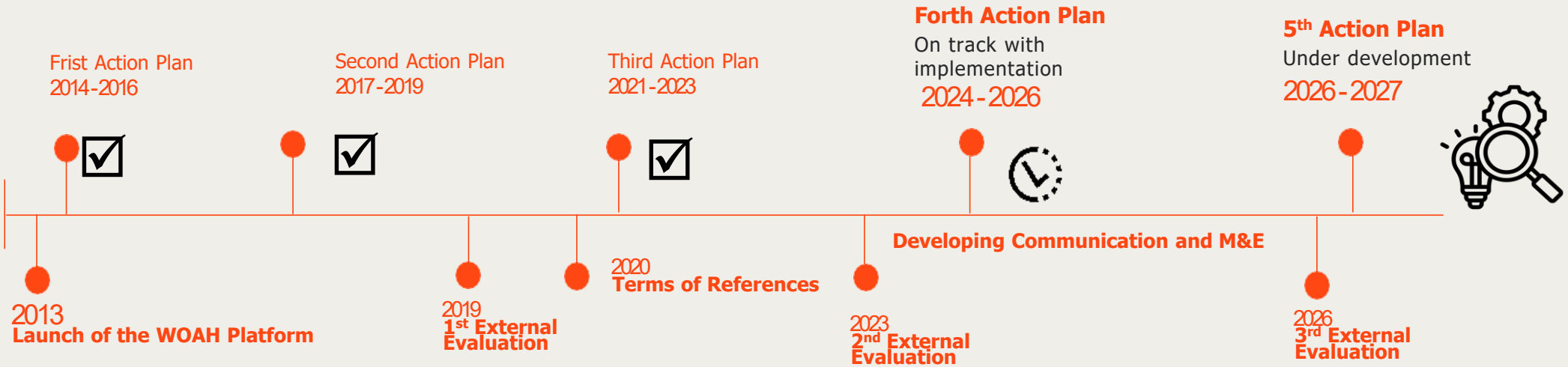
Tomasz Grudnik

WOAH SRR office in Brussels

32nd Conference of the Regional Commission for Europe
20-25 September 2026, Riga, Latvia

World Organisation for Animal Health

WOAH Regional Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe



Objectives:

- improve animal welfare across Europe
- assist Members in progressively implementing WOAH standards
- strengthen the capacities of Veterinary Services
- facilitate regional cooperation and exchange of experience
- engage relevant technical and resource partners

Priority topics

- Slaughter of animals
- Transport of animals
- Dog population management
- Animal welfare in natural disasters
- Welfare of working equids

4th Action Plan for 2024-2026

Impact (Long-term objective):

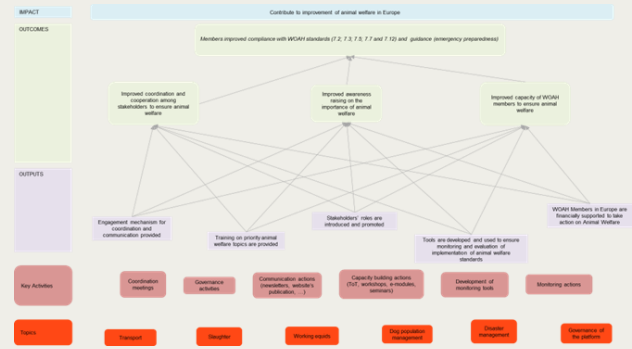
Contribute to the improvement of animal welfare in Europe through the priority topics

Outcome Objectives (short/mid-term objective)

Progressively improve the compliance of WOAH Members with WOAH standards

- **Common vision and continuity**
- **Strengthening the WOAH Members involvement**
- **Collaboration with all WOAH Members and stakeholders**





The 5th Action Plan 2027 – 2029 (proposal)

Continuity combined with targeted improvements

- continue activities that remain relevant
- complete and consolidate work initiated under the current Action Plan
- address remaining gaps in implementation
- strengthen follow-up after regional activities
- improve the monitoring and documentation of progress
- •adjust activities according to Members’ needs and available resources

Transport of animals

Current activities

- Whole Journey Scenario workshops
- Network of National Contact Points
- Transport self-assessment too

Remaining needs

- Better coordination between Competent Authorities
- Clearer responsibilities throughout the journey
- Continued practical training and guidance
- Better assessment of implementation gaps

Proposed direction for 2027–2029

- Apply the transport self-assessment tool
- Continue targeted Whole Journey Scenario activities
- Strengthen cooperation through the Contact Points network
- Provide follow-up support based on identified gaps



National Contact Points on long distance transportation for Europe

5th meeting NCP, March 2025, Thessaloniki



Whole Journey Scenario workshop on long-distance transport by land for Europe

December 2024, Paris



Development of Self-Assessment Tool

Ongoing

Slaughter of animals

Current activities

- Regional workshop in Tirana
- Development e-learning module
- Consultation with Members and technical experts
- Preparation of a common self-assessment methodology

