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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council Conclusions on the future of WOA

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the future of WOA, approved by the Council (Agriculture and fisheries) at its 4037th meeting held on 24 June 2024.

Council conclusions on the future of WOAH

1. In the context of the 100th anniversary of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), the Presidency launched an exercise to reflect on the future of WOAH. The exercise was done in parallel with the work initiated by WOAH to explore future scenarios and their implications for its governance structures and processes.
2. On the basis of the written contributions by the delegations in response to a Presidency questionnaire and of discussions at three meetings of the Working Party on Animals and Veterinary Questions (Chief Veterinary Officers), the Presidency prepared draft Council Conclusions.
3. After a subsequent round of discussions, the draft set out in Annex to this note received the support of the Working Party on Animals and Veterinary Questions (Chief Veterinary Officers) and will feed into the initial positions of the EU and its Member States in the upcoming discussions on WOAH's future.
4. In the light of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) is invited to:
 - a) confirm its agreement on the text of the Conclusions as set out in the Annex to this note,
 - b) recommend that the Council approve the Conclusions as set out in the Annex to this note.

Conclusions of the Council

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

Recalling that:

- The World Organisation on Animal Health (WOAH) is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1924 as the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) in response to the risks of transboundary animal diseases.
- The year 2024 marks the 100 year anniversary of WOAH, celebrating a century of its commitment of improving animal health and welfare.
- The Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures recognises WOAH as the relevant international organisation responsible for the development and promotion of international animal health standards and encourages the members of the World Trade Organization to base their sanitary measures on WOAH's international standards.¹

WOAH's mission

1. HIGHLIGHTS the central role of WOAH in creating transparency on the global animal disease situation over the past century.
2. RECOGNISES WOAH's unwavering commitment to global animal health and RECALLS that the Union and its Member States maintain their long-standing commitment to support WOAH's mission.

¹ Note by the Secretariat on the Relationship with Codex, IPPC and OIE, WTO, Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, G/SPS/GEN/775, May 2007; Art. 5.3.1 OIE procedures relevant to the agreement on the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures of the world trade organization, Terrestrial Animal Health Code, 10/08/22.

3. RECOGNISES the long-established expertise of WOAAH on animal health and zoonoses developed through its collection, analysis and dissemination of scientific data and information and its significant work of setting international standards, informed by science.
4. WELCOMES the leadership WOAAH has taken in other relevant issues, such as animal welfare and antimicrobial resistance, by integrating them in its scope of work over the last decades.
5. STRESSES the need for WOAAH to also timely address emerging global challenges.
6. ACKNOWLEDGES the important contribution of WOAAH, together with the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the International Plant Protection Convention, as international standard-setting bodies referenced by the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, on facilitating safe international trade in animals and animal products.

WOAH's working methods and approaches fit for the challenges of today and tomorrow

7. In the light of WOAAH's centenary, WELCOMES the initiative that WOAAH is undertaking to reflect on its future work and to revise its Basic Texts and governance to increase WOAAH's strategic agility and readiness for future challenges, with the creation of a working group that will be dedicated to follow up these initiatives.
8. ACKNOWLEDGES that WOAAH's science-based work continues to be the cornerstone of the organisation's credibility, recognising the importance of the scientific foundation of WOAAH's work.
9. In this regard, EMPHASISES that WOAAH's standards should continue to be based on the latest scientific knowledge and eventual field experience to ensure realizing them in practice.