Remaining needs

- Practical application of the revised WOAH standards
- Dissemination of the e-learning module
- Training of national experts and trainers
- Assessment of national implementation gaps

Proposed direction for 2027–2029

- Deliver Train-the-Trainers activities
- Support national use of the e-learning module
- Develop and pilot the slaughter self-assessment tool
- Facilitate exchange between Competent Authorities

The regional workshop on animal welfare during slaughter

February 2025, Tirana, Albania



- Awareness of the revised chapter on welfare during slaughter.
- Defining training needs and identifying partner organisations, authorities, and institutions for building national training programs on welfare during slaughter.

Development of e-resources on the slaughter of animals



Dog population management

Current activities

- Regional roadmaps in the Balkans, and Caucasus and Central Asia
- Regular regional workshops
- SAM4DPM self-assessments
- Support for national action plans

Remaining needs

- Address uneven progress among participating Members
- Strengthen implementation at the national and the municipal level
- Improve coordination between central and local authorities
- Maintain long-term monitoring

Proposed direction for 2027–2029

- Follow up on the regional analysis covering 2014–2026
- Support targeted national and subregional activities
- Strengthen the role of municipalities and local Veterinary Services
- Continue monitoring implementation of Chapter 7.7

6th Regional Workshop on Dog Population Management for Balkan countries

November 2024, Montenegro



5th Regional workshop on dog population management for the Caucasus and Central Asia

December 2025 - Almaty, Kazakhstan

SAM system 4DPM
Self-Assessment and Monitoring System for Dog Population Management



Animal welfare in disasters

Current activities

- Regional assessment of Veterinary Services' preparedness
- Development of national response plans
- Practical workshop in Bucharest

Remaining needs

- Better integration of animal welfare into emergency plans
- Clearer responsibilities among relevant authorities
- Practical testing of response arrangements
- Stronger multidisciplinary cooperation

Proposed direction for 2027–2029

- Support the development and review of response plans
- Conduct practical simulation exercises
- Promote exchange of tested procedures
- Strengthen cooperation with emergency management authorities

WOAH workshop on Response Plan Development for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction July 2025, Bucharest, Romania



European Civil Protection Forum 2024



Welfare of working equids

Current activities

- Regional awareness and consultation activities
- Identification of Members' needs
- Cooperation with WOAH Collaborating Centres
- Exchange of technical experience and resources

Remaining needs

- Better information on welfare conditions and implementation gaps
- Access to practical training and guidance
- Greater involvement of owners and local services

Proposed direction for 2027–2029

- Conduct targeted capacity-building activities
- Support national implementation of WOAH standards
- Develop or disseminate practical guidance
- Strengthen cooperation with specialised partners

Event on welfare of working equids

2 July 2026, Budapest, Hungary



A common approach across all priorities

From identified needs to measurable progress

1. Assess needs and implementation gaps
2. Define targeted regional or subregional support
3. Develop knowledge, skills and practical tools
4. Support application at national level
5. Monitor progress and identify remaining gaps
6. Use lessons learn to improve future activities

Strategic context

The 5th Action Plan will take account of:

- the WOAH 8th Strategic Plan
- the revision of the WOAH Global Animal Welfare Strategy
- the results and lessons of the 4th Action Plan
- findings from the evaluation of the Platform
- Members' priorities and consultation results
- relevant policy developments in Europe
- available human and financial resources

The regional Action Plan will translate the wider WOAH strategic direction into practical support for European Members.

Proposed overall objective

To support Members of the Regional Commission for Europe in progressively improving the implementation of WOAH animal welfare standards through regional cooperation, capacity building, practical tools and evidence-based follow-up.

Expected contribution

- stronger capacities within Veterinary Services
- improved coordination between responsible authorities
- better implementation of WOAH standards
- measurable progress at national and regional levels

Shared responsibility

WOAH and the Platform Secretariat

- Coordinate implementation
- Mobilise expertise and resources
- Facilitate regional cooperation
- Monitor and report progress

Members

- Identify national needs and priorities
- Nominate and involve appropriate experts
- Apply knowledge and tools nationally
- Report progress and implementation challenges

Partners

- Contribute technical expertise
- Support activities within their mandates
- Share experience, tools and resources

The success of the Action Plan will depend on active Member ownership.

Development of the 5th Action Plan

1. Review results and lessons from the 4th Action Plan
2. Consult Delegates, National Focal Points and stakeholders
3. Define priorities, objectives and expected results
4. Prepare the draft 5th Action Plan
5. Review and validate the proposal with the Steering Group
6. Submit the Action Plan to the Regional Commission for approval

The 32nd Conference is an important consultation milestone. Review and validation will continue in Q1 2027.

Governance

- WOAH Regional Commission for Europe
- Steering Group (Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Ireland, Portugal) and EU European Commission and WOAH CC AW

Stakeholders and partners

- annual coordination meetings

Communication

- developing communication strategy
- website updates
- annual newsletters
- Russian translations

Monitoring and evaluation

- tools within each priority topic
- overall indicators
- external consultant – review

Governance – Steering Group

- Member of the Bureau of the Regional Commission for Europe
- Azerbaijan
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Ireland
- Israel
- Portugal
- European Commission
- Animal Welfare Collaborating Centre
- WOAH HQ

Steering Group Meeting (SG25)
October 2025, Azerbaijan

Steering Group meeting (SG26)
9th of April 2026 (Teleconference)

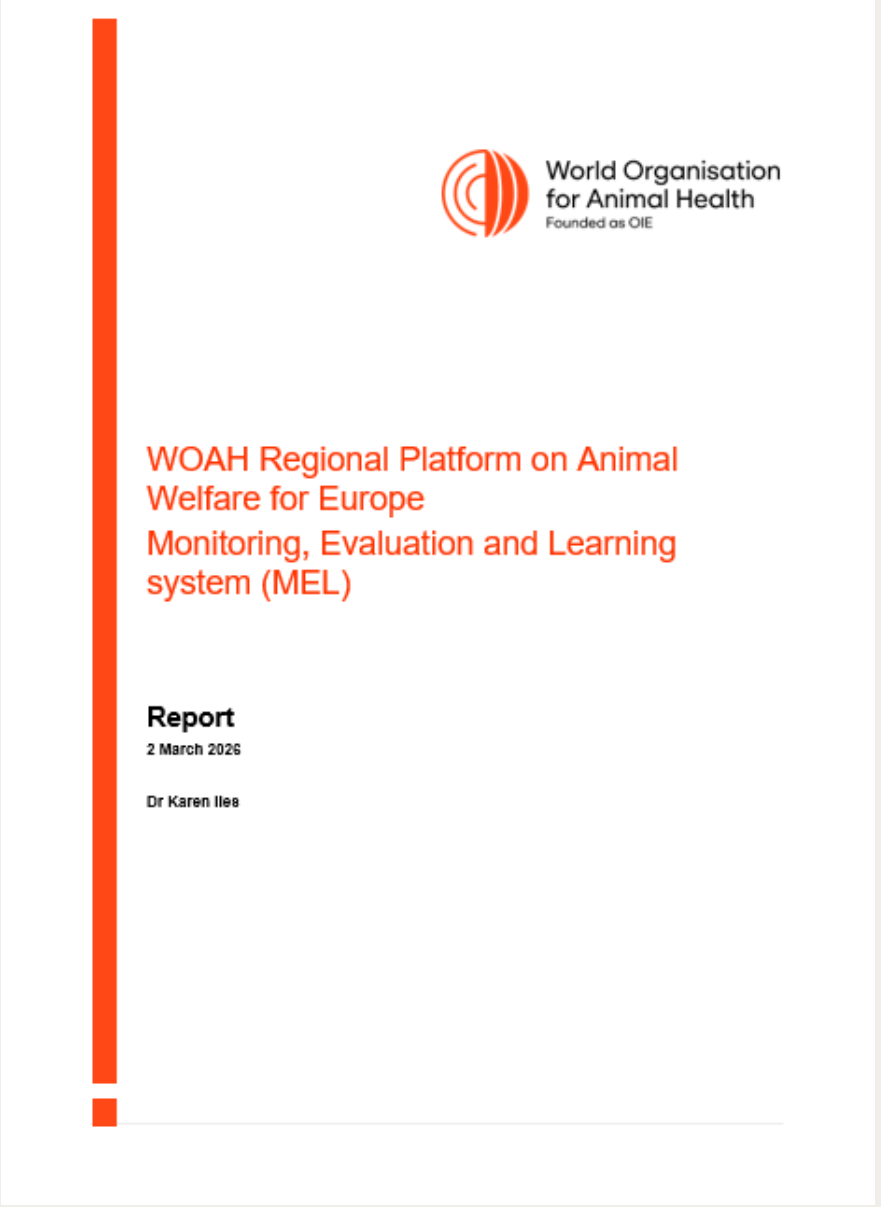
Steering Group meeting (SG27)
October 2026, Teramo (tbc)

Steering Group Meeting (SG28)
Q1/Q2 2027 online



Observers (resource partners from organisations and Member Countries, other interested parties, notably from the civil society, the industry, professional organisations, and NGO)

Monitoring
Evaluation
Learning



Monitoring Evaluation Learning

Strengths

- Support of stakeholders ~ great ideas!
- Commitment of the Secretariat to be even better
- Comprehensive reports
- Lessons & next steps
- SAM tools
- Collaborations
- Regular evaluations
- Applying evaluation recommendations

Challenges

- Foundation
- Terminology
- Time
- Reporting
- Roles
- … and more

Monitoring Evaluation Learning

Recommendations

- Engage a MEL specialist
- Update the Platform's Theory of Change
- Update the Results Framework
- Revise how the Platform reports are written
- Plan an impact study
- Create a MEL Roadmap (MEL Document and MEL Matrix).