10. STRESSES the importance of use and dissemination by WOAAH of official, timely and accurate data on animal diseases listed in WOAAH's Codes and emerging diseases, in line with the WOAAH standards adopted by the Assembly; and INVITES WOAAH to continue to increase transparency of the data used, to strengthen the feedback process for transmitted data and to ensure that data is provided in a timely manner.
11. RECOGNISES the commitment of WOAAH to work in a transparent manner and HIGHLIGHTS the need for a continuous effort to enhance transparency in the decision-making process and on the financial and budgetary reporting.
12. ENCOURAGES an open debate regarding the allocation of funds from members and from other sources ensuring financial governance that is based on transparency, that is sustainable and fair for members and that allows all members to contribute effectively and equitably whilst also safeguarding WOAAH's financial autonomy and independency.
13. RECALLS the active engagement of the Union and its Member States in WOAAH's work by inter alia delivering expertise for the development of WOAAH standards, and their continued commitment to respect those standards; in this regard, ENCOURAGES all WOAAH members to honour their commitments, so that implementation of WOAAH's standards is ensured.

WOAH's international positioning in a One Health context

14. ENCOURAGES WOAAH to continue establishing its leadership in animal health and governance of zoonotic diseases at the international stage, capitalising on its scientific and technical expertise in animal health, zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance.

15. FULLY SUPPORTS WOAHA's engagement in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the UN Environment Programme and the World Health Organization regarding cooperation to combat health risks, (the Quadripartite MoU), as WOAHA's expertise adds an indispensable component to this One Health collaboration, improves the outcomes of this partnership and contributes to the broader intersectoral One Health discussions; as well as in the Global Framework for the progressive control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), the joint FAO and WOAHA initiative to achieve agreed common goals in the prevention, detection and control of priority transboundary animal diseases at regional and global level, including improving coherent vaccination strategies.
16. RECOGNISES that WOAHA's participation in the Quadripartite collaboration demonstrates its societal role at global level and creates more awareness on the international animal health situation, making it possible for WOAHA to put its expertise on animal health and welfare, including zoonoses, foodborne diseases and antimicrobial resistance within the broad, complex and holistic context of One Health challenges.

Strategic cooperation & building capacity

17. Considering the complexity of global health issues, STRESSES that WOAHA should foster and further deepen its interdisciplinary collaboration with scientific institutions and other partners, in addition to the existing channels with Delegates and WOAHA Reference Centres, in order to share expertise and implement insights from various disciplines that can frame WOAHA's work more broadly.
18. HIGHLIGHTS that WOAHA should strive to raise awareness and increase knowledge especially on animal health, animal welfare and zoonotic diseases globally by continuing to engage stakeholders in the organisation's work and by educating the general public on WOAHA's work and animal health more generally.

19. ENCOURAGES WOAAH to continue supporting and guiding national veterinary services through, among others, the Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) Pathway; in doing so the national veterinary services and WOAAH can jointly work on improving knowledge on animal health, foodborne diseases and animal welfare at national, regional and international level.
20. STRESSES that WOAAH should continue to promote the usefulness and value of its standards and tools, as for example the Observatory, and to explain how they should be implemented at national level in order to improve the level of their implementation and the involvement of all WOAAH members in its work.
21. SUPPORTS WOAAH to take initiatives in building capacity to prevent, control and respond to animal health crises in countries with limited resources, as this will advance WOAAH's global mission and contribute to creating greater equality and solidarity in the partnerships between WOAAH members.
22. HIGHLIGHTS the necessity for an inclusive approach based on mutual understanding under WOAAH's framework, in order to increase participation of all Members in WOAAH's work.
23. In this regard, STRESSES the liaising role of WOAAHs regional commissions and RECOMMENDS to clarify and strengthen their role in order to better to take into account regional specificities.
24. REITERATES that the Union and its Member States should sustain their impact on international animal health policy, explaining and promoting their legal framework when it comes to animal health, animal welfare and zoonotic diseases as a way to keep striving for stronger international standards and to positively contribute to further progress made on these topics at international level.

25. VALUES the involvement of the Union and the Member States in WOAH's ambitious work on its future and ENCOURAGES the Member States' Chief veterinary officers and national delegates and the European Commission to actively partake in WOAH's work on the future of WOAH which aims to secure the organization's ability to deliver its mandate efficiently, effectively, and sustainably into the future.
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