What to do and how to do it – in the report

fully functioning M&E system that meets the needs of the Platform

Communication



Communication Channels and Activities



- **Website**
- **Events**
- **Newsletters**
- **Annual Report**
- *** Social Media**
  facebook.com/WOAHEurope x.com/WOAH_Europe



11th stakeholder consultation meeting

24th June 2026, Brussels



The regional workshop on the development of national animal welfare action plans

13 February 2025, Tirana, Albania

Funded by the European Union

- A need for a comprehensive, long-term, and sustainable approach to implementing WOAH
- animal welfare standards
- Support for targeted Members in the development of
  National Action Plans on Animal Welfare.
- A pilot initiative – follow-up to be explored



11
WOAH members

32
Participants

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine

World Organisation for Animal Health | Organisation mondiale de la santé animale | Organización Mundial de Sanidad Animal | GS

93rd General Session
SIDE EVENT

Investing in Animal Welfare: from Standards to Implementation

19 May 2026 Paris

Conclusions

- Animal welfare is a strategic investment, not just a compliance cost.
- It supports animal health, productivity, resilience and public trust.
- WOAH standards provide a science-based framework for action.
- Progress requires collaboration (governments, industry, financial institutions, academia, and civil society), innovation, digital tools, data systems and capacity building
- Strong Veterinary Services and supportive policies are essential to translate commitments into measurable outcomes.



Regional training workshop for WOAH National Focal Points on Animal Welfare

Budapest, Hungary, from 30 June to 2 July 2026.

Funded by
the European Union

- Presented the Platform's mandate, achievements and practical support to Members.
- Demonstrate its continued relevance to Members and stakeholders across Europe.
- Shared practical examples of how the Platform supports implementation of WOAH standards.
- Strengthen awareness, Member ownership and regional cooperation.
- Identify emerging needs and remaining implementation gaps, and determine which activities and forms of support to strengthen to shape the 5th Action Plan for 2027–2029.



5th Action Plan for 2027-2028

Proposed structure

- **Introduction (background and rationale)**
- **Achievements of the previous Action Plan (2024-2026)**
- **The external evaluation of the WOAH Platform**
- **Objectives**
- **Scope**
- **Activities of the 5th Action Plan**
- **Beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders**
- **Communication**
- **Reporting, monitoring and evaluation**
- **Timetable**
- **Theory of Change**
- **Results Framework**

Transport of Animals	• Continue the Network of National Contact Points on Long-Distance Transport • Whole Journey Scenario workshops (regional and multi regional with specific thematic focus e.g emergency procedure, vessels approvals) • Build and Implement the Self-Assessment Tool on Transport
Slaughter of Animals	• Disseminate and promote the e-learning programme • Organise regional and national training activities (ToT approach) • Develop the Self-Assessment Tool on Slaughter
Dog Population Management	• Continue the Balkans and Caucasus/Central Asia Roadmaps • Maintain and expand SAM4DPM assessments • Support National Action Plans and local implementation
Welfare of Animals in Disasters	• Organise simulation exercises and regional workshops • Strengthen cooperation with civil protection and emergency services • Strengthen regional (and global) collaboration, sharing expertise and resources
Welfare of Working Equids	• Regional workshops and thematic meetings • Develop and premote training and awareness materials (training session) • Engage Members CA and local partners to identify and address specific/local needs

Next meetings

- 27th Steering Group meeting
  7-8 October 2026, Teramo
- 7th Regional workshop on dog population management for the Balkans
  27 – 29 October 2026, Sarajevo
- WJS workshop Europe
  Q1 2027 Azerbaijan (tbc)
- WOAH tabletop exercise on Response Plan Development for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction
  Q2 2027 Portugal (tbc)

- For over a decade, the Platform has been highly relevant for our Members and stakeholders, assisting in the implementation of WOAH animal welfare standards across Europe.
- The 5th Action Plan will enhance our efforts and address any remaining gaps to meet the needs of our Members, with a focus on practical support, national follow-up, and measurable progress.
- The commitment of our Members and regional collaboration is key to the success of the Platform.



https://youtu.be/6Bd8jAw6tP4

Wooclap session – discussion